MEDIA RELEASE
February 14, 2011

Former Australian cricketer Ryan Campbell pitches in for FeBLUary

Saturday 19 February is National FeBLUary Day – a day where cricket clubs and associations across Australia will “turn blue” to create awareness of depression and anxiety – and beyondblue: the national depression initiative.

Former Australian cricketer, beyondblue Ambassador and Perth-based Network TEN Sports presenter Ryan Campbell will join thousands of Australian cricket players on Saturday February 19 for the annual FeBLUary campaign “Blue Day”.

Cricketers can turn ‘blue’ by wearing beyondblue wrist and sweat bands and giving out beyondblue information to friends and family.

FeBLUary originated from a partnership between Southern District Cricket Club, the South Australian Cricket Association (SACA) and beyondblue: the national depression initiative in 2008. This year, the previously South Australian based program is being expanded and all cricket clubs and associations throughout Australia are being urged to get involved.

Ryan has become a beyondblue Ambassador to speak about his personal experience of depression and to let people know that depression is an illness – not a weakness.

“Depression and anxiety don’t discriminate – they can affect anyone at any time, including cricket players,” he said. “I encourage all cricketers to turn blue on February 19 and help break down the stigma. It’s vital that the sporting community comes together to create awareness of depression and anxiety, and encourage each other to seek help early.”

beyondblue CEO Dawn O’Neil says it’s exciting to see sporting organisations taking a leading role in promoting awareness of depression, anxiety and related disorders.

“More than three million Australians currently have an anxiety disorder or depression – even very fit, elite sportspeople,” she says. “Asking for help is not a sign of weakness. The sooner you get the right treatment, the sooner you’re back in the game.”

SACA Cricket Operations Manager, Shane Bernhardt, is proud of the support shown by the cricketing community in South Australia over the past two years and looks forward to cricketers from across Australia getting involved in the 2011 campaign.

“We are encouraging every cricket club and association in Australia to be a part of FeBLUary,” he said. “The initiative is a perfect fit because cricket is the kind of sport where you spend a fair bit of time sitting and chatting to your mates. If we can get players talking about their mental health and looking out for one another, then that will have a flow-on effect to the rest of the sporting community.”

FeBLUary is a great way to raise awareness of depression and anxiety within your cricket community. All promotional materials are provided direct to you at no cost. For more information visit www.beyondblue.org.au/febluary

For more information on depression, anxiety, related drug and alcohol problems, available treatments and where to get help, go to www.beyondblue.org.au or call the beyondblue info line 1300 22 4636 (local call).

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