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## Australia Coach Criticises Referees Over Lions Series Loss

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Wallabies head coach Joe Schmidt has publicly criticised match officials following Australia's 29–26 defeat to the British & Irish Lions at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, a result that sealed the series for the touring side.

The controversy centered around a late try by Lions fullback Hugo Keenan in the final moments of the match. In the buildup, Lions flanker Jac Morgan cleared out Australian player Carlo Tizzano, prompting concerns about potential foul play. The decision was

referred to the Television Match Official (TMO), but after multiple video replays, the try was allowed to stand.

Schmidt expressed frustration with the ruling, arguing that it contradicted rugby's laws on player safety particularly Law 9.20, which prohibits contact with the head or neck during clear-outs.

"Because they're human, match officials make errors," Schmidt said in a post-match press conference. "We felt it was a decision that doesn't really live up to the big player safety push that they're talking about."

"You cannot hit someone above the shoulders. But that's what we've seen. We've watched a number of replays from different angles, so it is what it is, and we just have to accept it."

Wallabies captain Harry Wilson also shared concerns about the incident, suggesting that Tizzano had taken a hit to the neck area. "Obviously I saw shoulder to neck. Carlo was pretty sore about it," he said.

The British & Irish Lions, however, had a different interpretation. Lions coach Andy Farrell defended the clear-out and praised Morgan's performance from the bench.

"I thought it was a brilliant clear-out," Farrell said. "Honestly, it depends which side of the fence you come from. I can understand people's opinions, but I thought Jac was brilliant when he came on – and so were the rest of the bench."

The loss at the MCG hands the Lions an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. The Wallabies will look to salvage pride in the final test, but the debate over Saturday's controversial decision is likely to continue in the days ahead.