



Essence of the Game **From Auskickers at the MCG to Hawthorn's premiership celebration**

Channel Seven and former AFL player and football filmmaker **Rob Dickson** present an amazing all access look into our unique Australian Game.

Hosted and narrated by **Nathan Buckley**, the *Essence of the Game* were allowed into the dressing rooms during the entire 2008 season to take a behind-the-scenes look at what makes football clubs tick, building to Hawthorn and Geelong on Grand Final day.

The documentary also celebrates the breadth of the game to everything from kids to international teams and what footy means to them.

Commissioned by the AFL and Seven to capture the 'essence of football', this documentary tracks a range of football stories from the elite to the grassroots including:

- never before seen vision of Hawthorn's celebration with the premiership cup in the middle of the MCG at 8pm on Grand Final night
- **Jonathan Brown** miked up during the Hall of Fame match
- unprecedented access to senior coaches through 2008's finals series and their strategies, including what was to become **Alistair Clarkson's** winning three-quarter time Grand Final address.
- exclusive access to the inner sanctum of many AFL clubs and coaches from season 2008
- West Coast first round draft pick **Nick Naitanui** and the lead up to his draft day
- stories from community and country football.
- Peace football team with players from Palestine and Israel
- Tiwi Island football
- School football system

AFL CEO Andrew Demetriou said Rob Dickson's outstanding work had long been known within the football industry, and he is delighted that Channel Seven will air this showpiece documentary.

"The 150th year of Australian Football, our only indigenous game, celebrated the link between football in the parks and the communities, and the game at the elite level," Mr Demetriou said.

"Rob went to every part of Australia, and every level of the game, in 2008 to record and recognise the pivotal role that Australian football plays in Australian society today.

"The Essence of the Game is a wonderful record of a year in the sport, and the place of the sport in our country."

Filmmaker Rob Dickson said *The Essence of the Game* captures moments from every element of the competition.

“Viewers will share the excitement of a young Auskicker as he runs onto the MCG on Grand Final day, witness the tension of a younger player as he endeavours to be drafted onto an AFL list and be there with AFL star Jonathan Brown as he prepares for the Australian Football Hall of Fame Tribute Match.”

Channel Seven Melbourne General Manager Lewis Martin explained the documentary will take fans further into footy than ever before:

“We celebrate the game from the kids to the country towns and local communities to the stars. The *Essence of the Game* is a unique one-off insight into footy with never before seen access. The audience will go behind closed doors on Grand Final Day and see the very elite players like you've never seen them before.”

Friday March 20, 8.30pm Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth
Sunday March 22, 11am Sydney, Brisbane

About Rob Dickson

- Former AFL player Hawthorn 17 games, Brisbane 2 games. Ex- Morwell
- *The Passion to Play* (2001) - documentary
- *Access All Areas: Shane Crawford Exposed* (2004) - documentary

For further information:

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