

Media Release

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OMA supports homeless in new \$1m soccer sponsorship

Outdoor media companies will this year donate up to \$1 million in advertising space to raise awareness of The Big Issue's Community Street Soccer program as it prepares to host the Homeless World Cup (HWC) in Melbourne in December.

The sponsorship will assist the organisers to raise awareness of the Community Street Soccer competition and the Melbourne 2008 HWC, which is expected to attract more than 500 players from up to 57 nations, along with an estimated 60,000 spectators.

In addition to the OMA, the HWC is being supported by the Victorian Government among other sponsors. Past host cities include Copenhagen, Cape Town and Edinburgh.

OMA Chief Executive Helen Willoughby said the sponsorship with the Association would be in addition to the individual support given by members to charities and not-for-profit organisations. In 2006/07, members collectively donated around \$4.5 million in space and direct financial contributions.

Ms Willoughby said members would provide support to The Big Issue with space, printing and installation costs where possible.

"The Big Issue is a highly successful organisation which has positively impacted the lives of many of the nation's estimated 100,000 homeless people since its launch in Australia more than 10 years ago," Ms Willoughby said.

"The Community Street Soccer program and the HWC will provide new employment and social opportunities for homeless people in up to 30 separate communities around Australia. It is an extremely worthy cause with which the OMA is proud to be associated."

A successful trial of Community Street Soccer in Fitzroy, Victoria, has been running since 2004. Positive outcomes for participants included finding accommodation, enrolling in education and vocational courses, and attending counseling for substance or gambling abuse.

The Big Issue has already commenced a roll-out of the program and will commence the competition in mid-2008. A national team - to be known as the Street Socceroos - will be then selected to compete in the HWC.

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