

# THE PROFESSIONAL CRICKETERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA<sup>1</sup>

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‘There are so few problems about being a cricketer in Australia’,  
[Rod Marsh, *You’ll Keep*, (Richmond: Hutchinson, 1975), p. 175.]

‘The Board has a responsibility to see that the leading Australian cricketers are satisfactorily rewarded . . . I think it’s time that the Board carefully considered the principle of binding the leading Australian players to full-time contracts in much the same way as other sportsmen, businessmen and celebrities are contracted’  
[Ian Chappell, *Chappelli: Ian Chappell’s Life Story*, (Richmond: Hutchinson, 1976), pp. 194.195.]

The 1970s was a trying if not traumatic decade for Australian cricket; a decade which wrought fundamental changes to its structure, organisation and operation. Cricket was transformed from a semi-amateur sport where Test and leading players were paid relatively small amounts of money, to a fully-fledged professional operation with leading players employed on well remunerated contracts. The decade was punctuated by a series of clashes between players and administrators. Players asserted their rights regarding remuneration, playing conditions and for their views to be taken account of with respect to the organisation and administration of cricket. They also hoped to form a players’ association to counter the superior power of the cricket establishment. With the advent of World Series Cricket under the control of media baron Kerry Packer in 1977 the players brought into being The Professional Cricketers Association of Australia to defend and advance

their rights and interests. The Cricketers Association had a relatively short life becoming moribund in 1982, before being wound up in 1988.

In the 1970s the players of a number of Australian sports established, or sought to establish, players' associations. At the end of 1973 the Victorian Football League Players' Association was formed.<sup>2</sup> It has since changed its name to the Australian Football League Players' Association. In 1974 there was an unsuccessful attempt to establish a players' association in the South Australian National Football League. A players' association operated in the Western Australian Football League between 1979 and 1986.<sup>3</sup> And the Association of Rugby League Professionals was established in 1979 by players in the New South Wales Rugby League.

Little attention has been devoted to the Professional Cricketers Association of Australia. Most of the literature in this period has concentrated on World Series Cricket, and the effects it has had on cricket more generally.<sup>4</sup> This article is devoted to the Professional Cricketers Association of Australia; it examines the context or factors which led to its formation, and provides an account of its activities and functions. The article is organised into four sections. The first section provides information concerning the earnings of cricketers in the period 1969/70 to 1977/78. Section two examines player-administrator relations in the same period. The workings, activities and functions of the Professional Cricketers Association of Australia are examined in section three. The fourth section provides a summary and conclusion drawing together the major themes of the article.

### **The Earnings of Cricketers 1969/70 to 1977/78**

Other than for a small group of elite players cricket is essentially an amateur sport. Teams are organised into various (usually regional) Associations where players pool resources and organise functions to raise the necessary funds to pay for the equipment and other associated

costs involved with running a cricket club. Within the capital cities of each state there is a premier competition where Grade or District cricket is played. Some members of the first eleven may receive relatively small amounts of money from playing cricket.<sup>5</sup>

In saying this, however, a coach, or captain-coach, could receive a modest level of income for the time devoted to coaching and co-ordinating the activities of players. In exceptional cases an overseas player could earn a substantial amount of money from spending a season with a District club. In the 1975/76 season the Waverley Club in the Sydney metropolitan competition contracted England captain Tony Greig to play for an estimated fee of \$20,000.<sup>6</sup> It appears, however, that including fees for appearance, endorsements and other activities Greig may have received more than \$60,000 during his Australian sojourn in 1975/76. In the following season Waverley employed the services of English opening batsman Geoff Boycott.<sup>7</sup>

The best District players, together with outstanding players from country areas, are chosen to represent their respective states in the Sheffield Shield and in matches against visiting overseas teams. In the early 1970s a regular Shield player (who was not chosen to play Test cricket) would have earned approximately a "couple of hundred dollars" during a season. With the advent of sponsorship, payments to Shield players were gradually increased. At the beginning of the 1975/76 season Victoria increased payments from \$50 to \$60 a game; in addition to making available incentive payments. Western Australia increased payments from \$50 to \$65 a game for the 1975/76 season.<sup>8</sup> In addition, Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia introduced provident fund payments for players.<sup>9</sup> By the 1976/77 season regular playing Shield players could reasonably expect to earn between \$1,000 and \$2,500, depending on individual and team performance.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to this, several States (or rather their sponsors) attracted star players from other states or overseas to play with their team. Greg Chappell, for example, moved from South Australia to

Queensland at the beginning of the 1973/74 season. In February 1977, prior to the announcement of the formation of World Series Cricket, he received an offer, apparently worth \$40,000 over five years, plus an annual salary of \$25,000, from a group of Adelaide businessmen to return to South Australia.<sup>11</sup> In January 1976 Brisbane Radio Station 4IP signed New South Wales speedster Jeff Thomson to a ten year contract worth \$633,000, to work for their station and to play cricket for Queensland.<sup>12</sup> At the beginning of the 1976/77 season a sponsor was prepared to pay West Indian fast bowler Andy Roberts \$10,000 to play for New South Wales.<sup>13</sup>

It is from the ranks of those who play Sheffield Shield cricket that players are chosen to represent Australia in home Tests against other nations, or to tour overseas. Table One provides information on the payments Australian players received on selected tours in the period 1969/70 to 1977.<sup>14</sup>

**Table One**

**Payments to Australian Cricketers on Selected Tours 1969/70 to 1977**

Series	Countries	Payment	Payment per Week
1969/70	India & South Africa (23 weeks)	\$2,820	\$123
1972	England (17 weeks)	\$2,300	\$135
1975	England (15 weeks)	\$2,734	\$182
1977	New Zealand (5 weeks)	\$2,430	\$486
1977	England (19 weeks)	\$10,890	\$573

[Source: *Cricketer*, October 1975, pp. 14-16; Press Release, Mr Robert Parish, Chairman of Australian Cricket Board, 7 September 1977, reproduced in *Cricket Scene*, pp. 30-32; and the data for the 1972 tour is based on information supplied to the author by Ian Chappell.]

