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MEDIA RELEASE
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AUSSIE VIEWERS BIG WINNERS IN 2ND ASHES TEST

Australian cricket lovers have been the big winners in the second test match of the Ashes series, with huge numbers tuning in for the exciting conclusion of the game.

The audience for yesterday's excitement peaked just after 7pm (EDT) with 2.9 million tuned in to Nine's live coverage. The average audience for the last hour of play was 2.5 million viewers*.

The cumulative audience for this year's Ashes test series is 9.1 million viewers with yesterday's coverage alone reaching more than 3.5 million Australians

As one of the most loved sporting battles in Australian culture, the Ashes test cricket series has rightly been placed on the anti-siphoning list to ensure all Australians can watch the event on television, for free.

75 per cent of Australians cannot afford or choose not to pay to watch sport on television. Had the Ashes been shown exclusively on pay TV as it is in England, most Australians would have missed out on Australia's historic win.

Australian viewers have made it clear they don't want this to happen with record numbers of sports lovers responding to the Save My Sport campaign designed to keep major sporting events on free-to-air television.

Over 52,000 votes have been recorded on the Save My Sport website (www.savemysport.com.au) with 94 per cent of respondents of the view that they should not have to pay for sport they currently see for free.

Attempts by the pay TV industry to water down the anti-siphoning list has them falsely arguing that free-to-air broadcasters buy rights to listed events and then "hoard" them

The allegations are completely unfounded. Free-to-air broadcasters use the sporting rights they acquire and unused rights are made available to pay TV by either the sports rights holder or the free-to-air broadcaster.

Attempts by pay television to water down the anti-siphoning list are nothing more than an attempt to force viewers to pay up to \$1000 a year to see sports events currently shown on free-to-air TV.

The facts are:

- There are only 10 sports on the anti-siphoning list, plus the Olympics and Commonwealth Games
- Of the 1300 "events" pay TV claims are on the list, 836 are games in the Wimbledon and Australian Open Tennis tournaments.
- 1648 hours of listed sport was shown on free-to-air television last year
- Pay TV already provides coverage of listed sports
- A pay TV subscription including sports channels costs between \$600 and \$1000 a year

For media inquiries, please contact Free TV Australia on (02) 8968 7100.

* Figures sourced from OzTAM 5 cap cities