



MEDIA RELEASE



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STREET FOOTBALL FESTIVAL KICKS OFF

The Big Issue Street Football Festival, *presented by NAB*, was launched at Darling Harbour today.

Launching the event, NSW Minister for Major Events George Souris announced the NSW Government had committed funding until 2015 to support staging The Big Issue Street Football Festival annually.

"The festival will not only showcase the power of sport to change lives, but bring together people from all walks of life for nine days of football action," Mr Souris said.

Staged on a purpose-built floating pitch at Cockle Bay, the festival will include the National Championships of The Big Issue's Community Street Soccer Program, which provides weekly training to homeless and marginalised men and women at 25 sites across the country. The festival will also incorporate a Government Agency Cup, a Corporate Cup and a junior competition.

"Staging our National Championships in Darling Harbour is a major boost to the program and our players," The Big Issue CEO Steven Persson said.

"Street Soccer transforms lives by reconnecting people with the community and this festival provides a wonderful opportunity for players from across the country to come together and meet other football lovers."

The Community Street Soccer Program has engaged more than 3500 Australians since it was launched by The Big Issue in 2007. Outcomes for participants include re-connection with family and the community, improved confidence and self-esteem, improved physical and mental health and a sense of belonging.

NAB Group Executive Business Banking Joseph Healy said: "We are pleased to support this community initiative and look forward to some great football action on this unique stage."

The free event runs from May 28 to June 5. The National Championships will be played on June 4-5.

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