

## All football codes must invest more in preparing players...

All football codes must invest more in preparing players for the pitfalls of fame, says Australian National Council on Drugs. 

**ANCD Executive Officer Gino Vumbaca says if Ben Cousins is seeking help, this should be applauded because treatment clearly works and there are many programs out there that can assist him with the personal issues he may be facing.**

The Australian National Council on Drugs says all football codes should look at doing more to prepare players for the possible pitfalls surrounding the fame they get through the game.

ANCD Executive Officer Gino Vumbaca says if former West Coast Eagles captain Ben Cousins has problems with drugs or alcohol, he should unquestionably seek help because treatment can and does work.

Gino Vumbaca has made the comments following a range of stories in the media about Ben Cousins. Some have suggested the West Coast Eagles have been concerned about Cousins for over 6 months.

Gino Vumbaca said, "The simple fact is that treatment works and there are many programs out there that can help Ben Cousins with the issues he faces. The club have already said they believe Ben can deal with these issues. Our message is that professional help is vital in these types of situations."

"If Ben does not get professional treatment, it is in our view far less likely that he will overcome the issues he faces. There are many pitfalls in being a sports star. So often we are talking about young men with lots of money, time and adulation. It's an intoxicating mix and one that can clearly cause problems in all sporting codes."

"Without proper education about how to deal with the potential pitfalls, there will always be the potential for greater problems down the track. We call on all codes to invest even more than they do now in preparing young players for the possible pitfalls and life after professional sport. Without doubt, nobody sets out to end up with a substance misuse problem. If Ben is going to seek treatment, without doubt this should be applauded; and he definitely needs to be given the time and space to get better."

"We understand that Ben Cousins and his family are looking at the option of drug rehabilitation as part of the way forward to rebuild Ben's career. There's no question that treatment can make all the difference"

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*The ANCD is the principal advisory body to Government on drug and alcohol issues.*

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