



THIS IS *US*

**GUIDE TO COMMUNITY FOOTBALL
THEMED EVENTS**

CONTENTS

3	PLANNING AND PROMOTING A THEMED ROUND
3	BACKGROUND
3	PLANNING YOUR CLUB'S INVOLVEMENT IN A LEAGUE-WIDE THEMED ROUND
4	PLANNING A CLUB-BASED THEMED ROUND
4	PROMOTING THEMED ROUND EVENTS
4	FUNDING A THEMED ROUND
5	ANZAC ROUND
5	IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE PLANNING ANZAC ROUND
6	ORDER OF SERVICE FOR A COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY
6	EVENT RESOURCES
7	COMMUNITY UMPIRING WEEK
7	IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE PLANNING COMMUNITY UMPIRING WEEK
7	ORDER OF EVENTS
8	INDIGENOUS ROUND – SIR DOUG NICHOLLS ROUND
8	IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE PLANNING INDIGENOUS ROUND
9	IDEAS FOR HOSTING INDIGENOUS ROUND
12	PRIDE ROUND
12	IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE PLANNING PRIDE ROUND
14	WOMEN'S COACHING MONTH
14	ACTIVATING WOMEN'S COACHING MONTH
15	BIG FREEZE COMMUNITY ROUND
15	IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE PLANNING BIG FREEZE COMMUNITY ROUND

PLANNING AND PROMOTING A THEMED ROUND

BACKGROUND

Footy is an important part of Australian culture. As a nationally recognised body, the AFL uses its stature in the community to highlight special causes throughout the regular season. These rounds often bring added colour, depth and meaning to the sport.

At a community football level, the same is true. Themed rounds allow footy clubs to acknowledge the broader community in which their members live, work and play. They also support important causes and can generate media exposure that showcases local footy clubs in a really positive light.

Symbolism in themed rounds such as commemorative playing jumpers can be a powerful tool, however clubs should also consider how they can use these rounds to educate officials, coaches, players and supporters on key topics that are connected to the round.

Themed rounds may actually be staged across two consecutive rounds to provide all clubs in the competition with the opportunity to host a celebration.

It is also important to ensure that these themed rounds aren't the only time of the year that education and messaging around the themes occur, rather they are used as a point in time to highlight and celebrate what your club is doing through the season.

PLANNING YOUR CLUB'S INVOLVEMENT IN A LEAGUE-WIDE THEMED ROUND

It is important to work with your league before getting too far into planning your event to ensure it supports the concept and can help you with any logistics.

- » Themed rounds are a great way to engage media and build the community profile of the club and code. Liaise with the league manager to ensure that league and club are working together in relation to media.
- » If arranging commemorative playing uniforms or match balls, all designs must be approved by the league prior to going into production. Allow sufficient time to gain this approval within the design and manufacture timeline.
 - Speak to league managers to understand any special requirements under the approval process, e.g artist permission to use Indigenous design, Department of Defence approval to use official logos and badges.
- » If incorporating a ceremony into the running of the day requiring changes to match times, all changes will need to be agreed with the opposition club, the umpires and the league, with a minimum of seven days advance notice.
- » Advise opposition club of activities and invite them to be active participants, do this well in advance so the other team has time to prepare accordingly.

PLANNING A CLUB-BASED THEMED ROUND

Individual clubs may choose to have a locally themed round to support an important cause (e.g. special fundraiser), acknowledge a key achievement (e.g. Premiership reunion), or significant person in the club's history (e.g. founding President).

These events should be discussed with the league before being locked in. A good guide is to follow the same steps as listed above for league-wide themed rounds.

PROMOTING THEMED ROUND EVENTS

- » Post messages on the club's website and social media
- » Distribute posters, flyers and invitations prior to the game
- » Notify the media
- » Identify and invite key community figures, e.g. Mayor, MP, Indigenous Elders, RSL Sub-branch representatives, etc.
- » Identify and invite current and past players and acknowledge their contribution.

