

MEDIA RELEASE

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Bunnings fires up search for Australia's community footy club BBQ legends

Bunnings is lighting up the BBQ to launch the second year of its nationwide **Legend of the Tongs** search, a celebration of the local legends who keep Aussie rules footy clubs running, one snag at a time.

Now in its 12th year as an AFL partner, Bunnings' community initiative will run across 18 weeks of the 2026 AFL season, recognising the volunteers who turn up week in and week out to support their clubs.

With the campaign now underway, the first round of weekly BBQ "legends" has been announced with Kayne Henman and Laura McCallum from Victoria, Jarrad Young from South Australia, Jackie Barrie from Queensland and Vance Bond from Western Australia, all recognised for the heart and soul they bring to their clubs. Each week five clubs will win a BBQ prize pack valued at over \$585, including a Jumbuck 6 Burner BBQ and a Bunnings pop-up marquee.

Eight standout winners across the season will also score a trip for two to attend the Toyota AFL Grand Final, with several shortlisted winners coming from a public "community choice" vote open which is new for the 2026 competition

One overall winner will be crowned the 'Legend of the Golden Tongs', scoring \$25,000 in Bunnings products and materials for their local club. In 2025, the title was claimed by 90-year-old Geoff Wills from Melbourne's Bundoora Junior Football Club, recognised for an extraordinary 45 years of dedicated volunteer service. The honour reflects the vital role volunteers play in grassroots sport, with new Bunnings research revealing almost one in three Australians (29 per cent) say their favourite volunteer role is firing up the barbie – underscoring how BBQ, canteen and food service volunteers help shape club culture and community connection.

Returning as **Legend of the Tongs** ambassador is former Richmond legend Matthew 'Richo' Richardson who is joined this year by four times premiership AFLW player and commentator Libby Birch.

"Last year the calibre of entries was incredible – from lifelong volunteers to people who never miss a Saturday on the tongs, rain hail or shine and I'm ecstatic to be back to see who gets nominated this year," said Richo.

"I'm thrilled to be joining Bunnings this year and helping shine a light on the incredible volunteers who are the backbone of community footy across the country," said North Melbourne player, Libby Birch.

"The growth of the women's game in recent years has been outstanding, and it's only possible because of the dedication of volunteers at a grassroots level. From local clubs to elite pathways, these communities support women and girls in footy every step of the way and it's great to be part of a campaign that gives back to them," she added.

Bunnings Head of Community, Sponsorship and Events, Michelle Walter, said the initiative celebrates people who make local footy possible.

"Legend of the Tongs is all about recognising the heart of Australian rules football - the more than 200,000 volunteers who show up week in, week out to support their clubs," said Walter.



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“Whether it’s firing up the BBQ, backing their teams or raising vital funds, these volunteers play a huge role in keeping community footy thriving,” she added.

“Following a hugely successful first year, we’re proud to bring Legend of the Tongs back in 2026, delivering practical equipment and support that helps grassroots AFL and AFLW clubs focus on what matters most – their people and their community.”

Nominations are now open with winners announced weekly. Entries will close on 16 August 2026.

Think you know a BBQ legend? Nominate your local footy club’s Legend of the Tongs at [bunnings.com.au/legends](https://www.bunnings.com.au/legends).

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About Bunnings

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