



Thursday, 17 May, 2018

***Black Pearls* showcases the strength, resilience and achievement of our Aboriginal & Islander sporting stars**

New publication *Black Pearls: The Aboriginal and Islander Sports Hall of Fame* will be launched by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence in Redfern, Thursday 17 May, 2018.

AIATSIS CEO Craig Ritchie whose father, boxer Dennis Ritchie, features in the book, said: "The story of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia is one of strength, resilience and achievement, and is a story which continues to be lived out on the sporting field today.

"From the dusty AFL grounds in remote communities to the Super Bowl arena of American football, from Centralian pub darts competitions, to title fights in Tokyo and Buenos Aires, our sporting talent and achievement is truly a global phenomenon.

"This Hall of Fame is a museum and a tribute not only to individual achievement but to the power and strength of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander peoples."

The 397 page illustrated book is the updated and expanded Aboriginal and Islander Sports Hall of Fame, authored by Colin and Paul Tatz and last published in 2000 as *Black Gold*.

Professor Colin Tatz AO said: "As much a history book as it is a sports book, *Black Pearls* looks both inside and beyond the arenas for a portrait of the Aboriginal and Islander experience. The good, the bad and the ugly are captured in 276 stories and pictures."

The new edition showcases Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sporting heroes who, since the mid-1880s, have helped shape Australia's identity as a great sporting nation. Iconic names such as Cathy Freeman, Nova Peris, Artie Beetson feature alongside more contemporary sports stars such as Paralympic swimmer and cyclist Amanda Reid, the world-ranking tennis player Ashleigh Barty and Olympic water polo captain Nathan Thomas.

Paul Tatz said: "The unearthing of many of these great sportspeople has led to a wealth of Aboriginal and Islander family histories hitherto unknown to the world. Much more is needed to bring to light achievements, privations, and journeys that these great Australians have to tell. We live in an era where most of history is forgotten – it is imperative that we remember and learn from our not so distant past."

In its diverse collection of stories *Black Pearls* reveals a history of inclusion and exclusion, determination in the face of enormous obstacles, and resilience in overcoming remoteness, discriminatory laws, incarceration on isolated reserves and opponents in a variety of sports arenas.

Black Pearls: The Aboriginal and Islander Sports Hall of Fame (\$34.95 RRP) is available now from AIATSIS' publishing arm, Aboriginal Studies Press.

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