FUNDING A THEMED ROUND

Depending on the activities that you have planned for a themed round, it may be beyond your club's budget. There are some avenues you may like to take to seek funding or sponsorship such as grants from your local government, state government or federal government.

Seeking sponsorship from local businesses is another option in funding your themed round activities. You may like to look at putting local business logos on uniforms or social media or asking the local business if they would like to come and promote their business on the day. You may also like to ask for in-kind support in way of BBQ supplies or assistance with the event.

ANZAC ROUND

The ANZAC Round pays tribute to the sacrifice of the servicemen and women of Australia and celebrates the ANZAC spirit - courage, sacrifice, endurance and mateship.

Traditionally, this round is played on the weekend (or weekends) that fall closest to ANZAC Day, i.e. 25 April.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE PLANNING ANZAC ROUND

USE OF EMBLEMS

All Australian Army emblems, including the Rising Sun badge (see on the right), are protected by legislation and can only be used where formal approval has been granted by the Department of Defence (RSL clubs and sub-branches are not authorized to grant permission).

Permission to use the Rising Sun badge can be sought from the Department of Defence via an [online application process](#). Clubs need to allow approximately four weeks for processing the application, which must be factored into the timeline for producing commemorative jumpers, etc.. Clubs will need to present the league with proof of the approval to use the emblem when submitting jumper designs for endorsement.



ALTERNATIVES TO THE RISING SUN BADGE

The AFL and elite clubs use the ANZAC Appeal logo (see on the right) in relation to all ANZAC Round celebrations. Use of this logo is available to all community football clubs with high resolution images available from the AFL, requests to access to be made via the league manager.

Other alternatives as suggested by the Department of Defence include the following symbolic imagery which are not protected by legislation and do not require approval:

- » Poppy
- » Rosemary
- » Slouch hat
- » Soldier resting on reversed arms alongside wording "Lest we forget" or "We will remember them".



COMMEMORATIVE PLAYING JUMPERS

All uniform designs, including commemorative designs, must be approved by the league before being produced.

Once a club has the artwork it can contact the uniform supplier and they can assist with the process to have the jumpers produced. This can be a lengthy process so ensure that you allow adequate time for the process to be completed prior to your desired Indigenous round date, including gaining league approval for the design.

Clubs will need to be able to demonstrate to the League that it has approval for use of any Department of Defence emblems when submitting designs for approval.

ENGAGING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The Returned Services League (RSL) movement is Australia's largest ex-service organisation. RSL Sub-BrancheS connect veterans and their families to services and provide support through camaraderie, mateship, recreation, and commemorating service.

Sub-BrancheS are separate entities to licenced RSL Clubs, although some Sub-BrancheS may be co-located. RSL NSW and its Sub-BrancheS are a charity, whereas RSL Clubs are not. There are more than 320 Sub-BrancheS across the state of NSW.

Invitations should be extended to local Sub-Branche officials to attend ceremonies and participate in their conduct through roles such as reciting the Ode of Remembrance.

Other local organisations to consider engaging with include:

- » Australian Army Reserve Battalions
- » Australian Army Cadets
- » Australian Air Force Cadets
- » Australian Navy Cadets

Consider partnering with an organisation that provides support to ex-service men and women as an event day fundraiser. Potential partners include the local RSL Sub-Branche (preferred), Legacy, Soldier On, Australian Legion of Ex Servicemen and Women, etc..

ORDER OF SERVICE FOR A COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY

The Department of Veterans' Affairs suggests the following order of service for an ANZAC Day event via its [website](#). The items that are highlighted in yellow are those that are most feasible for a footy club to deliver on ground on match day.

