



# Essendon Football Club Reconciliation Action Plan

Image courtesy  
of the Herald Sun

Pictured (L to R) - Dallas Nummar, Paul Ngarrri, Neil Melpi, Leroy Jetta, Robert Warnir, Abel James Bunduck, Kurt Bunduck, Wagon Dumoo (obscured), Somersault - Paul Pupuli.



## LETTER FROM THE ESSENDON FOOTBALL CLUB

The Essendon Football Club has had, and continues to have, a significant relationship with Indigenous Australians.

Indigenous players have contributed greatly to the club's on-field success in the past. Our current playing list includes a number of highly talented players who we expect will contribute significantly to our future on-field success.

Off-the-field, our relationships have been equally important.

Michael Long has played a very significant leadership role in putting Indigenous issues on the agenda; firstly as an Essendon player in highlighting the problem of racial vilification in the AFL; and secondly, and more recently, in his walk to Canberra, that led to the formation of The Long Walk.

The Club now has a number of Indigenous community programs and relationships with Indigenous organisations, including our Partnership Programs with Wadeye and Tiwi Islands in the Northern Territory, our Barpirdhila mentoring program staged in conjunction with Rumbalara Football & Netball Club, our partnership with The Long Walk, and our promotion of the Dreamtime at the G game.

It is a natural progression therefore for this club to initiate a Reconciliation Action Plan. Through this Plan, we set

ourselves some bold actions to help "close the gap" between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

At the same time, we seek to improve the understanding and awareness of our staff of Indigenous challenges and to continue to position this Club's standing in the community.

In summary, the RAP will provide us with a focus and ensure our programs and objectives fall into line with those on the national agenda.

The Club sees its commitment to this plan as completely in line with its operating objectives and Essendon looks forward to continue to work towards the delivery of meaningful and lasting outcomes for Indigenous Australia.

Peter Jackson  
CEO and Managing Director  
Essendon Football Club

Ray Horsburgh  
Chairman  
Essendon Football Club

## OUR INDIGENOUS PROGRAMS

Essendon Football Club (EFC) delivers three main Indigenous Programs – partnerships with two Northern Territory Indigenous communities and the Barpirdhila Program, focusing on Indigenous young people in the Shepparton region of Victoria.

In addition, the Club has partnerships with The Long Walk and two Indigenous sporting clubs (Rumbalara Football Netball Club and Tiwi Bombers Football Club).

### Rumbalara Football Netball Club Partnership

The partnership with Rumbalara Football Netball Club in Shepparton aims to use the Essendon Football Club as a vehicle to help build the capacity of Rumbalara and the local Indigenous community, and to increase awareness of indigenous issues in the broader community.

Through the partnership, Essendon players and staff will act as mentors to Rumbalara members and participate in various leadership development activities.

### Barpirdhila Program

Essendon Football Club in conjunction with the Bill Hutchison Foundation launched the Barpirdhila Program – an initiative that provides companies with an opportunity to make a meaningful and long-term contribution to deliver education and employment outcomes for young Indigenous Australians – on 17 April 2009.

The aim of the program is for companies - large and small - to support young Indigenous people to complete secondary school to the stage necessary to qualify for tertiary education, traineeship or apprenticeship, and to then guarantee their placement in a company as a graduate trainee or apprentice as appropriate.

### Wadeye & Tiwi Islands Community Partnership Program

Essendon Football Club has formed partnerships with two indigenous communities - Tiwi Islands and Wadeye - as part of the AFL Club Community Partnership Program.

The Australian Football League (AFL) Club Community Partnership Program is a long-term engagement strategy to build the capacity of the partner communities by encouraging Indigenous people to reach their full potential. Essendon works in conjunction with local schools and agencies to engage young people in school and sporting activities.

The club has also established - through the assistance of its Indigenous Program Partner DESA Australia ([desa.com.au](http://desa.com.au)) – remote communication between the school in Wadeye and EFC, allowing for more regular communication between players and young people in the community.

The partnerships are supported by the AFL and the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

### The Long Walk (TLW)

The Long Walk Trust, inspired by Essendon great Michael Long, is a charity that works for Indigenous wellbeing by raising awareness and support for Indigenous led initiatives that promote culture and work for change.



