

Eddie McGuire and Tim Lane

Wednesday 1 May 2002, Melbourne Press Club Lunch, Medallion Club

Neil Mitchell (NM): Ladies and gentlemen, if I could have your attention please. We'll get under way, because as I said, we want to make sure we keep to the schedule. The format today is that we'll have a 5 or 10 minute speech from each person and then there'll be, I hope, a lively discussion and a number of questions from the floor. The genesis of this lunch came about on the eve of the footy season when I'm sure most people remember Tim Lane made the decision not to broadcast with Channel 9 this year. It's something that disappointed me greatly because I'd heard Tim and Ed call a couple of games and I thought that they worked extremely well together. I think they both thought they worked well together as well, and I was very disappointed by that and thought 'well let's get them together.' But that to me – well I don't know whether that is no longer an issue, that's one of the things we'll talk about – but that was the genesis of the idea. What it's developed into now, I suppose, is a discussion from both about football, about sports broadcasting, about integrity, about journalism, about the direction, even the direction the AFL's going. What we've essentially said to both Ed and Tim is well, whatever you like. We want to hear from you as two of the respected sports broadcasters in this town and in this country. Tim Lane. Science graduate. No? Almost a science graduate. Come on Tim, beat it up a bit. Tim studied science before moving on to sport and the two are very closely linked. Look, we all know the background of these two guys so we won't go through it. Tim Lane with ABC 774, very nearly with Channel 9 earlier this year. He threw away the GTV9 blazer without the logo on the pocket and decided not to go ahead with that, which probably means he's got more money than Kerry Packer if he can walk away from Channel 9! Ladies and gentlemen, Tim Lane.

Then Eddie McGuire. Born in Melbourne 1964. I was surprised by that, I thought he'd been around forever. The Footy Show – I'm equally surprised – has only been around since February 1994. Actually I was working at Channel 9 in those days, I remember some of the really rough – not pilots – but rehearsals for the very early editions of the Footy Show involving Sam Newman and a bar which, I don't think Ed was even involved with at that stage, which fortunately didn't go ahead. Look he's a sports reporter of some significance which people sometimes forget. My son said to me the other day 'did Sam Newman actually play football?' which I thought was pretty rough judgment on a bloke who's played over 300 games. Other people might be saying 'well was Eddie McGuire a journalist?' Well, he was and a very successful one and still is. On the Footy Show, also host of Who Wants to be a Millionaire, more Logies than Sam Newman, also obviously more money than Kerry Packer but fewer premierships than John Elliott. Eddie McGuire.

As I said, we'll have some statements from Tim, some statements from Ed and then questions and comments from the audience. We'll have microphones moving around so you just need to raise your hands and we will get to it. And we have tossed the coin, bounced the ball, done whatever else we have to do and Tim Lane insisted he go first. Tim.

Tim Lane (TL): Thanks very much Neil. And thanks for the invitation. We were told we've got 5 minutes but I have checked and it's a little loose so I hope I don't hear the bell ringing just as I'm warming up. The publicity blurb did talk about Eddie and myself discussing all that's happening in football early in this 2002 season but I just couldn't help feeling that there was something slightly provocative about the fact that both of us had been invited to this forum at the start of this particular football season. I've never been here before. And just to address my early remarks to football and what's happening with it on the field, quite frankly – and it is fashionable to do this – I blame flooding. Because flooding has everyone crying out for a bit of gold old-fashioned one-on-one. Particularly when the two adversaries have been giving each other a bit of cheek in recent times, publicly. They haven't quite gone to the extent of facing off in the carpark at the local pub like some involved in football have done recently, but I guess there has been a certain amount of parry and thrust. However, given that I'm currently in dispute with my opponent's club, or one of his clubs, I hope you'll excuse me if in the old-fashioned jargon of the game, I play a little wide of him and them today. I will, though, take on a just as formidable opponent – a bit like Darren Hulme meeting Mick

Martyn here on Sunday – namely the media generally and its coverage of the event that I think in all honesty brought Eddie and myself here today.

I'll begin by explaining in the barest of terms, from my point of view, what happened between myself and Channel 9 over the last 12 months. It was in, I think, early May last year that Eddie and Channel 9's EP of footy, Cos Cardone, met me and talked to me about – in addition to my role with the ABC – broadcasting Friday night football on Channel 9 this year. It was an exciting offer, I was very grateful for it. I went away and I thought about it. I thought about how I could do it alongside what I do with the ABC. I entered into negotiation. Within that period of negotiation I, as you do, made clear the conditions under which I was prepared to work. There were some that were fundamental, there was agreement on those, and so, in November of last year I signed a contract.