- » Flags lowered to half-mast before the start of the service
- » Welcome speech (2 minutes)
- » Mounting of catafalque party (2 minutes)
- » Hymns or other music (2 to 4 minutes)
- » Prayers, poems, or readings (2 to 5 minutes)
- » Commemorative address by invited guest (3 to 5 minutes)
- » Wreath-laying (3 to 5 minutes)
- » Ode of Remembrance (1 minute)
- » The Last Post (1 minute 22 seconds)
- » Period of silence (1 or 2 minutes)
- » Reveille (1 minute 1 second) or The Rouse (22 seconds) while flags are raised
- » National Anthem (1 to 3 minutes)
- » Dismounting of catafalque party (2 minutes) - if applicable
- » Closing remarks (2 minutes)
- » Official guests depart

EVENT RESOURCES

The Department of Veterans' Affairs website provides an '[ANZAC Day Kitbag](#)' includes sample speeches, the Ode of Remembrance, music suggestions, the National Anthem, Last Post, etc.

Clubs should consider arranging portable public address systems to ensure that speeches and music can be heard by all in attendance.

COMMUNITY UMPIRING WEEK

The objective of Community Umpiring Week is to thank our umpires as well as increase the awareness of umpiring as a choice and as an additional activity to playing. This week promotes the benefits of umpiring to attract new umpires to the game.

Messaging will highlight why umpiring is a great alternative to playing, as well as the benefits of umpiring. Benefits including 'get fit, get paid, have fun', learning new skills, all while learning about the game.

Typically, this week is normally celebrated in early to mid May (approximately round 9 of the AFL competition).

IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE PLANNING COMMUNITY UMPIRING WEEK

As the number of football participants and teams grows, so does the need for umpires. The more your club celebrates the critically important contribution of umpires across the season, but particularly during Community Umpiring Week, the more likely it is to be able to recruit umpires.

Consider making announcements on the match day, and ensuring that all at the ground can clearly hear these messages, e.g. hire a portable PA.

Consider additional recognition for Umpires on the day, e.g. free food and/or drinks through the canteen for Umpires (if your club doesn't already do this as 'business as usual').

ENGAGING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Be sure to look at options such as:

- » Promotion on all social media channels before the round, and after with photos/videos from the day
- » Promotion through local media (engage with league manager about this)
- » Key messaging at the ground on the day, consider use of a PA

People that are present on match day are those that have a direct connection to footy and are most likely to take up umpiring so ensure they see umpires being celebrated and having a positive experience. This needs to occur across the entire season, not just on one occasion!

ORDER OF EVENTS

Prior to the start of each match:

- » Players to line up on field and shake hands with the umpires
- » Host club to read out the following script whilst players shake hands with the umpires:

"The {insert names of both participating clubs} would like to acknowledge the efforts and contributions of all the local community umpires involved in our competitions. Thank you for providing the opportunity for our teams to play every weekend, as well as helping to educate our players."

INDIGENOUS ROUND – SIR DOUG NICHOLLS ROUND

The Sir Doug Nicholls Round (Indigenous Round) celebrates and highlights the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to the game of football and to our country. The round celebrates the relationship between the game and Indigenous Australia by connecting AFL fans to Indigenous culture.

Traditionally, Indigenous Round is held in mid to late May (approximately Round 10 of the AFL competition).

IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE PLANNING INDIGENOUS ROUND

IS YOUR CLUB CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE?

Before you begin with implementing new programs or initiatives to increase Indigenous participation it is important that you assess how culturally inclusive your club is.

- » Do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel comfortable, connected and valued at your club?
- » Is your club welcoming to the Indigenous community?
- » Most importantly, does your club have a zero tolerance approach to racial discrimination?

Please read 'Making your club culturally inclusive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people' to ensure that you are taking appropriate steps to be culturally inclusive. You can also read the specific Community Football Indigenous Round guide [here](#).

ENGAGING THE LOCAL ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITY

It is important to engage the local community in planning your Indigenous round.

- » Identify and invite any local Aboriginal organisations or community groups to be involved in planning and running activities on the day. If you cannot identify any local Aboriginal organisations or community groups, reach out to your local council as they may be able to provide you a contact to assist in this process.
- » Request input and seek advice on cultural activities and ceremonies from relevant Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people/organisations.

