

Cathy Freeman

Olympic Legend, Keynote Speaker

Cathy Freeman holds Legend Status in The Sport Australia Hall of Fame. A proud Kuku Yalanji woman, the many firsts she has achieved for Australia have made her a household name.

Cathy was Australia's first Aboriginal woman to win a gold medal at an international athletics event and the first Australian Aboriginal to compete at the Olympics. Additionally, Cathy was also the first person to win both the Young Australian of the Year (1991) and the Australian of the Year (1998).

Now retired from sports, Cathy Freeman devotes her time to causes she is passionate about, most notably Aboriginal issues.

Cathy Freeman was born in Mackay, Queensland in 1973. From the time she was a child she dreamed of winning an Olympic gold medal. She raced for the first time when she was eight years old. She ran the 80 metre sprint at her primary school and won easily.

Cathy Freeman has achieved much more than her dream of Olympic Gold. She won a scholarship to two Queensland schools, Fairholme College and Kooralbyn International School. At Kooralbyn in 1989 she was professionally coached for the first time.

In 1990 Cathy competed in her first Commonwealth games where she won gold as a member of the four x 100 metres relay team. She became the first Aboriginal sprinter to win a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games. At the 1994 Commonwealth Games she won the 200 and 400 metre gold medals. The 1992 Barcelona Olympics were her first Olympics but she did not make the finals. At the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, Cathy won a silver medal. In 1990 she was chosen as the Young Australian of the Year and in 1998 Australian of the Year. She is the first person to receive both awards.

Cathy Freeman was given the honour of lighting the Olympic flame at the opening ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympics. At those Olympics with the hopes of the nation running with her she fulfilled her childhood dream winning gold for the 400 metres. After the race she sat on the track emotionally and physically exhausted. The crowd wildly cheered her on her victory lap as she proudly carried the Australian and Aboriginal flags as she had first done at the 1994 Commonwealth Games.



Cathy Freeman has now retired from professional running and devotes much of her time and energy to important causes, particularly Aboriginal issues.

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