In considering the information contained in Table One it should also be noted that between 1969 and 1977 the Consumer Price Index more than doubled, increasing by 115 per cent.<sup>15</sup> It is also interesting to compare Table One with Table Two, which provides information on average weekly earnings for adult males employed in the private sector between October 1969 and October 1978. In this period average adult male weekly earnings increased from \$74 to \$218.30. The 1969/70 tourists' weekly income of \$123 was 66 per cent higher than the average weekly earnings of adult males in October 1969. For the 1972 tourists the margin was 40 per cent; while the 1975 tourists received a margin of 13 per cent. By 1977, however, the situation had changed dramatically with the 1977 tourists weekly income being 183 per cent higher than adult male average weekly earnings in October 1977.

**Table Two**

**Average Weekly Earnings: Adult Males in Private Sector, 1969 to 1978**

	Year	Earnings (\$)
October	1969	74.00
	1970	80.00
	1971	89.60
	1972	96.20
	1973	113.10
	1974	145.50
	1975	161.60
	1976	183.30
	1977	202.50
	1978	218.30

[Source: Reserve Bank of Australia, Occasional Paper No. 8A, Australian Economic Statistics 1949-50 to 1984-85: 1 Tables, November 1985.]

Information concerning payments to Test players for selected home series during the period 1970/71 to 1977/78 is presented in Table Three. The data presented above should be regarded as broadly indicative of the payments that players received. The major problem here concerns the accuracy of the author's calculations concerning the bonuses players were allocated from funds made available by sponsors. Also no attempt has been made to incorporate 'Man of the Match' or 'Man of the Series' awards in this data.

**Table Three**

**Payments to Australian Cricketers for Selected Home Series 1970/71 to 1977/78**

Series	Touring Team	Payment Details	Payment per Test
1970/71	England (7 Tests)	Fee \$180	\$180
1974/75	England (6 Tests)	Fee \$200, ACB Bonus \$200, Sponsor Bonus \$157	\$557
1975/76	West Indies (6 Tests)	Fee \$400, ACB Bonus \$400, Sponsor Bonus \$395	\$1,195
1976/77	Pakistan (3 Tests)	Fee \$400, ACB Bonus \$250, Sponsor Bonus \$333	\$983
1977	England (Centenary Test)	Fee \$400, ACB Bonus \$250, Sponsor Bonus \$1,352	\$2,002
1977/78	India (5 Tests)	Fee \$800, Sponsor Bonus \$1,212	\$2,012

[Source: *Cricketer*, October 1975, pp. 15-16; Press Release, Mr Robert Parish, Chairman of Australian Cricket Board, 7 September 1977, reproduced in *Cricketer Scene*, pp. 30-32; *Cricketer Annual*; and *Cricketer Close-Up* (1978).]

Table Three shows that in the 1970/71 series against England players received \$180 a Test. By the 1974/75 series, against England, this (initial) fee had increased to \$200. Following a successful series and agitation from players (see below) the Australian Cricket Board paid a \$200 bonus per player per Test, as well as a sponsors' bonus. For Tests against the West Indies in 1975/76, Pakistan in 1976/77 and the 1977 Centenary Test against England players received an initial fee of \$400, plus additional bonuses from the Australian Cricket Board and sponsors. For the 1977/78 series against India the basic fee was increased to \$800, with an additional \$1,212 being made available from sponsors. In addition to these payments, the Board also introduced a provident fund scheme for Test players in 1974/75. When the fund was initially established players were credited with \$100 a Test for the first twenty Tests, and \$200 per Test thereafter.<sup>16</sup> Monies so accrued would be paid to players, at the discretion of the Board, two years after their retirement from first class cricket.<sup>17</sup> State associations which had provident funds also credited smaller amounts to players chosen from their state to represent Australia in Test matches.

By totaling the income that players received from the Australian Cricket Board, and sponsors, during a series, and comparing it with gate receipts and sponsorship income it is possible to determine an approximate share of Australian players' income in the period 1970/71 to 1977/78. Such data is presented in Table Four. Total player income assumes that the twelfth man received the same pay as other players, and that players were paid for the abandoned Melbourne Test in the 1970/71 series. No account is taken of the travel and accommodation costs of the Australian team, or expenses they received, provident fund payments, or any 'Man of . . . ' awards. The data concerning gate receipts is based on Richard Cashman's research,<sup>17</sup> and sponsorship income is based on funds placed in a pool to be distributed to teams depending on their success on the cricket field. The data contained in Table Four understates the income that the Australian Cricket Board derived from

staging the respective series. It does not include income from other sponsors, concessions, broadcasting and other rights, nor income obtained by the various state associations from annual membership subscriptions.

**Table Four**

**Total Player Income, Gate Receipts - and Sponsorship, and Players' Share of Income for Selected Home Series in Australia 1970/71 to 1977/78**

Series	Total Player Income	Gate Receipts	Gate Receipts Plus Sponsors	Players Share Of Gate Receipts %	Players Share Of Gate Receipts and Sponsorship %
1970/71	\$15,120	\$511,694		2.95	-
England					
1974/75	\$40,104	\$873,442	\$891,442	4.59	4.50
England					
1975/76	\$86,040	\$1,100,685	\$1,150,685	7.82	7.48
W. Indies					
1976/77	\$35,388	\$445,254	\$469,254	7.95	7.54
Pakistan					
1977	\$24,024	\$418,019	\$433,019	5.75	5.55
England					
1977/78	\$120,720	\$393,948	\$493,948	30.64	4.44

India [Source: Richard Cashman, *Australian Cricket Crowds: The Attendance Cycle Daily Figures, 1877-1984*, Historical Statistics Monograph No. 5, History Project Incorporated, University of New South Wales, Kensington; *Cricketer*, October 1975, pp. 14-16; Press Release, Mr Robert Parish, Chairman of Australian Cricket Board, 7 September 1977, reproduced in *Cricket Scene*, pp. 30-32; *Cricket Annual*, 1977; and *Cricket Close-Up* (1978). ]

Given these caveats, Table Four shows that in the 1970/71 series against England the Australian players' share of income was 2.95 per cent. By the 1974/75 series the inclusion of bonuses from the Australian Cricket Board and sponsors caused it to increase to 4.5 per cent. For the West Indies and Pakistan tours the figure was equal to approximately 7.5 per cent. With the Centenary Test the players' share fell to 5.55 per cent. In the 1977/78 series against India, which is somewhat complicated by the advent of World Series Cricket, the players' share of income increased to 24.44 per cent.

