

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

SOCCER

A report from the Senate Environment, Recreation, Communications
and the Arts References Committee

First Report
June 1995

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Cover Photos of young soccer players provided by the Australian Soccer Federation.

Left Inset: Two young soccer players, photographer unknown

Centre Inset: Group of young soccer players, photographer unknown

Right Inset: One young soccer player, photograph by Mr Ron Hughes

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SOCCKER INQUIRY

Terms of Reference

On the 8 December 1994 and 2 February 1995 the Senate resolved that the Senate Environment, Recreation, Communications and the Arts References Committee-

inquire into the role of coaches, players, agents, clubs, officials and others in the transfer of Australian sportspeople and into any other matters relating to corruption, conflicts of interest, tax evasion, and improper financial transactions with particular reference to the sport of soccer; and review the report by the Hon. D. G. Stewart to the Australian Soccer Federation; and that the Committee report to the Senate on this matter by 31 August 1995.

The Committee's reporting date was extended to 29 June 1995 by resolution of the Senate on 11 May 1995 and to 31 August 1995 by resolution of the Senate on 22 June 1995.

SUMMARY

The Committee's inquiry:-

- confirmed the media reports of mid-1994 that had generated public concerns leading to the inquiry, that there were substantial differences (totalling more than \$1 million in the relatively few transfers the Committee examined) between prices paid by overseas clubs and the money received by Australian clubs for the transfer of Australian players to Europe;
- confirmed that large amounts of cash, or cash equivalents, involved in some of these transactions made it impossible to trace the ultimate beneficiaries of these vast differences;
- confirmed that some Australian club officials not only were aware of these differences but had provided receipts in their club's name for monies their club had not received;
- confirmed that there was no evidence that any of the missing money ended up with the National or Assistant National Coach or any Australian Soccer Federation (ASF) official or National Soccer League (NSL) club official;
- found no additional credible evidence that would sustain the majority of the Hon D G Stewart's recommended action against various Australian soccer coaches and officials;
- concluded that the Committee's inquiry has served the best interests both of soccer football, by providing an opportunity to clear the air of all the allegations, rumours and speculation affecting the sport over a considerable period, as well as by allowing those alleged to have been guilty of misbehaviour the opportunity to respond ;
- was hampered, but not damaged, by the failure of Government members of the Committee to participate fully in its hearings and by their public criticism of the Committee's activities ; and
- has already led to significant improvements in the administration of soccer football in Australia, and the Committee believes that the implementation of its recommendations would further assist this process.