

Media Release

From the Department of Justice

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Footy players urged to look after their mates off the field

Footy great and AFL Coaches Association CEO Danny Frawley today called on Victoria's amateur footballers to take the lead in reducing alcohol-related violence and participate in this year's Wingman Off-Field Champion Awards.

Wingman is a partnership between the Victorian Government, the AFL Coaches Association, and a number of other sporting bodies, to address the issue of alcohol-related violence and the personal implications of antisocial behaviour.

Mr Frawley said the Off-Field Champion Awards recognised grassroots football players who demonstrated positive behaviour off the field, which set a positive example for their peers.

"The AFL Coaches Association is proud to be part of this great partnership which sees clubs across Victoria actively promoting the Wingman message," he said.

Mr Frawley was speaking at launch of the Off-Field Champion Awards program for the Southern Football League, where he was joined by Gabrielle Levine, South Eastern Metropolitan Regional Director for the Department of Justice.

"We are looking for players who are already making their mark on the footy field to step up and become champions off the field," said Ms Levine.

"The awards recognise those players who look out for their mates in social situations by helping them steer clear of potentially violent situations," she said.

The Off-Field Champion for each football league receives a \$250 cheque, while their club wins a \$250 sports equipment voucher and a commemorative football.

Ms Levine said the Wingman message extended to all young Victorians. "A Wingman is someone who keeps their friends safe and away from harm," she said.

"We want to see young people being able to enjoy a night out without being caught up in violent incidents that are fuelled by alcohol."

Wingman is a partnership between the Department of Justice, the AFL Coaches Association, Netball Victoria, and Surfing Victoria.

To date, more than 300 clubs from 16 amateur football leagues and 40 netball clubs across Victoria have signed up for the program.

Victorians can support the Wingman program by taking the Wingman pledge at www.wingman.org.au