

Explanatory Note: Cultural Sector Interviews

Australian Cultural Fields researchers conducted a range of semi-structured interviews (26 in total) with key government, industry and agency professionals to enhance our knowledge of the changing dynamics of Australian cultural fields since 1994, although often encompassing earlier periods. The interviewees are individuals with deep experience and expertise in their respective fields.

Following the completion of the project, several interviewees gave their permission for these transcripts to be uploaded to the ACF project website for wide public dissemination and reasons of posterity.

Interviews were recorded and professional transcribers turned them into text. In reviewing the transcripts, interviewers checked both audio and text for accuracy as much as was feasible. There is some variation in transcription style and notation, and in many cases further editing was undertaken in consultation with the interviewee (and, in one case, the person responsible for their estate).

The interview material was checked by the interviewers, interviewees (and, as noted, a representative in one case) and other members of the Australian Cultural Fields research team for clarity and accuracy. Often these transcripts are conversational in nature, and no attempt has been made to correct the inevitable *non-sequiturs*, grammatical errors etc. of 'organic' oral communication. Some interview sections were deleted at the request of the interviewees or because of potential legal implications. These deletions are flagged where it is necessary to preserve the overall coherence of the interview. The views expressed in the interviews are those of the interviewees.

These interviews were conducted with approval of the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee (H11025). Subsequent approval to publish the transcripts to the ACF website was given following a research ethics amendment request. Some cultural sector interviews were not published according to the wishes of the interviewee (or their representative).

We extend our sincere gratitude to the interviewees and their representatives for permission to share these transcripts, and for their assistance in preparing them to be uploaded to the ACF website.

Australian Cultural Fields researchers are confident that these qualitative data, alongside other data analysed in our many research publications, constitute an enduring resource for future cultural research and debate in Australia and beyond.

Kyle Patterson

This interview was conducted in 2017 as part of 'Australian Cultural Fields: National and Transnational Dynamics' (ACF), an Australian Research Council funded Discovery Project (DP140101970). The project website is <https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/acf/>. The transcript was uploaded to the ACF website in November 2022.

Interviewee and position (at time of interview):

Kyle Patterson, Head of Communications and Corporate Affairs, TEG Pty Ltd (Live Entertainment and Data Analytics Company)

Interviewer: Professor David Rowe, Western Sydney University

Interview date: 14 November 2017

Interview location: Surry Hills, Sydney

ACF field(s): Media; sport

START

David Rowe

Here we go.

Kyle Patterson

Technology working. Wonderful.

David Rowe

I hope so. Okay, so, could you start off, would you mind just introducing yourself? And tell me about your history of working... Your involvement in the sport field, and also in the media field, if you could.

Kyle Patterson

Pleasure. So my earliest memories of sport, as a kid in middle-class or lower middle-class Box Hill in Melbourne, was all about soccer, as I knew it then. Football, the world game. I had a migrant father, from Belfast, who was an avid football fan, and that informed my

entire sporting universe. Got a big shock when I went to primary school in 1966, and very quickly worked out that soccer was not the game of my suburb, or my state, or my city, or my country; and then very quickly became used to that terrible epithet that soccer was “wog ball”. I grew up with that to the point where at primary school... and I was a reasonable athlete; soccer was not played, and I played AFL in winter and cricket [in summer], because you want to be working with your mates. But in those days, in the 60s, there was never even any thought that soccer would be introduced. Even in high school. I went to Blackburn High School, and they didn’t have a soccer team in the interschool carnival, and eventually in fourth form, in those days, which is Year 10, one of the teachers said, “Okay, we’ll put a team in, but you,” – as in me – “will have to coach it, because no one here knows about that game.” That was the kind of world we lived in.

Later on, I was very fortunate to become a cadet journalist with a soccer paper called *Soccer Action*, and I classify that period as being my university of life, because I left school at 17, didn’t know much about much; went to work with a really skilful editor, a guy called Laurie Schwab, and my beat was the Victorian State League, which was full of Maltese, Croatian, Greek, Macedonian, Serbian, Italian teams. So every weekend, I was immersed in different languages, different thinking, and it just opened my eyes, totally, to what the world was about, and what Australia was about. And yet these people didn’t... I mean, my little soccer paper had a weekly circulation of about 9,000 nationally. So we were a niche sport.

David Rowe

Yeah.

Kyle Patterson

But you know what; through my experiences as the son of a migrant, and through my experience as a journalist, football is such an equaliser. And I know it’s a cliché to say it is its own language, but it is. And since then, I’ve had times I’ve been in the back of a cab in Buenos Aires, talking broken Spanish to a taxi driver about the merits of Gabriel Batistuta playing for Argentina. I travelled to Tehran and the same thing. No one talked about the Americans and the CIA. It was all about football. Football has been a great conduit for me to understand other people in the world. And I’ve got to say, in 2017, in my lifetime, it’s come such a long way, to the point where our revolution in football – and I still say our, because I consider myself a football person – we’ve grown like weeds, up through society, and people turned around and said, “Cripes, where’d that come from?” Because

now, in the rugby suburbs of Sydney, all the dads go to watch the Wallabies play, but the mums drive the kids to football. So I remember famously once I was invited to a speaking gig at a prestigious Sydney school at Cranbrook, and they said to me, "In your speech, is it possible for you to please subtly berate the principal? He won't let the soccer team play on the main pitch. It's reserved for rugby". These are parents playing the same 25 grand in fees as the rugby families. That was only 10, 15 years ago. Happy to say now that in Sydney, in the main private schools, football has thrown off the shackles of suppression. Because for many years, they would only let there be three or four football teams. The parents have spoken, and now, in every school... Kings in Parramatta, Cranbrook, sure you go there, there are more football teams than rugby teams, and they tried their darnedest to suppress it, but they couldn't, and we're over those hurdles. So it's fantastic. That's a little snapshot of my experience.

David Rowe

Okay. So you started off in the newspaper, and then maybe if you could just tell me a little... I mean, I know about your career, but if I'm able to hear it in your own words, how you... You seem to have moved between the sports field and...

Kyle Patterson

And business. Yeah, look, originally I was a journalist, as I say, dedicated to this football magazine; did some travel, went and learnt my skill as a journalist in suburban papers. I worked for *The Age* newspaper for a period, and then managed to get a job at SBS, which was fantastic, because it was the intersection of my two passions – football and journalism. That was 1985; I spent 18 years at SBS, and was fortunate to be part of a team of people in the sport department. So in 1990 we covered the first World Cup on our own, in Italia 90, and I was lucky enough to travel there, and I remember at the time, our mission was not so much to make sure we covered all the goals and the great games; it was about bringing that world festival, that carnival, that absolute melting pot where everyone can get on. The World Cup is the only thing... The Olympics have suffered boycotts; largely the FIFA World Cup's been immune from that, because it's too important. Football is too important to boycott. So I spent a lot of years there.

