

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release



Street Socceros set sights for the World Cup

The Street Socceros, a street soccer team put together by The Big Issue, have been accepted to represent Australia in the upcoming Homeless World Cup being held in Sacramento, California from 8-15 July 2023.

This will be the 11th time that Australia has sent a team to the Homeless World Cup. The team is made up of eight players across Australia who have experienced homelessness, marginalisation or disadvantage. Players are selected from The Big Issue Community Street Soccer Program, a program that engages those facing tough times to become active and social in a safe environment.

The Community Street Soccer Program is a free weekly program, run in 25 locations nationally. Participants can take part in a friendly match, meet others and seek support. The program caters to all fitness levels and abilities, and staff can work closely with participants and link them to services that address their individual needs.

To date, the program has engaged more than 10,500 participants, with significant benefits in health, wellbeing, housing, education and employment. Recent surveys have found:

- 37% participated in education or training
- 24% found employment
- 20% improved their housing situation
- 98% are more motivated to maintain or improve their physical or mental health
- 100% said the program makes them feel good about themselves.

The Big Issue CEO Steven Persson is delighted for the Street Socceros to take to the world stage.

“The Homeless World Cup is a wonderful opportunity for our Street Socceros to shine a light on the power of Street Soccer to an audience of millions. I have no doubt our team will represent Australia and the Community Street Soccer Program in the best light.”

The Homeless World Cup gives those such as the Street Socceros a chance to play on an international level, whilst meeting new people and exploring beautiful surroundings. More than 500 players from 64 teams will take part in the week-long tournament this July.

The Street Socceros team will be announced shortly, with a jersey presentation that befits a group of people who have achieved so much and who will represent Australia on the world stage.

The Australian Government has funded the Community Street Soccer Program since its inception in 2007. Funding provides the opportunity for the program to support people experiencing homelessness and marginalisation to benefit from the power of sport as a foundation to improve their health, housing, education and employment outcomes, while strengthening local communities.

Alongside the Community Street Soccer Program, The Big Issue is also involved in other social programs and enterprises, such as *The Big Issue* magazine, Women’s Workforce and The Big Issue Classroom. For more information visit our [website](#).

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The Big Issue spokespersons are available for interview. For more information on the Street Soccer Program visit [here](#).