Six weeks before my first engagement, the employer had a change of heart on one of the conditions. I then offered to honour the sections of the contract not affected by the change of heart, but this didn't prove to be an acceptable arrangement for the employer.

I didn't walk out, and I definitely didn't walk out on the eve of the season. My position was reiterated many times during that six week period between Channel 9's football launch on 12 February and the eventual public revelation of the circumstances on March 27th. Yet for 24 hours, I was the one fending off criticism, which did – I must admit – come as a bit of shock to me. The Australian reported on March 28 that 'Lane stunned Channel 9 executives yesterday'. The Herald-Sun that 'Tim Lane last night walked out on the network' and continued '... the veteran ABC' ... don't like that word ... 'the ABC caller quit just 24 hours before he was due to call the season opener'. A season eve walkout, tantrum, call it what you like, was irresistible, and the columnists and talk show hosts loved it even more than the reporters. Patrick Smith ... 'breathtaking arrogance and his timing on the eve of the season could easily be interpreted as grand-standing, probably should.' Don't let's worry about the obligations of contractual confidentiality, let alone consider how events may have progressively unfolded. It was like the tribunal making its judgments on the basis of freeze-frame evidence. I know it's a hackneyed complaint, I was taken out of context, in this case though I was, it wasn't about quotes, it was about a particular event not being given a context. Of course at the heart of it was the matter of a Club President calling his team's games. I happen to be of the view that it continues a trend of centralising power among the few that isn't healthy. As a friend of mine put it, can you imagine an American returning home talking to a mate saying how much he liked Australian Rules Football, but saying, hey there's one guy there who runs one of the clubs and then he calls the game from the booth on Friday nights. As I've written previously, it would be unthinkable for a president of a political party to be an ongoing political commentator, and while – and Eddie's pointed this out – this is only football, it's only sport, sport does have access to the public imagination like little else, and thus is a great forum for the establishment of ethical standards.

But for me it wasn't so much about Eddie's conflict of interest, and that is a criticism, a claim that's been constantly put into my mouth in much of the reporting that has been done about it. It was more about the potential for one of my own. Anyone who heard the first ten minutes of our football broadcast on 774 last Saturday, and heard Dwayne Russell's clash with Caroline Wilson, I think would now understand what I've meant by this all along. However independent and objective Dwayne's motives might have been, he ran the risk of being seen to be wearing a Channel 9 hat, while he was broadcasting as an employee of the ABC. The one matter in which I feel open to reasonable criticism on this matter, is that I entered into the arrangement in the first place, and it was something that I did ponder throughout the period of negotiation and consideration. But I thought to myself that fellow ABC broadcasters, Terry Lane and Virginia Trioli, write for commercial organisations, and even the Media Watch host, David Marr, as I understand it, even though he's on leave, is still an employee of the Fairfax organisation at the Sydney Morning Herald. I asked myself whether I as a footy commentator should live under some self-imposed standard that didn't apply at other more serious levels. Having chosen to proceed with the negotiation, I did, however, want to avoid any obvious areas of contention, and Eddie's role to me was clearly one, as I couldn't see how I could credibly argue that I didn't agree with him doing what he was doing and yet sit beside him and help do it. It

has been interesting to observe since March 27th that a 'Herald Sun' vote line survey produced an 82.1% NO vote on whether Eddie should call his Club's games, and it was on a day where there were an unusually high, I think 2,300 respondents in round figures. Clearly, there is a view against it, how reliable such a poll is – I don't know – but I had to be conscious of the controversial and contentious nature. I've stated that to Eddie and to Ian Johnson, the Network Managing Director, through our discussions. It wasn't though a populous course that I took, it was one designed to enable me to work for Channel 9 and do my job at the ABC with a minimum of complication. I think it's good that it has provoked discussion – healthy discussion – in the football community, and even the community beyond that, and I think it'll serve a useful purpose too, if it causes the executive and policy making custodians at the ABC to give further consideration to the issues involved when the organisation's broadcasters seek to perform outside work.

I'm happy to in Q and A discuss far more controversial issues than that, but I just thought I would start on that note.

Thank you.

NM: Tim Lane, ladies and gentlemen, Channel 9, Eddie McGuire.