I was also a big part of bringing the Tour de France into Australian TV rooms. Again, you see what's happened with the power of TV. Cycling was another niche European sport; cycling is now the new golf, you know. Cycling is the new golf. It's a fantastic pastime; it's a European way of getting about, but it's also a European passion. And again, SBS... I

worked for the news for a period of time. I was there actually in 1983... Sorry, 87, was it? When Bob Hawke tried to amalgamate SBS with the ABC and failed. And so again, I felt very fortunate, coming from what was an Anglo family – we're Irish, and my mum was an Australian, and she had Irish blood on her side, from the south of Ireland – I always felt fascinated by hearing the stories of people in Australia I met through my travels through TV and football, and it really does change your view. I know that I have to catch myself... Andy Harper at Fox Sports, a good friend of mine, and we think similarly. We do have to sometimes catch ourselves, because it's easy to have a chip on your shoulder, being a football guy in the Australian media, and in an Australian society where you see, for example, the AFL – a very wealthy, powerful body – has been genius at getting governments to spend money on their endeavours, for what is a sport that is largely popular in the southern states of Australia. And yet they have by, with government connivance. So, for example, you've got a stadium in the Gold Coast, the Metricon Stadium, which the Suns play in; the Queensland government basically built that for the AFL. It just defies logic. The same with the showgrounds here in Sydney; the government of the day, I think it was Morris Iemma was Premier, was convinced by the AFL... they might have put in a little bit of money. They might have put five million in, and the government put the rest.

So I always observe those things with saying, "Why wouldn't Australian governments build things that actually fit with the national priority?" We keep hearing that we're part of Asia. AFL is never going to be part of Asia. I'm sorry, I can't predict the future with any certainty, but I think I'm safe in saying that. And yet, guess what was played this year in Shanghai? An AFL game. So it's still a real frustration that Australia's still this little island of Anglo-centric culture, that football is almost an inconvenient game. It keeps banging up against these old, established sports. We keep reminding them, in many ways, and it's happening at the moment, the World Cup matters. No one in Russia cares who won the AFL grand final. No one in Russia's going to care who wins the Ashes. But people in Russia will care who wins on Wednesday night, whether it's Honduras or Australia coming to their tournament. So yes, Australia is a fantastically successful multicultural country. I think part of it has to do with being reasonably successful of sharing affluence. I hope we continue to do that. I think poverty is one of the great corrosives of society, but I am worried about the new... I think it's too strong to call it... Well, there's a reactionary element in society now, in politics, that harks back... wants to look back at Australia as the White Australia

Policy, and that's to all our detriment. Even to them. So we need to have these discussions. So I commend you on the work you're doing.

David Rowe

Well, thank you. So obviously you moved into the sport field more directly, and I will use this term 'field' in quite a technical sense. I wonder if you would describe for me what you see as the dimensions of the sport sector. What are the institutions that make sport?

Kyle Patterson

It's an immensely important industry, in some respects. It employs a lot of people in Australia. If you add the horse racing industry to all the other... And I was recently at a seminar with the *Australian Leisure Management* publication, and governments don't count the sports industry as a sector as they do mining, or as they do agriculture. It's there, and it's a service industry, and it's part of our growth. Australians are very good... We've almost pioneered sports science, in many ways. All the GPS tracking devices, the use of nutrition and hydration in monitoring athletes... For example, the head of athletic performance at Arsenal Football Club is a guy who left Port Adelaide Football Club recently, because he's one of the world's best.

We, as a society, get called a "sports-mad society". I think we are. I mean, I'll give it to the AFL, they have average crowds of 40,000 across Australia in a small country of 24 million people. It's part of the political fabric; it's part of the national psyche. Winning or losing at national level. The Olympics, which no one really cares about those sports, but they become a bit of a barometer for national mood over the period of time. I think we're not alone there; many societies have sport in their soul and, in fact, look what's happening in Catalonia at the moment, the football team embodies their sense of identity, and their sense of what's possible. But I think Australia has got these really weird contradictions in that playing sport and watching sport are considered two different things. Participation... it's funny, we're told about the obesity crisis and diabetes crisis. I went to high school in the 70s, they removed PE teachers. We used to have a physical education teacher, and it was compulsory to turn up. If you had a note from your doctor, you could sit and watch. And suddenly, next minute I'm hearing my kids are going to school, "Oh, yeah, the PE teacher only does this, and he has to teach maths, and this..." So we've done some really contradictory, stupid things as a society. We build cities where we have this massive land mass, but we're cramming more and more people into these densities without having open space for kids to play. Particularly some of the newer communities. I live in Chatswood;

big Taiwanese, Hong Kong Chinese, South Korean communities, and they have to be encouraged to join team sports. I remember I was the junior coaching coordinator at Chatswood Rangers Public School, and a hardworking Taiwanese Chinese mum came to the registration day, and asked me, "Oh, will you pick my son up and bring him home from the games?" I said, "No, it's not that sort of service. And we actually want the parents to come; we want you to come and encourage your kid, and be part of it". "Oh, no, he can't play. He can't play, because on Saturday, we have the shop".

There's an issue there, but I think generally speaking, sport is enmeshed in our society in ways we probably don't imagine, and its influence goes way beyond. But the AFL is a political force in the Victorian society. The NRL is to a lesser extent a force here. The Sydney Cricket Ground Trust in this city is like a self-appointed power. They're very influential people, and they can influence policy. They're appointed by government, but they've got their own ability to influence policy. So sport has got a lot of power. It's enmeshed in the power structures of society and decision-making, for sure.

David Rowe

If it is so powerful, and I agree with you that it's culturally powerful, but as I mentioned, the base point of our research is the 1994 national cultural policy. You can read, as I have many times, the national cultural policy, *Creative Nation*, and sport isn't there. Well, it is actually; it's only there as a kind of competitor for sponsorship money with art. So why do you think that sport did not make it into the national cultural policy?

Kyle Patterson

That's a very good question. I think part of what occurs there is, so much of sport is for profit, because when you're selling billion-dollar TV rights, there's probably a maybe understandably view of governments and agencies and policymakers that say, well, "They've got their own resources; other cultural pursuits don't". That assumes, of course, the money flows from the top to the bottom. In some sports it does; the AFL is great at that. They've got this wonderful program called Auskick, which is disguised as a marketing program to sign kids up, but as far as being inexpensive and well-run, and wholesome, it ticks all those boxes. It's great. I know in the case of football, and I have to put a caveat on this – I used to be the chief spin doctor for football; I worked for the FFA for five years, so you can discount some of that. Football used to say, "We have many mouths to feed, but not the means to do so", when we were talking to government, because football has been... it's now not disputed, the Australian Sports Commission recently did for the first

time a properly benchmarked participation survey, and took out all the ambit claims of other sports, and football's about a million... 1.1 million, it's by far and away the biggest participation sport. Largely, football is the other way; football is kind of from the bottom up, because... and I was a registered player until recently, until my body gave up. I used to pay what they call the NRF, the National Registration Fee, which actually ends up going to FFA to help fund the national body, and that's just football's strength in numbers. But I still see in suburbs... I coached a women's team last year. The standard of toilet amenities, which are very important for females to be participating, and the change rooms, were terrible. And so local governments, State governments are always throwing money at professional sport, because that drives tourism. So, for example, the NRL's very good at auctioning off the State of Origin. So there'll be a State of Origin in Perth, in a couple of years, because they want to drag [in] so many Queenslanders and New South Welsh people. And that's fine, but a lot of that focus of policy is on that professional tier, which my company, to be honest, we drive that, because it does drive tourism.

I mean, my company, we promoted Argentina versus Brazil at the MCG; a sell-out 100,000. Lots of people came to Melbourne, the government was happy, the hospitality industry is happy, et cetera. But why participation of sport isn't considered on the same level as participation in theatre or music or dance, that's maybe a national blind spot that we just think it's all healthy, and we're such a great sporting nation that doesn't need help. But clearly, if you drill down into the trends of participation, and the rates of participation, all of this current excitement over women's sport is great, but the participation rate among females is still well behind males, and that opens up a whole heap of other issues relating to gender and role models, and all that sort of stuff. But it's a good question, I can only suggest that sport has always been seen as something that lives in every household, and doesn't need governments to touch it. But I'm sure you'll have a better answer by the end of this work.

