

JAMES HIRD – Retired AFL Premiership Player/Essendon FC Captain/Brownlow Medallist



Inspiration/ Mental Health/Wellness/Supporting Men's Health



James Hird is not only an AFL champion, but he is almost considered 'Essendon Royalty' with his Father and Grandfather both playing for the Bombers. It's a family connection that 'Hirdy' is very proud of, dating back two generations.

James spent 17 seasons playing for the Essendon FC, playing in 2 x winning Premierships, captaining the 2000 premiership team. The 5 x All Australian, Brownlow Medallist and dual Premiership player has also been decorated with awards including a Norm Smith Medal, Australian Football Hall of Fame, a Team of the Century induction, and the Jim Stynes medal, just to name a few!

With his many career highlights, come some of the low times, which have included multiple fractures to his face and stress fractures in his foot, both keeping him out of the game for an extended period.

James was appointed Coach of the Essendon FC in 2010, a high in his football career, but it was during this time, he was involved in the 2013 Essendon Football Club Supplements Controversy which was a devastating low. These circumstances took a huge toll on James both professionally and personally. James by his own admission has been to hell and back since 2013 and has had some very dark times battling mental health issues.

James' doesn't pull any punches in his presentations. He is frank and open when talking about the good times and the bad, and he is brave enough to tell his story and to bare all to his audiences.

James tells how he has been turning his negative experiences into a positive, to help others and to highlight the importance of seeking help.

After stints at Channel 7 and Goldman Sachs, JB Were, James with his business partners started a global marketing business working across all continents of the world. After 14 years Gemba of which James is now a Director and significant shareholder, is one of the world's leading sports and entertainment consultancies. James is now working closely within the food and tech industry with his focus being Australia, China and Asia

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"We had James present to 400 men at our recent Big Blokes BBQ for Men's Health Week. James was amazing, you could have heard a pin drop in the room as he told his story, men were coming up to him after the presentation in tears and shaking his hand and telling him how brave he was to tell his story and help raise awareness for mental health. I could not recommend him more highly to present on the subject of mental health and to tell his story, no holds barred. The best speaker we have ever had at this event."

Garry Howe - Pakenham Big Blokes BBQ/ Star News Group