

SOME FANS TO PAY EVEN MORE AS VARIABLE PRICING STAYS

AFL FANS ASSOCIATION (AFLFA): “GIVING FOOTY FANS A VOICE”

Variable pricing may have been overhauled, but some fans will pay even more under a system that gives clubs the power to set ticket prices for their home games, the AFL Fans Association says. Fans will pay up to \$95 for a seat this year and the dearest MCG and Etihad seats have gone up again.

AFLFA president Gerry Eeman says some clubs have lifted some ticket prices despite big rises last year. “This is disappointing given we were told 2015 is ‘The Year of the Fan’,” he says. “This is a really worrying move. It’s a slippery slope once you let clubs price games. The risk is that every year clubs will look to raise their ticket prices for popular games to boost club revenue. Fans don’t want to be punished for their teams doing well and they don’t want to be punished for barracking for popular clubs. The new variable pricing system allows this to happen. Where will ticket prices be in five years?”

Last year the most expensive seats at the MCG cost \$60 and at Etihad Stadium \$62. This year some home clubs will charge up to \$65 at those grounds. “While the number of seats in those categories is not high, it prices average fans out of the best seats and there is a real risk number of seats allocated to these expensive categories will expand each year,” Gerry says.

“The new system is also very confusing, with multiple seating categories and price rates. If clubs want fans to attend, they must make it simple and affordable and not try to cash in when they think a match might be high demand.” A brief analysis of 2015 adult ticket prices by the AFLFA shows:

- Some MCG games have up to 9 price categories (eg all Richmond + some Hawthorn home games).
- The most expensive Port Adelaide home game tickets at Adelaide Oval are a whopping \$95.
- Tickets for Adelaide’s Round 1 game against North Melbourne at the Adelaide Oval will cost up to \$90 and general admission \$30.
- Fans will pay up to \$80 at ANZ Stadium (Sydney v Essendon Rd 1).
- Tickets to the Fremantle-Port Adelaide Round 1 game at Domain Stadium will cost up to \$84.
- At some low-demand MCG games, fans will pay up to \$45 to sit at the front of level 4 (Richmond v Bulldogs, Rd 2 / Richmond v Melbourne, Rd 4).
- Fans who want to secure general admission at many games must check with the home team in advance to find out where that will be, as the area will vary.

On the plus side, some clubs will offer cheaper seats at some games and kids will be admitted free at the MCG and Etihad Stadium on Sundays (not at other grounds). Etihad Stadium online transaction fees are down from \$7 to \$2.50 and Richmond has offered those who pre-book level 1 seats for its home games against the Bulldogs and Melbourne a 30 per cent discount until April 7.

However AFLFA feedback indicates that fans are wary of being placated at big games with “cheap seats” high up in the stands. “All MCG and Etihad Stadium games, other than Anzac Day, must retain a \$25 general admission ticket option,” Gerry says. “But if these seats are way up in the stands whilst swathes of the best seats remain empty, then that this is a deeply disappointing outcome. We witnessed exactly that scenario at too many games last year.”

Fans already copped big ticket price increases last year. Adult general admission rose by 25 per cent in 2014 to \$25, concession by 40 per cent to \$17 and kids tickets doubled to \$5. Many reserved seat categories also rose in price.

The AFLFA says the AFL and clubs must explain the new system and point out which prices have increased or decreased since last year. “Transparency is very important. What I’d like to hear is the AFL and clubs explain why this is good for fans, with no spin attached,” Gerry says. “There may be

some really good deals, but they are not easy to find. Also, things often change if a team starts losing and fans are less inclined to pay a premium. In those cases, charging a premium could backfire.”

AFLFA membership is free and fans are encouraged to join at www.aflfans.org.au (new site coming soon).

For more information contact: AFLFA president Gerry Eeman on 0403 938 484 or Treasurer Ron Issko on 0400 709 118. Email: media@aflfans.org.au or president@aflfans.org.au

ENDS

Pricing categories, Richmond v Western Bulldogs, Round 2, 2015

 Level 2 Wing	\$65
 Level 2 Goal	\$65
 Level 1 Wing	\$50
 Level 1 Goal	\$50
 Level 2A Wing	\$45
 Level 2A Goal	\$45
 Level 4 Wing Front	\$45
 Level 4	\$35
General Admission	\$25

Source: www.afl.com.au