



INTRODUCTION

At the Brisbane Lions our athletes are consistently exposed to vilification and hate speech, particularly through online channels and social media. As part of this submission, our athletes were able to provide specific examples of incidences that have occurred that can help guide this inquiry. The examples we provide are shocking and saddening, but common occurrence within the professional sports world. Just this week, four AFL Clubs, including ourselves, and the AFL have had to make public statements calling out racism specifically. As part of our Club Statement, we committed to taking action against those who spout hate online and this submission is part of that action. It is our belief that there needs to be additional regulation and legislation particularly of online platforms such as Instagram and Facebook to ensure that those committing these acts of vilification, can be held accountable and subjected to law as would any other criminal. Today’s backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated hate speech and now is the time for action.

EXAMPLES OF VILIFICATION OCCURRENCES TOWARD OUR ATHLETES

Example 1.

Athlete	[REDACTED]
Date of abuse	18/07/2021
Comment	[REDACTED] is a little useless ape Chuck him in the zoo And throw bananas at him
Medium	Facebook messenger
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Alert AFL Integrity who are investigating – Club Statement against racism
Evidence	<p>The screenshot shows a text message conversation. The sender says: "And hahahahaha so good [REDACTED] is a little useless ape Chuck him in the zoo And throw bananas at him". The recipient replies: "[REDACTED] we have loads of outs!! Ah there we go true Richmond supporter comments. How dare you racial abuse players!! [REDACTED] bigger and better person then anyone on your pathetic tigers list!!! Go back to your cave you racist".</p>

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Level 5, Gate 2, The Gabba
812 Stanley Street Woolloongabba QLD 4102
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Example 2.

Athlete	██████████ (directed at his children, who are Indigenous)
Date of abuse	18/07/2021
Comment	██████ the ██████
Medium	Instagram
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Alert AFL Integrity who are investigating – Club Statement against racism – ██████ addressed on personal twitter page

Example 3.

Athlete	██████████
Date	23/07/2021
Comment	I hate aboriginals, there scum
Medium	Instagram
Action	– Alert AFL Integrity who are investigating

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Example 4.

Athlete	[REDACTED]
Date	23/07/2019
Comment	
Medium	Facebook Group
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alert AFL Integrity - Club statement
Evidence	

Example 5. (Historical)

Athlete	Various Past Players
Date	Various
Comment	Various
Medium	Verbal and Online
Action	n/a
Evidence	https://www.lions.com.au/video/798603/past-Indigenous-lions-speak-up-about-racism?videoId=798603&modal=true&type=video&publishFrom=1597981618001

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IMPACTS

Emotional impacts; anger, confusion, concern for each other and their families (protection), frustration that without harder consequences it continues to happen.

Psychological impacts; distress, worry, anxiety, depression.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After consultation with our Indigenous athletes the Brisbane Lions make the following recommendations to the Queensland Parliament's Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's inquiry into serious vilification and hate crimes:

Recommendation 1.

Law reform for online social media platforms – prosecution and criminal charges. Without these harder consequences this kind of behaviour will continue to happen.

Recommendation 2.

Better education in schools – supporting schools to implement education policies that support racially integrated schools; training and recruiting teachers that reflect the diversity of students; schools should give history, social memory, and human rights – as well as Indigenous forms of knowledge – a place at the core of teaching.

Recommendation 3.

National campaign – promoting easy process to report these crimes and have them prosecuted. Should be catchy, recognisable, and memorable. Think; Life Be In It and Slip, Slop, Slap in terms of their ability to stick in someone's mind.

Recommendation 4.

Consideration of options for identity verification for online accounts to enable tracing perpetrators – understand there are some serious ramifications for this and so appreciate due diligence must be applied here.

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