

CHARGING HOME:
The Big V was back on the big stage when Victoria played the Dream Team at the MCG on May 10. Sydney Swans star Adam Goodes was among Victoria's best with 21 disposals.



CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL

While the Hall of Fame Tribute Match was the centrepiece of the 150-year celebrations, football communities at all levels were also recognised.

This year marked 150 years since the first recorded match of Australian Football was played. Events and celebrations throughout the year recognised the significance of Australian Football at all levels of the game, from the AFL, through to the state leagues, community leagues and clubs, to NAB AFL Auskick and school football competitions.

The *Australian Football 150 Years* celebrations centred on a number of major programs, each of which generated significant positive publicity and community engagement and allowed Australian Football to penetrate new markets.

One of the key objectives of the year was to ensure that all football communities took part in the celebration of our game and many of the events were specifically targeted at local communities.

A number of *Australian Football 150 Years* ambassadors were appointed to take the message across the country, including Kevin Sheedy, Neale Daniher, Nathan Buckley, Luke Darcy, Jason McCartney, Mark Ricciuto and Chris Grant, and a series of columns were distributed to every local suburban and regional newspaper across Australia.

Community Football Weekend, May 9-11

Community Football Weekend was scheduled to provide the football community with the opportunity to celebrate 150 years of Australian Football.

No AFL matches were scheduled on that weekend, with football supporters encouraged to return to grassroots footy. Community football clubs were also urged to plan themed celebrations at their matches, focusing particularly on recognising the role of volunteers.

As part of the celebrations, 293 AFL players attended grassroots football matches, many to the clubs they played with as juniors. More than 1.6 million people attended grassroots football on that weekend, including many past AFL players.

The weekend also generated national print, television and radio media coverage valued at more than \$3.1 million, particularly through suburban and regional press.

ABC Radio devoted more than 11 hours of coverage over two days to stories from dozens of local community clubs in all Australian states and territories.

The Hall of Fame Tribute Match, May 10

The Hall of Fame Tribute Match was held at the MCG and saw 50 of the AFL's best players playing for Victoria and a Dream Team in front of 69,294 spectators.

The match generated a large amount of public interest, particularly surrounding team selection and game-day match-ups. Jonathan Brown (captain of Victoria) and Andrew McLeod (captain of the Dream Team),

played significant roles in driving publicity for the event, which attracted a television audience of about 1.7 million people.

The Dream Team jumper was designed to incorporate the names of 1500 community clubs outside Victoria.

The Australian Football Experience incorporating the NAB 150 Tour

The Australian Football Experience travelled around Australia from February to October, with free community events conducted as part of the NAB 150 Tour.

The tour visited about 110 towns and hosted more than 200 events in every state and territory. Through use of our Australian Football 150 Years ambassador appearances, interactive activities, musical performances and local school visits, the tour engaged people of all ages in football's special year.

The Australian Football Experience included a series of interactive activities built around a Sherrin-shaped dome, capable of holding 80 people, which highlighted the history of the game of Australian Football since 1858.

At each public event local, selected volunteers were presented with a commemorative plaque to recognise their outstanding contributions to Australian Football, further helping to instil the Australian Football 150 Years legacy among local communities.

Volunteer Recognition Program

In the 150th year of Australian Football, several initiatives were introduced to recognise the contribution of volunteers.

Through these initiatives, more than 3500 volunteers received some form of recognition:

- State Volunteer of the Year Awards, with winners from across the country formally recognised at the 2008 Toyota AFL Grand Final by AFL Commission Chairman Mike Fitzpatrick. As part of their award, the volunteers and their partners joined in the 2008 Toyota AFL Grand Final parade.
- 1400 volunteers received recognition over Community Football Weekend with either a commemorative polo shirt or certificate.
- 78 volunteers were presented with a commemorative plaque from an AFL ambassador in regional areas in conjunction with the Australian Football Experience road show. A further 81 volunteers were recognised with these commemorative plaques at regional awards nights.
- Two volunteers were profiled as part of Network Ten's Brownlow Medal coverage.
- Volunteers were profiled through the 150 years e-newsletters that were distributed widely to community level clubs across Australia.



