

## MEDIA RELEASE: The Reclink Australia Football Grand Final Series 2017 - Including the Unincluded [1]

14 August 2017

Reclink Australia is excited to announce the 26<sup>th</sup> Reclink Football Grand Final Series will be held on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> August and Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017 at The Peanut Farm Reserve, Chaucer Street, St Kilda for what will be an action packed 2 days of football, community spirit and entertainment. The Reclink Football Grand Final Series attracts over 700 participants, volunteers, community agency staff, AFL personalities and radio commentators and will be broadcast live on Casey Radio 97.7 3SER community radio station.

Both days will kick off at 10am with Hon Greg Hunt MP delivering a Welcome speech and coin toss on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> August. The Collingwood Knights Vs Frankston Dolphins match will commence with a pre-game reflection to be delivered by Father Bob Maguire and the game will be called live by radio personalities Smokey Dawson, Crackers Keenan and Des Dowling. Appearances by AFL Players, retired AFL legends and leading sports women and men will provide the participants experiencing disadvantage a chance to meet some big names in sport.

*?Reclink Australia is delighted to have Hon Greg Hunt MP Minister for Sport launch the annual Reclink Football Grand Finals Series on 31<sup>st</sup> August at the Peanut Farm Reserve in St Kilda. Minister Hunt has had a long association with Reclink?s sport, recreation and art programs through his involvement with the Reclink Western Warrior Football Team, a Hastings based team for young people experiencing disadvantage including mental health, homelessness, addiction and domestic violence. Reclink Australia is greatly appreciative with the recent announcement by Minister Hunt of the Turnbull Government?s funding of \$2 million over two years for the Reclink National Program?.* **John Ballis, CEO Reclink Australia.**

The Reclink Football Series is the flagship program for Reclink Australia, an annual grass roots community grand final football series involving over 400 male and female players drawn from a range of community-based organisations to play an Australian rules football fixture over a 10-week

session. Participants in the Reclink football fixture are currently experiencing disadvantage including homelessness, mental illness and drug and alcohol addiction, to participate in a structured team based sport.

**Reclink Australia** is a national not-for profit organisation whose aim is to enhance the lives of people experiencing disadvantage or facing significant barriers to participation by providing sports and arts activities which help to engage some of the community's most vulnerable and isolated people. By including the unincluded? Reclink Australia has mobilised the vulnerable and helped them to build self-confidence, social skills and make life-choices often leading to work readiness and even employment. This social connectedness helps to break the downward spiral of self-destructive behaviour.

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