START SIMPLE

When considering what your club may like to do for Indigenous Round it is a good idea to consider what your club has the resources to deliver, what your club can afford and what will be sustainable. It is best to ensure that your club participates respectfully and builds a base to complete more activities in the future. It doesn't need to be overly complicated or cost a lot for your club to hold an Indigenous Round.

PROMOTE YOUR INDIGENOUS ROUND

- » Link to other NAIDOC/Reconciliation Week events to help promote game and build a week of celebration within the community
- » Invites to Elders and any Aboriginal community members and groups as guests

FUNDING YOUR INDIGENOUS ROUND

Grants may be listed under sport sections, NAIDOC activities, reconciliation activities or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander grants.

IDEAS FOR HOSTING INDIGENOUS ROUND

NAMING YOUR CLUB'S INDIGENOUS ROUND

Naming your club's Indigenous round after someone or something culturally significant is a great opportunity to localise the Round. You may consider naming the round after a past Indigenous player, or with consultation of the local Indigenous people you may name the round in the local language. You may also like to play for a perpetual shield or cup named after the local traditional custodians.

FLAG RAISING

Starting off your Indigenous round with raising the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander flag is a great way to show respect to Indigenous people. You may like to ask an Indigenous player/past player to raise the flag or even engage a local Aboriginal Elder or community member.

MINUTE OF SILENCE

Holding a minute of silence is a respectful way to pay homage to the history of Aboriginal people, especially those that have passed away. This is something that you could introduce and ask the playing group, officials and spectators all participate in.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Anyone can do an Acknowledgement of Country. This is an opportunity for your club to acknowledge the traditional owners of the country which your football club is on. This may be spoken over a public address system, or spoken in front of the playing group.

WELCOME TO COUNTRY

A Welcome to Country can only be performed by an Aboriginal person who is a traditional owner of the area where the Welcome to Country will be performed.

SMOKING CEREMONY

A smoking ceremony is a cultural cleansing ceremony that involves burning of specific leaves to create smoke. Aboriginal people have been performing this ceremony for thousands of years. This is something that you may be able to plan when you organise a Welcome to Country.

CULTURAL DANCERS

You may ask cultural dancers to attend and dance at the event to display and celebrate their culture. You may be able to access cultural dancers or contacts for cultural dancers through your local Indigenous organisation.

MUSICIANS

Indigenous round is a great opportunity to showcase local Indigenous musicians and talent. You may be able to seek out expressions of interest for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performers who would like to perform or reach out to your local Indigenous community for contacts.

GROUND MARKINGS

Marking the oval with ground paint is a great visual inclusion for Indigenous round. Some options include painting an aboriginal flag in the centre circle or painting the 50-metre arcs in red, black and yellow.

HALFTIME EVENT

Hosting a halftime event with past Indigenous players/coaches and inviting local Indigenous community members is a fantastic relationship building opportunity and a great way to acknowledge the contribution of past Indigenous players and coaches. You may ask a current or past player if they would like to speak at this event also.

INDIGENOUS DESIGN JUMPERS

Having an Indigenous designed guernsey is a great way to engage a local Indigenous artist, this may be someone within the local community or a current or past player/coach.

Payment should be discussed prior to the artwork being produced so that everyone is clear as to whether this is an in-kind artwork or a paid job. The artist needs to provide a letter (or similar) that grants permission to the club to reproduce the artwork on uniforms and this will need to be provided to the League when seeking approval for the uniform design.

Once the club has the artwork it can contact an approved uniform supplier and they can assist with the process to have the jumpers produced. This can be a lengthy process so ensure that you allow adequate time for the process to be completed prior to your desired Indigenous round date, including gaining League approval for the design.

You may like to keep the jumpers to utilise for following years Indigenous games or you may like to auction the match worn jumpers after the game to raise money for the club.

MERCHANDISE

Having Indigenous designed merchandise is a great way to engage a local Indigenous artist and include the entire football club and supporters within Indigenous round. Similar to Indigenous design jumpers, see above for considerations such as engaging an artist, payments and permissions, and artwork design.