Eddie McGuire (EM): Thanks everybody, if you don't mind, I'd just prefer to stand actually if I'd just deliver this. I'm happy to take questions, as is the case in anything I do at any time of the day. My mobile phone number is 0418 334 447, which every journalist in Australia has and that's why sometimes I get a bit annoyed when people don't prevail upon that opportunity to ring me at any time to get any quotes or some articulation on why some things are being done. I'd like to maybe just use the opportunity today, I haven't had as much time to prepare as Tim, not that I'm apologising, but because this morning which the time I had set aside to contemplate today, I have actually been in a 'please explain' session at the AFL, where – which is an interesting one, given the situation – I was asked to 'please explain' as a president of a football club, and I suppose as a professional broadcaster, being able to speak. Which I think is interesting. And particularly in a week where we've just really put up for the first time ever and shown 115 VFL/AFL players who laid down their law so that we have freedom of speech. I take freedom of speech very seriously, I also take my position as a journalist very seriously because everything that I've been able to achieve in my life has been directly attributed to the career I've had in journalism. So, I'm happy to just talk a little bit about what things have been going on and the likes, and take questions and fire away. Is Garry Linnell here? I saw Stephen Linnell here. If Garry was coming, so, well he was the only other person who's probably heard this speech – not this speech, this quote – in relation to what I try to do in my life, and while I'm not here to justify anything, maybe we can explain a few things. But I often use this speech when I speak to school kids and all sorts, it's on my office at work, it's in the Club Rooms at Collingwood and it's by Theodore Roosevelt and it's the 'Man in the Arena' speech, and it says ... 'It's not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs, who comes up short again and again because there is no effort without error and shortcoming. But who does actually strive to do the deeds, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst – if he fails – at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.'

That's what I like to try to do in my life. Sometimes successfully, sometimes not successfully, but I like to have a bit of a go. That quote's not mutually exclusive to journalism. When I say that's it's not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, that's not saying that all journos are critics and, as we all know, there's never been a monument built to a critic. In fact it's quite the opposite. Hard, factual, breaking stories in journalism is what this quote is all about in my mind as far anything that happens in life. Good strong breaking journalism, not weak opinion, biased columns that get written because blokes or women don't get off their arse and chase stories, or won't get off their backside and go out and check a fact. The reason why I was in before the AFL Tribunal this morning was because of a

series of sloppy articles last week, and it pained me no-end this morning to have to go into the AFL to defend not only myself and my club and my coach, because the reason why we were there was because my colleagues in the media didn't do their job.

Now I've got a grab here that runs 20 seconds, that explained what I meant in regards to umpire Martin Ellis's photo or face being up on the dart board of all Collingwood supporters. It was reported 180 degrees opposite to what I actually said and meant. I was sticking up for Martin Ellis. Now as a result of that, because it was badly reported in the first place, because it had a screaming headline... Then subsequently the opinion writers wrote their opinions - at one stage it was said that I was trying to intimidate umpires. The Sunday Herald-Sun wrote three different stories on the weekend based on it. Now this tape recording is actually from the Herald Sun reporter who interviewed me. He gave it to me because he was disappointed with the way the story was taken care of. Now, that was done on Wednesday and that the Sunday Herald Sun guy couldn't walk to the end of the corridor to ask him can I have a listen to the tape - or get on the phone and ring me and say what did you actually mean - even though I had written a substantial article in the Saturday Herald-Sun explaining exactly what I meant, gives you concern sometimes and cause for concern that the media at times in this town want to pick teams and play accordingly. Now I have no problem with senior journalists writing opinion pieces, so long as their opinion is based somewhere on fact rather than if their gut is playing up.

Now that's where the problems arise in this town I think at some times. It is very convenient for us to pick good versus evil in an issue and I think this was particularly salient to the Tim Lane/Eddie McGuire battle. Tim mentioned at the start there, that I was the one who first approached him. Absolutely. And I was the last person to speak to him and right to the very end I was asking him and trying to put as many things forward to him to make him feel happy about his position at Channel 9. I was happy to even subject myself to a grievance tribunal. Unheard of at Channel 9. Now a grievance tribunal that occurs at Channel 9 is when the ratings aren't there - as it should be.

So I've tried my hardest, and Tim's felt - agreed - and I concurred with him, and I said that that's right, if you're not one hundred percent involved, then you shouldn't be involved. That was taken as a slight at Tim. Tim was actually agreeing with me. He couldn't be a hundred per cent involved in everything, the philosophy of Channel 9 - my philosophy as the team captain if you like - so he chose to do what he did. No problems. I still respect Tim one hundred per cent. Last week when he asked me to come to the ABC - not a problem. Go on, Tim has his opinions, some would report that as being an unbiased opinion. I would argue he has an ABC opinion. Is that unbiased? No, it's an ABC opinion. I might have a Channel 9 opinion. I might have an unbiased opinion because I wear so many hats. Who's right, who's wrong. It is all a matter of opinion at the end of the day. But we just have to be a little bit careful sometimes that we set up good versus evil.

