Some tipping tactics include:

- Tipping the team who is higher on the ladder

- Tipping the team with a better winning streak

- Conversely, tipping teams who are apparently due for an unlikely win

- Tipping the team with a superior head-to-head history

- Tipping the home team

- Tipping the team with the better bookmaker odds

- Tipping teams based on “expert” tips made by sports journalists or former players.

- Looking at the teams’ form against the top eight teams.

- Looking at factors like weather, venues, travel requirements, the injuries list and suspensions

of important players.

There are more advanced tactics such as the core and satellite method, where you tip according to

the betting odds except for those games where the bookmakers expect a close result. For these you

simply tip against the team most others are tipping, in the hope that you might get an edge over the

herd in your particular tipping competition.

Each of these ideas has some merit. But that's the problem. How much merit should you place in each

tactic, and how can you possibly combine tactics in a way that gives a fair weighting to each?

That's where machine learning comes in. Machine learning is a branch of artificial intelligence that

can be programmed to understand the relationships between data based on what has happened in the

past. It is frequently used by large companies to find new customers for their projects, by academic

researchers to understand our natural and social worlds, by investment companies to predict

movements in the stock market and by bookmakers to set the initial odds for sports.

The Footy Forest is my attempt to use machine learning to predict AFL football games using a range

of data and giving appropriate weighting to their ability to make accurate predictions.