Merchandise can be sold to players, officials and community/supporters to raise money for the club. Some great ideas for merchandise are scarfs, beanies, hats or even incorporating an Indigenous design into your whole club polo or training top.

AUCTION/RAFFLE ARTWORK

Purchasing artwork from a local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander artist or utilising the artwork you may have used for the Indigenous round design to raffle or auction is a great fundraising option and a great way to engage the community/supporters in the activities of Indigenous round.

GAME BALL

Having a game ball designed with Indigenous art is a statement and a great way to engage a local Indigenous artist, this may be someone within the local community or a current or past player/coach. Payment should be discussed prior to the artwork being produced so that everyone is clear as to whether this is an in-kind artwork or a paid job.

The League will have to approve the design and match balls will need to be produced by Sherrin.

DECORATIONS

Decorating the clubrooms or common areas is a nice way to visually celebrate Indigenous round. Use red, black and yellow colours to represent the Aboriginal flag and blue, green, white and black colours to represent the Torres Strait Islander flag. Clubs may like to decorate with balloons, streamers, pictures of past Indigenous players, or having a cake/cupcakes made displaying the Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander flags to be cut at halftime or sold at the canteen.

ARMBANDS

Wearing black tape or red, black, and yellow tape as armbands is a way of showing respect to those who have passed away. It is a sign of mourning to wear armband tape. This is a way to acknowledge the history of Aboriginal people.

ACTIVITIES

Additional activities for Indigenous round may include having face painters painting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.

RELATIONSHIPS

Clubs may like to ask Indigenous organisations if they would like to bring banners to display or if they have a marquee they would like to set up at the event.

PRIDE ROUND

Pride Round is a celebration of diversity and inclusivity within the game and community.

The AFL aspires to ensure everyone feels welcome and safe be their authentic selves whilst participating, watching and enjoying our great game.

International Pride Day is 28 June, so it is appropriate to celebrate Pride Round on a weekend or weekends that fall closest to this date.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE PLANNING PRIDE ROUND

IS YOUR CLUB INCLUSIVE?

Before you begin with implementing new programs or initiatives to demonstrate your support of the LGBTQI+ community it is important that you assess how culturally inclusive your club is.

- » Do members of the LGBTQI+ community feel comfortable, connected and valued at your club?
- » Is your club welcoming to the LGBTQI+ community?
- » Most importantly, does your club have a zero tolerance approach to vilification and discrimination?

SYMBOLISM

The six colour Pride Flag is one of the most well-known and used LGBTQI+ flags throughout history, with the rainbow theme being widely adopted to represent Pride initiatives.



Incorporating rainbow themes into uniform designs (e.g. rainbow socks) is a highly visually effective means of promoting the Pride Round.

The Transgender Flag is another symbol that is commonly used in relation to Pride events.



EDUCATION

Symbolism can be a powerful tool, but clubs should also consider the challenges faced by significant proportions of the LGBTIQ+ community in participating what have traditionally been male dominated sports.

Building on positive acts of symbolism, clubs should investigate options to educate the committee, coaches, and players the best approaches to change homophobic language and behaviour in Australian sport.

The AFL has a dedicated LGBTIQ+ page [here](#) which provides information on our partnership with Pride in Sport, as well as links to the gender diversity policies and resources that can support clubs and communities.

The Gender Diversity Policy Companion Guide is a great resource for Leagues & Clubs with dedicated sections for each. It can be found in the AFL's [resources page](#).

TRAINING PROVIDERS

Clubs can partner with organisations that are specifically established to provide education programs and resources, such as:

[Pride in Sport](#) is a national not-for-profit sporting inclusion program specifically designed to assist sporting organisations of all levels with the inclusion of employees, athletes, coaches, volunteers and spectators with diverse sexualities and genders. The world-first Pride in Sport Index (PSI) benchmarks and assesses the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people across all sporting contexts.

