



SPIRIT STRONG, GAME ON

Sir Doug Nicholls Round provides an opportunity to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culture and history and the invaluable contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have made to Australian Football.

Season 2024 marks the 18th year the AFL has celebrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. The Round will be celebrated across Rounds 10 and 11 of the Toyota AFL Premiership Season, from 16th-26th May.

This year's theme for Sir Doug Nicholls Round is "SPIRIT STRONG, GAME ON". This theme highlights the peoples, traditions, enduring spirit and legacy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures have had across all levels of our game and in our nation.

Local Community Club Celebrations of Sir Doug Nicholls Round

This year we hope our community football clubs will continue to celebrate Indigenous Round at this time in partnership with their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community by incorporating a range of activities from the below guide. We have developed this guide to include a range of engagement opportunities in the hope that there is an engagement level for all clubs to access and celebrate this important round.

Acknowledgement of Country and a Welcome to Country

There are over 250 different Aboriginal language groups in Australia. An important protocol for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for thousands of years was to request permission to enter someone else's Country. A Welcome to Country is delivered by Traditional Owners to welcome visitors to their country. An Acknowledgement of Country is an opportunity for anyone to show a sign of respect for the Traditional Owners of the Country an activity is taking place on.

Baseline Engagement

- Delivering an Acknowledgement of Country
 - See the Reconciliation Australia website for tips on delivering an Acknowledgement of Country [here](#)
 - This can be delivered over a club PA system, by coaches in the change rooms before a game, by umpires on field during a coin toss or at any other significant moment during the day
- Asking a player to speak about the significance of Indigenous Round to them
 - Identify any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander players/members within the club and ask if they would be willing to engage during the day
 - This person could write a post for social media or give a short speech during game day
- Inviting an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community member to speak to the football club at a training session or on game day
 - Research and connect with your club/towns local Indigenous community
 - Find a connection through a club player/member
 - Make contact with your Local Aboriginal Lands Council, you can search [here](#)
- Have players wear red, black and yellow arm bands
- Paint the Aboriginal flag in the centre circle of the oval

Increased Engagement

- Inviting a local Elder to do a Welcome to Country
- Holding a smoking ceremony or inviting a local dance group/didgeridoo player
- Wearing an Indigenous themed guernsey developed by local artists
 - Clubs must have written permission from the artist, and relevant approval by the Controlling Body
- Inviting Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander guest speakers/players to share a story about why Indigenous Round is important or to share any particular stories about the local area
- Incorporating signage to acknowledge traditional custodians at club venues

Partnerships and Local Initiatives

- Partner with a local Indigenous organisation or Indigenous program e.g. local Aboriginal Medical Service or Youth Program
- Running a fundraiser (sports equipment drive/raffle) to raise funds for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander charity such as the GO Foundation
- Identify a social justice/important Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issue and raise awareness about the issue with the broader community

Key messaging/requests (either for club social media, or when contacting community groups)

- We are hosting a round for our local football club to celebrate Indigenous Round which aligns to AFL's celebrations and is about celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culture and the invaluable contributions of Indigenous players to Australian Football.
 - Indigenous Round will be an opportunity for our local football club to learn more about the history of our region and build better relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- We would love to invite members of the local community attend our day, support the event or speak to our players and fans at the game

How to share your club engagement with AFL NSW/ACT:

- Post photos/stories on your clubs social media channels and tag @aflnswact (Facebook and Instagram)
- Share content with your League Manager/Competition Coordinator
- Ask if any League representatives are available to attend your game day celebrations

Support across the Round

- For any support or help please contact your local Community Football and Competition Manager.