



**Media Release**  
29 June 2010

**HBA and the Hawks provide a unique experience for bushfire survivors**

This week health insurer HBA is giving ten deserving junior footballers from the bushfire ravaged regions of Victoria the chance to spend three days with the Hawthorn Football Club through the 2010 HBA HighMarks program.

HBA is proud to be offering this chance of a lifetime, to junior footballers who have had to overcome the adversity of last year's devastating bushfires, with the participants having lost friends, family members and some of their homes.

Despite these traumas, the commendable juniors have been selected for their continued leadership within their local community and being active team players, both on the field and off. Some of the young juniors attending the program include Ben Woollard and Will Goonan from Alexandra, Max Sauppe and Josh Anderson from Boolarra, Ashley Whitaker from Wandong, Finden Bowles from Yea and Mark Ford from Heathcote Junction.

Hawks premiership player Trent Croad joined HBA Ambassador and Hawthorn Legend Peter Hudson in congratulating the successful participants for being excellent role models for their communities.

"Not only were whole communities destroyed in the 2009 bushfires but the lives of those who survived were changed forever and the path to rebuilding is a long journey," Hudson said.

Now in its seventh year, the program provides the participants with the opportunity to spend three days being mentored by Hawthorn's senior players, learning about healthy lifestyle choices, setting goals and allowing them to go behind the scenes at an AFL game.

Hudson said he was delighted to be able to be part of a program which supported the courage and bravery displayed every day by those boys who were affected by last year's bushfires.

“Everyone has been touched by the tragedy of the bushfires in different ways and we hope this fantastic opportunity will go some way in helping these junior players to continue rebuilding their lives,” Hudson said.

Hudson went on to say this year’s HBA HighMarks program followed HBA’s earlier donation of more than \$220,000 in support of the bushfire recovery efforts and their recent donation of new goal posts to the Alexandra Football/Netball Club who were unable to fund replacements after last year’s bushfires.

“Continuing this ongoing assistance is vital to rebuilding these Victorian communities, and we’re delighted to partner with the Hawks to continue this support over the next three days by giving junior footballers in regional Victoria the chance to spend time with some of their AFL idols.” Hudson said.

Similarly, Croad said the Hawthorn players were looking forward to working closely with the aspiring young footballers, many of whom have overcome greater obstacles than any sportsperson could face on the sporting arena.

As one of Australia’s leading private health insurers, the HBA HighMarks initiative aligns HBA’s long term goal of helping people lead healthier, happier and longer lives.

For more information on each of the participants please see the player profiles attached.

**-Ends-**

**For more information or to organise an interview with the participants please contact:**

Stephanie Furler  
Reputation, Consultant  
Email: [sfurler@reputation.net.au](mailto:sfurler@reputation.net.au)  
Mobile: 0422 465 973  
Work: 02 8252 7003

#### **About HBA**

HBA, as part of the Bupa Australia Group, has been looking after Australians for more than 70 years. As a leading private health insurer, our primary aim is to help all Australians live longer, healthier and happier lives.

HBA proudly covers around one million Australians – giving them the confidence to better manage their healthcare needs. It’s the largest non-government operated health fund in Victoria with 27 per cent market share.

In addition to private health insurance, HBA offers travel, home insurance and car insurance.

#### **About Bupa Australia**

Bupa Australia is a leading healthcare provider. With a significant presence in every Australian state and territory, the company operates under the trusted and respected brands, HBA, MBF, Mutual Community and Clearview, proudly covering more than three million Australians.

Bupa Australia is driven by the vision of “Taking care of the lives in our hands”. The company is focused on providing sustainable health insurance and financial services solutions that represent real value to customers, and on leading the industry in the promotion of preventive health and wellness.

Bupa Australia's products and services include cover for hospital, medical, ancillary and ambulance services, as well as travel, life, car and home insurance, and retirement planning and lifestyle management services.

As part of the international Bupa Group, Bupa Australia draws on the strength and expertise of an international healthcare leader. The Bupa Group covers more than 10 million people in over 200 countries and provides other health and financial services to many more millions of customers around the globe.