**Transcript of Pride Game video**

Sport is a great way of keeping fit and socialising, and is at its best when everyone can be involved; no matter your gender, where you’ve come from or who you love.

In July 2017, St Kilda Football Club is kicking off the second ever AFL Pride Game. They are committed to making a safer and more inclusive AFL environment for the LGBTIQ community… starting with their own club.

Matt:

When Yarra Glen staged the first Pride Game when one of their players, Jason Ball, came out a few years ago, we were really inspired by that. And so St Kilda took the opportunity to work with Yarra Glen Football Club, to work with VicHealth, to work with other community partners, to say, “Hey, can we take this great community initiative and shine a light on it for the broader community?”

Jason:

Well, growing up, the football club felt like the one place that I would never be able to come out – homophobic language was regularly used, and it left me really scared to be myself.

Graphic:

Nearly 3 in 5 game attendees witness verbal homophobia or transphobia at or around a game.

Ro:

Every day in Victoria, the LGBTI community somewhere is being discriminated. Whether it’s in the workforce, whether it’s in the street, whether it’s in schools, or whether it’s in the sporting clubs. Many Victorians play sport or want to play sport, but we know that over 70% of our community has been discriminated against in those spaces. So language is really important being an inclusive club, all these things make people want to join, join in, and have fun, and feel included.

Graphic:

87% of young gay Australians who play sport feel forced to hide their sexuality.

Jason:

Pride Game wasn’t just about saying no to homophobia, but it was actually sending a really powerful message of acceptance and inclusion for LGBTI people who for so long haven’t felt safe and welcome within the world of sport.

Ro:

Sport can play a big role in galvanising a whole community around being LGBTI-inclusive.

Matt:

By unlocking stories of people that fans could relate to, that helped us to demonstrate why this was such an important issue and it helped people to connect the dots between footy, um, passion and diversity, and recognising that not everyone has belonged at the footy, but that we’re a much stronger game if everyone does feel welcome.

Graphic:

Suicide attempts of same-sex attracted Australians are nearly 14 times higher than their heterosexual peers.

Jason:

The Pride Game was a real message of hope for young people who are LGBTI to know that they can be themselves within the world of sport, and that they are going to be accepted. Sport has been one of the most homophobic environments for LGBTI people. But to have the rainbow, that international symbol of gay pride, splashed across the 50 metre line, and in the cheer squads, and the goal umpire flags, was just such a powerful symbolic message to our community.

Graphic:

Before the Pride Game, 56% of people surveyed who identified as LGBTIQ felt AFL games were not inclusive.

Matt:

The power of that imagery, the power of those symbols, to welcome members of the LGBTI community to come to our game and feel like, “Hey, we belong here,” was really important for us. And I encourage other organisations to think about the power of symbols and how to utilise them to open up your organisation. We have an obligation to lead, we have an obligation to have the hard conversations. And I think the first ever Pride Game really demonstrated that if you embrace that opportunity it can have a really powerful impact for good.

Graphic:

All LGBTIQ Pride Game attendees surveyed felt it was inclusive.

Jason:

I think as a result of the Pride Game we’ve really seen community attitudes shift when it comes to the use of homophobic language. But there’s so much more that needs to be done because this was just one game. Ah, there’s 18 teams that play AFL who could benefit from doing something like this, and there are a whole host of other sporting codes that could also get involved.

Matt:

I think for any sporting organisation looking to champion diversity, one of the things that you really benefit from is engaging with partners and people who can help you on the journey.

Ro:

If there’s a club or a group or a different sports code that’s looking to do a pride game I’d say go for it. There’s a lot of people that can assist you cos it’s not the first time. A Pride Game is a great way to educate about LGBTI issues. People come along and they go home, learning and knowing more. You can have a luncheon, you can have guest speakers, it’s a great way to engage people.

Matt:

I guess we’ll know we’ve been a success when we don’t need to have a Pride Game.

Jerril:

VicHealth is proud to support the Pride Game. We want everyone, regardless of their sexuality, to feel comfortable playing, watching and umpiring, no matter what the sport. This footy game shows us the way – it’s absolutely time to blow the whistle on discrimination!