

Doping Claims Denied By Demons

AFL Club Melbourne has admitted links between its team doctor and former Essendon sports scientist Stephen Dank, the man central to the Australian sport anti-doping investigation. However, the club denied it has done anything illegal.

The [Australian Football League](#) says it is urgently seeking an explanation from Melbourne over its dealings with Dank in the context of Australia Sports Anti-Doping Authority's (ASADA) probe into supplement use now certain to widen to take in the Demons. Recently, the ABC's *7.30 Report* claimed to have text messages between Melbourne's club doctor Dan Bates and Stephen Dank stretching back to mid-2012. Many Demons players were named in the messages that suggest a supplements regime at the club that Dank was involved in and ABC's *7.30 report* alleges the text messages between Dank and Bates continued until the day Essendon fronted a media conference to reveal that they had concerns over their supplements program and the work of Dank at that club. However, none of the substances mentioned in the Melbourne text messages are banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

AFL Club Melbourne, in a lengthy statement, said there was no evidence any of its supplements breached the WADA drug code, and that Dank never directly treated players nor worked directly for the club but it admit that Melbourne's club doctor Dan Bates and sports scientists Stephen Dank had been in communication prior to the launch of ASADA's investigation into Essendon, though Bates always had the final say in any treatment for Demons players. Melbourne said in its statement that Dank, at no point of time, was able to directly treat players and added that Dank and Dr Bates communicated via email, phone and text, regarding supplements (prior to the ASADA investigation).

The team, in the statement, said its processes require Dr Bates to consider the appropriateness of any treatment and make a determination as to its suitability at all times, to ensure that the welfare of our players is always maintained. Meanwhile, Melbourne coach Mark Neeld refused to reveal whether he had any knowledge of the club's [supplement program](#) and said he is confident in the club's processes and said we all should support the investigation and let's have an investigation.

The AFL, which last week said Essendon was the only club involved in the wider Australian sport anti-doping investigation, approached the Melbourne Football Club to ascertain the club's involvement with Stephen Dank and added that Melbourne provided the AFL with an explanation, however the matter has remained open as part of the AFL's broader investigation into Dank's activities with AFL clubs. The AFL said in a statement that it was not previously aware of the claims broadcasted by ABC's *7.30 Report* and these will form part of ongoing investigations by ASADA and the AFL and also added that the AFL is urgently seeking a further explanation from Melbourne Football Club about the veracity of the claims and how they can be reconciled with previous statements from the club.

Meanwhile, Demons face a critical clash with Greater Western Sydney Giants at the MCG on Sunday, after having a terrible season, losing their first three matches by huge margins.