No account of payments to players in this period would be complete without a consideration of the salaries paid by Kerry Packer in establishing World Series Cricket. The contracts he signed players on ranged from \$16,500 to \$35,000 per season, with an approximate average of \$25,000, plus incentive payments.<sup>20</sup>

### **Players and Administrators**

The players of this era expressed two major complaints concerning their employment as cricketers. The first was that they did not receive adequate financial support for the time and effort they devoted to the game. With both domestic series and overseas tours, players could be required to devote eight to nine months of the year to cricket. Because of such demands on their time they found it difficult to hold down regular jobs and establish careers. Both paceman Dennis Lillee and batsman Ross Edwards, for example, were sacked by their respective employers because cricket kept them away from their jobs for so much of the year. Many players were also forced into premature retirement because they could not make an adequate living from cricket.

The players' second complaint was that administrators did not take account of their needs and interests in making decisions. Players complained about inadequate travelling arrangements, too few rest days

- particularly after a gruelling Test match, poor hotel accommodation, and poor food and nutrition on overseas tours. Associated with these criticisms there was also a feeling that administrators had a 'penny-pinching' mentality in their attitudes toward players.

The 1969/70 tour to India and South Africa provides an illustration of these problems. The tour lasted twenty-three weeks with five Tests in India, and four in South Africa. During parts of the Indian tour players endured what Ian Chappell described as 'disgraceful living standards' and an itinerary which involved late night trips from one game to the next. The living conditions, together with poor food resulted in a general decline in the health and fitness of players. On the South African leg of the tour the Australians were whitewashed losing 4-0. Ian Chappell later claimed that 'the double tour was arranged with little thought for the welfare of players', and maintained that the Australian Cricket Board had 'a responsibility to ensure the good health of players, which was badly neglected'.<sup>21</sup> Australian captain Bill Lawry submitted a critical report to the Australian Cricket Board concerning the hardships players experienced during the double tour. Test player Paul Sheahan later claimed that it was because of this report that Lawry was 'assassinated' by the Board when he suffered the indignity of being dropped from the Australian team during the 1970/71 series against England.<sup>22</sup>

The 1969/70 double tour was also noteworthy for another reason. At the beginning of the South African leg it was proposed that a fifth Test be played to overcome the possibility of a deadlocked series. It was suggested that games against provincial sides would be deleted in lieu of this additional Test, and that players would stay a few extra days in South Africa. This would have necessitated the signing of new contracts. The tour management hoped that players would agree to these changes on the same terms of the contracts they had signed before commencing the tour. The players asked for an extra \$500. The Australian Cricket Board countered with an offer of \$200, which was rejected. A fifth Test was not played.<sup>23</sup>

Ian Chappell seems to have been at the centre of, or associated with, most of the disputes which occurred between players and administrators during this period. One of the leading batsmen of his era, Ian Chappell was an outstanding, if not brilliant, captain, who, between 1971 and 1975 transformed Australia from a mediocre team to acknowledged world champions.<sup>24</sup> Often described as a 'players' man' Ian Chappell not only led players on the field,<sup>25</sup> but also, and more importantly fought for their rights off the field. Richie Benaud described him as someone who 'was never averse to speaking his mind, particularly if it was to do with some bungle made by an administrator, or if his players were being harshly treated by the Australian Cricket Board'.<sup>26</sup> Phil Tresidder, the editor of Australian Cricket described Ian Chappell as 'a crusader for players . . . a modern day sporting shop steward seeking better conditions, pay and sponsorship for his colleagues'.<sup>27</sup> In both the 1972/73 and 1973/74 seasons Ian Chappell made representations on behalf of Test players to the Australian Cricket Board. Amongst other things he sought an increase in payments to players and the establishment of a provident fund. He recalls that his representations concerning these two matters were not well received by the Board.<sup>28</sup> As has already been noted above, a provident fund was subsequently introduced in the 1974/75 season.

In the 1974/75 series against England Australian players were initially paid a Test match fee of \$200 (see Table Three). Australia outplayed England, winning the series 4-1, and in the process attracted large crowds and high gate receipts.<sup>29</sup> At the Melbourne Test, played between Christmas and New Year, the crowd exceeded 250,000 people who paid more than \$250,000 in gate receipts. The players realised that their total pay amounted to \$2,400, which constituted less than one per cent of gate receipts. At the same time as the Melbourne Test, John Newcombe received \$10,000 for eleven hours work playing tennis across town at Kooyong in the Australian Open.<sup>30</sup> Wicket-keeper Rod Marsh only had to talk to his brother Graham to discover how well golfers were

rewarded in comparison with cricketers. The members of the Test team placed pressure on the Australian Cricket Board to have their pay increased. Following the Sydney Test Dennis Lillee told a member of the press that he believed players should be contracted to the Board, receiving annual salaries ranging from \$25,000 to \$30,000.<sup>31</sup>

The Board reacted unfavourably to these complaints and criticisms. At one stage Board Secretary Alan Barnes said that players 'are not professionals . . . they were all invited to play and if they don't like the conditions there are 500,000 other cricketers in Australia who would love to take their place'.<sup>32</sup> Such a statement only served to harden the resolve of players. Ian Chappell met with Bob Hawke, the President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, to discuss the possibility of players organising into a union or association.<sup>33</sup> There were also suggestions that players contemplated striking in an effort to increase their pay.<sup>34</sup> At the end of the series the Board decided to pay a bonus of \$200 per player per Test, as well as making available an extra bonus from sponsorship funds (see Table Three).

