

## **Did taxpayers pay \$460,000 to hide the truth?**

The Australian Grand Prix Corporation paid \$101,590 for lawyers at VCAT to keep the grand prix's highly dubious crowd count methodology a state secret. This is on top of the in-house lawyers' annual salary of \$359,129.59.

All they had to do was switch on the free ticket scanners supplied by the ticketing agency and connect to a computer so why the secrecy, why the lawyers and why the cost?

The AGPC has two problems with this stonewalling: they convinced the judges at VCAT it is "cost prohibitive" to count attendees but FOIs revealed they have no costings for any counting devices.

The AFL, Tennis Australia, the VRC and the rest of the AGPC's competitors all use bar code scanners to count their crowds. The AGPC, under oath said they do not actually know how many people are in their venue yet they make claims such as "more than 300,000 attendees from all over the world" and it is "Australia's largest single day sporting event".

They say they cannot disclose their estimation methodology because their competitors could "use" it. This really means the AGPC cannot substantiate its claims but worse, **this is an abrogation of responsibility to protect its patrons in any civil emergency at the venue.**

This corporation has a lot of trouble with the facts. For example:

- The AGPC published attendance numbers as 'fact' for 10 years until the Ombudsman's investigation found them to be 'estimated'.
- Audited ticket sales, divided by ticket prices and seats indicates fewer than 70,000 tickets are sold and seats are mostly empty for the first two days.
- They admit under oath that free tickets are printed and counted as attending, also around 15,000 'credentialed staff' are counted every day as 'attendees'. Other sports don't count staff.
- With the majority of patrons in grandstands that contain only 25,415 seats, how can they claim a crowd of 100,000 on grand prix day as the viewing mounds and trackside viewing areas can only fit another 20 to 25 thousand?

The Australian Grand Prix Corporation has hired lawyers to argue that the public cannot have access to the facts because it would cause harm to the corporation. Save Albert Park's president, Peter Goad says, "Because Victorians have sunk more than one billion dollars into the Formula One grand prix and allowed a foreign company to exploit a public park for their profit, we are entitled to know the truth."

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