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## **Mitch Brown's strength and candour recognised**

*Health Equity Matters CEO, Dash Heath-Paynter said:*

"Today is a historic moment, not just for the AFL, but for our entire nation and for LGBTIQA+ people across Australia.

"Mitch Brown's story demonstrates strength and honesty. Speaking openly about his sexuality in the context of elite Australian sport is inspiring and will give confidence to many Australians confronting similar questions of identity.

"For over a century of AFL competition, no male player has identified as openly bisexual or gay. Mitch's announcement breaks through decades of silence and opens the door for others who may be on their own journey.

"This is a powerful statement about visibility and inclusion. For LGBTIQA+ young people watching today, Mitch is showing them that they belong in every space, including in the nation's most followed sporting code.

"Mitch's announcement reflects the contemporary reality of broader Australian society. However, it also reminds us there is still work to be done to ensure all sporting codes in Australia are inclusive and safe spaces for LGBTIQA+ people. As the AFL approaches its finals season, we would urge them to grasp the opportunity offered by Mitch's strength. The AFL must be do some deep thinking about the measures needed to make the code safe and inclusive for players, officials and volunteers.

"When public figures like Mitch share their stories, it smashes down barriers, builds confidence, and creates pathways for others to be the person they want to be".

"We commend Mitch for his strength and candour and thank him for using his platform to advance inclusion and diversity in Australia. His announcement today will resonate far beyond the sporting world and contribute to a more equitable Australia for all LGBTIQA+ people."

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About Health Equity Matters:

*Health Equity Matters is the national federation for Australia's community-controlled response to LGBTIQA+ health.*