

**PUBLIC STATEMENT OF THE PARTIES PURSUANT TO
THE PEEK RULE (RULE 35) OF THE AFL RULES**

An incident occurred at a SANFL match on July 17, 2021, at Prospect Oval between the Adelaide Football Club and the North Adelaide Football Club. Taylor Walker of the Adelaide Crows, who was not playing in the match, made a racist comment regarding North Adelaide player, Robbie Young, to an Adelaide Crows teammate who was playing.

An Adelaide Crows official overheard the comment and reported the incident to the club who reported it to the AFL. The incident was then investigated by the AFL Integrity Unit under the Peek Rule (Rule 35 of the AFL Rules). This is a confidential process until completed.

A complaint was laid under the AFL Rules which alleged that Taylor Walker had engaged in prohibited conduct.

Under the Peek Rule, which relates to discrimination and racial and religious vilification, any such complaint is to be conciliated.

On 5 August 2021 that conciliation was held in Adelaide.

The conciliation involved Taylor Walker, Robbie Young, the Adelaide Crows official and the AFL.

The conciliation was successful. Rule 35.7 provides:

Where a complaint is resolved by conciliation, the only public statement that shall be made concerning the complaint and its resolution shall be that agreed upon by the parties.

This is that statement.

During the conciliation, Taylor Walker apologised to Robbie Young and the official for his conduct. Both accepted the apology. Taylor Walker expressed his sincere remorse for his comments and expressed his commitment to being an active participant in addressing racism within the game, and society. Taylor Walker has made the following comments:

“There is no excuse or justification for the words I said. They are unacceptable and I take full accountability for that. I am deeply ashamed. I did not intend to cause harm, but I know and understand that I have caused deep hurt to the official who reported the matter and to Robbie Young, to both of their families and to the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. I apologise to all of them and to the Adelaide and North Adelaide Football Clubs.

I ask that you respect the wish of the official who reported this matter not to be identified.

Today’s process has led to a deeper understanding of the hurt that I have caused, and I am embarrassed, ashamed and remorseful.

The official who reported this showed courage and leadership in calling out what I said, and I am determined to do what I can to emulate his actions.

I want to be an active participant in addressing racism in our game and the wider community. This starts by educating myself so I can influence others and make a positive difference moving forward.

I know I need to back up my apology with action, and this is my commitment.”

AFL Executive General Manager Inclusion and Social Policy Tanya Hosch, who attended the conciliation on behalf of the AFL, thanked all parties for their cooperation throughout the conciliation process and reinforced that racism, regardless of where it occurs has no place in football or the community. Ms Hosch additionally made the following comments:

“Racist actions and behaviours are inexcusable.

“The AFL strongly condemns the racial vilification of our football community including our players, staff, and their families, across all levels of our game.

“I would like to acknowledge everyone involved in today’s conciliation process, especially the Adelaide official and Mr Young for calling out the behaviour and/or taking a stand against racism by their involvement in this process.

“I have no doubt Mr Walker is remorseful, understands that his comments can trigger trauma and seriously impact the mental health of the individuals, families and communities involved and he has accepted his sanctions.”

Through the conciliation, the parties have agreed the complaint can be resolved in the following manner:

1. Taylor Walker will not play in the Adelaide Crows’ remaining 3 matches of the 2021 AFL Season and will not play in the first 3 games of the 2022 AFL Season;
2. Taylor Walker will make a donation in the sum of \$20,000 to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program in South Australia (as approved by the AFL acting reasonably and within five (5) days of details being provided to AFL by Taylor Walker, failing which it will be deemed to be approved);
3. Taylor Walker will undertake an education program. The education program requires AFL approval, acting reasonably, within 5 days of details being provided to AFL by Taylor Walker, failing which it will be deemed to be approved if it comprises:
 - a. Engagement and volunteering time in mentoring in appropriate community programs to learn through direct experience as directed by Indigenous programs Manager of the Adelaide Football Club;
 - b. Facilitated by the Indigenous Programs Manager, AFC engage with interpersonal community engagement to listen to and understand Aboriginal stories, truths and perspectives;

- c. Supported self-reflection to learn from mistakes and understand these mistakes;
and
 - d. Provision of educational materials readily available that explain the history, stories and experiences of First Australians and other people of colour;
4. By 23 August 2021, Taylor Walker will privately address players and staff of the Adelaide Football Club to apologise in relation to his prohibited conduct; and
 5. By 23 August 2021, Taylor Walker will privately address players of the North Adelaide Football Club to apologise in relation to his prohibited conduct.