[Stand Up Events](#) is a Not-for-profit Incorporated Association dedicated to fighting sexual and gender discrimination in Australian Sport, in life. Our primary mission is to create safe, welcoming and inclusive sporting cultures for the LGBTIQ+ Community.

[Play by the Rules](#) is a unique collaboration between Sport Integrity Australia, Sport Australia, the Australian Human Rights Commission, the government departments of sport, anti-discrimination, and human rights. Play by the Rules provides information, resources, tools and free online training to increase the capacity and capability of administrators, coaches, officials, players, parents and spectators to assist them in preventing and dealing with discrimination, harassment, child safety, inclusion and integrity issues in sport.

Play by the Rules offers two free courses which are recommended by the AFL:

- » [Inclusive Coaching Course](#)
- » [Creating an LGBTI+ Inclusive Club](#)

WOMEN'S COACHING MONTH

Women's Coaching Month presented by BHP is an opportunity to celebrate and promote Women in Coaching through a series of assets, programs & initiatives both at a national and state level. The intended outcome of which, is to generate excitement, celebrate the success of our current women in coaching, legitimise the coaching pathway for women and girls, and of course, recruit more women in to coaching.

Women's Coaching Month was run for the first time in 2021 and gained a significant amount of interest and traction right across the football network.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE MONTH

Throughout the month of July, the following assets and initiatives will be delivered at a National level:

- » Stakeholder Kit to encourage the States and wider football community to celebrate WCM
- » Women's Coaching Month launched with Hypereel video celebrating Women in Coaching
- » State activation events
- » Series of targeted EDM's
- » Website articles and social media posts showcasing prominent Women in Coaching
- » National AFL She Can Coach program presented by BHP
- » Sharing of community resources for Clubs and Coaches to support women in coaching, as well as coaches of women & girls

ACTIVATING WOMEN'S COACHING MONTH

- » Promote on social media
- » Highlight women coaches at your club or male coaches who champion women's coaching pathways
- » Promotion of women coaches through local media
- » Hold a club event to showcase women coaches and pathways from player to coach

BIG FREEZE COMMUNITY ROUND

FightMND was established by AFL legend, Neale Daniher, in 2014 with the purpose of finding effective treatments and ultimately a cure for Motor Neurone Disease.

The most prominent fundraising initiative of the FightMND organisation is the Big Freeze at the G, which is held annually across the June long weekend.

FightMND will be staging a Big Freeze Community Round in the week following the Big Freeze at the G. Clubs will have the opportunity to buy Big Freeze socks to be worn by players during matches, with the sale of these socks raising much needed funds for FightMND. Socks can be purchased [here](#).

IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE PLANNING BIG FREEZE COMMUNITY ROUND

SEEK APPROVAL BEFORE PURCHASING SOCKS

Wearing different socks to those previously approved by the League constitutes a change of uniform design and will require approval. Ensure approval is sought in sufficient time for orders to be placed and socks delivered ahead of the round.

Provide early advice to the planned match day opponent and invite them to be involved in all planned activities on the day.

PROMOTE YOUR BIG FREEZE COMMUNITY ROUND

FightMND has developed template promotional resources for use across various social media platforms. Contact your League Manager to access these resources.

PROMOTE THE BIG FREEZE CAUSE

Remember that the Big Freeze is the main fundraising avenue for FightMND and people are able to get involved beyond just the activity at your club. Promote the [FightMND message and website](#) in all media releases, interviews, and on match day at the ground.

INCORPORATING OTHER ACTIVITIES INTO THE DAY

Clubs may wish to include other activities into the day as further avenues to raise funds, e.g. ice bucket challenge, frozen slide, etc. If these activities require a change to the usual match day timing, these changes will need to be agreed to by the away club, and by the League. These agreements need to be secured by a minimum of seven days ahead of the match day.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Wherever a club activity is associated with promoting FightMND, content can be shared with the AFL and we may be able to showcase that content via AFL social media channels. Contact your league manager for more information.

THIS IS *US*