David Rowe

I wonder whether the media's implicated in this. I mean, you think of the caricature of Norm, sitting on the sofa, watching sport on television, rather than being active. And sport being associated with either not being very bright; you know, about being about the body rather than the mind; and also about sitting down and being, if you like, mindlessly entertained, rather than actually doing something. I mean, I know those are obviously

stereotypes and caricatures, but do you think they have some kind of power, say with governments?

Kyle Patterson

I'll just jump ahead. One of the things that's really... There's two big trends that I'm seeing in adolescents. Gaming, eSports as a sport, is taking off. No one knows about it because it's a trapped ecosystem. The gamers don't watch TV, they don't read newspapers, they're in their own little world. Running alongside that is this... I'll call it – I don't agree with it personally, the scourge of gambling on sport. Another screen-based activity. I'm very concerned that we've got generations of impressionable 12- to 18-year old males – tends to be males, eSports, it's not females – growing up with the validation that eSports is legitimate activity. And it is, it's legitimate, it's competitive, but it's not a sport in the traditional sense that it's pitting athleticism, it's a brain sport, and that's fine. We don't want to invalidate that, but I am concerned that there's a very short leap from the hold that gaming has on these young eyes, to gambling. Because I see the way these gambling ads are pitched at adolescent blokes, to the point where I've had horror stories of even younger kids, 10-year olds, saying, "Oh, what are the odds of this winning"? So that's the current problem.

Look, traditionally, yeah, look, it's funny. In America, they still don't allow sponsors on shirts. So the brand of the Chicago Cubs or the LA Lakers, or the New York Nicks, that's what you're seeing. We take a massive risk by putting... Well, we used to put cigarettes on our sports trophies. The Soccerroos used to be called the Winfield Soccerroos, for a long period. And as recently as the mid-80s. We still allow, in this day and age, beer sponsors on football shirts, and the post-game dressing room shots of many sports are beer drinking. What a message that sends to everyone at home, from Grandad to the kids, that "Oh, yeah, it's actually a bonding thing. We don't actually have to get out and do that; we can watch it and bond, and drink beer. We are fitting a stereotype of what it means to be an Australian male sports fan". I remember the Norm campaign very well; it was a 70s thing. I think the advent of screens... I think we've got another wave of it, because we know from the sort of research stuff I look at, most sports fans, a lot of them will have a second screen, which is to bet, or to follow on Facebook, or to text their mates, or have a conversation about the game as well as watching it. That's going to make it harder to get people off that couch. And you know what? There's a lot of money riding on them staying there, because with the way free-to-air is travelling, and there's a kind of a conventional

wisdom that the disaggregation of media will hurt sports rights, because the premium that the free-to-air network pays to own the State of Origin means you have to watch that channel to watch Origin.

As disaggregation comes in, you can sample highlights and other things. Inevitably, it's harder for the media companies to regain the revenue they would pay, and so they'll pay less revenue. And so sport's got to be very careful that all organised sports don't get hooked onto this sugar hit of TV rights, and wake up one day and say, "Oh, shit, our participation has gone through the floor; the free-to-air's have said, "No, I'm not paying anymore"". I do worry for the NRL, the salary cap deal they've just done, which ramps up to about \$10 million per year, per club by about 2021, that's ambitious, because once wages go up, good luck putting them back down. So there are some structural issues facing sport, and not least participation sport, and the connection to professional sport. And they are connected. Every time I hear a professional athlete who gets in trouble saying, "Oh, yeah, I never wanted to be a role model". Guess what, buddy? You are. As soon as you pulled that shirt on as a 17-year old, I guarantee you, someone would say, "You're representing this club now". And most clubs are good at having a cultural orientation. So I'm not sure I answered your question there, but anyway.

David Rowe

Okay. If there is as bit of a cultural hierarchy outside sport, you've also indicated there's one in sport. In particular, you mentioned football being... has a well-documented difficulty in dealing with the other sports in that regard. Do you see any change in that relationship?

Kyle Patterson

Look, in my own experience, there's been massive change. It's happened over my, let's say 50 years, to the point where the primary school I went to in Melbourne in 1966, where it was wog ball and there was no soccer players, they've now got two soccer teams – a female team and a male team. The private schools that tried to have a segregation of rugby only, and now the doors are open to football. Frank Lowy... and I've got to pay credit here to one guy, Arthur Sinodinos, himself a Greek migrant who was John Howard's Chief of Staff, at a point where Sinodinos realised the national interest... Because when soccer was, in the 2000 to 2003 period, basically disintegrating, Sinodinos was the one who convinced Howard to say, "Look, the national interest is that we have a sport that we can actually connect with Asia, connect with Europe, connect with South America; plus it's a great part of social cohesion in Australia". I mean, on another day... and no one's ever

written this, I don't think, the role of football on the post-war migration is why it was cohesive, because soccer clubs in those days, in my view, were social welfare organisations. They found jobs, they found comfort, people helped them with language. Helped them with the relocation, helped them with all the strange things happening in their life, of leaving sometimes war-torn countries, and coming here, and in the case of the Croatians, keeping alive for decades their dream of independence. I mean, they were mercilessly criticised for it; in fact, famously in Victoria in 1972, they expelled the Croatian club from the State league because the Yugoslav Prime Minister had visited Australia that year, and the Croatians had a massive demonstration, including there was a big problem at a game, and so they kicked them out. So their club, unashamedly, was both a sporting club but a political statement, saying to the diaspora, "Look, yes, we're in Australia, but we have this Croatian flag on our chest...".

So, I've lost my train of thought a little. Yeah, so football's come a hell of a long way. Frank Lowy should take a lot of credit for that, but still I don't find that organisations like DFAT [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade], for example, understand what football can do for Australia. DFAT were part of promoting that AFL game in Shanghai. That's great, but where was... And we play in the Asian Champions League anyway. And they might turn around and say, "Okay, well, we don't need to help you, because you play there anyway, you're part of Asia". But I don't see the leverage opportunities. I don't see mining companies, when they were selling tonnes and tonnes of iron ore and coal to China, coming back to Australia and saying, "Okay, let's use that relationship to have something that the people actually love, which is sport". I didn't see the BHP Cup, or the Glenco[r]e Cup. I didn't see that. And that's the thing that, on another topic, football is one of the few things we have in common with Asia. Asia being such a... you know, Asia is 50 or 60 different cultures of people, but we've got relationships through football with all of them. It's one thing we can share without having to talk about colonialism, which they probably associate us with. Or with our role in recognising Taiwan. There's all those other issues that football can overcome. I don't think Australia's got anywhere near doing that, and that's because – to answer your question – there is a hierarchy here, and when it comes to the crunch, we'll see it this summer; cricket is the default national sport of Australia. One hundred per cent. One hundred per cent, there's no doubt about it. In the southern states, AFL then becomes what they would call their passion; in the northern states, rugby and league. Football is that field of sunflowers. It's everywhere. It's never ever seen as being the big, powerful gum tree, to use an analogy, because we've always been an

inconvenient truth, that it's popular, it's safe, it's skilful, it can be played by all shapes and sizes, and the growth, the popularity of football, unfortunately, reminds some of the other sports of their own weaknesses. Not weaknesses, of their own limitations. AFL's case, it's not international. In cricket's case, it's a game of Empire.

