

Dear Sir,

Warmest greetings from a SE Asia expat. I write to you regarding an issue which is fast becoming the largest stir of the community here, the programming of AFL telecasts into the region.

I have attached a couple of threads about this subject as well as a link to the Hong Kong Dragons website which posts a response from your esteemed organizations explaining the reasoning of the programming decisions.

I ask your consideration as the CEO of the network to reconsider your decisions based on, and I say this with all due respect, my belief that your researchers and decision makers have erred in their perception of what is the best programming to meet your obligations as well as satisfying your market audience. Allow me to highlight a few points for your consideration.

a) Whilst understanding your requirements from DFAT and target audience, in reality, through my 16 years experience here in SE Asia, the far, far majority of your audience is expatriates (we are a very large group with huge numbers in the immediate region)

b) Your target audience of educated, English speaking locals will on, a Saturday night, be unlikely watching a replay of Foreign Correspondent (which mostly focus on non-Australian cultures) and a replay of All Saints. Both are aired only a two hours prior at Prime Time anyway! In reality, they are all watching ESPN or Star Sports cheering for Man U or Chelsea

c) You have scheduled rugby, either NRL or Super 14's for a prime time game on Friday night as well as for 8 hours on a Saturday, however, apart from the 1am games, AFL gets 1 game of 3 hours

d) Whilst your responder is possibly correct in the fact that the target audience has a slightly higher request for rugby, they do of course maintain it is still a small percentage. It is true that NRL and Super 14's do have a larger following among non-Australian expats as of its more international appeal, but among Australian expats, AFL has a much higher following. As such, the reality of your programming is you are catering to the non-Australian expats, not your target market, nor even your secondary market, Australian expats!

e) Your respondent has highlighted that your principal aim under your agreement with DFAT is to promote Australia as a vibrant, pluralist democracy and a modern trading nation. Apart from saying that replays of Foreign Correspondent and All Saints have very little to do with satisfying that aim, AFL itself epitomizes those aims. AFL is one of the most highly recognizable Australian cultural icons. It is uniquely and recognizably Australian and when you look at it in further depth, the game is played by many representatives of many

cultures within our Australian society. Please look at the make-up of AFL teams such as Port Adelaide, Essendon, Carlton etc. and you will see teams made up of cultures including Aboriginal, Irish, Islanders, Asians, Italians and many more.

f) Further to this, the AFL itself is very much pushing the internationalism of the game. In Asia alone, the local participation in local leagues is growing exponentially. In Japans league for example, a very large portion of participating members are local Japanese and they have representative sides comprising of only Japanese players touring Australia. Your target market tunes into Australia Network to understand and learn of the Australian culture. There is nothing more iconic than AFL.

Again with respect I ask you to reconsider. Your researchers are wrong. If you scheduled AFL games at 10pm or 10.30pm on a Friday or Saturday night, your tuned in audience would surely be double that of what you have programmed now. Isn't that what television is about?

Regards

Scott Stacey