The Age haven't got the footy rights at the moment, so they write the crowds are down. The Herald-Sun have got the footy rights so they try and push it so that the Age can't get after-match interviews for a 20 minute period. The Age kick up. There was no kick up when Channels 9,10, 2 have not been able to have this facility for five years. Any time there's a feature story about - written in the newspapers - the TV reporters are made to look like dick heads. Oh, they stand there in their Versace suites with their make up and their coiffed hair. You know, and I say to journos then who turn up and say 'how come we don't get treated with respect?' Well, my first advice would be - stop turning up in your gardening clothes and we might actually start looking at you as if you're a professional. That's the first bit. That's if you do turn up. At the Collingwood Football Club we offer journalists unfettered access after the game to speak to all players. They must speak to journos. How many people have availed themselves of this in the last two years? Probably three. Then mid-week you get the journo who's finally scratched his head and realised 'oh, hang on there might be a story down here at Collingwood.' We want to speak to Mark McGough tomorrow at nine o'clock at his school yard. 'No. You've had four hours after the game to speak to him. You're not smart enough, you've missed the boat.'

There's plenty of opportunity, but what we have to do is just look forward. So, I look at it from a journo's point totally. Mick Malthouse cops some bad raps along the way, but Mick's at least open. I went in today and fought very hard and ultimately had a – not a victory as such, but I think common sense had a victory – and so too did Andrew Demetriou, because he said to me 'I find it very hard to fine Michael Malthouse today because we ask our coaches now to go a media conference - we fine them if they don't go to a media conference – and now I'm going to fine them if they say something that's interesting.' All I ask is that when the journos sit there, that they actually listen to what's being said and report the facts. Just report it, then you can have the opinions based on the facts. But we have to just make sure that this barracking that's going on in the media just pulls up a little bit. It's just going over the odds. You know, you either barrack for the ABC or you barrack for Channel 9 or you think Bruce McAveney is a good caller, or Eddie McGuire's a shit head, or Sam's a dick head. I mean, probably all those things are right in various situations.

So that's what I'm saying, as far this is concerned, we have to look as a fraternity in the media, but also do the right thing and get back to what pure journalism is about. Break stories. Ask hard questions. Be fair. Write opinions based on fact. Give somebody a bit of a chance. It may not be, because it has been reported for five years that Eddie McGuire wants to take over the whole of Melbourne and run the world and all the rest of it. That might be just a picture that has been extrapolated on because somebody did an ordinary job the first time. At least ring up and get your own opinion. Ask why situations happen. Why was the Sheik last week going to toss the coin at Collingwood, and why didn't he? There's goods reasons both ways. It wasn't, as Baummy wrote, that we were selling out the club on ANZAC day. Quite the opposite. Quite the opposite.

So they're the things that I am happy to talk about today. I'm happy to talk about what happened with Tim and all the rest of it but I have one thing that I will say and if anybody wants to listen to the twenty second grab - in fact I'll play it for you if you like. Twenty second grab that I gave to -

NM: Hang on Ed, before you play it, what were you reported as saying?

EM: I was reported as saying – and you will hear the quote, and the quote is accurate, the context is completely opposite – that as a result of Chris Tarrant being rubbed out Martin Ellis had given very bad evidence, and as a result he deserved, or should be up on the dart board of every Collingwood supporter in town. What I said was in relation to a very long press and wide-ranging press conference that Mick Malthouse and Kevin Sheedy had given. We were all arguing that the fact is that tribunals are going to be hard when there's no vision. I've been saying this for three years. They have to have patrol film like the VRC or the racing industry. Not the broadcasters, and I said that when Seven were the broadcaster as well. They're there to cover the game. You must have patrol film, so that if it does go missing the day there is a Collingwood bloke who's whacked somebody, there is no question saying McGuire's duded – you know – knocked off the tape. They have to have their own patrol film. That was the whole argument, and I said – the problem has been - well I'll play the tape in a second. But within two hours of the tribunal decision, on one of our fans' site 'From the Outer' there were 250 written things about Martin Ellis, and 2,000 views by all the mad Collingwood supporters. So Martin Ellis is on a hiding to nothing next times he turns up at a Collingwood match, they'll want to kill him. And that's what I said. He's already up on the board and all he did was the right thing. He said what he saw. He didn't do anything wrong and he is going to cop the heat for all this. All he needed was a little bit of corroborating evidence and things would have been alright. Now I'm happy to play it. It runs twenty seconds. There is a bit of a stop and start in it because being the technical genius that I am I almost wiped out my tape this morning, and would have ended up getting a fine. Subsequently to all this I was exonerated, Mick was exonerated for his comments about the tribunal. To show good faith as far as the umpires are concerned, Mick has accepted a \$5,000 suspended sentence, going forward, because Mick wants to be able to talk at the media conferences, but also we believe strongly in supporting the umpires, so we take that on board. And Mick and I have asked if we can go to the umpires and play the video of the entire press conference, which runs for fourteen and a half minutes, which puts things in context, and also to play this tape. So, here we go. The first words you

might hear would probably be Kevin Sheedy at the end of his press conference, and then you pick up the grab with me, and it was Mark Stevens by the way who provided this. And Mark, I know how he wrote the story originally and how it went into the paper was different, so I'm not having a crack at him.

