FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rising Cost of Community Sport Prompts Reclink Holiday Appeal to Help 600 Australians Access Vital Connection and Belonging

200 people. $50 each. One big difference.

As the cost of community sport continues to rise, Reclink Australia is calling on Australians to help ensure that financial hardship doesn't prevent people from experiencing the benefits of sport, recreation and social connection through its 2026 Holiday Appeal.

The appeal aims to raise $10,000 by encouraging 200 supporters to donate $50 each, helping provide 600 places in sport and recreation programs for people experiencing disadvantage to connect, participate and thrive through sport and recreation.

The campaign comes as research from Federation Uni shows community sport can cost more than $4,500 per person each year, placing participation out of reach for many Australians. As cost-of-living pressures continue to impact households across the country, increasing numbers of people risk missing out on opportunities to connect, build friendships and support their physical and mental wellbeing through sport.

Reclink Australia CEO Dave Wells said “sport and recreation isn't a luxury. It's a lifeline”.

"When the cost of participation keeps rising, too many people are left on the sidelines. For the people we support, sport is about far more than physical activity. It's an opportunity to build friendships, improve wellbeing and feel part of a community."

"Across Australia, too many people remain marginalised, disconnected and living with the health consequences that come from a lack of activity and social belonging. Our vision is that sport and recreation is accessible for everyone and recognised as an essential service for community wellbeing."

A donation of just $50 can fund three places in a Reclink Australia sport or recreation class, helping remove barriers to participation and creating opportunities for people to experience connection, confidence and belonging. The appeal's $10,000 target will enable 600 people to access programs next year.

The campaign is also sharing the story of Pete Simpson, 81, who found friendship and connection through a Reclink Australia ten pin bowling program after experiencing loss, loneliness and isolation.

"It's the friendships. I look forward to the bowling every fortnight because it gets me out of the house and I'm amongst good company and friends," said Pete.

This holiday season, Reclink Australia is encouraging Australians to come together and demonstrate that small acts of generosity can have a lasting impact.

"Sport and recreation play a critical role in creating stronger, healthier and more connected communities," said Dave Wells. "Whether someone can give $10, $25, $50 or more, every donation helps create opportunities for people to connect, participate and belong."

Donations to the 2026 Holiday Appeal can be made at: **fundraise.reclink.org/2026-holiday-appeal or https://reclink.org/**

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About Reclink Australia

For more than 35 years, Reclink Australia has used sport and recreation to bring people together and create a sense of belonging. Every year, Reclink engages thousands of Australians who experience barriers to participation, including social isolation, economic disadvantage, disability, mental ill-health and other personal challenges.

Through welcoming and inclusive programs delivered in partnership with communities across the country, Reclink helps people build confidence, improve their physical and mental wellbeing and strengthen their connections with others.

Reclink is driven by a simple purpose: to create an Australia where everyone can belong through sport and recreation.

By making participation more accessible, Reclink connects people facing personal challenges, strengthens communities and creates opportunities for people to thrive. With Brisbane 2032 in its sights, Reclink is working towards a lasting legacy where sport and recreation is recognised as an essential service for public health, acknowledging the important role participation can play in improving wellbeing, reducing social isolation and building stronger, healthier communities.