Raymond Ritchie, Jarrod Atkinson  
and Daen Winmar help launch  
Essendon's Barpirdhila Program

Michael Long celebrates a goal in the 1993 Premiership season

## MICHAEL LONG

Michael Long is one of the most recognisable Indigenous figures in AFL football. He played for the Essendon Football Club between 1989 and 2001, was a member of two premiership sides and the winner of the 1993 Norm Smith Medal.

Michael championed the Indigenous cause within the AFL. In 1995, Michael made a stand against racial abuse, following an on-field incident with another player, asserting that racism had no place in sport.

Ultimately this led to Michael being one of the pioneering forces behind the racial abuse code that was adopted by the AFL in the 1990s.

Michael retired from football in 2001.

On 21 November 2004 Michael Long embarked on an historic trek, walking from his home in the suburbs of Melbourne all the way to Parliament House in Canberra – more than 650 kilometres away.

After returning home from yet another Indigenous funeral, Michael decided that something needed to be done about the plight of his people. He took it upon himself to get Indigenous issues back on the national agenda and resolved to meet with Prime Minister John Howard to discuss his concerns... even if he had to walk all the way to Canberra to do it.

Michael was joined on the road by Indigenous and non-Indigenous supporters from all over Australia. Some walked in support for an hour, some for a day and some walked all the way to Canberra. As the walkers passed through the Victorian countryside, local people came out to meet them, offering encouragement, support and assistance.

Seeing both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people rallying together, Michael's Long Walk became a mission of hope. The troupe started walking out of frustration and pain but as they walked they began to understand that Australians from all walks of life had been looking for a way to express their support for Aboriginal culture for a long time.

When he heard about this amazing journey, the Prime Minister agreed to meet Michael when he arrived in Canberra.

The Long Walk officially came to an end on Thursday, 2 December 2004 as the walkers arrived in Canberra. The final leg wound its way through the heart of the city and the weary walkers were joined by thousands of supporters as they made their way to the Prime Minister's office. On Friday, 3 December 2004 Michael Long finally met with Prime Minister John Howard.

In addition to continuing to champion this cause through The Long Walk, Michael is still heavily involved in football. He has an ambassadorial role with the AFL, works closely with AFL Northern Territory and continues to provide support to Essendon's Indigenous programs in the top end.

The Long Walk is now a charity that works for Indigenous wellbeing by raising awareness and gathering support for Indigenous lead projects. It currently supports four programs that develop Indigenous leadership. Essendon Football Club became an official partner of The Long Walk in 2008. Essendon Football Club's administration centre at Windy Hill is now home to the head office of The Long Walk and its Project Manager, Kim Kruger. This position is jointly funded by the Essendon Football Club and The Long Walk.

More details about The Long Walk's supported programs can be found at [www.thelongwalk.com.au](http://www.thelongwalk.com.au)

Essendon Football Club's partnership with the charity includes joint funding of its administration which is now based at Windy Hill, as well as working together on four programs:

- Essendon's annual Dreamtime at the G clash with Richmond now coincides annually with The Long Walk;
- Indigenous Youth R on the Ball, where up to 100 Indigenous youth participate in Essendon's harm prevention program;
- The Indigenous Cultural exchange between The Wadeye Palngun Wurnangat (Women's Association) which promotes women's and family activities and the Dandenong community in Victoria; and
- This Reconciliation Action Plan.

### Dreamtime at the G

In 2005 Essendon Football Club joined the AFL, Richmond Football Club, the MCC and The Long Walk in establishing the annual Dreamtime at the G game - a match dedicated to celebrating the role Australian Rules Football has played in building bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia.

In the past four years the game has grown significantly - so much so the AFL was encouraged to establish an annual Indigenous round with the Dreamtime at the G game the flagship event. In 2009 the game attracted a match day audience of in excess of 70,000 people and a television audience of just under one million people.

## Our Vision for Reconciliation

The Essendon Football Club has benefitted from the outstanding contribution of some remarkable Indigenous Australian talent.

- Michael Long
- Dean Rioli
- Gavin Wanganeen
- Norm McDonald
- Derek Kickett

The on-field excitement these names have created has spilled over to the off-field engagement of the Australian community. Today programs such as partnerships with the Northern Territory communities Wadeye and Tiwi, the Rumbalara Football and Netball Club in Shepparton and The Long Walk exist as Essendon's new ways of engaging with Indigenous people and communities.