In rugby league's case, it's actually becoming at junior level a game that's too hard to play with the body mismatches. Rugby union, unfortunately, has got problems with safety and also participation, whereby – and I don't profess to know enough – but clearly they have got a game that is regarded by parents as being quite dangerous. It doesn't mean rugby league's going to disappear, or union will disappear, because we know in America, American football is hardly played by anybody, but it's a massive sport. So yeah, there is definitely a hierarchy. I put it this way: cricket's number one, AFL is two, NRL is three, rugby's four, football – soccer – is five. Hopefully, with a bullet. Hopefully on the rise.

David Rowe

You may not remember, but I met you at one of the Lowy Institute events on football diplomacy. We had a brief chat there, and...

Kyle Patterson

Has my view changed?

David Rowe

Eh?

Kyle Patterson

Has my view changed?

David Rowe

No, not really. We had a chat at the end. I was trying to put a slightly sceptical view about football diplomacy at the time, because it was all like, "Football diplomacy, great, we're in Asia". And for example, you recall that just before the AFC Asian Cup final, there were mutterings about what was Australia doing in the Asian Football Confederation Cup.

Kyle Patterson

Very much so.

David Rowe

So I'm interested in sports diplomacy and football diplomacy. Do you think it's actually a particularly effective way of doing diplomacy? Or is it perhaps exaggerated?

Kyle Patterson

Oh, I think so. I think we just don't get it. We don't get it. The power structures are different in other parts of the world, where normally in the Gulf States, we're talking about, the Royal Family runs the Football Association, runs the economy, and they become intertwined. So, if you wish to go and have influence in the Gulf, you need to understand they are football-mad. They actually run the association. I don't know whether DFAT gets that. I mean, what's happening there now is quite incredible, and the fact that we're on the nose among those Gulf States, which we are, because there it seems to be they think we take a World Cup spot from them, and that they now regret letting us in, and they don't see they've got anything in common with us. I think we have got significant trade with that part of the world. I think football diplomacy is just that we as Australians don't rate it. I can tell you, everywhere else I travel, that people who sit at the highest level of government, when I've travelled to Iran, when I've travelled across Europe, when I've travelled to South America, football matters. If you wanted to solve a diplomatic problem, you could do it, at least through the entrée of football. But not in this country, because... Frank Lowy aside, who had the ability to pick up the telephone to prime ministers and they would listen to a former Reserve Bank Board member? I just don't think... [it's] self-evident by the fact that DFAC thought it was a useful thing to promote an AFL game as some sort of sideshow in Shanghai. I just don't think our political class gets it. I don't think it's a waste of time, I think it's hugely valuable.

The personal contacts is going to be made at football, and I always base this on the World Cup. I've been lucky to have been to five World Cups. I tell you, it's the only time you can let 20 nationalities into a bar to drink and carry on, because they're there to talk about football. It's kind of like they put aside any other historical enmity. It's almost... it becomes beholden on everyone in that room to embrace your fellow football fan. Not as, "I'm a Serb and he's a Croatian", or "I'm a Macedonian, he's a Greek". So there's massive potential in football diplomacy. But again, it hardly made news last week, there was meant to be an AFC underage tournament in Ballarat. We denied the North Koreans visas. The AFC had to take the tournament out of Australia. It passed without a blip. There was probably two paragraphs in the newspaper. Now, given everything that was happening, right, if that was

a cricket tournament, hypothetically. And let's say we had sanctions on Sri Lanka, who knows? Just hypothetically. That would have been a major story. There would have been... someone would have said, "Get John Howard on the phone". John Howard knows the head of the Sri Lankan Cricket Board, who used to be the...". The network[ing] would happen. It's just that that's the Anglo method. The football network is not regarded as being important.

I mean, I can tell you, Franjo Tuđman, the inaugural President of Croatia, signed Mark Viduka personally. He took a plane from Canberra to Melbourne, to get Viduka to go and sign for Dynamo Zagreb, because he wanted to show the diaspora of the world of Croatia that, "We are now independent, we are a legitimate country; so much so that the best Croatian players are going to come play in the Croatian league". And the government, apparently, financed that transfer. A million dollars. A lot of money at the time for Melbourne Croatia. But the President did it. Now, that's football and diplomacy coming together. Tuđman didn't go and open a factory and say, "We'll export to Croatia". He opened a transfer window. So I don't know, maybe I'm being too starry eyed because I've spent too much time in that world. I know Johnny Warren was one of the ambassadors for the Sydney Olympic bid in 93, and he was given the most difficult countries, because they knew, as a former player who played in the World Cup, he would get the meetings. In Africa, particularly. They knew that if DFAT said, "We've got Johnny Warren, he's a player, he played in the World Cup against Franz Beckenbauer in '74" ... "Oh, we want to meet this guy". Because of football. Football got none of the credit for that. Just before Sydney won the Olympics, we hosted the FIFA World Youth Cup, you might recall. Neville Wran was the Chairman of the Organising Committee. I know that behind the scenes, the clever guys, like Coates and at the time, Richardson, the Labor Party 'cruncher', they did use the football connections to go, "Okay, we've got a problem with this vote from this country. Who do we know? Does he like football"? Because roughly about a third of the IOC members also had come from the sport of football. Which makes sense, because football's usually the biggest sport in any country.

So I'm going to answer that one in the negative. I don't agree that it's all froth and bubble, it's all just canapes and champagne at games. There is a real opportunity for Australia, if we get *fair dinkum* about it.

David Rowe

So you've kind of hinted a bit, talking about policy around sports, and funding from government and that kind of thing. General policies around the ASC and the AFL and so on, FFA. What is your take on the development of sport policy in Australia? Has it been positive?

Kyle Patterson

Look, it's been fits and starts. I mean, you know, you can look at three or four big tent poles, the first one being the Montreal Olympics, where famously we upset the politicians because we didn't win enough gold medals, and they couldn't have a ticker tape parade and get their kudos. On the back of that, the Australian Institute of Sport started, which is a positive thing, because maybe my accident, but it gave Australians a massive jumpstart into the world of science and sport and monitoring. In some ways, we've kept that lead, because you track back the number of coaches who left Canberra and got employed by other countries because the AIS was seen as being innovative. It was ground-breaking. So that's a good example of sports policy. We probably haven't done enough to engender an industry around it, and we should have had universities attached, closer to the AIS – which we're kind of doing now – to go and use our IP to go and say, "Right, let's become the world leader in this". We're kind of up there because we had clever people, and now there's State institutes. We actually just... I don't know whether it was deliberate policy, but we've had that. So that's one tent pole.

The Australian Sports Commission kind of came out of that process. It's had some period of impact, and some periods of total disaster. I do not like the current policy around funding Olympic sports based on their abilities to win medals. That, to me, is not a policy. That is driven by politicians who don't care if it's a Taekwondo gold or a Jujutsu gold; they don't care whether anyone plays those sports in between Olympics. They just want to be able to say, "We spent X million, and we got this many medals". That actually penalises football, because football being the most competitive of all the world games, so the men's Olympic team hasn't qualified for London or for Rio and, therefore, funding gets taken down, you get marked down in terms of allocation of resources. This is the wrong thing to do for a sport that's got this massive participation base. But the Sports Commission's advent has been influential, because clearly they do control a lot of money. They control policy. On governance, they've had a good role, I think; I mean, it was the Australian Sports Commission's concerns about the governance of sports that led to... certainly in football,

and I think also in swimming, possibly in athletics, where they said, “You’ve got to professionalise your management, and professionalise your leadership, because otherwise you’re just going to become these State-based phantoms, fighting over an ever-shrinking pie”. So I give that a tick.

