

Tuesday, 9 June 2026

The Big Freeze 12 scores big with footy fans And iconic Collingwood v Melbourne showdown reaches 1.98 million

One of the biggest days on the AFL calendar, the **Big Freeze** at the MCG, was a hit with viewers yesterday, reaching 1.34 million people on Seven and [7plus Sport](#).

Seven's **The Big Freeze At The G** had a national total TV audience of 903,000, up 13% on last year and its biggest audience since VOZ total TV ratings started.

Following the **Big Freeze**, the Collingwood v Melbourne King's Birthday clash reached 1.98 million. It delivered a national total TV audience of 930,000, up 7% on last year's game and up 57% on the 2026 season-to-date AFL average. On 7plus Sport, the game drew 121,000 viewers, up 100% on 2025.

Played in front of a crowd of 88,000, the game was yesterday's most-watched sport program. It was also the #1 sport program nationally among people 25 to 54s, 16 to 39s and grocery shoppers.

First introduced in 2015, the **Big Freeze** has become a crowd-favourite pre-match fixture at the Collingwood v Melbourne King's Birthday blockbuster. This year was the first without Australian Football legend and FightMND Co-Founder and Patron, Neale Daniher AO, following his recent passing.

Seven's pre-game coverage featured a special tribute to Neale, paying homage to a revered figure across Australian sport who united the football community and inspired millions of Australians, through his leadership in the fight to raise awareness and vital funding for research through FightMND.

Seven's team for the King's Birthday match was led by Abbey Holmes, Brian Taylor, Hamish McLachlan, Dale Thomas, Nick Riewoldt and Tom Morris. McLachlan also joined Tim Watson, Neale Daniher's lifelong friend and former teammate, to host the **Big Freeze** pre-match coverage, while Taylor called each slide as the stars took the icy plunge.

Seven's Head of AFL and Sport Innovation, Gary O'Keeffe, said: "**Big Freeze 12** was a truly remarkable tribute to the late, great Neale Daniher AO. While we miss him dearly, we know he would have absolutely loved what unfolded at the MCG yesterday.

"With more than 88,000 fans filling the stands and huge audiences joining us on Seven and 7plus Sport, there could have been no greater celebration of Neale's life, legacy and the extraordinary impact he had on so many Australians," he said.

“Welcoming South Sydney Rabbitohs star Jai Arrow and his family onto the MCG to toss the coin was an incredibly powerful moment. Jai's courage in sharing his own battle against MND has inspired so many people, and the entire community stands firmly beside him in the fight against *The Beast*,” he said.

“As we come together again tomorrow to honour Neale at his State Funeral Service tomorrow, we reflect on his extraordinary contribution to MND research, advocacy and awareness in Australia. More than that, we reflect on his unique ability to unite people from all walks of life behind a common cause.”

Tomorrow, the nation will farewell Neale with special live coverage of his State Funeral Service at the MCG from 12.00pm AEST nationally on 7plus, and broadcast on Seven locally in Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth.

7NEWS Melbourne Presenters Peter Mitchell and Rebecca Maddern will host the broadcast, guiding viewers through the special tribute and reflecting on his extraordinary sporting career and enduring legacy post football.

Triple M Melbourne will also broadcast live from the MCG from 12.00pm AEST in tribute to Neale, with live and ad free coverage of the State Funeral Service commencing from 1.00pm AEST available nationwide on LiSTNR.

For more information, please contact:

Neil Shoebridge
M: 0417 511 012
E: neil@skmediagroup.com.au

Andrew Knowles
M: 0449 510 357
E: andrew@skmediagroup.com.au

About the Seven Network

The Seven Network is part of Southern Cross Media Group (ASX: SXL), one of Australia's most prominent media companies, with a market-leading presence across broadcast television, audio, publishing and digital. The Seven Network alone reaches more than 17.5 million people a month.

Southern Cross Media Group owns some of Australia's most renowned media businesses and platforms, including the Seven Network and its channels 7two, 7mate, 7flix and 7Bravo; [7plus](#); [7NEWS.com.au](#); [LiSTNR](#); the Hit and Triple M radio networks; [The Nightly](#); [The West Australian](#); [The Sunday Times](#); and [PerthNow](#).

Media Release



Seven is home to Australia's most loved news, sport and entertainment programming, including **7NEWS**, **7NEWS Spotlight**, **Sunrise**, **The Morning Show**, **The Voice**, **Home and Away**, **Australian Idol**, **My Kitchen Rules**, **Farmer Wants A Wife**, **The Chase Australia**, **Better Homes and Gardens**, **The 1% Club**, **The Front Bar** and the **TV WEEK Logie Awards**.

The Seven Network is also the broadcast partner of the AFL, Cricket Australia, Supercars, the **2026 Rugby League World Cup** and the **Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games**.

Source: VOZ 5.0 National. Average audience and cume reach. King's Birthday AFL vs same match last year. YTD average is Opening Round to King's Birthday overnight. All figures are match only unless otherwise stated. Data overnight.