At the end of the Australian tour to England in 1975 a meeting occurred between players and tour manager Fred Bennett and Australian Cricket Board Chairman Tim Caldwell. A wide range of issues were discussed including the vexed issue of payments to players.<sup>35</sup> According to Dennis Lillee's account of the meeting the two representatives of the Board indicated that they would look into the players' complaints and seek to initiate action. Lillee claims, however, that:

We heard no more about it. That was the annoying and frustrating thing. We just never seemed to be getting anywhere in our effort to get a better deal with the Board. At times we felt we were making some headway, then all of a sudden a brick wall would appear at the end of the passage. Always that brick wall was there and it seemed a waste of time talking to them about anything.<sup>36</sup>

In February 1976, during the series against the West Indies a meeting occurred between Bob Hawke, Ian Chappell, Greg Chappell, Rod Marsh, Rick McCosker, and former Australian player and businessman Bob Cowper. The players were seeking advice from Hawke on how to proceed to improve their economic lot. Hawke, a cricketing enthusiast and an accomplished player, suggested that they should avoid using the term 'union' in discussions with administrators, as this would be likely to produce a hostile reaction. He then proposed the concept of a 'liaison man', a person who would act as a conciliator, or intermediary, between players and administrators.<sup>37</sup>

For a period in 1976 Bob Cowper acted as a 'liaison man' between players and the Australian Cricket Board.<sup>38</sup> In response to the agitation and discontent of players, and in an attempt to deflect or forestall the creation of a players' association, the Board announced the creation of a Cricket Sub-Committee in September 1976 where player representatives and Board members could discuss issues of mutual concern. Looking back on this decision David Richards, the current Chief Executive of the Board, has said that players 'wanted a players' association and the Board set up a Cricket Committee'.<sup>39</sup> The Cricket Sub-Committee provided a forum for players and administrators to discuss matters, and appears to have been the vehicle through which player payments were increased for the various domestic and overseas tours which occurred in 1977 and 1977/78 (see Table One and Three above).

While the relationship between players and administrators seemed to have moved onto a new plane,<sup>40</sup> the Australian Cricket Board had not responded quickly enough to quell the past grievances of players. When Kerry Packer provided them with the opportunity of alternative employment they deserted the Board virtually to a man. Jack Pollard observed that 'The fact that so many signed at a point when match fees were rising and no organisation existed to stage WSC games,

demonstrated how unanimous was the players' discontent and how badly ACB officials misjudged the players mood'.<sup>41</sup>

### **The Professional Cricketers Association of Australia**

The life of the Professional Cricketers Association of Australia can be broadly divided into two periods. The first is from its formation in September 1977 to its registration under the New South Wales *Companies Act* 1961 in January 1979; roughly speaking the period in which World Series Cricket operated. The second is from January 1979 to its eventual demise in 1982; essentially the period following the compromise between Kerry Packer and the Australian Cricket Board.

With the advent of World Series Cricket the players put into effect their previous desire to form a players' association. The inaugural executive comprised Ian Chappell as President, Greg Chappell Vice-President, Ross Edwards Secretary, Rod Marsh Treasurer, and Mick Malone and David Hookes committee members. The Cricketers Association did not want to confine membership to Packer players - it sought to enrol Board players and develop relationships with overseas player associations with an eye to forming an international confederation of cricketers. The Association of Tennis Professionals, formed in 1972, was the model upon which the Cricketers Association based its operation. In November 1977 the Packer players were addressed by John Newcombe concerning the operation of the tennis players' association.<sup>42</sup>

Membership fees were initially set at \$50 per annum for World Series, and \$10 for Board players.<sup>43</sup> The Cricketers Association enjoyed some initial success in attracting Board players with the establishment of a branch in Western Australia. There were also indications that branches would be established in Queensland and South Australia. Attempts to develop an international association proved to be unsuccessful. While there was co-operation between the Australian and West Indian associations, and batsman Sunil Gavaskar had discussions with Ian

Chappell during 1977/78 to establish an association amongst Indian players, the English Cricketers' Association was unprepared to co-operate, apparently because of its opposition to World Series Cricket.<sup>45</sup> The other major functions performed by the Cricketers Association during the Packer period were to provide members with taxation, superannuation and other financial advice, and the establishment of a discipline code to govern player behaviour on the field.<sup>46</sup>

Not only did players earn higher incomes from playing for World Series Cricket compared with what they had previously received from the Australian Cricket Board, but they also experienced a closer and more cordial relationship with management/employers. Ian Chappell, together with former Test captain Richie Benaud, and former Test players Bob Cowper and John Gleeson were members of World Series Cricket's governing committee. Austin Robertson, who had recruited most of the players to World Series Cricket, acted as a 'liaison man' between players and management to resolve any problems which may have emerged.

Kerry Packer also provided the Cricketers Association with a loan of \$10,000 to help aid its establishment. Ian Chappell provided two examples involving Kerry Packer to illustrate the tone of World Series Cricket-player relationships. The first concerned the final of the One-Day International Series in the 1978/79 season. The game was a day-night match and there was some confusion about when the game was scheduled to finish. The West Indies believed it would be a 47 over game, while the Australians thought it would run to 50 overs. The mix-up ended in a West Indian victory.<sup>47</sup> Upon discovering this Packer paid the same amount of prize money due to the West Indians to the Australians - World Series Cricket operated on a winner take all approach to prize money.

