School of Health Science and Psychology

**Invitation to participate in a survey about lower limb injury prevention in Australian football**

You have been invited to participate in a survey about lower limb injury prevention knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in Australian football. Researchers from the School of Health Science and Psychology at Federation University Australia, together with The Australian Football League (AFL), are undertaking this project to better understand what coaches of Australian football know, think and do to prevent lower limb injuries among their players.

Studies with community Australian football players have consistently shown that lower limb injuries (knee, ankle and thigh/hamstring) are common with muscle/tendon strains and joint/ligament sprains among the most common injury types. It is likely that many could be prevented, mainly through implementing appropriate warm-up and exercise training programmes.

Coaches can significantly influence the safety and training attitudes and behaviours of their players. Coaches are critical to the adoption and implementation of sports safety strategies and it is important for us as researchers, and the AFL as the governing body for the sport, to understand what coaches know, think and do about preventing lower limb injuries among their players.

This research will help to maximise the uptake of, and compliance with AFL safety and injury prevention policies and programmes, by coaches of community level players. The information we gather will be used to inform the content of coach training courses and how they are developed and delivered, what resources are developed and how they are disseminated, accessed and used.

**Procedure**

You have been invited to take part in this survey because you are an accredited Australian Football coach of senior (adult) players. We ask that you complete a short questionnaire about what you know, think and do about preventing lower limb injuries among the players you coach. It will take around 30 minutes to complete the survey. You can contribute to the survey if you are a currently accredited coach, even if you are not currently coaching a team.

The survey is available online via the link provided. If you answer ‘Yes’ to the question “I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement for this project and am happy to proceed” this will imply that you have read and understood the information contained in this document and that you are providing your informed consent to take part in the research.

**Benefits and risks**

Participating in this research is considered as having ‘indirect benefits’. This means that you will not gain any specific advantages individually. Rather, your results, combined with all the other
participants, will help us to develop better ways of ensuring that Australian football coaches have access to relevant and useful information about lower limb injury prevention.

There is very little risk associated with taking part in this research. However, should you feel concerned or if any of the questions cause you distress, we encourage you to discuss these concerns with a member of the research team, via the contact details provided below or contact life on 13 11 14.

Confidentiality
Your confidentiality is assured because the researchers do not have access to your personal data, nor can the answers you provide be linked to your personal data. Nevertheless, all data will remain password protected and accessible only by members of the research team. The AFL will be provided with a report summarising the data and the findings of the research. They will not have access to any raw data you provide. The data will be destroyed after 5 years, in line with Australian standards.

Your rights
Participation in this survey is voluntary. Your decision to participate or not, will have no repercussions from the research team, your football league or your club, and your choice does not require any explanation. You are free to decline or to withdraw your consent, without giving a reason, up until the time you ‘submit’ your survey. Following submission, we will be unable to distinguish your results from any other coach, and so we won’t be able to remove your data.

Funding
The Australian Football League (AFL) supports this research and has provided funding to the research team to conduct the survey. The AFL’s sponsorship has no influence on the research project itself.

Research team
The project is being undertaken by researchers Dr Scott Talpey (Lecturer) and Dr Alex Donaldson (Senior Research Fellow) from the School of Health Science and Psychology at Federation University Australia in Ballarat. The research team is supported by staff at the AFL, including Mr Lawrie Woodman (Coaching Development Manager), Ms Jan Cooper (Manager, Female Football Development) and Dr Patrick Clifton (Football Research Analyst).

If you do not understand any or part of this information, if you have any questions or if you would like further information, please contact the Principal Researcher: Dr Scott Talpey, Lecturer, School of Health Science and Psychology, Federation University Australia, Ballarat.

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Should you (i.e. the participant) have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this research project, please contact the Federation University Ethics Officer, Research Services, Federation University Australia
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Telephone: (03) 5327 9765, (03) 5122 6446
Email: research.ethics@federation.edu.au

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