



MEDIA RELEASE

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Sporting club nabs top award in Oz for alcohol management

FEDERAL: Thurgoona Football Netball Club has today been announced as the nation's top sporting club for the responsible management of alcohol and for providing a safe and healthy environment. The club was presented with the National *Good Sports* 'Club of the Year' award last night at the Australian Drug Foundation's annual Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Oration at the State Library of Victoria.

The Australian Drug Foundation's *Good Sports* program is a free national initiative aimed at creating safe, healthy and family-friendly environments for community sporting clubs by helping them manage alcohol responsibly.

This year also marks the 10th Anniversary of the *Good Sports* program, which began as a pilot program involving 25 Victorian clubs in 2000 and now engages almost 4,000 sporting clubs across Australia.

"Since joining *Good Sports* in 2006, Thurgoona Football Netball Club has worked hard to turn around their harmful alcohol culture. Instead of news about drink driving offences and violence, we're now seeing on-field success, more members and new sponsorship deals," said John Rogerson, CEO Australian Drug Foundation.

"We know that sporting clubs are the hub of Australian communities and provide a unique setting for people to think about their drinking. And this club has made a great commitment to provide leadership within the community," added Mr Rogerson.

The *Good Sports* program helps clubs develop strategies including decreased reliance on alcohol to fund club operations, RSA trained bar staff and safe transport options to foster an environment welcoming of all community members.

Mr Tony Way, President Thurgoona Football Netball Club, said prior to joining the *Good Sports* program in May 2006, the club was in poor shape with a number of drink driving offences between members, irregularities with their liquor licensing and frequent violence, both on and off the field, associated with alcohol consumption.

"I would encourage all sporting clubs to get involved in this program and commit to it. It doesn't hold your club back, it makes it grow," said Mr Way.

Through a number of initiatives to turn the focus away from heavy drinking, Thurgoona has reaped many benefits, with a significant increase in club members, increase in annual turnover, achievement of one national sponsor and many smaller, local sponsors as well as no liquor licensing offences.

After four years of participating in the *Good Sports* program, the club is now winning premierships and reaping many rewards including:

- Increase of club members from 250 to 380 since 2006
- Increase of annual turnover (while decreasing alcohol sales) by \$78,000 per year
- Achievement of one national sponsor and many smaller, local sponsors
- Increase of spectator support from approximately 100 to 600 persons per match
- Zero drink driving offences committed by members since 2007
- Zero liquor licensing inconsistencies
- Zero reported incidents of violence or disturbance to the Albury Police
- Gaining a reputation from local authorities and the broader community as a healthy and family-friendly club, which is reinforced through their willingness to allow the general public to use the club facilities



"*Good Sports* has experienced such growth over the past decade. We now have a network of around 100 Project Officers around Australia delivering the program to their local communities," said Mr Rogerson.

For more information on the *Good Sports* program visit www.goodsports.com.au.

For media enquiries please contact Renee Lustman or Melody Trowse on 03 9278 8100 or 0430 948 380.

Australian Drug Foundation

Celebrating 50 years of service to the community, the Australian Drug Foundation is Australia's leading body committed to preventing alcohol and other drug problems in communities around the nation.

The Foundation reaches millions of Australians through community sporting clubs and also works with a wide range of Australians in governments, workplaces, health care settings and schools, offering educational information and campaigning for healthy and strong communities.

Good Sports

Good Sports is a nationwide program of the Australian Drug Foundation that helps sporting clubs become safer, healthier and more family friendly through the responsible management of alcohol. With almost 4,000 clubs participating nationwide, the *Good Sports* program is free to join and easy to sign up to. Visit www.goodsports.com.au