...

Sky Channel and Channel 9 or Channel 7 or Channel 10 pursuing the races. They check the races, that's what they're for, it costs too much money. But if you're going to have patrol film, if there is going to be something like that, you put up your own and I don't know whether that should be a fixed cost at the stadium or the AFL should make a one-off investment and surely if we are going to develop the game and the ?? going to have \$30 million for developing the game and most of that - a lot of that is in making sure that the umpires aren't not becoming pariahs in the community. Let's take the heat out of it. Had there been a camera and the umpire's evidence was correct – and we're not doubting that he is saying what he saw – then we would have pleaded guilty and he probably would have got a week. Had the umpire seen that he actually did get it a bit wrong and the other five guys were right, then he would have withdrawn the charge. Either way it would have been a far cleaner and happier scenario all round. The tribunal wouldn't have been called into question. Those five players wouldn't have been called liars and the umpire is now, I mean – you know the Collingwood supporter – Martin Ellis, he's up on the dart board of every Collingwood supporter in the world. So, you know, what does that do? Add a bit more - all it seems is we've got the umpires agitated. We've got the players feeling really bad. Collingwood's lost a star player going into two important games and the AFL tribunal and its appeal process is under scrutiny again. Well, that's a huge win, so whoever's in charge of this, congratulations, you've had a good week.

EM: So in the end I was bagging the AFL and not the umpires. But so basically that was it. Now that ran 21 or 21 whatever those are - I don't know if that's seconds or whatever, but as a result of that we've had two hours of discussions this morning. Martin Ellis's family feels aggrieved. The journo who wrote the story, I spoke to the Umpire's Association boss on Friday, but he still came out on Saturday and had a go because he thought he had to fight the fight. I wrote a story on Saturday explaining it all. The Herald-Sun on Sunday writes three stories giving it to us. Actually it was quite interesting, they said that we shouldn't even be called into answer a question, we should just get fined. So it's interesting how free speech some times - you know we want it and we don't want it at various stages.

So we'll throw it open, but I think we have to be a little bit careful not to get hypocritical. We ask for people to be open and frank and then we bag them when they are. We ask for people to apologise – including the Prime Minister – at various stages, yet when newspapers are found and admit that they have guilt, the last thing they ever want to do is apologise in the paper. So these are all things that I've seen and felt and been involved in in the last six months or so. I still believe that the media in this town do a fantastic job and I just think that sometimes we need to have the room of mirrors and hopefully we can all go forward, but I just think that sometimes opinion and factless opinion is starting to override the good old-fashioned stories that used to be based on fact and based on going out and finding out the stories. Thanks everybody and fire away at Tim and myself.

NM: Thanks Ed, as I said we'll have a microphone moving around the room, anybody got any questions to start? Yes?

Q: I'd like to ask a question of Eddie. Can I just preface it by saying I applaud his stand on Anzac Day, a novel way to celebrate the battle of Bethsheba but the statement in favour of the Muslim communities against the crusade by the rest of the western world. But putting that aside, the thing that struck me about everything you've said today and previously is like Jeff Kennett and to a certain extent Neil, you don't actually get what Tim's talking about. Have you at any stage reflected on what Tim said, have you had any doubts whatsoever about your position and have those doubts, if you have had them, are they likely to lead to you changing any of the positions as you said in terms of the many hats you wear?

