**A National Women’s Competiton? (abbreviated version of the article)**

AFL chiefs commissioned a review of the future of women's football, which will consider ideas like a national competition and having women play for sister sides to AFL clubs within a decade.

Backers say women players could pull on the boots for sister sides of the AFL's biggest teams within a decade.

VWFL spokeswoman Leesa Catto said women did not aspire to play in the AFL, but wanted to develop their own game.

“Women don't want to play with and against guys at all,” she said.

“We want to develop our game as much as possible and that includes a national comp the same as WNBL, W League soccer, netball etc.  
  
“There might be women's teams aligned with or part of AFL clubs, for example Melbourne playing the women's national league.”

Hawks president Jeff Kennett yesterday revealed Hawthorn was poised to announce its own women's team, through a partnership with an existing female club.

To be known as the Hawks, the team would benefit from a close relationship with the 2008 premiers.

"We are well on the way to getting the deal done," Mr Kennett told the Herald Sun. "There are 80,000 women playing football in Australia and I can actually see this working."

The Melbourne Football Club has established links with the Victorian Women's Football League, and North Melbourne is exploring options.

Supporters say a "WAFL" could even command its own broadcast rights deal.

The review will be conducted by AFL Victoria consultant David Code and presented to the league later this year. AFL community development manager Dean Warren said the review was aimed primarily at overhauling female football at junior, suburban and state levels, but forming a national league was on the radar.

"Down the track there's no doubt there could be the possibility of a national competition," Mr Warren said.

"The demand for young women wanting to play the game is growing.

There are some exciting opportunities ahead for them."

More than 80,000 girls registered to play Australian rules last season, from Auskick to seniors. Victoria will field 45 female youth sides in 2010 - up from 32 - and 28 senior teams.

VWFL president Debbie Lee said fans would be surprised by the talent that already existed in female ranks.

"These girls have played footy from a very young age," she said.

 Lee would like to see AFL-affiliated women's sides playing curtain-raisers at grounds such as the MCG and Subiaco.

"Initially it might be a Melbourne-based competition with four or five AFL clubs supporting women's footy, and then develop into a national competition where each state is represented," she said.

"That's my dream."