

# Sydney Swans

Promoting positive mental health to athletes, members & fans



**Black Dog**  
Institute





## Partner Overview

The **Sydney Swans** are a professional Australian rules football club, the men's team competes in the AFL and the women's team in the AFLW.

The **Sydney Swans** have long been community leaders by using the power of football to create awareness and drive change on important social issues.

Sydney Swans goals for partnering with Black Dog Institute are to:

1. Become an exemplar sporting club for mental health and wellbeing through sharing and promoting **Black Dog Institute's** e-mental health tools, services, programs and research to members & fans
2. Position **Sydney Swans** as leaders within the AFL, putting mental health awareness at the very heart of its business.



"Our partnership with Black Dog Institute helps differentiate us the other teams within the AFL, it is a great conversation starter for our fans, making the topic of mental health more accessible."

Isabelle O'Brien, Sydney Swans Fan Growth Manager

## Background

**Black Dog Institute** offer partnerships with sporting clubs with the aim to empower organisations like the **Sydney Swans** to take a public stance on mental health by driving awareness, reducing stigma and providing solutions to athletes, members and fans.

Established in April, 2019 the partnership primarily focuses on improving the mental health literacy and resilience of Australian school students.

By the **Sydney Swans** publicly aligning with **Black Dog Institute** it shows the club is seriously committed to changing the dial on mental illness statistics for everyone.

“The partnership brings sport and the community together to teach meaningful life skills. For our footballers, building resilience and nurturing mental health is just as important as maintaining physical health.

The partnership has been running since 2019 and we are proud to be making a difference in the community. We’re looking forward to continuing to build and strengthen the partnership for years to come.”

Scott Dalby, Sydney Swans Executive General Manager – People



## Strategic Approach

Sydney Swans and Black Dog Institute's partnership deliverables:

1. Fundraising for Black Dog Institute
2. Mental Fitness program & ambassadors
3. Spread awareness of **Black Dog Institute's** resources, predominantly through the **Sydney Swans** monthly newsletter, which reaches over 60,000 fans
4. First Nations



"We see our partnership with Black Dog Institute as one that can make a real difference to young people and we're looking forward to working together."

Natalie Fagg, Sydney Swans Head of Customer and Community



# First Nations

**Black Dog Institute** arranged “lived experience” presentations for the **Sydney Swan's** First Nations, where indigenous speakers shared their own mental health stories to help educate others about mental health and illness and to break down the stigma associated with it.

“Our First Nations peoples are overrepresented in mental health statistics and hearing from those with lived experiences normalises mental health and encourages our people to open up and seek help.” – Jarred Hodges, Sydney Swans Manager of First Nations Strategy & Player Development

**Sydney Swan's** player James Bell, a proud Yuin Indigenous Australian filmed a video for iBobbly, a social and emotional wellbeing self-help app for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 15 years and over. Everything in the app is shaped by Indigenous community members to ensure that iBobbly is culturally informed and safe.

'It's so relatable hearing from a real person as opposed to seeing just the stats and numbers"

The **Sydney Swans** also encourage academy players to download and use the **iBobbly** app. Lessons about this e-mental health tool are incorporated into the players development and training schedules.



**iBobbly**

*An app for mob by mob  
Helping keep our spirit and mind strong*



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## Results

# MENTAL FITNESS



PRESENTED BY BLACK DOG INSTITUTE

Each year a handful of **Sydney Swans** players participate in **Mullets for Mental Health**, growing or cutting a mullet and fundraising during the month of September. Players and the club promoted the campaign on their own social channels encouraging fundraising and mental health awareness.

"The partnership also sends a powerful message to Sydney Swans employees that the company cares about mental health issues and can help them act." Isabelle said.

**Sydney Swans** participate in the Mental Fitness initiative, where interested players are trained by **Black Dog Institute** each year to deliver the program to schools around Sydney with these schools given the opportunity to sign up for the **BITE BACK Challenge** to win exclusive Swans prizes, including home-game tickets and signed guernseys.

Mental Fitness is a free interactive program for teenagers where they learn about training the brain to deal with daily stresses without feeling overwhelmed, upset or worried.

"Sydney Swans players present the Mental Fitness program to high school students to help them build resilience and maintain good mental health."



## Partner Insights

For clubs & sporting organisations considering a non-profit partnership, **Sydney Swans** offered this advice:

1. Put your agreement down on paper. With a detailed MOU in place there is no disruption in the partnership and both parties know the exact goals for the year/s.
2. Assign a dedicated partnership manager within your club. This ensures regular communication, which is critical to both partners achieving goals and getting the most out of the partnership.
3. Raising money is important, but so is awareness. **Sydney Swans** are proud of the fact that in addition to raising money for **Black Dog Institute**, they've increased awareness and support for mental health issues amongst fans.
4. You'll be having an extensive impact on the community. **Sydney Swans** knew by partnering with **Black Dog Institute** that it would be good for staff, but there is equally significant impact on members & fans because the resources that get shared.



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Want to learn more about how to partner with us? Contact us today on [corporatepartners@blackdog.org.au](mailto:corporatepartners@blackdog.org.au)

To find out more about Black Dog Institute or any of our programs, please visit [blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://blackdoginstitute.org.au)

To find out more about Sydney Swans, please visit [sydneyswans.com.au](http://sydneyswans.com.au)