EM: Well, I examine every position. The first one I examined was the heartache and the amount of time it took before I decided to stand up for the Collingwood Football Club and have at one stage nearly walked away from my career to do so, because I believed in what Collingwood could do in the community and I believed it was bigger than some things have to be, at a time when the club was shot to pieces and no one was there. Because I looked around and I actually tried to help them by finding somebody and couldn't. And in the end I realised that if I didn't do something, the place would fall over. Now that might sound all very well and the rest of it, but that was the case. So you do it. You have a go and you cop it and you get your head kicked in and you do all those types of things. That's alright, I never complained about it, you just let it go and all the rest of it. I agree with what Tim says and does and that's fine. He can live his life the way he does. I've chosen my path, my path coincides a little bit with the man in the arena. As far as I'm concerned, I'm prepared to get my hands dirty, I'm prepared to cop them as I go, prepared to give them back as well on the way through. I try to be as fair as possible, I answer every question that's asked of me, I have nothing to hide. Never ever, as far as conflicts of interest are concerned, have I got anything to hide. Everything is on the record, everything is open and accounted. As opposed to – I might add – most of the colleagues in the media who at various stages work for - as Tim said, you know, quite right when saying that maybe Dwayne has to look at things, but so too Caro, so too Caro who works at Channel 7 and at one stage, when it was writing stories regarding the TV rights and when I put the question to her she answered honestly that yes, her family did have shares in the Seven Network and things like that. And her husband Brendan Donohue works at Seven. But I don't think that Caro does anything untoward. I think she reports it as she sees it. I have no criticism of that. This town's too small, I mean, I don't know, it's great. It's great that Tim does that and that's good and Tim has got his reputation to uphold and look after and I have no problems with that. But so too do I, and sooner or later, you've got to point at the score board and say well, all these things that this joker McGuire does, what are the impact, are they negative impacts or are there positive impacts?

NM: OK, next question. And while that's coming up, Tim could I ask you. You used the term 'centralised power', you were concerned about centralised power. Now with what Ed's said today, does that ease your concerns or aggravate them?

TL: Well, I suppose, in all honesty nothing he said has given me the impression that anything's about to suddenly change, and that's for Eddie and for Channel 9 and for the Collingwood Football Club to decide. But, in this case I suppose the view of it I have is that it's not as though the calling of the games absolutely requires a person who is the president of the club to do it. There are plenty of people available in other words to do it. And in fact Channel 9 in their earlier plans presumably, their plan marked 1, did have enough people, because presumably when I signed my contract with a particular clause in it, they had someone else in mind – Dennis Cometti I gather – to do the job. So, it wasn't as though it was necessary for the two hats to be worn. I guess there are some situations where an individual's expertise is such that that individual must take on particular roles in the interests of the broader good. I don't see this as being one of them.

NM: Do you put David Hooks into that category? He's going to be coach of the Victorian cricket side and presenting on 3AW and Foxtel. Now he won't be calling games admittedly, but he's going to a commentator and coach. Or Harry Beitzel when he was umpires coach and a 3AW caller.

EM: And Caroline Wilson who picks the All Australian team and Mike Sheahan who does the Hall of Fame and on it goes. Throw me a name and I'll give you a conflict.

NM: What about the David Hooks thing in particular?

TL: Well it'll be an interesting one and again, I suppose it's for the employers of these people to make judgments about whether they feel as though they can do two, or in David's job's situation, three jobs, adequately for them. It's for Foxtel to decide whether he will continue to tell enough of the truth when he's talking about the effort of the Victorian cricket team and its success or otherwise, when he's sitting in front

of the Foxtel cameras, and for 3AW to decide whether he'll be – and he is going to be during the summer a prominent commentator on Victorian cricket for 3AW – I suppose to decide whether it feels it will get its money's worth out of David, or whether he'll be keeping secrets. Inevitably he will have to, they must know that, presumably they decide that the clout that he brings simply by being David Hooks, but also by being the coach of the Victorian cricket team, serves their interests well.

NM: OK, other questions please?

Q: Yeah, I have to declare my prejudice here. I'm a Collingwood supporter and I also have the ABC bias, so that's going to be a bit difficult to deal with. My question to Eddie – and it is on Friday night broadcasting - put aside the ethics of the whole question and my question is why do you want to call football when Collingwood's playing? Let me just go on from there and draw on your experience on Thursday. You didn't have any broadcasting commitments and you watched Collingwood beat Essendon in fantastic style. Now surely that's the way to enjoy a Collingwood game.

EM: Absolutely. And I think people have this image out there that I run the world and certainly run Channel 9. As Tim said, things changed a number of times over the 12 month period from being granted the contract to the bounce of the first ball. Ultimately when the station was shelling out big dough and the market was tight, they decided to use their quotes 'to bring the big guns out'. Now without false modesty, it was me there on Sunday night picking up a couple of Logies and I am the bloke who's won more AFL awards for journalism than anybody else who's been on television. And I do host the two biggest shows in television, the Footy Show and Who Wants to be a Millionaire. And Friday night football is the one that they paid the money for. So at the ultimate, I think at one stage Sam wasn't going to be involved either – they actually thought well, why wouldn't we put the bloke on who puts seven points on 60 Minutes called Sam Newman. Why would you have Sam and Eddie, who have dominated television football for the last 8 years with the No 1 rating show, why would you not use them? Ultimately, I mean Tim mentioned the Herald Sun poll, I'll use another poll called the ratings and Friday night football has been a monstrous success in the first five weeks and we expect it to continue that way. Yeah, I'd rather be probably sitting in the outer barracking for the Pies as I have on alternative weeks although it does my throat no good, barracking for them the way I do at the footy, but that doesn't matter. I mean I still say that the least conflicted part of what I do is actually calling the game because when Nathan Buckley has got the ball I can only say he's got it, if Craig Bradley's got it, I've got to say he's got it. And there's never been a problem. If ever I was going to use my position for evil rather than good, it would have been over the years on the Footy Show and if you think I'm one-eyed there, give David Smorgon a call.