The second example concerns the World Series tour to the West Indies in 1979. Prior to the commencement of the tour World Series

managers examined players' contracts and calculated that the costs of players' salaries would be too high given anticipated revenues which would be obtained from the tour. Discussions occurred with Ian Chappell who agreed, and obtained the agreement of players, to tour at a level of pay approximately half that contained in the contracts. Kerry Packer was far from impressed with these developments. He didn't like to break his word and intended to honour the contracts. When it was pointed out that the extra cost of such a decision would amount to \$300,000, he replied that that was the cost of a B grade movie for television.<sup>48</sup>

On 17 January 1979 the Professional Cricketers Association of Australia was registered under the New South Wales *Companies Act* 1961. Consideration had been given to registering as a trade union. It was believed, however, that registration as a company would be easier and quicker.<sup>49</sup> There was some doubt as to whether or not professional cricketers would be regarded as involved in an employer-employee relationship. In 1955 players of the Victorian Football League and Victorian Football Association had failed in an attempt to register the Australian Football Players' Union under the *Conciliation and Arbitration Act* 1904.<sup>50</sup> In addition, the Cricketers Association may have fallen foul of the minimum membership rule of 100 contained in Section 132 (1) (a) of the Act.

Changes occurred to the executive committee at the time of registration. It was decided that Ian Redpath should assume the mantle of President, as a conciliatory gesture in trying to develop a bargaining relationship with the Australian Cricket Board.<sup>51</sup> Ian Chappell became Vice-President, Richie Robinson Secretary, Rick McCosker Treasurer, and Greg Chappell and Rod Marsh committee members. Another change to the executive occurred in the 1980/81 season when Greg Chappell assumed the role of President, Rod Marsh Secretary, former New South Wales Shield player and solicitor Michael Hill the position

of Executive Director, and David Hookes, Steve Rixon, Ian Callen and Roger Woolley committee members.<sup>52</sup>

On 9 February 1979 the Cricketers Association sent a letter to Shield and state practice squad players seeking to enrol them as members, and to the Australian Cricket Board and state associations announcing their 'official' formation and desire to develop a bargaining relationship.<sup>53</sup> The letters stated that while all current members were involved with World Series Cricket the Cricketers Association's aim was 'to represent *all* professional cricketers' and that it should not 'be regarded as a militant breakaway group'. The letters also stated that the Cricketers Association's 'objectives can be broadly summarised as being for the promotion of professional cricket and the protection and support of individual players'. In addition, 'The purpose of our Association is to represent professional cricketers as a body at discussions at state, national and international level for the betterment of players and the game'. The letters also stated that the Association had written to all cricketing countries suggesting that they form similar associations (if they had not already done so) and that all these bodies when formed then send a representative to form an International Cricketers Association similar to the International Cricket Conference. Membership fees were set at \$25 p.a.<sup>54</sup>

At the beginning of the 1979/80 season - and following the compromise between Kerry Packer and the Australian Cricket Board<sup>55</sup> - a series of meetings occurred where the Cricketers Association sought to convince 'non-Packer' Test and Shield players of the wisdom of becoming members. In addition to the usual arguments advanced concerning the need for a collective employee's organisation, it was also claimed that players would find it difficult to counter the combined might of the Board and Packer's organisation. Several leading players were unconvinced of the need for a players' association, of joining a body which they saw as being connected to World Series Cricket; while younger players found it difficult to relate to struggles and problems which had

occurred in the early 1970s.<sup>56</sup> Notwithstanding these problems, the Cricketers Association did succeed in enrolling a proportionately large number of players. In 1980 it had 61 members,<sup>57</sup> and in 1982 membership stood at 67;<sup>58</sup> which would have represented approximately 75 per cent of regular Test or Shield players.

The Professional Cricketers Association of Australia failed in its attempt to develop a bargaining relationship with the Australian Cricket Board. The Board adopted a two part strategy to counter the Cricketers Association. First, while the Board took no action to confront the Cricketers Association in head-on conflict, it maintained that there was no real role the Association could perform given the existence of the Cricket Sub-Committee which provided a regular forum for players and the Board to exchange viewpoints.<sup>59</sup> An examination of the minutes of Cricket Sub-Committee meetings in this period reveals that a wide range of issues were discussed, including such matters as payment to players, expenses, provident fund payments, sponsorship, contracts, leading player contracts, tour arrangements, umpiring, crowd behaviour, player/writer rules, rest days, brighter cricket, provision of trainers/physical education instructors, helmets, wickets, six ball overs, night cricket, Australian uniforms, and so on.<sup>60</sup>

According to Michael Hill 'the Board's Cricket Sub-Committee drew the teeth of the Cricketers Association'.<sup>61</sup> With the benefit of hindsight, however, it is conceivable that the Cricketers Association may have been able to develop a de facto bargaining relationship with the Board through the Cricket Sub-Committee. Players who attended such meetings were the elected representatives from each of the states, plus the Australian captain. Following the merger between the Board and Packer most of the player representatives on the Cricket Sub-Committee either belonged to, or more importantly, were executive members of the Cricketers Association.<sup>62</sup> The player representatives could have caucused amongst themselves and pursued the objectives of players as developed under the auspices of the Cricketers Association. To the

extent that future players may wish to develop a new players' association they could pursue such a strategy. It was from a player representative system established by the owners of American baseball in 1946 that players formed the Major League Baseball Players' Association in 1954.<sup>63</sup>

The second part of the Australian Cricket Board's strategy to forestall the Cricketers Association was to appoint Bob Merriman as a co-ordinator between players and the Board. He was, in effect, to replicate the 'liaison man' role which had been previously performed by Bob Cowper in 1976, and by Austin Robertson during World Series Cricket. The attraction of Merriman for the Board was that he was both an industrial relations specialist and a cricket administrator. Prior to being appointed as a Commissioner to the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission in May 1980, Merriman had been an industrial relations practitioner in the vehicle industry.<sup>64</sup> He was also a cricket administrator in Geelong, and had managed the Australian team on a tour to India in the latter part of 1979. David Richards maintains that Merriman played an important part in building bridges between players and administrators in the period immediately after World Series Cricket.<sup>65</sup> Dennis Lillee also praised Merriman whom he saw as being 'very keen to do the right thing by both parties'.<sup>66</sup>

