



## Help this little piggy...

raise over \$1 million so families of children with life-threatening illnesses can access the support they need.

For immediate release  
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# Piggy Bank Appeal “kicks” off with controversial footy debate

High profile football personalities including Richmond’s Joel Bowden and AFL legend Peter Hudson, will debate the question “**Have we lost the connection with Grassroots football?**” on Friday 4 September at 7am at the MCG to kick off the 12th annual Piggy Bank Appeal for Very Special Kids.

Jim Wilson will once again host the debate where avid Essendon supporter the Hon. Peter Costello (MP); Caroline Wilson, Chief Football Writer for The Age; father and son team Peter Hudson, ‘Hawthorn football legend’ and Paul Hudson, former player and now assistant coach at Collingwood; Simon Madden, Essendon ruck legend and Joel Bowden, Richmond player will go head to head over whether the AFL is too focused on the game at the top level and has lost touch with the fans and ‘grassroots footy’!

*“My greatest football achievement was to get a game in the Little League. I am one of those that never got above Grassroots football”* says Peter Costello who was the No.1 ticket holder at Essendon for more than a decade.

This is a unique opportunity to see some of the most controversial and outspoken names get fired up over this controversial topic. Held in the MCC Members Dining Room, proceeds from debate ticket sales and funds raised from a live auction of ‘money can’t buy’ experiences, will all go to this very important cause.

This controversial, topical and comical debate ‘kicks off’ the 2009 Piggy Bank Appeal, which will run from 4 – 27 September and aims to raise over \$1 million so Very Special Kids can continue supporting families caring for children with life-threatening illnesses. For more information go to [piggybankappeal.org.au](http://piggybankappeal.org.au)

### Notes to editor:

- What:** 2009 Footy Fever Debate. *Have we lost the connection with Grassroots footy?*  
**When:** Friday 4 September. **The function finishes at 9am. This will be the best opportunity to interview panelists or Very Special Kids representatives**  
**Where:** MCC Members Dining Room, level 2, MCG, Yarra Park, Jolimont  
**Why:** To help Very Special Kids raise funds for the 2009 Piggy Bank Appeal

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## About Very Special Kids

Very Special Kids is a unique organisation that supports families throughout their experience of caring for children with life-threatening illnesses, from diagnosis through to recovery or bereavement. Such illnesses include a range of neuro-degenerative, genetic and rare conditions, muscular dystrophy and cancer. Sadly, many of these children will not reach adulthood.

Very Special Kids provides practical and emotional support for the child, the parents and the siblings through a team of highly professional staff and a network of trained volunteers. Services include:

- care at *Very Special Kids House*, Victoria's only children's hospice, providing planned respite, emergency respite and end-of-life care
- emotional support and counselling
- hospital visiting
- sibling programs and family activities
- a bereavement support program

It costs more than \$4 million a year to run Very Special Kids and \$1.3 million to operate *Very Special Kids House*. Less than 25% of Very Special Kids' annual operating cost is provided by the Victorian Government.

Currently, Very Special Kids supports more than 840 families across Victoria. Very Special Kids relies heavily on the generosity of the community to fund its services.

To find out how to donate or for more information on the organisation visit [vsk.org.au](http://vsk.org.au) or call 1800 888 875.

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