EFC undertakes this Reconciliation Action Plan to ensure the club continues to engage with Indigenous communities respectfully and for our mutual benefit. EFC recognises the disadvantage Indigenous people face as a result of policies and attitudes of exclusion, marginalisation, dispossession and control. This has resulted in lower standards of health, education, employment, housing and exclusion from Australian society. These are proven factors that contribute to the 11 year lower life expectancy of Indigenous Australians when compared with non-Indigenous community members.

EFC recognises that for Indigenous people to enjoy the same health, education, and employment standards that our average

supporter enjoys, we need to commit to do what's within the club's resources, and what aligns with our club's core business of running a football club, to make this happen.

EFC prides itself on its values of Heritage and Tradition, Professionalism, Community and Success. These align with the values of the Indigenous communities with which we are engaged. To be successful EFC recognises Indigenous heritage and tradition and the need for Indigenous community inclusion and participation.

Indigenous tradition and heritage and the achievements of the Indigenous community need to be celebrated through events like Dreamtime at the G. EFC values its Professionalism and commits to proactive personal and professional development for Indigenous employees, embracing cultural competency for all EFC staff and maximizing any EFC resources in the areas that are proven determinants of wellbeing for Indigenous Australians.

We want to see more paid up Indigenous Essendon members who support our club from a level playing field and well into the future. This can only happen when Indigenous people are on the same footing as the rest of our supporters and have access to education, jobs, housing and are in good health.

Michael Long continues to march on in the pursuit of improving Indigenous wellbeing through the work of The Long Walk. EFC looks forward to benefitting, on and off the field, from many more Michael Longs to come. EFC will continue to develop our current crop of Indigenous footballers with the hope that the names of Davey, Ryder, Lovett, Lovett-Murray, Dempsey, Atkinson and Jetta might one day be added to the list of five above.

### Our business

Essendon Football Club is a not-for-profit sporting and community club. It employs over 200 administrative staff and 47 professional AFL players. Currently, the club employs 9 Indigenous staff, including 7 players. It has over 42,000 members and 1.1 million supporters nationally. Besides the core business of football, the club operates the Windy Hill venue and Melton Country Club, two retail outlets, a fitness centre and a range of community programs.

## Our RAP

The EFC RAP was developed by a Working Group consisting of:

- Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director
- General Counsel and Strategic Development Manager
- Learning and Development Co-ordinator
- Indigenous Player
- Non-Indigenous Player
- The Long Walk Project Manager
- Koori Alcohol Action Plan Project Officer - Department of Human Services
- The working group was chosen for its diversity as well as representation from all levels of the football club

The working group examined the club's existing Indigenous programs and reviewed them against how they meet the club's core business of football as well as the needs of the Indigenous communities with which we work.

**1. Relationships:** EFC recognises the importance of fostering sustainable, respectful relationships to achieve outcomes for Indigenous people and the club. In other words going out and talking and listening to Indigenous communities and recognising their know-how.

**Focus area:** Indigenous Community Inclusion and Participation, identifying opportunities to engage with Indigenous communities

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
Establish RAP Working Group consisting of CEO and MD, General Counsel and Strategic Development Manager, Learning and Development Co-ordinator, Indigenous Player, Non-Indigenous Player, Community Manager, Project Manager, The Long Walk, Koori Alcohol Action Plan Project Officer, Department of Human Service CEO Completed	CEO	Complete Feb & Aug annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working Group established. RAP Working Group meetings held quarterly.</li> <li>6 monthly RAP progress reports to Board/executive.</li> </ul>
Establish Indigenous Programs Reference Group with Community Manager as convenor to report to RAP Review Group	Community Manager	Reference Group established Oct 09 * Meeting held by 28 Aug annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reference group established and to include Wadey, Tiwi, Rumbalara and The Long Walk representative along with an EFC Indigenous employee, and a local Indigenous community representative</li> <li>Reference group meets/consults once annually.</li> </ul>
Improve engagement with Indigenous community partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wadey Partnership Program</li> <li>Tiwi Islands Community Program</li> <li>Rumbalara Partnership (Affiliate Club)</li> </ul>	Community Manager	Oct 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Six Participants in Wadey Mentoring program</li> <li>Six Female participants attend Dreamtime at G and The Long Walk</li> <li>Two visits by EFC to Tiwi Islands to deliver sports/health program</li> <li>20 team members through On the Ball including an activity at Windy Hill Fitness Centre</li> <li>One employee exchange / development opportunity (non football department)</li> </ul>
Foster relationships with Indigenous leaders in sectors other than sport by promoting their capability in the community	CEO Executive Assistant	Jan 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four Indigenous leaders added to VIP list in 2010 and invited to key events</li> </ul>
Establish an Indigenous player and staff network.	Athlete Development Co-ordinator	Jan 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indigenous player and staff network established.</li> <li>Indigenous players and staff invited to meet quarterly.</li> </ul>