With its inability to develop a bargaining relationship with the Australian Cricket Board, the Cricketers Association, in the words of Dennis Lillee, 'gradually disintegrated'.<sup>67</sup> Despite its initial burst of recruitment enthusiasm, by the 1981/82 season it was a spent force. Ian Chappell made several attempts to interest other players to take over and rejuvenate the Association, but all to no avail. The Association had no role and little money. An individual wished to purchase the rights to a photograph of the 1974/75 Australian team. The sale of these rights was used to pay back Kerry Packer's loan,<sup>68</sup> and in May 1988 the Professional Cricketers Association of Australia filed to be deregistered,<sup>69</sup> with the

balance of its assets, \$252.07, made over to the Primary Club of Australia.<sup>70</sup>

Why did the Professional Cricketers Association of Australia fail to survive? The above analysis suggests two possible answers. The first is that it did not attract enough players and/or did not attract the right (i.e. Test level non-Packer) players. Second, it failed to develop a bargaining relationship with the Australian Cricket Board. The Cricket Sub-Committee and the appointment of Bob Merriman as a cricket co-ordinator served to out-manoeuvre the Cricketers Association. There are problems, however, with both explanations. The Cricketers Association membership constituted approximately 75 per cent of regular Test and Shield players. As was argued above, it could have potentially developed a de facto bargaining relationship with the Board by pursuing its goals and objectives via representatives elected to the Cricket Sub-Committee.

It will be argued, however, that a third and more powerful reason lies behind the demise of the Cricketers Association. Its demise arose from the problems of operating with a small membership distributed amongst the six states of Australia. Given the number of players playing first class cricket in Australia the Cricketers Association could never hope to have even one hundred members. In addition, its members were distributed across the length and breadth of the Australian continent. Executive members performed their functions on a part-time basis; as well as playing cricket they had other jobs and commitments to attend to, and found it difficult to devote the time and energy necessary to sustain the Cricketers Association. In addition, its small membership base and low fees (\$25 per annum) provided it with scant income with which to pursue its objectives. In the period from its 'official' formation in January 1979 to 30 June 1979 membership income amounted to \$605; in the twelve months to 30 June 1980 it was \$2,167.<sup>71</sup> Such funds would barely sustain the costs of committee meetings, or an Annual General meeting, let alone the development of an international association.

This line of reasoning can be further illustrated by reference to information concerning the operation of small unions in Australia in the early 1980s. In 1982, forty-six of Australia's 322 unions had memberships of less than one hundred.<sup>72</sup> Virtually all of these unions, however, would have been organised on a single state basis, compared with the Professional Cricketers Association of Australia with members in six states. Rawson and Wrightson's register of unions, for 1983, shows of those that had less than one hundred members twenty six operated in one state (or possibly thirty eight if single state unions for which no membership data was provided are included), one union had members in two states, and the Industrial Arbitration Registrars Association's nine members were spread across five states and two territories.<sup>73</sup> This last union, however, should be ignored as it constitutes an aberration in that it comprises the very persons who were in charge of the registration of federal unions under the *Conciliation and Arbitration Act*.

Given the small size, wide geographic distribution of its membership, and its low income the Professional Cricketers Association of Australia lacked the wherewithal and financial resources necessary to operate as a viable institution. It found itself a victim of the tyranny of distance.

### **Summary and Conclusion: Of 'Warriors In Baggy Green Caps'**

In the first half of the 1970s Australia's leading cricketers believed that they were inadequately compensated for their time and effort, and that the Australian Cricket Board did not take account of their needs and interests in making decisions. The players exerted pressure on the Board to improve their position, and explored the possibility of forming a players' association to defend and advance their rights and interests.

With the advent of World Series Cricket the players formed the Professional Cricketers Association of Australia. Following the compromise between Kerry Packer and the Board the Cricketers

Association sought to spread its membership and develop a bargaining relationship with the Board. While it experienced some success in terms of the former, it failed with respect to the latter. The Cricket Sub-Committee and the appointment of a cricket co-ordinator undermined the Cricketers Association, which quickly became moribund. It has been argued, however, that the major reason for the Cricketers Association's demise was the logistical and financial problems associated with maintaining an organisation with a small membership distributed across six states.

While the players of the first half of the 1970s, whom Ian Brayshaw has referred to as 'Warriors in Baggy Green Caps'<sup>74</sup> may have failed in their attempt to develop a players' association they nonetheless helped to usher in two important changes to the organisation and operation of Australian cricket. The first is the Cricket Sub-Committee, which was originally created to ward-off a potential players' association. David Richards regards it as 'a very, very important committee, probably the most important committee the Board's got'.<sup>75</sup>

Second, World Series Cricket established the practice of placing leading players on contract, which has been continued by the Australian Cricket Board - notwithstanding problems experienced prior to the 1984 West Indies tour,<sup>76</sup> and players signing up for unofficial tours to South Africa in 1985/86 and 1986/87.<sup>77</sup> The top 25 or 26 players are placed on two-year contracts with the Board where they receive a retainer in the first year (the amount varies depending on an appraisal of players' skills) plus a guaranteed minimum income in the second year. In addition, players receive additional performance based income linked to selection in the Australian side and success on the field.<sup>78</sup> Monies are also set aside for provident fund payments. Senior and regularly selected players who are members of a successful Australian side in all probability, would currently earn more than \$100,000 per annum from playing cricket.<sup>79</sup>

The economic rewards that Australia's leading players currently receive would seem to result from the struggles undertaken by 'Warriors

in Baggy Green Caps' in the 1970s and their associated desire to establish a players' association.

