

Swans and Lions the losers as AFL cuts

AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL
Jessica Halloran and AAP

Sydney will lose about \$90,000 of their salary cap in 2007 after the AFL announced changes to concessions for the Swans and Brisbane yesterday. The league also unveiled its revamped tribunal system.

Brisbane and Sydney will lose the location allowance they receive under the salary cap after 2006. But the Swans will retain a

cost-of-living allowance – likely to be 7 per cent – to help overcome Sydney's higher living costs.

Swans chief executive Myles Baron-Hay was pleased that Sydney would retain that allowance.

"It's very important and encouraging that not only is the AFL supportive of our cost-of-living allowance but so are the other AFL clubs," Baron-Hay said.

"In regards to the location allowance, we understand the AFL's decision and anticipated it."

The location allowance gave the Swans an extra \$300,000 a year to spend, but after a review in 2006 of the cost-of-living allowance, Sydney are expected to have only \$90,000 less to pay players.

Brisbane, however, were less impressed. Lions chairman Graeme Downie said the loss of the location allowance would disadvantage both clubs. "Because of the large number of players from outside Queens-

land, we are two to three times more likely to lose players to the 'go-home' factor than most of the Victorian clubs," he said.

Clubs were, however, supportive of the tribunal changes. The new system is similar to that of the NRL, where certain offences will receive set penalties according to a points system. It is aimed at reducing the number of tribunal hearings.

The league will introduce a three-man match review panel to decide which cases need to be

Kiwis turn to spin for answers

CRICKET
Alex Brown and Chloe Saltau

New Zealand's think tank surveyed the Adelaide Oval wicket and announced the likelihood of playing two spinners. Meanwhile, Australia's most miserly and effective tweaker – statistically, at least – believes he is unlikely to bowl a ball this Test, despite the outstanding figures he returned the last time Ricky Ponting called on his services.

Michael Clarke, with a bowling average of 2.16 and strike rate of 7.3 from five Tests, is certain Adelaide local Darren Lehmann will be Australia's top part-time spinner when the second Test begins tomorrow.

Clarke's opinion came as New Zealand indicated they were likely to select spinners Daniel Vettori and Paul Wiseman, hopeful the move is more successful than the seam-bowler strategy in Brisbane.

Since claiming 6-9 on a deteriorating Mumbai pitch earlier this month, Clarke has bowled just once – for Western Suburbs in a grade match against Sutherland and he was wicketless.

Not that the 23-year-old is relying on bowling to hold his place in the Australian XI. Fresh

If the suit fits ...

A figure-hugging, full-length body suit was couriered across the Tasman last night for Australian batsmen Darren Lehmann to step into for his 100-metre race against Kiwi opener Mark Richardson.

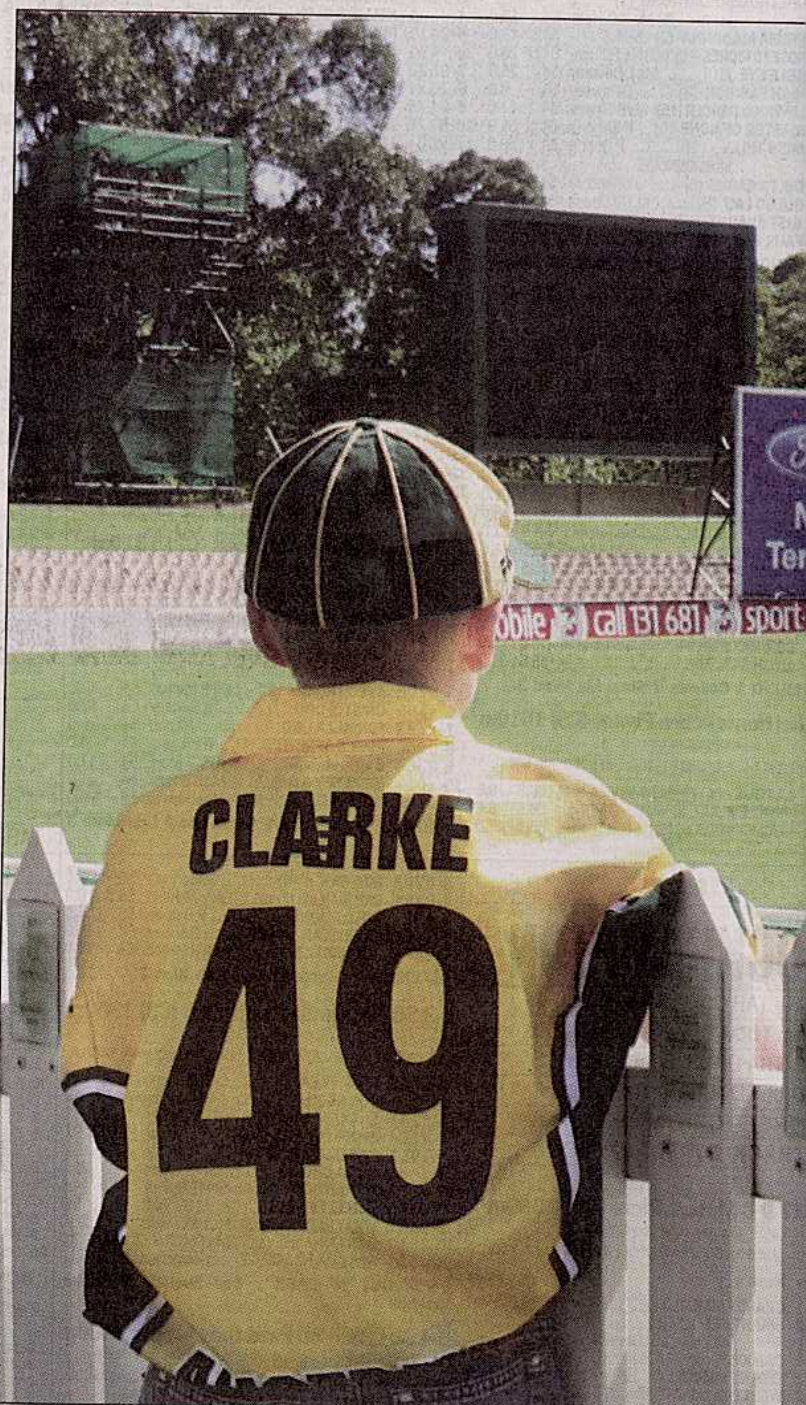
New Zealand supporter group the Beige Brigade had the outfit made this week in time for the sprint between two of the world's least athletic cricketers at the end of the Adelaide Test. The suit is bright yellow with thick green strips down the side and a green hood.

"We look forward to seeing Darren Lehmann looking like a weightlifter in it," the founders of the brigade wrote in an email.

Richardson will race in a brown and beige suit.
 AAP

of 43.98 remains to be seen.

"I'd be surprised if it wasn't looked into, because of the state of the wicket. Now it looks like a good wicket, so in two days' time it will probably be even better," Vettori said. "That normally means there's going to be a lot of overs for the spinners



Idolised: a young Michael Clarke fan watches the Australian squad train yesterday in Ad

Hedding says the ...