I think pay TV would have to be one of the biggest... I know myself, my career at SBS changed because of it, because up until about 1994, SBS had the FA Cup, they had the Champions League. We had the World Cup, we had the UEFA, we had the Euro Championships. We had The Socceroos, we had the NSL, we had everything. Then '95 was the start of pay TV, and then little by little, the content of football drifted away, so my colleagues drifted away with it, to the point now where SBS still retains some of the World Cup, but this is going to be the surprise for people in Russia – Optus have got exclusive use of about half the game. So SBS will show the main games and the Australian games, but if you’re a... let me pick a country; let’s say Peru beat New Zealand, and Peru qualified, and you want to watch Peru at the World Cup, you’d better hope you’ve got an Optus subscription, because those games will be... so pay TV, massive. The advent of online gambling, as well, we have to say; they’re quite related, those two. Other government policies... I think it’s lamentable that government schools lock the gate on the weekend. There’s a real problem, and it varies from local government to local government. Sometimes local government is smart enough to go to private schools, and say, “Look, we’re short of pitches. We want to rent this off you. Open it up”. So I’ve seen a bit of that happen in the North Shore of Sydney in football. I don’t think it happens universally. It’s crazy that we have a lack of a policy whereby schools should have sports facilities. Every school should have a gym for kids. Or for parents on the weekend. It’s infrastructure. It’s basic. It’s like saying to someone, “Oh, yeah, we want you to do maths, but we’re not going to give you the ability to have a calculator; you have to do it yourself, long hand. Local government... There’s a huge crisis, I think. I don’t know about the rest of Australia, but in the north of Sydney, there are so many 1960s/70s eras floodlights, dressing sheds. So it’s lumpy, but I’d say there’s four or five big, significant things that have happened. I think the AIS, the advent of the Sports Commission, some of the government stuff, pay TV. But as I say, I do not like the current Sports Commission... they call it Winning Edge, the policy. I think it’s... you know, it’s not even trying to be all things to all people; it’s actually just trying to win medals for the sake of winning medals, with no impact back to participation, or health of the nation, or building a coherent sports policy. So I think it’s pretty ordinary. I’ll leave it at that.

David Rowe

Okay. Just on the pay TV for a moment, so you're in favour of the anti-siphoning regime?

Kyle Patterson

Look, you know, I think it's been... let's look at it this way. So in the UK, you haven't been able to watch Premier League on free-to-air since about 1996 or something, I can't remember.

David Rowe

Or Test cricket since 2004.

Kyle Patterson

That's wrong. To the extent in the case of football here, because of that nation-building project that Sinodinos and Howard gave Frank Lowy, they said soccer had an exemption for 10 years from anti-siphoning, to try and put a bit of a floor under the rights, to give the Lowy Board some money to actually do what they had to do. That's finished now, and so you see the Socceroos are on Channel 9 now, and you've got some A-League on... is A-League still on... the A-League's on 10 this year, it's flipped over. But yeah, I think so. Anti-siphoning, I think World Cups, AFL grand finals, they've got to be on free-to-air. They've got to be open to everybody. It's the ethos of Australia; it's an egalitarian nation. I'm not sure how much of it holds. So anti-siphoning, I think, has been a good thing by and large. It didn't save my career at SBS, but that's okay.

David Rowe

It's just been reduced a bit in the latest broadcasting [legislation], but it's still there. It's still the strongest in the world, pretty much, apart from as you might know, in Argentina they renationalised football. The government took it off pay television and put it back on free-to-air.

Kyle Patterson

To probably save themselves.

David Rowe

Yeah, for a very obvious political reason. Okay. I don't want to take up too much of your time; we've got some big issues to get through. Just try and run through some of them at least. Globalisation and sport. Some people talk about the end of national sport, and...

Kyle Patterson

Well, it's interesting from an Australian perspective. I mean, if you look at the A-League, it's now got, it's had a whole run-through of great foreign players, of great foreign coaches. Clubs don't... like, The Wanderers have just put in a Spanish guy from Bilbao. It's interesting that AFL and NRL can run salary caps, and they're able to run a draft system, only because in their known universe, they can put a fence around it. You can't put a fence around the global industry of football; every player's labour is totally... well, not totally. Labour is fairly mobile. Coaches are mobile. Sports science is mobile. You've got this example, this guy at Arsenal, the Aussie guy. I think more and more... it's been slower than I thought, but I think one of the funny things we're seeing with that notion of 10 years ago, people said the global village. Well, yeah, there is a global village, for sports that are already global. They're more global now. Globalisation hasn't really helped with the AFL. The AFL is as strong as they've ever been. The NRL, arguably, you've got the biggest TV deal. And in soccer's case, the most compelling content is derbies. Locals, where everyone knows everyone. So we've had this great... Guangzhou Evergrande, which is the champion club of China. They've come to Sydney to play a Champions League game. They've got great Brazilian players. At one time, their coach was Fabio Capello, great former player. Six thousand people turned up. The only people who turn up in big numbers is because Guangzhou goes and buys 5,000 tickets and gives them to all the students. So you have to say that to that extent, globalisation is more myth than reality. Will it eventually help? I would think long, long term. The day that the Asian Champions League has the same clout as the European Champions League, then it might have a big impact on Australian soccer. At the moment, where now we joined Asia in 06, we got elected. So we've had a decade, and it's been great to qualify for the World Cup, because it's been easier. It's been great for our under-age teams to play more competitive games, but has it helped the professional tier? Not really. Most of the A-League clubs don't like playing in the Champions League because it's expensive, it's mid-week, when they're trying to play. So yes, the dividends of globalisation of football are out. For other sports, it has saved rugby union, because their TV deal from selling their content into the UK has buffered their decreasing popularity here. So yeah, there's a tick for globalisation. And look, this Rugby League World Cup we're watching now, I quite enjoy. I like to see Tonga beat New Zealand. That was good. And look, certainly rugby has now got this French league and the English leagues, which are really highly professional and highly paid, and they've got the same mobility of players, which sort of hurts them a little bit. But yeah, I think all news

is local, and all sports are going to be local I think for a period of time. I don't see the idea of Wanderers fans getting more excited by playing Guangzhou than Sydney FC. That's not going to happen for a long, long time.

David Rowe

Okay. Some discussion perhaps around sport and equality and diversity; transnationalism, Indigenous people... What's been the role of the sports field, do you think, in that?

