

**22 October 2021**

**PRIDE IN SPORT STATEMENT ON ADELAIDE UNITED FC PLAYER JOSH CAVALLO**

**In response to Adelaide United Football Club's Josh Cavallo coming out publicly as gay, Pride in Sport, the national not-for-profit program that supports Australian sporting organisations and clubs in all aspects of LGBTQ inclusion, has issued the following statement.**

**Beau Newell, National Program Manager for Pride In Sport, said:**

Pride in Sport applauds Adelaide United player Josh Cavello for his courage and leadership in sharing his coming out story, via a powerful video released earlier today by his club.

Cavello, an elite, professional male footballer, is the one of only few elite male athletes in Australia to come out publicly as gay. In the video, he addressed his challenges in coming out to family, friends, teammates, and others across the sporting community, but also the relief and joy he feels for doing so.

His bravery is to be congratulated and his journey shows the unfortunate reality that many athletes face when they are not able to enjoy the sport they love as their true selves.

Like Cavallo, many athletes self-edit their existence in sport and expend a good deal of their daily energy on hiding their true self from others. His story highlights the fear that many athletes have in coming out: that they will face potential discrimination, harassment and bullying from those within their sport.

We know that experiences of prejudice and harassment, and/or not being able to live openly can impact on the mental health of LGBTQ people. Research shows that traditional sports are often seen as unwelcome spaces for people of all ages with diverse sexualities or genders, with many athletes being completely or partially in the closet while playing sport due to fear of intolerance and discrimination from other players, coaches and officials.

This is a fear that is justified for many, but as many LGBTQ athletes who have recently come out over the past few years have demonstrated, it has not been their experience.

It is the right of every player to be accepted and affirmed, on and off the sporting field, and we know that when this happens, mental and physical health outcomes dramatically improve.

Sport has an amazing opportunity to provide a safe and inclusive environment to all people, including people with diverse genders and sexualities. We congratulate the Adelaide United Football Club for providing a member of their team with a welcoming, supportive, and safe professional environment where he can be himself.

We applaud Cavallo for sharing his story and couldn't be prouder of him.

**ENDS**

**MEDIA ENQUIRIES**

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## Who are we?

Pride in Sport is an Australian national not-for-profit inclusion program specifically designed to assist sporting organisations at all levels with the inclusion of employees, athletes, volunteers, coaches, officials, and spectators with diverse sexualities and genders, as well as their allies.

### **Membership Program:**

The Pride in Sport membership program is designed to:

- Assist Australian sporting organisations with all aspects of LGBTQ inclusion as it pertains to their sport and those working within the sporting organisation;
- Work with members to achieve best practice as benchmarked by the Pride in Sport Index (PSI);
- Create better health outcomes for LGBTQ athletes, coaches, fans and others by creating inclusive spaces through the reduction of homophobia, stigma and discrimination.

To find out more about the Pride in Sport Membership Program, please [click here](#).

### **Pride in Sport Index**

The Pride in Sport Index is an initiative of the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Australian Sports Commission and a legacy of the Bingham Cup, Sydney. Following the release of the Out on the Fields study in May 2015, the largest international study examining homophobia in sport, these organisations commissioned Pride in Diversity to develop a Pride in Sport Index.

The Pride in Sport Index™ is the first and only benchmarking instrument specifically designed to assess the inclusion of people with diverse sexualities and genders within Australian sporting organisations and codes more broadly. Participating in the index will allow Australian sporting organisations to not only assess their own practice, but determine that which constitutes good practice, along with the ability to benchmark their own initiatives against an external measure and other sporting organisations.

An advisory group was established to assist Pride in Diversity in the development of the Pride in Sport Index. The advisory group included; the National Rugby League (NRL), the Australian Football League (AFL), the Australian Rugby Union (ARU), Football Federation Australia (FFA), Cricket Australia, Swimming Australia, Water Polo Australia, Basketball Australia and Golf Australia.

To find out more on the Pride in Sport Index, [click here](#).