NM: OK, thanks for avoiding the false modesty Ed.

Q: I'm a Melbourne supporter. And I want to say that I think Eddie and Tim do a terrific job for football, both of you. But I must admit I was very disappointed last year when Eddie as the President of one club broke the story on Joseph Gutnick and Melbourne and the Schwarz incident was on the same night -

EM: No it wasn't sir. We'd better get the facts right.

Q: Oh alright, OK.

EM: Give your opinions so long as they're based on fact.

Q: But I thought the actions towards the Melbourne Football Club from the President of one club couldn't have more effectively destabilised Melbourne's season last year, if you'd tried. And I thought -

EM: Because I invented the story, you're right. It wasn't there, there was no story, I invented that whole thing didn't I? There was no destabilisation at the club. Ron Walker hadn't floated the idea which Craig Hutchison reported, if Hutchy's still here, that night on the news and we followed up on it and found out

what was really going on. And when Joseph Gutnick said to me 'grab your pen and write down these quotes' and I wrote them down verbatim with a producer standing with the microphone on speaker to make sure that I had somebody there. And when I rang Ian Johnson and said this is what's being said, this is what we're reporting and I said to him 'I'll give you 10 minutes, you call me back with your response after you call your fellow directors' and he called me back and again I put down the quotes verbatim, yeah that was terrible. That had nothing to do with me being President of the Collingwood Football Club. If anything, it drove me further to make sure that the quotes were accurate and reflective of the situation. Now I got my head kicked in for two weeks over that until some of my colleagues actually had a good look at the story and the story ended up being an understatement. I also had a series of opinions written in The Age which I subsequently sued and won based on a very very very ... liberal approach to what I was doing and opinions and painted me as a racist. So I'll ask you to think about what you've just said to me. If you really think that I as a Collingwood President tried to destabilise a football club based solely on fact of what was going on. So I'll give you time and I'll come back to you.

NM: Oi! Who's running this Ed?

EM: It's a big call. I take it personally.

NM: Tim, you're accused of holding an ABC opinion. What's an ABC opinion?

TL: That's a good question. And it's probably one that greater minds than mine turn to at times and perhaps ought to turn to in the future. I guess, as you would know only too well, in talk radio there is an exchange of an opinion, there is what Jon Faine refers to as a contest of ideas. That can involve expressing one's own opinion at times. It can also involve taking the position as devil's advocate and perhaps even being seen to be reflecting another opinion. I would think the purest of pure ABC opinions is that kind of bilateral form of opinion that could cross the whole spectrum on a particular issue depending upon the nature of a discussion that is being pursued at a particular time.

NM: OK, I think our last question probably down here on the right.

Q: Eddie, when I heard you talk about the man in the arena, I couldn't help thinking about the players themselves and their limited career and what they put in over a short career span and how hard they work and what they put their bodies through in that period. And your comments the other day about, on the Footy Show, about how you thought that players were earning too much and were being too greedy -

EM: Hang on, I didn't say either of those things but yeah, go on.

Q: Well I think, I can't remember exactly -

EM: Your opinion is not being correlated with fact. OK, keep going and I'll tell you what I said.

Q: Yeah, well perhaps you could say, the impression that I got watching the show was that you thought that the players were being too greedy and their demands were excessive and that they were putting clubs at risk. But when you have regard to what other people make out of the game including yourselves and a number of people, I'm not criticising that...

EM: Well the Presidency actually, it's an honorary position and certainly in the Collingwood -

Q: I'm not talking about the role of President -

EM: OK, well okay, well certainly in the situation of the Collingwood President, he pays for every ticket and his own lunch and his seat and his membership.

Q: Sure, I wasn't talking about the Presidency -

NM: Press Club too by the way.

Q: But I just wondered whether you thought as a broadcaster and a lot of what you do is centred around football. I'm not criticising for that, I'm just asking you whether you thought your sentiments about the man in the arena and what you said about what players earn from the game, were inconsistent and also whether any players have raised with you after your comments and I may have misinterpreted them, maybe you can let me know, but whether any players have said to you afterwards whether they said 'fair cop Eddie, we really earn what we...

