



Media Release

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Sydney FC and Melbourne Victory match to raise awareness about depression and anxiety

beyondblue is partnering with Sydney FC as it takes on Melbourne Victory this Saturday in the fourth annual *beyondblue* Hyundai A-League Cup.

Sydney FC are the current champions, after winning the Cup last season, and now has two wins under its belt, with Melbourne Victory keen to even the score in Saturday's game.

Despite fierce rivalry between the two sides, both are committed to the message that depression and anxiety don't discriminate, and can affect anyone of any age and stage in life, particularly men.

On Wednesday, Sydney FC players took part in an information session facilitated by *beyondblue* Board Director **Paul Howes**, where new *beyondblue* ambassador and former A-League player **Dez Girdali** gave a personal account of his experience with depression and anxiety, and his recovery.

beyondblue Chairman **The Hon. Jeff Kennett AC** said both teams were committed to promoting good mental health in the Australian community, and called on soccer fans to take action if they or someone they know is experiencing depression or anxiety.

"We know that one in seven Australian men is currently experiencing depression or anxiety or both, so it is vital our message is heard by everyone in the Australian community," he said.

"Too many men don't seek support because they are ashamed they can't cope or worried people will think they are weak, however we know that if left untreated, depression kills.

"Men are much less likely to seek support for these conditions than women and as a result, are three times more likely to die by suicide.

"To reduce this shocking statistic, men need to know how prevalent depression and anxiety are and where they can get confidential support easily.

"We are enormously grateful to Sydney FC and Melbourne Victory for playing in the *beyondblue* Hyundai A-League Cup for the fourth year running, and with their continued support, we can ensure Australian football players and fans are informed about the importance of maintaining good mental health, in the same way they look after their physical health."

Sydney FC Captain Alex Brosque said he is proud to be an ambassador for the *beyondblue* Hyundai A-League Cup and hopes it raises awareness and inspires people to tackle depression and anxiety.

"The *beyondblue* Cup is always a fantastic occasion between the Hyundai A-League's two biggest clubs. At Sydney FC, we are proud to be supporting such a worthy cause and helping to raise awareness of men's health issues and depression.

"The more we can do as professional footballers to stamp out the stigma surrounding mental health conditions the better. Saturday should be a great game between two of the current strongest teams in the league who both play very entertaining football. I hope everyone enjoys the day."

Melbourne Victory Captain Mark Milligan said his team was thrilled to be participating in the *beyondblue* Hyundai A-League Cup again.

"The *beyondblue* Hyundai A-League Cup has been a great initiative for the games between us and Sydney FC over recent years and everyone at Melbourne Victory is again thrilled to be involved raising awareness for depression and anxiety," he said.

"This is a very serious issue in our community and we are happy to support it and continue to bring the cause the forefront of people's minds."

Saturday's game will be preceded by the *beyondblue* March with Sydney FC Support Group "The Cove" from Parkside Bar to Allianz Stadium at 6.30pm.

Contact: *beyondblue*

Anne Wright 03 9810 6108/0411 035 695

Julie Foster 0409 433 501

beyondblue
PO Box 6100 Hawthorn West VIC 3122
beyondblue support service 1300 22 4636
www.beyondblue.org.au