**2. Respect:** EFC recognises Australia has a unique Indigenous cultural heritage and that Australians are proud to be different. By improving the understanding of our people and building respect for Indigenous people and culture, EFC aims to promote inclusiveness for all Australians.

**Focus area:** Recognise Indigenous Heritage and Tradition, foster Awareness of contemporary culture, Embrace Cultural Difference and Celebrate the achievements of the Indigenous community

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
Increase the club's influence on Dreamtime at the G to deliver an event that involves and meets the expectations of the Indigenous community	TLW Project Manager Media Dept	June 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 survey conducted with Indigenous community through TLW newsletter and EFC website</li> <li>1 local Indigenous performer and 2 Indigenous production personnel engaged</li> </ul>
Create a welcoming environment for Indigenous employees by performing a Welcome to Country on their first day of employment	Athlete Development Coordinator Learning & Development Coordinator	Jan 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome to Country ceremony performed by Traditional Owners and attended by all new staff, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous players and administrative staff.</li> <li>Welcome to Country protocol to be explained to attending staff and players.</li> </ul>
Create a welcoming environment for Indigenous community by including an Indigenous element in selected EFC events through consultation with the Indigenous player and staff network	Marketing Services Manager	Oct 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 element of Indigenous content at EFC events including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family Day</li> <li>Walk in Harmony</li> <li>Unity Cup</li> <li>Crichton Medal</li> <li>'84/'85 Anniversary Dinner</li> <li>Dick Reynolds Club Lunch</li> <li>Essendon Women's Network Lunch</li> <li>First Year Members induction</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Cultural competency education for all staff including players	People & Culture	Oct 2010	All staff to undertake cultural competency education
Indigenous profile in Hall of Fame	Hall of Fame Curator	Oct 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Indigenous player inducted into the Hall of Fame</li> <li>Develop permanent display on Indigenous players and their contribution to the club</li> </ul>
Attend Indigenous cultural, reconciliation and football events and mark these events on EFC internal calendar	People and Culture TLW	Oct 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 staff to attend Share the Spirit Concert – 26 Jan</li> <li>6 staff to attend Blak Nite Cinema</li> <li>20 staff to attend a Long Walk event by December 2009</li> <li>6 staff to attend NAIDOC March</li> <li>2 football staff to attend Victorian Aboriginal Youth Sport and Recreation Cooperative Carnival in 2009</li> </ul>
Acknowledgement of country protocol to be observed at large, internal meetings.	Executive Assistant to CEO	From Jan 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidelines on Acknowledgement of Country made available to all EFC staff.</li> <li>Acknowledgement of Country performed at staff planning day</li> </ul>
Welcome to country protocol to be observed at external, public events	Marketing Services Manager	From Jan 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidelines on Welcome to Country made available to staff.</li> <li>Welcome to Country performed at annual general meeting and up to 3 other public events</li> </ul>

# JIM BERG

Gunditjmara Aboriginal Elder Jim Berg is a proud member of the Windy Hill Fitness Centre. Jim and his 'soulmate' Kylie joined six years ago after Jim had a knee operation and the discovery of six blood clots on his lungs stopped him from his normal activities like cycling.

"By coming to the gym everything has come back into working order. Before coming to the gym I'd be out in the garden for 10 minutes and I'd have to sit down. Now I'm fitter than I've ever been in my life." Jim says as he casually lifts 45 kilos with one hand.

At 71 years old Jim Berg is defying the national statistics on life expectancy for Aboriginal men. But then Jim has always been one out of the box.