## NOTES

1. I would like to thank Ian Chappell, Michael Hill, solicitor and former Executive Director of the Professional Cricketers Association of Australia, David Richards, Chief Executive of the Australian Cricket Board, Rick McCosker, Greg Chappell and Ross Edwards for providing me with information concerning events associated with Australian cricket and The Professional Cricketers Association of Australia. I would also like to thank Shayne Quick for providing me with copies of the Cricket Subcommittee Minutes which he had obtained concerning his Ph.D. research into World Series Cricket. Thanks are also expressed to Richard Cashman and David Richards for their comments on an earlier draft of this article. They bear no responsibility for the errors, factual or interpretative, contained in this article.
2. For details concerning its operation see Braham Dabscheck, 'Industrial Relations and Professional Team Sports in Australia', *The Journal of Industrial Relations*, (March 1976); and Bob Stewart, *The Australian Football Business: A Spectator's Guide to the VFL* (Kenthurst: Kangaroo Press, 1983), pp. 91-96.
3. See Tony Buti, 'History of the WAFL, Players Association', Papers in *Labour History*, 4 (November 1989), Perth Branch, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, pp. 42-51.
4. See for example Christopher Forsyth, *The Great Cricket Hijack*, (Cambenvell: Widescope, 1978); Peter McFarlane, *A Game Divided*, (London: Marlin, 1978); Brunnell Jones, *Cricket Confusion*, (Trinidad: Sports News Service, 1978); Andrew Caro, *With a Straight Bat*, (Hong Kong: Sales Machine, 1979); Alan Lee, *A Pitch in Both Camps: England and World Series Cricket in Australia 1978-79*, (London: Stanley Paul, 1979); Frank Tyson, *War or Peace*, (Ashburton: Garry Sporke, 1980). For an examination of the legal battles, or court cases, associated with World Series Cricket see John Scott, *Caught in Court*, (London: Andre Dentsch, 1989), pp. 101-111.
5. In 1986 Mr Justice Toohey in the Hughes case observed that 'the amounts [paid to District players] . . . are small indeed and in no way capable of providing a living for a player'. Hughes vs Western Australian Cricket Association (Inc) + Ors (1986) ATPR 40-736, at 48,037.
6. *The National Times*, 22-27 September 1975.
7. *Lords World of Cricket Monthly*, July 1976, p. 56.
8. *Cricketer*, October 1975, p. 52; *Australian Cricketer*, December 1975, p. 24.
9. *Cricketer*, October 1975, p. 16. Victoria had introduced such payments in the early 1950s.
10. For further information concerning sponsorship see *Australian Cricket*, December 1976, p. 45, and March 1977 p. 5; *World of Cricket Monthly*, May 1977, pp. 28 + 29.
11. *Cricketer Annual, 1977*, p. 45.
12. Forsyth, *op.cit.*, p. 80.
13. *Australian Cricket*, February 1976, p. 48.

14. Leading players have also obtained income from other activities related to playing cricket, both at home and on tour. Such activities include speaking engagements, appearances, writing, sponsorship and product endorsement.
15. Australian Economic Statistics 1949-50 to 1984-85: 1 Tables, Reserve Bank of Australia, *Occasional Paper No. 8A*, November 1985, p. 214.
16. *Cricketer*, October 1975, p. 16.
17. Over the years the rules relating to provident fund payments have altered, and the amounts credited to players increased. For example, players now receive credits for one-day internationals.
18. The calculations which follow only pertain to the share received by Australian players; they ignore the payments to players of touring sides and the associated travelling, accommodation and other costs involved.
19. Richard Cashman, 'Australian Cricket Crowds: The Attendance Cycle Daily Figures, 1877-1984', *Historical Statistics Monograph No. 5*, (University of New South Wales, Kensington: History Project Incorporated).
20. This data comes from Forsyth, *op.cit.* Adrian McGregor has suggested that Forsyth's data may understate the income that players received from Kerry Packer. See Adrian McGregor, Greg Chappell, (Sydney: Collins, 1985), pp. 144-145.
21. Ian Chappell, *Chappelli: Ian Chappell's Life Story*, (Richmond: Hutchinson, 1976), pp. 64-68.
22. *Cricket Digest* (1979), pp. 8 + 9.
23. For further details see Chappell, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-16.
24. For an account of Ian Chappell's skills as a captain see Richie Benaud, *Benaud on Reflection*, (Sydney: Collins, 1984), pp. 25-37. For an examination of the Australian team during Ian Chappell's reign as captain see Ian Brayshaw, Warriors in *Baggy Green Caps*, (Milson's Point: Currawong Press, 1982). and for an account of what it was like to play against an Australian side in this period see Bob Willis (with Patrick Murphy), *The Cricket Revolution: Test Cricket in the 1970s*, (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1981), pp. 47-69.
25. Some of which resulted in clashes with opposing players and umpires. For his account of such events see Chappell, *op.cit.*, pp. 124-129, 135-138 and 168-171.
26. Benaud, *op.cit.*, p. 35. For an example of Ian Chappell criticising administrators in South Australia and proposals for reform see *Cricketer*, April 1975, pp 10-12.
27. *Australian Cricket*, January 1976, p. 3.
28. Interview, Ian Chappell, 23 May 1990. In the early 1970s he made similar attempts on behalf of his South Australian Shield colleagues in an attempt to dissuade senior players from retiring prematurely. The South Australian Cricket Association dismissed his submissions.
29. Cashman, *op.cit.*, p. 60. For further discussion concerning Australian cricket in the 1970s. and particularly the role of television see Richard Cashman 'Ave a Go, Yer Mug! Australian Cricket Crowds From Lamikin To Ocker', (Sydney: Collins, 1984) pp. 130-152.
30. *The National Times* 13-18 January 1975.
31. Dennis Lillee, *Lillee: My Life in Cricket*, (North Ryde: Methuen, 1982). pp. 83-87; and Dennis Lillee, *Lillee: Over and Out!*, (North Ryde: Methuen, 1984) pp. 48-53.
32. Quoted in Rod Marsh and Ian Brayshaw, *You'll Keep*, (Richmond: Hutchinson, 1975) p. 119.
33. Interview, Ian Chappell.