Kyle Patterson

I like to think... there's a story I like to tell. I wasn't there, but I take it as being truth. So somewhere in Annandale in 1954, the first ever Gaggia coffee machine was imported by one of the people who started the APIA Leichhardt soccer team. And by folklore, by legend, when this machine was first put into action, there was uproar among the local Waspish types, because the coffee smelt. They started serving salami, and they were going to cause foot and mouth, and wipe out the whole cattle herd. All these... steam, and noise, and all this cacophony of coffee machines. We're a tea drinking nation. And now, viability for the human race in Australia is at least three cafés per block. I noticed some years ago, spaghetti Bolognese was the most popular dish on Australian tables. So in terms of the effect of importing football and its culture, and what it's done to our society here, and to our... and transnational, I'll get you to explain that in a bit more detail. But for everything you can point to where a sport like soccer has maybe broadened the cultural horizons, and been a great social cohesive, there's also been huge negatives. I worked through the Balkan War for SBS. It was a terribly traumatic time, because in those days you had a Greek team, a Macedonian team, a Serbian... well, mostly Serbian team in Footscray, JUST; in Melbourne, you had Melbourne Croatia, and there were very nasty riots. There were firebombing of churches on the night of games, deliberately timed to inflame tensions. Jeff Kennett, who I have a great admiration for normally, played some quite nasty politics by saying he would not recognise Macedonia, he would call it FYROM, which totally upset the Macedonians, because Kennett was trying to split some Greek votes off the Labor party, because the Greeks... not all, but traditionally voted (Labor]... Because themselves, a lot of them were refugees from Greece's military uprising in the 70s. And that set back soccer's cause terribly, because you had that thing, "Oh, yeah, soccer; you fight ancient feuds. You become hyper-nationalists". You had situations where kids going to school, playing for school soccer teams, were told by their parents in some cases, "Don't play with him, because he's from a different nationality". It's like, hang on,

you're all in the same uniform. You're all Australian kids. The game of football wore a lot of the heat for that, and always unfair, but it was just a reality. That, in some way, kept football in a kind of a political ghetto for a long period of time, because no sponsor wanted to touch it.

The Balkan War of '92... it ran for sort of three or four years, didn't it? That was terribly disruptive on the community I worked in, and lived in. Sad cases, one of the saddest I saw, Branko Buljevic was a Croatian by birth, who migrated to Australia and played for Footscray JUST which is the Serb club. Went to the World Cup with Rale Rasic, a Serb; was a hero of Australian football. Brilliant player. When the Balkan War broke out, Buljevic had friends on both sides. He had Serb friends, he had Slovenian friends, he had Croatian friends. Unfortunately, overnight, his Serb friends deserted him. I saw him one day at the Croatian ground, on his own, and even the Croatians wouldn't touch him, because, "You were a traitor before, you played with the Serbs". So this poor guy was reduced to this isolation. He should be a national hero. He was one of the incredible 22 part-timers who took us to the World Cup. That broke my heart. I've lost track of him. I've lost track of the guy. That's a disgrace. He should be held up as an ambassador of what [makes] our country's great. He migrated here, he's a great sportsman, put him on a pedestal, make him a role model for others.

Unfortunately, as it happened... and you know, I fear for the first Arabic-descended soccer star, because you know... we had one; we had two players, the Elrich brothers. Came out of Parramatta and both played for Australia. Tarek Elrich is still playing in Adelaide; a fantastic role model for his community. Unfortunately, his brother... yeah, Ahmad went off the rails, and was jailed, and everyone tut-tutted and went, "Oh, see? He's the typical one. He's the one. His brother's just the golden child, then". That stuff is important to Australia. I am really concerned about the demonisation of our – in Sydney, particularly – Arabic communities. I think it's terrible. I got to know a lot of... it was funny, I was working at ANZ Stadium, and a lot of the Christian Lebanese would support the West Tigers; a lot of the Muslim Lebanese would support the Bulldogs. They were great. You know where we had the most trouble? It was not when they played, because they don't drink. They support their team. Yes, there was a period where the young idiots of some of the communities would do stuff on the trains on the way home, and it got blown up. It was nothing. It was nothing compared to some of the trouble you saw at other games, where there was booze... normal sports fans fighting. So I don't think I've answered your question, because as I said, I have great faith in human beings. I have great faith in everyone who comes to

Australia. Overwhelmingly, most of them make great contributions to our country. I am concerned about the trend in society at the moment. I think one of the worst things that John Howard did was to provide lavish funding to religious schools. I think one of the great things about... that I went to school and wore the same uniform, and went to the same classes as everybody else. The fact that young kids can be taken out now and put in either a... I'm not going to name the religions. I don't want to be, you go to school with people from your religion, and the government helps fund that. That, to me, is undercutting one of the secrets of our success of multiculturalism, that we educate kids to the same standard. We say to them, "Yep, wear a uniform. It's not meant to make you conform; it's meant to strip away the overt differences. Go and like the guy because you like the guy; not because he wears the same stuff as you". Anyway.

David Rowe

Okay. When you mentioned the Arabic brothers, I was also thinking of the Krakouer brothers in AFL, and maybe some parallels there. But in particular, I wonder if you'd have some comments about relationship between sport and Indigenous...?

Kyle Patterson

Yeah. Look, I'll take my hat off to AFL and rugby league; I think they've done great things. The fact that the playing population of AFL and league 'over-indexes' the normal representation in society. You could take a cynical view that that's just because they've picked these great athletes. The sport I follow has done a pretty poor job over a long period of time, particularly when you consider that Harry Williams, in 1974, as an Indigenous player, kind of made history. He was one of the first Indigenous athletes after probably Lionel Rose... or it was possibly before Rose to actually truly represent Australia on a global stage. It was probably cricketers, back in the day. I think sport has an important role to play for Indigenous people. I read a lot of programs, but I think overall though, Australia does a shocking job with our relations with... I mean, I'll choose my words carefully – the Prime Minister's recent pronouncements about the recognition. You just shake your head. How can it be in 2017, we can't even get a debate about the importance of recognition? I see the three tied up. I see the republic; I see Indigenous recognition; I see a greater role for anti-discrimination. I don't think we should be weakening laws, I know there's a push for that. I think they're all tied up in our identity. I think... I wonder what our Indigenous people think about seeing their heroes. I suspect it's a unifying force for them. It's great that someone like Mal Meninga is the coach of Australia; he's an Indigenous person.

David Rowe

But it's not, you think, in some ways, kind of pigeonholing them as sportspeople? Is there a danger of that?

Kyle Patterson

Yeah, there is, definitely. It's like saying they're gifted at one thing, but nothing else. Yeah, I agree totally. That's the danger for them, that we effectively say to Indigenous kids, "Don't be a doctor, don't be a scientist, don't be an astronaut, because really, this society only really wants you to be a footballer. Then we'll put you up on a pedestal". Yeah. It's a terribly troubling aspect of being an Australian, for me, at 57, not seeing the end of when how identity will suddenly be resolved in some respects. At least we stop being this outpost of Empire, and we look at being a Republic, and we look at truly recognising our Indigenous past. Because you start to think this may not happen in my lifetime, which would be terribly depressing. So yeah, again, much to do. I think your point is right; I would endorse that, that sport tends to pigeonhole those great athletes, and it doesn't do justice to their broader society.

David Rowe

You were talking before about paying fees – registration fees – for football. I've been doing some research in another project in western Sydney, on sport at the community level. Quite a few people complained to me... here we're getting onto social class, I think, economic disadvantage. Quite a few people found sports registration fees too much. That they couldn't afford it, basically. Football actually was often mentioned as one of those offenders, because the fees are quite high compared to other sports. Could you comment on that?

