

## Nova Peris

### *Former Olympian, Politician & Keynote Speaker*

Nova Peris OAM OLY was Australia's first indigenous woman elected to federal parliament and the first Aboriginal Australian and Northern Territorian to win an Olympic gold medal. Having appeared on television programs including the ABC's Q&A program, *Kitchen Cabinet* with Annabel Crabb, Andrew Denton's *Enough Rope*, and *Off The Record* with Bruce McAvaney, she is one of our most recognisable voices.



Nova Peris has demonstrated leadership all throughout her life, breaking down barriers once viewed as unachievable for an Aboriginal woman - or any woman. Since the mid-1990s, she has spoken regularly on the plights facing Aboriginal people, and has visited hundreds of communities throughout Australia to gain as much of an insight as possible into the issues facing people from all walks of life. Her commitment, passion, and work ethic is indeed unrivalled. She is a truly great leader for Aboriginal people, particularly children, and remains committed to bridging the gap between people of all races and backgrounds. In 2018, Nova was the Northern Territory Award Winner for Excellence in Women's Leadership, recognising her contribution to the advancement of gender equality across Australia.

Drawing from her unique experiences in sport, government and as a leader within Australia's indigenous community, Nova Peris effortlessly tailors her keynote presentations to inspire audiences from diverse ages, backgrounds and sectors. Her ability to be able to speak equally with people from all socioeconomic backgrounds gives Nova a unique approachability and relatability that sets her apart from many with similar platforms and responsibilities.

### **More About Nova Peris:**

Nova Peris is one of a very few athletes who have represented their country in two different sports; hockey & athletics, and separate Olympic Games.

She became the first indigenous Australian to win an Olympic gold medal when she was a member of the victorious Hockeyroos in Atlanta in 1996. She also became the first mother to be a gold medallist for Australia since Shirley Strickland in 1956. Nova was later appointed to the role of Vice President of Northern Territory Hockey.

After the team's Atlanta success, Peris made a decision to turn her remarkable talents to athletics. She excelled on the track, winning the 200m and 4x100m gold medals at the 1998 Commonwealth



Games before the climax of her athletics career: a return to the Olympics in Sydney, where she reached the semi-finals of the 400m and was a member of Australia's 4 x 400m relay team, which placed fifth.

On 8 June 2000, Nova was the first Australian to run with the Sydney 2000 torch on home soil. After being passed through the hands of Aboriginal elders, she ran a stretch around Uluru with her 10-year-old daughter Jessica before passing to Ernie Dingo.

Nova's twin achievements, being our first indigenous Olympic champion and achieving in two different sports at Olympic level, marks her as one of our finest athletes. In 2014, she was still ranked in the Australian All Time top 10 for the 100m, 200m and 400m. She was a semi-finalist in the 400m at the Sydney Olympics and her 51.28s quarter-final run was a Personal Best.

A former Senator for the Northern Territory, Nova is a passionate campaigner for indigenous rights and reconciliation in Australia. As a treaty ambassador for the former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), she has traveled around the country, campaigning for a treaty between black and white so that a fundamental understanding between two groups can be forged. Nova has also been appointed to roles that include International Indigenous Human Rights Ambassador - repatriation of human remains at Manchester UK Museum and National Ambassador for Reconciliation Australia.

Nova has actively participated in promotional and advocacy campaigns for domestic violence, youth, depression, youth suicide. She is a former Board Member and National Patron for Beyond Blue. She has served as the International Ambassador for World Health Organisation & Griffith University Youth Suicide Prevention and International Ambassador for 'Hepatitis Australia' - 'World Hepatitis Day'.

On 7 September 2013, Nova Peris became Australia's first indigenous woman elected to federal parliament and during her time in parliament she was a member of several Senate Committees and inquiries, including the Education and Employment References Committee; Finance and Public Administration: Legislation and References Committees and the Senate Community Affairs: Legislation and References Committees. Nova resigned in 2016, ahead of the elections and in 2017 was appointed as Principle Advisor for the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), involved in Sport and Recreation Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing and Community Participation. Additionally, she was appointed Patron for the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA); and Chairperson for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island National Sporting Hall of Fame, tasked with establishing a permanent home for the Hall of Fame.

Nova Peris was awarded Young Australian of the Year in January 1997, she received the Medal of the Order of Australia in January 1997 and the Australian Sports Medal in June 2000. She is acknowledged in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Hall of Fame and has written an autobiography *Nova - My Story*.



## Client testimonials

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“ Extremely warm and personable... Mixed well with both staff and students... She spoke extremely well... Great solid messages of positivity... Fantastic Aboriginal role model... Understated her achievements in a most endearing way but she has obviously achieved so much.

- *Mareeba State High School*

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