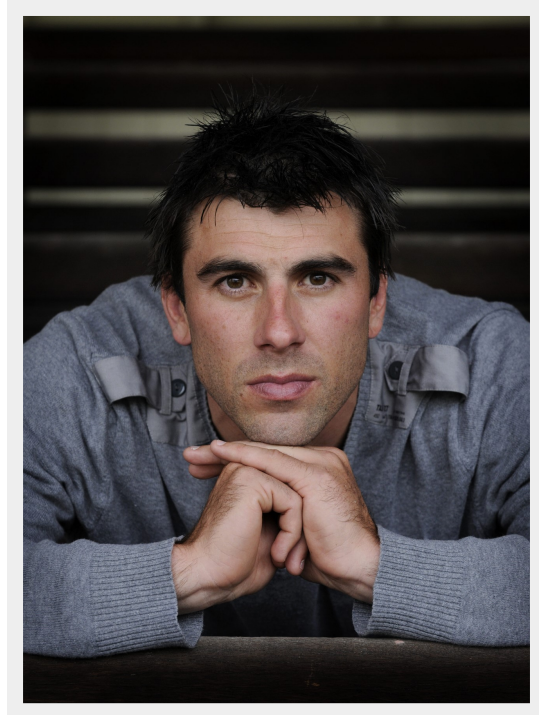


## Heath Black

### *Former AFL Player, Motivational Speaker & Author*

Originally from Victoria, Heath moved to Western Australia and started with the Dockers as a 17-year-old in 1997, moving to St Kilda for several years before finishing his career with Fremantle in late 2008. Heath was well known in football circles for his left foot and agility on the field and perceived by the public as a bit of a bruiser and larrikin that couldn't seem to resist a good brawl. After leaving professional football and spiralling out of control, Heath realised the full extent of his mental health issues in 2010 following the failure of his marriage, lost job opportunities, several arrests and a growing dependence on alcohol. After a series of misdiagnoses, he was finally diagnosed with both Bipolar II and Adult ADHD in 2011.



Heath was the keynote speaker for the 2011 Men In Black ball, alongside Ernie Dingo. Heath was also a keynote speaker at the 2012 Australian Disability Employment Conference. In February 2012, Heath became an Ambassador for Headspace, the National Youth Mental Health Foundation.

During 2012, Heath delivered various wellness sessions to AFL Players and Staff, Cricket Victoria Players and Staff and the U/17 WA State Cricket Team. Heath travelled to various Rio Tinto remote mining communities throughout Western Australia.

During 2013, Heath partnered with 1Life Suicide Prevention to facilitate workshops on suicide awareness. After the success of Heath's work with Cricket Victoria, Cricket Australia invited him to provide wellness workshops to various other State and National cricket sides. Heath took over from Nathan Thompson as a Mental Health ambassador for VLine. Heath facilitated workshops on bullying, drugs and alcohol.

Since 2010, Heath has played in the annual E.J. Whitten Football Game alongside various Australian sporting heroes and entertainers. The game is a major fundraiser for Prostate Cancer. This is a fantastic event which promotes sponsorship and corporate networking.

Since retiring from football, Heath has completed his Certificate 4 in Training and Assessment which formally qualifies him to write, facilitate and review his own workshops. In 2011, Heath was formally trained to facilitate 1Life Suicide Prevention presentations and travelled through WA with other 1Life representatives in conjunction with the WA Football League

to speak with communities affected by suicide.

During 2011 and 2012, Heath received formal training from the AFL Players Association (AFLPA) to facilitate workshops on Stress Management, Healthy Choices and Respect & Responsibility. He helped the AFLPA deliver Playwell and Playwise programs to each AFL club around Australia. The Playwise program was targeted at the AFL Leadership Groups to help them better recognise mental illness within their clubs and among their teammates. The Playwell program was targeted at the first and second year players to help prepare them for AFL careers and make good decisions with regards to drugs, alcohol and other social situations. During 2013, Heath participated in an internationally accredited Suicide Assist course, provided by Living Works. Heath also received formal training from VLine in Lifeskills for Young People, which included training on recognising bullying and understanding how to help victims.

Heath is currently enrolled with Swinburne University, studying his Graduate Certificate in Social Science (Male Family Violence).

### **Heath Black talks about:**

- Importance of Teamwork
- Importance of Leadership
- Accepting and learning from Criticism
- Working with diverse personalities
- Physical and Mental Wellbeing
- Overcoming life's obstacles & recovering from rock bottom.

### **Client testimonials**

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“ Heath was an inspirational speaker at the recent Men in Black Ball to raise funds for men's mental health.

- *Medical Forum WA*

“ The AFL Players Association Wellbeing Service has been fortunate enough to be able to have Heath Black facilitate several of our programs including PlayWise, a Mental Health Literacy program delivered to AFL leadership groups, and PlayWell, a resilience and stress management program delivered to first and second year AFL players. Heath's personal battle with mental health and his subsequent story of managing his illness provides valuable insight for the players partaking in the programs and without a doubt increases the engagement of our participants. He's honesty and humility when telling his personal journey encourages young men to engage in conversation on an issue which is often considered taboo. I can't thank Heath enough for his contribution to our Wellbeing programs.

**- AFL Players' Association**

“ The North East Business Forum, a networking business group, engaged Heath's services to present on the importance of identifying mental health in the context of a business environment. He is honest, engaging and concise and we have no hesitation in recommending him to any business or group seeking an informed and memorable speaker.

**- North East Business Forum**

“ Heath presented an honest and sombre yet overall positive account of his life both before, during and after his high profile AFL career. Often dogged with controversy, he openly discussed his demons and the steps he took to understanding, embracing and managing the issues in his life. His story was a sobering one, but showed plenty of hope through opening up and talking about the issues. Heath's group workshop was well planned and very beneficial to our members. The feedback I received to his session was all extremely positive. We look forward to having Heath back next year.

**- State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia**

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