Kyle Patterson

Yeah, absolutely. Look, I had to look at this issue when I was at FFA as the Head of Corporate Affairs, and it's largely true, because other sports, like cricket, AFL, and league have different means to subsidise. So AFL head office subsidises Auskick. Rugby league is a different model; there's usually leagues clubs, which have got a way to make it very affordable for kids to play rugby league. Cricket has had different schemes, Have a Go Cricket, and tend to push funding down. Football doesn't. Football takes funding the other way. I know in the last... in the 2017 season, quite a number of young players – this is 22-year old students from my female team I was coaching. The fees were 420 dollars to

play an 18 team game season, probably 18 training sessions, not that everyone goes. Yeah, access to a nice floodlit pitch; we had an artificial ground to play on. But for 420 dollars, they start going, “Shit, that’s like my gym membership, which I pay 10 bucks a week and have seven days’ use”.

David Rowe

Multiply that by the number of children, too, in large families.

Kyle Patterson

Oh, yeah. The other issue is again, back to a policy setting. I know in this State, I don’t know about other States, but there’s been rate-capping on local government, almost for years. So for local government to invest in artificial pitches, invest in floodlights, is limited. They then do cost recovery, they charge football clubs to use those floodlights. So there’s a real issue with that. Football is expensive, and it gets worse at the elite level. If you want to... I had a son playing rep football, where it’s kind of 1900 dollars a year. Mind you, that was to pay a coach. Now, I didn’t mind that; I wanted him to be in an elite program, I don’t want another dad coaching him; I want to have a qualified coach. And look, having put my kids through violin lessons and saxophone lessons, you kind of expect that. So I put that to the side. That’s a choice that... again, it’s difficult, because one of the great ironies of football, the greatest players have been those that have come from dirt poor circumstances.

And so yes, there is a real issue that if only the wealthy can afford to put their kids into elite programs, what are we doing? There’s a club in the Eastern Suburbs here, Dunbar Rovers, who make a virtue of having fee-free elite programs. So, if you get picked for the program, your family doesn’t pay. Not every club can do that like Dunbar Rovers, not going to have a good community of quite clever affluent guys who raise funds. It’s certainly a big problem, but again, I’d ask the question of the governing structures of our society, why don’t State governments say to local governments, “No, no, we’ll cap the rates on capital expenses, but we’ve got a priority on sport funding. We’ll audit you, make sure you’ve got enough. Make sure there’s this many hectares of open space per thousand people. Do that. Make sure that you go and negotiate with the local school to share the facilities. Make sure that the toilets are suitable for girls, boys, and disabled people”. As a symptom, yeah, football’s got a problem that we have a cost base that is prohibitive. I’m sure in some parts of Sydney, there are kids playing league rather than playing football, because league’s probably charging them 80 bucks for a season, and the football club’s charging them... I

think the average... I looked at it, it was closer to \$200. The \$400 I'm referring to is adults, but yeah. For a family with three kids, with limited means, 600 bucks plus boots plus socks...

David Rowe

Plus travel.

Kyle Patterson

Plus travel is suddenly, no. That's a problem for our game, because I used to say to people, "Football is the only game we can meaningfully practise on your own. You can juggle the ball. That's a game skill". Every other game you think of, maybe cricket you can hit the ball against the wall, I don't know. Soccer's the only game you can practise on your own, or with two, or with three, or with four. You can practise on the streets. So it should be the game of the masses. There shouldn't be that cost thing there. There's a lot of people... I mean, you might want to consider down the track talking to Craig Foster. Craig's very passionately involved in the Indigenous side of the game, and with this whole issue of paying for elite players, he is very anti it. He's always banging on about it. But it's not going away, because the trouble is, too many dreamy parents thinking about Harry Kewell. "Oh, Harry Kewell, he left Sydney at 15 and went to Leeds; he became a multimillionaire. I'll find the money. I don't want to die wondering. I want to put my boy in". And that's what these academies play off, some of them. They play off that, "Oh well, if you don't want it, that's fine, but we reckon your boy's special. There's two or three more years of college, he could be on the plane". So it's quite terrible.

David Rowe

Yes, and it's a bit beyond our brief today, but there's that whole area. The academies in Africa and so on that we could talk about another time. Just one last... or two last questions. One is to give you the opportunity to say something after this one...

Kyle Patterson

I've said plenty.

David Rowe

Obviously you've mentioned girls and women, the whole gender question. I've written a bit, and others have too, about the relationship between sport and masculinity, and sport being a male-dominated domain.

Kyle Patterson

Yes.

David Rowe

I don't know whether: a) you agree with that it is male-dominated; and b) have you seen any changes over the last two, three decades?

Kyle Patterson

I've had this great experience. I've coached elite junior males, I've coached grumpy old men over 35s players, and I've coached junior girls, and I've coached social women players. They're two different games. The men are testosterone-fuelled, it's a battle. It's like the old days, medieval times. Our village against theirs. How dare they come here? Whereas the girls are more likely to stop in the middle of the game to pick an opponent up. I learnt very early, when you're doing a pre-game team talk to a female team, the whole tone and language has to be different. Female players are far more interested in the team's welfare. The blokes are actually... they say it's the team, but it's about them. They want to get the better of the guy against them, and score the goal. Look, I think at the moment there's interesting things happening. Cricket, AFL... soccer's been there, all these professional leagues starting. I'm more concerned what's happening in State schools, or primary schools. What I am seeing is still a lag between... because soccer's a game where up to... I think the law is up to 11. You can actually play mixed if you police it properly. I don't see a lot of that happening; I think there is still a discouragement for female players to participate in any sport. I think it's great seeing Ellyse Perry score a double century; I think it's great seeing Sam Kerr becoming a superstar on a global basis. That should inspire some more girls to play, but what are the structural issues? What are they being told at six, when they start school? What are they being told... you know, netball's a great participation sport. I tend to think it doesn't encourage great athleticism, it's a very restrictive sport, I think, in terms of movement, for girls.

I still think there's big issues with modifying games for females. I mean, obviously it was Moya Dodd, the Australian member of FIFA, had to push through the law change on the hijab, so the girls could play with head covering and other covering. I've got two daughters; good thing for me is, one plays football, one plays basketball. They're active. They see it as part of their existence now. That's because we've got a house where everyone plays. My wife plays football. I played football until 55. My son's an avid player. So they were

kind of indoctrinated that sport's normal. A lot of houses where Norm's sitting. You do wonder. And the dropout rate is quite... I coached an under 16 girls' team, and from one year to the next, when Year 11 started, I had [an] 80 per cent dropout rate. Straight away, their mums said, "Oh, you have to concentrate on your study. Don't play". I said, "Let them play. We'll modify the training. It's good for their mental health. Good for their physical health". But they dropped out. For them to start up again, at 19, when they're at uni... it just doesn't happen, if you miss those years. So I think structurally, it's very masculine. It's getting a little bit better, but miles to go. Miles and miles to go. And again, it might need government policy. I noticed yesterday, Stuart Ayres, the New South Wales Sports Minister issued a directive to the Office of Sport to say, go and develop some specific policies for women on facilities, participation, and even fundraising. He wants the Office of Sport to help sports that have large female participation bases get sponsorship and pay for some of these things. So maybe there's a slow turning of the wheels behind the scenes.

David Rowe

Also, you've spent a lot of time in media, and you talked a bit before about the power of television, in particular. Some people have said that media's come to dominate sport. It's too powerful in sport. More neutrally, how do you see the relationship between the media and sport fields, and...?