Jim is passionate about South Eastern Indigenous culture and he founded the Koorie Heritage Trust in 1985 as a way to protect and preserve South East Indigenous cultural heritage. Now retired from the Trust after 22 years, he still runs tours on a voluntary basis.

Jim is currently a member of three State government committees – the Community Support Fund, the Cultural Heritage Council and the Public Records Office.. He is also involved with Kylie at the Broadmeadows Health Service, as volunteers. He was involved for 14 years with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and continues to visit Indigenous prisoners in custody, teaching cognitive skills, spirituality and culture.

Jim knows he has achieved his phenomenal workload by building on strength and fitness achieved through football in his early years, and continuing his fitness now at the gym.

Jim and Kylie attend the gym twice a week to maintain their fitness as they have their Grannies chasing them around their home every time they come to visit!

Jim says "The Windy Hill Fitness Centre is one of the friendliest places. The staff are just wonderful and full of encouragement, and they know their job. The people who attend the gym are also very friendly. The fitness centre has great facilities, from the pool, to the equipment, the classes and the instructors. From my experience, Windy Hill Fitness Centre is one of the best gyms I have ever attended.



Jim Berg training at the Windy Hill Fitness Centre

**3. Opportunities:** EFC is a large community and the opportunities to address the gap between the position of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians are broad. The club's RAP aims to provide a range of educational, business, recreational and health opportunities for Indigenous people at all levels of the club.

**Focus area:** Proactive personal and professional development of Indigenous employees, maximizing any EFC resources in the areas that are proven determinants of wellbeing (closing the gap) for Indigenous Australians (eg access to employment, housing, education, health promotion, cultural practice)

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
The Long Walk Trust Professional Development of The Long Walk (TLW) staff	The Long Walk	Dec 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TLW Project Manager Learning and Performance plan established.</li> <li>100 Indigenous kids through On the Ball</li> <li>1 Melbourne outlet established for Palingun Wurnangat (Wadeye Women's Association)</li> <li>5 schools participate in TLW activities</li> <li>2 Indigenous people employed part time to deliver schools program</li> <li>Support 1 Indigenous leader through the fellowship</li> </ul>
* Strengthen EFC Indigenous programs that promote harm prevention and economic development * Promote TLW programs: • Indigenous Youth R On the Ball • Indigenous Studies in Schools • Indigenous Cultural Exchange • Fellowship for Indigenous Leadership	Community Manager	Oct 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Coordinator employed</li> <li>20 business partners engaged and 20 participants</li> </ul>
Barpirdhila – Indigenous Mentoring Program	Client Services Manager	Nov 2009	Member survey to include option for members to self-identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.
Identifying and meeting needs of Indigenous EFC members	Media Dept Corporate Sales	Sept 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 Media mentions of EFC RAP</li> <li>Promote DESA's contribution in 1 event</li> <li>1 corporate partner buys table TLW event</li> <li>RAP mentioned in TLW newsletter</li> <li>RAP published on EFC website with link from homepage</li> </ul>
Encouraging corporate partners to develop RAPs, sponsor Indigenous events and participate in our Indigenous programs • Promoting EFC RAP in Dreamtime week • Profile DESA Australia - EFC's Indigenous programs partner	Athlete Development Coordinator	Oct 2010	100% exposure for Indigenous players to off-field development
Off-field Development and Education for Indigenous players	Community Manager People and Culture	Oct 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 admin employee and 1 football department team member establishes a relationship with an Indigenous partnership program</li> <li>1 Indigenous partner secondment to EFC for skill transfer/training etc.</li> </ul>
Sharing the skills of EFC staff with our Indigenous Partners	People and Culture Manager / relevant Managers	Oct 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indigenous Australians are encouraged to apply for all advertised positions.</li> <li>Through our Indigenous partnerships offer 1 work experience placement and 1 traineeship with Windy Hill Fitness Centre, Windy Hill Social Club, The Bomber Shop and/or IT department per year</li> </ul>
Grow Indigenous employment in the administration of the EFC.	Athlete Development Coordinator	Feb 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Indigenous membership</li> </ul>
Promote discounted membership of the Windy Hill Fitness Centre to Indigenous players / staff and their families			

