

Cathy Freeman

Olympic Legend and Keynote Speaker

Cathy Freeman is a proud Kuku Yalanji, Magarr-Magarr Warra and Birri Gubba woman. She is also an Australian Indigenous Olympic champion. She ran her first race when she was five and realised that she loved the way racing made her feel.



Cathy Freeman was a member of the gold medal-winning 4x100m relay team at the 1990 Auckland Commonwealth Games, and in so doing became the first female Australian Aboriginal to win a gold medal at an International athletics event.

She was awarded Young Australian of the Year in 1991 and a year later in Barcelona became the first Australian Aboriginal to represent Australia at an Olympic Games. Two years later, Cathy won gold in both the 200m and 400m at the Commonwealth Games in Victoria, Canada. At the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996, she won silver with a personal best time of 48.63s in the 400m. She was crowned World Champion in the same event at the World Athletic Championships the following year, was awarded Australian of the year in 1998, and was again World Champion in the 400m in 1999.

Cathy's most notable achievement, however, came in 2000 at the Olympic Games in Sydney. Her image was beamed into millions of homes around the world when she became the first competing athlete to be invited to light the Olympic flame at the opening ceremony. She then went on to win the gold medal in the 400m, realising a life-long dream.

More about Cathy Freeman

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 ran her first race when she was five and realised that she loved the way racing made her feel. She won her first gold medal at a School Athletics Championships when she was eight years old.

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.

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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