...

EM:this was at a delegates' meeting they floated and discussed the idea that in going hard the two clubs might go out of business. All I've ever said, and I mean I'm the first person to say get as much money as you can, whatever the market can get, OK, I do it in my own life and I negotiate very hard and vigorously and try and do it – but not to the point where you're going to send anybody broke. So my points were very much based on football teams surviving and everybody prospering as much as possible in there. There is a fine balance. My line about managers and the Players' Association and the like and clubs putting in the welfare officers is that the salary cap is \$90 million. That's what everyone says, right? There's \$90 million there, which is a fair bit. Add \$5 more for the AFL Players' Association right? Because some of that goes into a retirement fund. In the meantime, since that CVA has come in, players are hitting you for long service leave. Now if you can tell me that 10 years ago players really thought that playing football is a full time job well, you know, good luck to you because it hasn't, never has been. Now it is, OK, so that's alright, that's the law of the land. You pay them, why are we paying them twice? If the Players' Association are looking after everybody and there's standardised contracts and all those types of things and the managers are doing all these things, putting people to bed and making sure they're there. Why are we still getting blokes punching on at nightclubs, belting each other up at pubs, why is it that I've got three blokes full time at Collingwood making sure everyone's got a job, making sure they wear the right clothes, turn up on time, do all the things that apparently all the managers are doing. Now there's a role for everybody, but in football at the moment, I reckon there wouldn't be more than 25 players who would really need to have a commercial manager. This is the other thing. People said 'oh this is going to make it harder for a young kid to come into a club'. And I said go out and get Robert Richter QC to be your advocate. Go and pay a one-off fee and get the best in the business. That's what I do, I've never had a manager in my life. When I go to negotiate, I go and pay good money and get the best bloke, get him in there and he does the job and I say thanks, go. Because he's not getting 5% of everything I do all my life. He wasn't with me when I was a 14 year old in the press box at Essendon, okay? So he doesn't deserve 5% of everything on the way. And all I was saying that don't think that the figure's \$90 million. It's not \$95, it's probably \$102 million or somewhere in amongst that, that is allocated to players. Now I don't care if they've got their personal chauffeurs, if they had their own valet. You do what you like but it's your money and that's all I'm saying is that there is a lot of money out there for the players. How they want to allocate it, up to them. If they want to have a Players' Association up on the 45th floor of the Rialto building doing whatever they do, good luck to them. If they all want to have laptops as they've all got, which is fantastic for playing Nintendo on, good luck to them. They can have them. If they want to have a manager who takes them down the street to buy their car with them so that at the end of the thing, yeah, they've been looked after but they can't even get health insurance because they've never filled out a form in their life, okay. But if they want me to have three full time people and spend enormous resources at the Collingwood Football Club to do the same thing for the third time, to make sure they're brushing their teeth, then I think we're going a little bit further. So that's all I'm saying is, there is only so much money to go around, let's make sure we're not doing the same thing three times over. And let's get, in what is a very – don't forget, when the Footy Show started, Ricky Nixon was a PE teacher at Carey and Craig Kelly was a half-back flanker at Collingwood. Right, it's a new industry and there's got to be rational around the line and people thought this was some bolt from the blue. This is what's happening in world sport. Managers are on the way out, negotiators, personal

financiers etc. are on the way in. It's a trend. And all I'm saying is have a look out. If you need a manager, if you need the Players' Association, if you need the welfare bloke at Collingwood, have them, but it's your money.

NM: OK, ladies and gentlemen, we are out of time. I'd like to thank both our guests for coming along. Ed, given what you said about dress standards, can we ask you a question though. Are you wearing (a) a Versace suit; (b) an op-shop suit; (c) gardening clothes?

EM: Well, depends what sort of garden you've got I suppose.

NM: And you don't get a million dollars for the answer.

EM: No, not at all! It is actually a Versace suit, there you go.

NM: Tim? Versace?

TL: Australian made Neil.

NM: Ladies and gentlemen, please thank Tim Lane and Eddie McGuire. Now we do have a tradition of gifts here. For example, we gave Sam Newman a signed photograph of himself which is still on his bedroom wall. For Tim Lane we have a photograph of Tim in Carlton guernsey pursued by Ed McGuire holding the ball in one hand. Don't know who that could be, Tim.

TL: Thank you.

NM: And for Eddie we have a photograph of himself in the Prime Ministerial chair, no no, in a Collingwood guernsey tackled by Tim Lane. Gentlemen, thank you very much. ...It is Nathan Buckley's body... Ladies and gentlemen, that's it for today. Thank you very much for your attendance and again our guests, thank you for coming.