Kyle Patterson

Look, I think today, in 2017 Australia, you hear TV execs say it. I mean, sport is the greatest live, unscripted drama. It's content for them. It's unscripted, it's relatively cheap, even though these sports rights are through the roof, if you're going to make a two-hour movie, or you go and broadcast a two-hour football match... I think the average someone calculated the other day, I saw in the *Fin[ancial] Review*, I think the AFL collects something like \$170,000 in rights payments per game. That's averaged out. Dirt cheap, when it's rating so well. So I have to say yes, at the moment, the relationship between sport and TV is... sport has become a high-level of TV product. I'll give you another example. There was a guy from Stoke City Football Club in Australia recently, on a research tour, and he was talking to a colleague of mine, and they just said, "Look, what do you do with your ticket prices? We hear that the Premier League is really expensive". He said, "You know what? I'm from a working-class town. Gate income is eight per cent only of Stoke City's income". He said, "Why would I inflame the fans by putting the price up? I haven't put them up for five years, because what I want is a full stadium to make noise, to get my team to

beat the other team; we stay in the Premier League, I get this cheque from Sky; happy days". And so that just shows you the total domination. And look, the NRL's the same. The NRL at the moment has got a bit of a crisis. They washed off quite a bit of live crowd support this year. NRL's never traditionally been a big spectator sport anyway, because they never had to be. They've always had... since 1956, when pokies came to Australia, they had other ways to fund their sport, whereas the AFL didn't. The AFL needed members and box office.

But the fact that TV now dictates kick-off times, days of the week... they basically dictate the length of the season. I remember when the A-League started, at the time I was working at Football New South Wales, at Parklea. In its first iteration, Fox Sports said to John O'Neill, "Well, look, ideally, your season should start the week after the AFL/NRL finish, and stop the week before they start. Can you do that? It was like, 'oh, really'?" And so they tried to, in the first iteration of the A-League, actually start in September, before the AFL finished, because there was only a few finals games. They did finish in February before the other teams started, but unfortunately the season's now extended, so the A-League starts the week after the NRL, but now goes right the way into May. And the big problem for the A-League is... when I was there, you're playing a third of your season under the shadow of these sports, and then Big Bash [cricket] comes along. All those strategic decisions are based around TV. What can you do to keep your TV partner happy?

Fox Sports have recently renewed in football for *circa* AU\$50 million a year; nothing like the money that the other sports get, but when I was at FFA, I spent a lot of time with the Executive, thinking, "How do we create an environment where the TV will look at us as a great TV product"? So, for example, half the value of bringing Alessandro Del Piero to Australia was Sydney FC got a bounce in membership and crowds; we got a huge bounce in mainstream newspaper, radio, TV news coverage. But the best thing about it was the pay ratings went up to here [gestures upwards], and suddenly we could turn around and say to the executives, "Look, we can move the dial. We can move the dial". And so TV's so, so important, if you work in professional sport. Look at the NRL. I watch a bit of NRL; the video ref is a big part of the game. It's deciding outcomes, it's a big part of the entertainment, it's a big part of the Monday discussion about was the decision right or wrong. It's a big part of the life experience, where you go, "Oh, did he get it down, though"? So that's where TV has actually changed the nature of the game. Unashamedly, I was an advocate for the VAR – the video-assisted refs coming in, in football. I think football needed to help our referees. I mean, our referees have got a tough job. There's one guy;

the game's so quick these days. One ref with two assistants who he's wired to, can't hope to get everything right. I like the VAR, but the traditionalists are howling. I'm not very popular amongst some of my friends, even [laughs]. "You're the idiot that got this thing". We're actually one of about five countries doing a FIFA test, although it's going to be at the World Cup next year, I think. So it's kind of... it's away. Or was that the Confed[eration]s Cup? I don't think it's a bad thing.

TV's still the single best way to advocate for a sport or an issue. I like to think the virtue is, the more kids who see the A-League, who see a skilful, relatively safe, exciting sport, are more likely to play it. Is that good for them? Yep. Is it good for the game of football? Yes it is. I just think the horse has bolted; I don't think you can turn it back. The days where everyone played at three o'clock Saturday, and there was only one game broadcast... which was probably, to be fair, that probably happened in the 70s, then it was stopped. Since pay TV came, you've got all sorts of timeslots. I mean, it's hard for FFA to manage, but you've got to play at 5:30, a Saturday game in summer. Why? Because it's an economic imperative to keep the TV... You don't want to... when you've only got five games a week, you're mad to put two simultaneously on, because you then halve the audience. So I'm probably biased; I'm probably not the best guy to ask, because I've made a career in TV. But yeah, I think by and large it's a symbiotic relationship, and it's good for sport, I think.

David Rowe

Okay, well, we have been going for a long time. Is there anything we haven't covered, that you think that you might like to say?

Kyle Patterson

I think it's been quite comprehensive. I'll just say I wish you well. I think there is a lack of debate among policymakers and broadcasters about the fact that the whole gambling thing just overtook sport without any politician... Well, that's not fair to Nick Xenophon and Andrew Wilkie and others. The fact that the establishment, both in politics, in business, in TV waved this through, and fed it, and watered it, to the point where now we're getting some minor restrictions coming in... I do think that's... I think most people... and I haven't got a direct economic interest anymore, but it's a terrible thing that we've done to sport and to kids. The fact that it's gambling. I wonder who would go to Flemington and Melbourne Cup day if you couldn't bet? Just watch the horses. Do we go? Because the

prizemoney wouldn't be much. So I think that's the two things that I do worry about. I mentioned them earlier.

Screens and the rise of eSports; what's it going to do to the current or future generation of very influential adolescents? What's it going to do to their activity? To their life? To their view of what sport is? The attendant risk of screen-based gambling is a massive issue, and those two things... sports and governments, and policymakers, should be turning their attention to it with a bit more rigour, because we know that social media is nefarious and ubiquitous. It's everywhere, and it's hard to manage. Well, guess what? These things actually are a real harm, and the model of free-to-air TV is probably, may be in its final decade, and maybe most sports aren't... Well, I think that's not true. The AFL and NRL are trying to prepare. They're all getting their own digital companies; I see cricket decided to broadcast the women's Test purely on streaming. They'll get a big shock when they try and monetise that, but that's the lesson that's been found with all those disaggregated forms; no one will pay very much for them. You might pay, yeah... "I'll give you 20 bucks for a Summer Pass; I'm not going to pay you 1200 bucks like..."

[speaking to server]

So yeah, you've probably heard more than enough from me.

David Rowe

So what were you saying right at the end?

Kyle Patterson

So they're the things that worry me, that big changes are afoot with free-to-air TV, with the way sport is structured online, with eSports, with gambling. And you know, the trouble with the gambling thing is the World Wide Web, you can shut down sites in Australia as much as you like. Cayman Islands... I deal with this problem in the reselling of tickets. You probably heard of this mob, Viagogo? They're beyond the reach of... the ACCC [Australian Competition and Consumer Commission] is taking them to the Federal Court next year, to try and pin them for very flagrant breaches of Australian consumer law. They may not turn up in court. They may not turn up. At the moment in the UK, politicians are trying to work out how to corral them into some law-abiding behaviour. They may just say, "Nope, okay, we'll leave London; we'll go set up in Jersey Islands" or whatever. This is the big risk for those screens, that the screens can find their consumers, and lawmakers are powerless to put restrictions around it, and sport's in the firing line, there, a bit. So, anyway.

David Rowe

Okay, thank you. That was terrific.

Kyle Patterson

Thank you. Good opportunity to have a chat.

David Rowe

Very interesting.

END