

Oxford Australia Word of the Month

October 2009

Footy Frank – *noun*: a frankfurter, especially of the type sold at football games.

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Footy Frank

The story behind the Word of the Month

Footy franks seem to have begun their life as a proprietary term of the Hutton's Company, associated with the advertisement: 'Don't argue, don't argue ... Hutton's **Footy Franks** are best.' They were often giveaways to footballers on the Sunday lunchtime footy shows. But is there any justification for putting an entry for **footy frank** into an Australian dictionary?

Recent evidence collected at the Australian National Dictionary Centre suggests that **footy frank** has become a general term in Australian English for a **frankfurt**. The **footy frank** often appears in a list of such sausages ranging in size from *little boys* or *cocktail frankfurts* to grown-up *frankfurts* and **footy franks**.

Footy franks remind people not just of football in general, but especially of the Grand Final. In September 1997 the Melbourne *Herald Sun* reported: 'Along with pictures of sausage rolls, **footy franks** and meat pies was a Grand Final Cake—decked in red, white and blue, and with icing that said "Go the Dogs".' In September 2001 the *Kalgoorlie Miner* suggested that **footy franks** and the AFL Grand Final are inextricably linked: 'At last, the MCG's surface is dry, Julie Anthony has emerged from the crypt and the Coles cold section is fully stocked with Hutton's **Footy Franks**. That one day in September is upon us.'

Footy franks also became Australia-defining icons, as when they were associated with consumerism in the *Kath and Kim* comedy show: 'At the heart of the mother and daughter duo is their avid consumerism: they love to shop, they love to talk about shopping, brand names fall from their lips faster than sale prices on Boxing Day. Sharon's idea of a big night involves **Footy Franks** and Tia Maria. It's part of what defines and locates the characters' (*Age*, August 2007).

The **footy frank** has broken free of its sauce-covered literalness, and has become the source of metaphor, as in these examples:

Fans sweated 10-deep along the Grand Final Parade route. People in plastic replica guernseys steamed in the sun like **footy franks** in a microwave oven. (*Herald-Sun*, September 1999)

Her aside was greeted with a blank look of confusion from the handsome teenager who was blessed with the personality of a **footy frank** and a similar bulge in his impossibly tight jeans. (*West Australian*, April 2005)

The **footy frank** has become a firm part of Australian English, and has earned its place in the dictionary.

metrosexual
weapon
of mass destruction
burka
barbecue
senior moment
Sudoku
dishlicker
cyberstalking
pear-shaped
Bioterrorism
karrack
glycaemic
index
stopper
hornbag
witlof
yakitori