



Media Release

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Beyond Blue and Hawks call on fans to 'play your role'

Beyond Blue and community partner Hawthorn Football Club are encouraging football fans to get involved in the Play Your Role campaign to mark the 2020 AFL Beyond Blue Cup.

Hawthorn and the Gold Coast Suns will take to the field on Sunday to compete for the Cup at a time when the mental health impacts of the coronavirus pandemic are being felt across Australia.

Fans are encouraged to support their mates by getting involved in the Play Your Role campaign and taking one of the following steps:

- **Look** out for changes in behaviour that may be a sign a mate might be struggling. They might seem on edge or are less social than usual.
- **Ask** how they are going. Even if they say they're fine, checking in shows you care.
- **Listen** openly and without judgement if a mate says they're not fine.
- **Support** a mate by making sure they know you're there for them and connect them with support if they need it.

Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman said the community partnership with Hawthorn took on even greater meaning this year.

"The coronavirus pandemic has affected the mental health of people in many ways, so the AFL Beyond Blue Cup is a reminder that we can all play a role in supporting others," Ms Harman said.

"Sports, including football, provide a great opportunity to provide that support on and off the field, to make mental health a part of everyday conversations, to reduce stigma and encourage support-seeking.

"So at a time when many people are doing it tough, I want to thank the Hawthorn Football Club for their continued support."

Hawthorn CEO Justin Reeves said the Hawks were proud of the long-standing partnership between the club and Beyond Blue.

"Over 15 years of partnership, we have worked together to help breakdown stigma around mental health and play our role in encouraging people to have important conversations about mental health," said Reeves.

"Our players rely on their teammates as a strong network of support on the field, and it's no different off the field.

"The Beyond Blue Cup is a great opportunity for our club to continue to raise awareness of and normalise discussions around mental health."

For more information on how you can play your role, visit beyondblue.org.au/playyourrole

The Beyond Blue Support Service is available via phone 24/7 on 1300 22 4636 or via beyondblue.org.au/get-support for online chat (3PM – 12AM AEST or email responses within 24 hours).

The new Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Service is available 24/7 at coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au. Its dedicated phone line, staffed by mental health professionals briefed on the pandemic response, is now open on 1800 512 348.

Contact: media@beyondblue.org.au

Beyond Blue
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