



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **LeasePlan Stands Down as Western Bulldogs' Major Sponsor**

World leading vehicle leasing and fleet management provider, LeasePlan has today announced it will step down as the major sponsor of the Western Bulldogs at the end of 2008, after six years with the AFL club.

"We make this announcement at this stage of the season to allow the Bulldogs ample opportunity to source an appropriate sponsor partner for 2009 and beyond to join them on their continued upward journey," said LeasePlan Australia Managing Director, Spiro Haralambopoulos.

"LeasePlan is in the middle of an exciting period – leading the global LeasePlan group in a significant \$AUD50 million business transformation project," he said.

"Hence, we must focus all our attention on successfully implementing these ebusiness innovations and system improvements that will ensure we sustain the very strong organic growth patterns we have been able to achieve over more than 20 years in this market, as well as adjusting our focus in order to be the hub for the brand's expansion into Asian markets in coming years."

LeasePlan's decision not to take up its option on a third three-year term signals the end of one of the longest major sponsor relationships in the AFL.

"The Western Bulldogs are also in the middle of an exciting period. We like to think we have played a part in the strong revival of the club during our association and that they will have sustained success from now on," said Mr Haralambopoulos.

Since LeasePlan signed on in 2003, the Bulldogs have enjoyed improving fortunes in many areas, on and off the field.

They have developed a very strong team with an influx of exciting young playing talent; seen the commencement of the considerable redevelopment of their western suburbs home, the Whitten Oval; acquired the services of respected senior coach in Rodney Eade; tasted just the eleventh finals win of its long history when it beat Collingwood in 2006; and is heading towards more September action this year after its best start to a season in more than 50 years.

"LeasePlan has provided essential support during the rebuilding of the red, white and blue and we are very thankful for their six years of association," said Western Bulldogs Chief Executive, Campbell Rose.

"We now find ourselves in a position that many said we wouldn't achieve, with the Whitten Oval redevelopment, record membership, revenue and match day attendances as well as exceptional on-field performances. We thank LeasePlan for the last six years, and we look forward to a new and exciting phase in our club's history," said Mr Rose.

LeasePlan has also enjoyed benefits of association with the club and the AFL, with enhanced brand recognition and the success of its Carn the Kids football program that will have hosted more than 13,000 kids and carers at more than 30 Bulldogs games across the country by the end of 2008.

"LeasePlan is particularly proud to have been able to take so many kids, that otherwise would not have had the opportunity, out for a fun day at the footy thanks to the relationship we have had with the Bulldogs and through some great support from the AFL," said Mr Haralambopoulos.



LeasePlan and the Western Bulldogs will say their official goodbyes at the club's President's Function at the last home game – the round 21 Friday night clash with Essendon at Melbourne's Telstra Dome - and then both parties hope to enjoy some Bulldogs' success in September.

**For further information (not for publication)**

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