KEY MOMENTS: The AFL commissioned artist Jamie Cooper to capture 150 years of Australian Football. *The Game That Made Australia* highlights key people, moments and events that have helped shape and influence the code since 1858. About 10,000 lithographs of the painting were distributed during the year, with the original on display in the foyer of AFL House, Docklands, Melbourne.

Kick Around Australia, August 7

Kick Around Australia was held on August 7, 150 years since the first recorded match of Australian Football was played. The day encouraged football enthusiasts around the country to have a kick of the footy or wear their teams' colours to celebrate football's birthday.

The AFL Schools Program played a key role in the promotion of the event, with 150 curriculum programs designed so that schools could celebrate the day with footy-themed lessons. More than 700 schools and 200,000 school children took part in the event.

In the wider community, the event was driven predominantly through publicity exercises, which included:

- Writing letters to every federal, state and local member of government, encouraging them to set up their own football-themed media events on the day.
- Sending kits with footballs and goal posts to Australian Defence Force bases around the world so that the troops could play a game of football on August 7. Stories of games and clinics being held in East Timor and Afghanistan were broadcast back into Australia.
- Creating a countdown to August 7 with an online and print media campaign, featuring photos of Australian identities with footballs.
- Sending footballs wrapped as birthday presents to media personnel, who used them as props on various television shows.

The year also saw Australian Football celebrated through a number of non-traditional mediums, allowing the game to penetrate markets not previously explored by the AFL.

- *The Australian Game of Football* (commissioned by the AFL and produced by Slattery Media Group) publication providing a historical account of the past 150 years of football. By November 2008, 30,000 copies had been sold, with a second print run projected for 2009.
- *The Game That Made Australia* – a painting by Melbourne artist Jamie Cooper depicting images of Australian Football at all levels and in all eras throughout 150 years. The painting was a key feature of the 2008



Kevin Sheedy, AFL 150-Year Ambassador

Kevin Sheedy made more than 90 appearances at various football-related activities throughout Australia in 2008. He visited every state and territory, and also visited the United States and South Africa.

During the year, Sheedy:

- Appeared at 150-Year 'Roadtrain' activities around Australia, including Melbourne, Ballarat, Hobart, Adelaide, Canberra, Merimbula, Moyston, Brisbane and Toowoomba.
- Attended the AFL Northern Territory Grand Final in Darwin and the Tiwi Island Grand Final.
- Was a guest of the USAFL at its national championships in Colorado Springs.
- Toured South Africa with the AIS-AFL Academy squad.
- Was keynote speaker at AFL national coaching conference on the Gold Coast.
- Was assistant coach of the Victorian team in the Hall of Fame Tribute Match at the MCG.
- Was involved in management and promotion of the 2008 International Cup in Melbourne and Warrnambool and was keynote speaker at the official dinner at Crown Palladium.
- Was keynote speaker at West Australian Football Hall of Fame function.
- Spoke at the launch of the \$14 million Australian Football stadium in Townsville.

Toyota AFL Grand Final pre-match entertainment. Some 10,000 lithographs of the painting were also distributed to various markets, including schools, community leagues and clubs, Australian Football International Cup participants, 500 small businesses and a selection of major corporations.

- *Footy Shorts* – a short film competition run in conjunction with the Melbourne International Film Festival that asked entrants to make a film based on what footy meant to them. More than 50 entries were received and tickets sold out for two screenings.
- *Focus on Footy* – a photographic exhibition held in the Crown Atrium in Melbourne that featured portraits of the game's personalities and characters, captured by 10 of Australia's leading photographers. The exhibition was the backdrop to the 2008 Brownlow Medal red carpet event.