34. See *The National Times*, 13-18 January 1975. In February 1976 South Australian players unanimously agreed to, what turned out to be a shortlived, strike over issues relating to the selection of a team to tour the eastern states. For details see Chappell, *op.cit.*, pp. 129-132; *The National Times*, 15-20 March 1976; and *The Australian*, 28 February 1976.
35. Brayshaw, *op.cit.*, pp. 30-32.
36. Lillie, *My Life*, p. 86.
37. Interview, Ian Chappell; Chappell, *op.cit.*, pp. 195 + 196. Also see *The National Times* 22-27 September 1975, and 29 December 1975 - 3 January 1976. In 1975 Hawke played in a charity match for Tony Greig's XI against Ian Chappell's XI. Coming in at 7-50 he top scored with 39, and took 0-5 with the ball. See *Australian Cricket* November 1973, pp. 32-33.
38. Chappell, *op.cit.*, p 195; Forsyth, *op.cit.*, p. 19.
39. 'David Richards', in Jack Egan (ed), *Extra Cover*, (Sydney: Pan, 1989), p. 326.
40. Ian Chappell was prepared to acknowledge that they changed for the better after the 'Board had made moves to get closer to players'. Chappell, *op.cit.*, p. 14.
41. Jack Pollard, *Australian Cricket: The Game and the Players*, (Sydney: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982). p. 1138.
42. Forsyth, *op.cit.*, pp. 164-166.
43. Interview, Ian Chappell.
44. Forsyth, *op.cit.*, p. 115; and Cricket Sub-Committee Minutes, 16 November 1977, p. 7.
45. Interview, Ian Chappell. For details of disquiet amongst Indian players see *Australian Cricket* November 1977, p. 9; and of the English Cricketers' Association Forsyth, *op.cit.*, pp. 167-168; and Ric Sissons, *The Players: A Social History of the Professional Cricketer*, (Sydney: Pluto, 1988) pp. 285-314.
46. Interviews, Michael Hill, 14 August 1990; Ian Chappell.
47. See Caro, *op.cit.*, p. 99 for details.
48. Interview, Ian Chappell
49. Interview, Michael Hill.
50. 84 CAR 675. For an account of this union's brief history see Braham Dabscheck, 'Out of Bounds: The 1955 Australian Football Players' Union', *The Journal of Australian Studies*, (November 1990). The Association of Rugby League Professionals was registered under the New South Wales *Trade Union Act 1881* in November 1980, and *Industrial Arbitration Act 1940* in November 1984.
51. Interview, Ian Chappell.
52. Letter, 9 February 1979; and Particulars lodged with Corporate Affairs Commission 15 April 1981.
53. The letter was discussed at a meeting of the Cricket Sub-Committee, which did not include any Packer players, on 10 May 1979. See Minutes, Cricket Sub-Committee, 10 May 1979, p. 2.
54. Letter, 9 February 1979.
55. The World Series tour to the West Indies in 1979 season may have precluded an earlier membership campaign.
56. Interview, Ian Chappell; Telephone Interview, Ross Edwards, 8 May 1990. Also see *Lillie, My Life*, pp. 120 + 121; and Lillie, *Over*, pp. 55 + 56.
57. Minutes, Cricket Sub-Committee, 4 February 1980, p. 7.

58. Profit and Loss Statement, 30 June 1982.
59. See Minutes, Cricket Sub-Committee, 20 August 1979, p. 9; and 4 February 1980, p. 7.
60. This is based on the Minutes of seven of the first ten meetings of the Cricket Sub-Committee held on 16 November 1977, 26 January 1978, 25 May 1978, 24 January 1979, 10 May 1979, 20 August 1979, and 4 February 1980.
61. Interview, Michael Hill.
62. Those in attendance at 20 August 1979 meeting were Rick McCosker, Jim Higgs, Gary Cosier, Ian Chappell, Rod Marsh and Tony Benneworth; and at 4 February 1980 meeting Rick McCosker, Jim Higgs, Gary Cosier, Ian Chappell, Rod Marsh, Roger Woolley and Greg Chappell.
63. See James B. Dworkin, *Owners versus Players: Baseball and Collective Bargaining*, (Boston: Auburn House, 1981), pp 26 + 27; Robert C. Berry, William B. Gould IV, and Paul D. Staudodar, *Labor Relations in Professional Sports*, (Dover: Auburn House, 1986), pp. 52 + 53.
64. Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the President of the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, Year ended 13 August 1980, AGPS, Canberra, 1981.
65. Interview, David Richards, 16 August 1990.
66. Lillee, *My Life*, p. 121.
67. *ibid*
68. Interview, Ian Chappell.
69. Application for Cancellation of Registration of Company, 31 May 1988.
70. Letter from Rick McCosker to author, 10 April 1990.
71. Directors Report for the Period Ended 30 June 1979; and Directors' Report for the Period Ended 30 June 1980.
72. *Trade Union Statistics*, Australia, December 1982, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, Cat. No. 6323.0.
73. D.W. Rawson and Sue Wrightson, *Australian Unions* 1984, (Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985). The Australian Broadcasting Commission Senior Officers Association had 103 members distributed across the six states, two territories and overseas.
74. Brayshaw, *op.cit.*
75. Richards, in Egan, *op.cit.*, p. 331. Ian Chappell is less convinced that players have any real say with respect to important decisions which are made. Interview, Ian Chappell; Sissons, *op.cit.*, p. 298. For Greg Chappell's views on this issue see 'Greg Chappell', in Egan, *op.cit.*, p. 307.
76. Lillee, Over, pp. 56 + 57.
77. Chris Harte, *Two Tours and Pollock The Australian Cricketer in South Africa 1985-87*, (Adelaide: Sports Marketing, 1988); and (1986) *ATPR* 40-736, at 48, 037.
78. ACB - Player Contract.
79. This statement would need to be qualified if there were no overseas tours during the Australian winter.