#### 4. Tracking progress and reporting

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
Establish RAP review group to monitor and evaluate RAP progress.	General Manager, Community and Media	Nov 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP reviewed quarterly</li> <li>Review group to include executive staff, Indigenous employees, Learning and Development Coordinator and community department</li> </ul>
RAP to be distributed to all EFC staff and made available to the public on the EFC website and the Reconciliation Australia website.	General Manager, Community and Media	Aug 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff given a copy of the RAP.</li> </ul>
RAP to be reported on annually. Report to be available on the EFC website and the Reconciliation Australia website.	General Manager, Community and Media	Oct 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual report submitted</li> <li>Annual report published on EFC &amp; RA websites</li> </ul>
RAP is refreshed annually. Refreshed RAP is made available to the public on the EFC website and the Reconciliation Australia website.	General Manager, Community and Media	Oct 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Group identifies new actions</li> <li>Refreshed RAP published on EFC and RA websites</li> </ul>
Communication Plan to all staff	General Manager, Community and Media	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documented communication plan established</li> </ul>



## WADEYE PARTNERSHIP

Since its establishment in 2006, Essendon Football Club's partnership with Wadeye - a remote Indigenous community located 420-kilometres south-west of Darwin - has seen a significant strengthening of ties.

The partnership is part of the AFL Community Partnership Program and aims to promote education, health and wellbeing, game development and community engagement among the 2,500 residents.

Since the inception of the partnership, the club - including players Nathan Lovett Murray, Andrew Lovett, Leroy Jetta, Courtenay Dempsey and Heath Hocking (twice) - has made over a dozen visits to Wadeye to plan partnership activities, spend time with the local people, learn about their culture and promote healthy living.

The main purpose of the visits involves working with young members of the community who have shown potential to become future leaders. The mentoring, part of the AFL Ambassadors for Life program, will include regular communication between community members and players via remote communication technology.

The key mentoring activity each year involves a group of Wadeye secondary-school students, teachers and community elders visit Melbourne on a week-long leadership camp with Essendon players and staff. The camp - the model for which was designed and by Nathan Lovett-Murray - aims to reward this young students for their school attendance and willingness to succeed. Wadeye elder (and school vice-principal) Tobias Nganbe said the partnership between Essendon and Wadeye is working.

"Essendon is a great club to be associated with. Their professional approach and outgoing club officials and players have allowed young people from the community to really benefit from program. Their strong club bond has rubbed off on the young boys and it reflects in the boys actions back in the community," he said.

As part of the partnership Ryder, Dempsey and Lovett participated in an oral health DVD, which was distributed throughout Wadeye and other NT Indigenous communities. Players also recorded other healthy lifestyle messages which were shown on local television.

Andrew Lovett shares his sunnies with a young boy on Wadeye



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Jason Mullumbuk, Wadeye



## OUR COMMUNITY PARTNER - DESA AUSTRALIA

It's not often that senior executives of corporate partners roll up their sleeves as part of a sponsorship arrangement, but that's what representatives from EFC's Indigenous Program Partner – DESA Australia – did recently.

DESA Australia directors, Dennis Middleton, David Dewar and Stephen Scott, visited the remote Indigenous community of Wadeye to assess where their organisation could utilise its skills to assist the community in better meeting their communication needs.

Established in 1989, DESA Australia is one of Australia's leading installers of data and electrical services to corporate Australia and is working towards the set-up of EFC's remote communications network infrastructure which will enable the club - and other organisations - to reach these communities more regularly.

The recent visit, the second time DESA representatives have visited Wadeye since the partnership with EFC was established, focused on conducting a detailed cabling audit of the local school, the results of which will be presented to local authorities advising areas to improve internal and external communication.

Managing director and company founder Dennis Middleton said DESA was looking forward to working with Essendon throughout 2009 to support the Wadeye community.

"We see our support of Essendon's Indigenous programs as a true partnership, one in which DESA Australia plays a meaningful role by directly engaging with the community and we are excited about the contribution we can make collectively in supporting this community and others, said Dennis Middleton.

"We are also initiating an Indigenous Employment Program with the support of the Government's Structured Training and Employment Project (STEP) with the hope of ultimately employing several indigenous young people as apprentices and trainees and we see this role as complimentary to our work with Essendon."

With DESA's assistance, EFC plans regular remote communication sessions with players and young people in three areas throughout Australia – Shepparton (through Rumbalara Football and Netball Club) Tiwi Islands and Wadeye.