

Canberra and Australia win — but women's sport and health fans lose

By *Lachlan Barker*

23 December 2014



It was a win for Canberra United in the W-League, but a loss for televised women's sport and while Australia wrapped up the men's cricket test series against India in Brisbane, the alcohol and fast food industry kept its grip over the cricket market, reports [Lachlan Barker](#).

IT WAS A GREAT GRAND FINAL between [Canberra United](#) and [Perth Glory](#), with all the elements that make a game great. There was drama, there was action, the underdogs ended up and all of it great viewing, but of course overarching it all was the sad demise of women's soccer as a televised sport in Australia — at least for the foreseeable future.

The Abbott Government's ideological attacks on the ABC mean that the national broadcaster no longer has the wherewithal to cover this sport, which I find irremediably sad. So it's *sayonara* to the women's soccer on TV and I am sorry to see it go.

The match itself was tight to begin with, like all grand finals, with expansive play rare as the players involved got over their pre-match butterflies. The NSW side opened the scoring in the [20th minute](#) through American import [Stephanie Ochs](#) (pronounced 'Oaks'). Ochs weaved her way through and threaded a curling shot into the bottom right hand corner of the Perth Glory net.

This goal seemed to unsettle the Western Australians and they found it hard to find a rhythm from then on, showing more scratch than bite. However that all changed in the 63rd minute when Perth's [Collette McCallum](#) placed a precision free kick into the far corner of the Canberra goal, with Canberra keeper [Chantel Jones](#) wafting at the air of the ball's passage.

Scores were now 1-1 and it was game on.

This did give the Perth team heart and they returned to the contest with a vengeance. They even had the chance to take the lead in the 74th minute. Perth striker [Marianna Tabain](#) was shoved in the box, and the referee pointed to the spot. W-League 2014 [Golden Boot](#), [Kate Gill](#) stepped up, but placed, rather than slammed a gently travelling ball into the arms of Jones, and the Canberra team and their green-liveried fans breathed a hearty sigh of relief.

This sigh of relief turned to cheers of joy just seconds later when the Green machine took the lead. Jones cleared the ball through to

defender [Lori Lindsey](#), Lindsey placed an extraordinarily precise chip into the path of striker [Ashleigh Sykes](#) and Sykes then battled the defence all the way to box, won herself a decisive amount of space, slotting the ball with precision past the advancing Perth keeper.

This was really the goal that won it for Canberra and, at 2-1, they were never headed. Sykes then added a third for Canberra just three minutes later and it was all over.

Perth tried hard but couldn't find the sweet spot, and with an increasing number of players going forward, they began to open up at the back. This led to giving away a penalty in the dying seconds of extra time. This was missed by Canberra, but it didn't matter, Canberra had won the 2014 Major Premiership [3-1](#).

I did contact the major sponsor of the Canberra women's team, the [University of Canberra](#), and asked of their reaction to the loss of coverage of women's soccer in the new year. They responded as so: *'The University of Canberra is committed to supporting women's sport and we are proud to partner with W-League team Canberra United.*

We have a long relationship with Canberra United and recently increased our support for the elite sporting team from back of shorts sponsor to front of shirt sponsor for the next two seasons.

The University of Canberra also counts Canberra United players and staff among our current students and alumni.

We commiserate with the ABC about the government funding cuts which gave rise to the need to cancel coverage of the W-League in 2015. Education, the ABC and SBS had all been led to believe there would be no such cuts, and this will be a setback to women's

sport.

Roger that U of C. It is a genuine shame, and one can only hope that reason returns to the throne – and women's soccer to our screens – as soon as possible.

One sport that doesn't have to ever, ever worry about not being on our screens is the cricket. Here are the [ratings figures](#) for the last day, Saturday, of the recent Brisbane test, won by Australia:

1. SECOND TEST - AUS V INDIA S3 [Session 3] 1,193,000
2. SECOND TEST - AUS V INDIA S2 [Session 2] 1,144,000
3. NINE NEWS 977,000
4. CAROLS IN THE DOMAIN 2014 951,000
5. SECOND TEST - AUS V INDIA S1 [Session 1] 872,000

As you can see the cricket filled the three of the top five spots that day. Thus we in our homes were as usual deluged with ads for an unholy alliance of unhealthy products — mainly takeaway food, gambling and alcohol. I was, as usual, somewhat cocooned with my radio tuned to the ABC radio commentary and so was spared the audio of the ads. The visual was again, however, offensive.

So I continued my pestering of the powers that be about this issue.

How India's Australian tour is descending into chaos
[#AUSvIND](http://t.co/U3MWBblXn4)
pic.twitter.com/pxmX2Bxszn

— Herald Sun (@theheraldsun)
[December 22, 2014](#)

I contacted [Lachlan Barker](#) at Communications, [Malcolm Turnbull](#), asking: cyclonecharlie88.blogspot.com

[.au](#). You can follow him on

Are we [Twitter @cyclonehugie](#)
loophole that allows alcohol
advertising during children's viewing
times, if part of a live sport
broadcast?

Did you know? The
Also, with the [first Australian with](#)
obesity in Australia [than in the UK](#) and
Briefing shows [was a #ThingsHave](#)
gotten: [The Children #OKESB](#)
[Bomb](#), is there [any more ban](#)
KFC, and other [fast food on](#)
advertising during the cricket?

— NITV (@NITV)

The response from [December 17, 2014](#)
department shows that we may finally
be moving on this issue. The response
says:

*The placement and amount of alcohol
and junk food advertising on
television are governed by complex
co-regulatory arrangements.*

*Specific rules governing advertising
on commercial television are set out
in the Commercial Television Industry
Code of Practice, which is due to be
reviewed in 2015.*

*Clauses 6.7 and 6.23 relates to
commercials which advertise alcohol
drinks or are directed to children
respectively.*

*The review will be undertaken by the
commercial television broadcast
sector, in close consultation with the
Australian Communications and
Media Authority (ACMA) and include
a public consultation process.*

Now this may seem like the typical
ministerial 'don't hold your breath'
response but, to be fair to Malcolm
Turnbull, this is the most positive
response I have ever had on the topic.

[Channel Nine](#), the broadcaster of the
cricket, for instance, have never
responded beyond saying 'no
comment at this time'. (Or any
subsequent time, now that I think
about it).

So at least Malcolm Turnbull is aware
of the problem, and we will wait upon
the review with interest.

I have no doubt that the food, alcohol
and gambling lobbies will fight tooth
and nail to keep the loopholes that
allow this destructive advertising to
continue, but we can only hope that
reason returns to her throne, and ads
for gambling, alcohol and fatty foods
are removed from our screens during
children's viewing times.

Or, even better than that, at any other
time as well.

India vs Australia: Verbal
exchanges took India off their
game at Gabba, says Mitchell
Johnson
<http://t.co/fvxMdrCLRa>

— The Indian Express
(@IndianExpress) [December](#)
[23, 2014](#)