

MEDIA RELEASE

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## ATHLETES, CLUBS AND ORGANISATIONS RECOGNISED FOR LGBTI INCLUSION AT INAUGURAL PRIDE IN SPORT AWARDS

The National Rugby League (NRL), Cricket Victoria and Australian Football League (AFL) club St. Kilda are among the organisations that have been named as Australia's highest ranking sporting clubs and codes for LGBTI inclusion at the inaugural Australian Pride in Sport Awards held today at the Showtime Events Centre in Melbourne.

The Australian Pride in Sport Awards is the first celebration of its kind dedicated solely to recognising exceptional efforts in making sport more inclusive of LGBTI people. It is produced by Pride in Sport, the national not-for-profit sporting inclusion program spearheaded by Australia's largest LGBTI health organisation ACON.

The St. Kilda Football Club took home the award for the Highest Ranking Overall sporting organisation, while Cricket Victoria were recognised as the Highest Ranking State Sporting Organisation. The NRL took out the Highest Ranking National Sporting Organisation award. The Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Corporation was the recipient of the Achievement Award for Most Improved.

Three individuals across various sporting disciplines were awarded for their efforts in making their respective sports more inclusive of LGBTI players, employees and fans, while two community awards were also handed out. ***See next page for complete list of award recipients.***

The awards showcased the results of the Pride in Sport Index (PSI) – the national benchmarking instrument used to assess LGBTI inclusion within Australian sport. Launched in 2016, the PSI was developed in conjunction with the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Australian Sports Commission and Bingham Cup Sydney, alongside an advisory group comprising representatives from a range of peak sporting bodies.

ACON Vice-President and Co-Founder of the PSI, Andrew Purchas, said: "The PSI allows sporting organisations and clubs to benchmark their LGBTI inclusive policies and practices annually, and the Australian Pride in Sport Awards acknowledge and celebrate those that have scored highly on the index.

"In 2014, Australia's major sporting codes signed up to the *Australian Anti Homophobia and Inclusion Framework for Australian Sport*. These awards and the index continue this important work as they provide sporting organisations with an opportunity to reflect on their work in the inclusion of LGBTI participants and staff, and identify areas they can address to ensure their sport is truly inclusive.

"Many of Australia's sporting organisations are recognising positive steps need to be taken to ensure your sexuality, gender identity or intersex status does not impact your ability to play, watch or be involved with sport at any level – and we're proud to celebrate those success stories at the Pride in Sport Awards today.

"I congratulate all the award recipients and the many others working towards making Australian sport an inclusive place for everyone," Mr Purchas said.

The awards which were hosted by ABC sports presenter and journalist Tracey Holmes featured a host of leading sporting and community figures including former Olympic swimmer and Pride in Sport co-patron Daniel Kowalski, and Australian tennis champion Casey Dellacqua.

Alex Blackwell, one of the world's leading cricketers and Pride in Sport co-patron, said the awards and program are helping pave the way for LGBTI inclusion within Australian sport.

"Sport has had an incredibly positive impact on my life during my 15 year international cricket career. I have experienced all the health and social benefits that come with playing sport at the highest level," Ms Blackwell said.

"Sadly the evidence tells us that sport is not a particularly welcoming place for all Australians, especially young LGBTI people. This is arguably the group that could most benefit from sport.

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“Now armed with this knowledge sporting organisations are joining Pride in Sport so that they can effectively break down the barriers to LGBTI inclusion and attract the largest and most diverse participation, fan and talent base and ensure their sport thrives into the future.”

This year’s PSI results saw the majority of those sports that did participate in 2017 actively use the index to plan their activity over 2018 and this has brought about a significant shift in the average score, with a 109 per cent increase in the average score across all submissions.

Relationship Manager for Pride in Sport Casey Conway said: “Since its inaugural year, the Pride in Sport Index has seen a significant shift in practice with LGBTI inclusion work in Australian sport. With a wide range of sporting organisations participating, we are seeing a strong commitment to providing safer and more inclusive environments and experiences for LGBTI people”.

While LGBTI inclusion has well and truly made its way onto the Australian workplace diversity and inclusion agenda, Blackwell added there is more to be done to ensure that sport in Australia can experience greater levels of LGBTI inclusion.

“Year on year improvements and success stories in LGBTI inclusion are being celebrated at the Pride in Sport awards. I would like to congratulate each sport and the many volunteers on the work they are doing to ensure sport is a place for everyone,” Blackwell said.

## 2018 Pride in Sport Awards Recipients

Award	Recipient
Highest Ranking Overall	St. Kilda Football Club
Highest Ranking State Sporting Organisation	Cricket Australia
Highest Ranking National Sporting Organisation	National Rugby League
Achievement Award for Most Improved	Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Corporation
LGBTI Ally Award	Emma Staples, Cricket Australia
LGBTI Inclusive Coach	Reid Smith, Perth Pythons
LGBTI Community Sport	Perth Pythons Hockey Club
LGBTI Out Role Model	Jeremy Archer, Brisbane Tritons Water Polo Club
LGBTI Inclusion Initiative	National Water Polo League Pride Cup and Shield

### ABOUT PRIDE IN SPORT

Pride in Sport is a national not-for-profit program that assists sporting organisations and clubs with the inclusion of LGBTI employees, players, volunteers and spectators. It is part of ACON’s Pride Inclusion Programs, which provides a range of services to employers, sporting organisations and service providers with support in all aspects of LGBTI inclusion. All funds generated through membership and ticketed events go back into the work of Pride in Sport, actively working alongside sporting organisations, clubs and participants to make Australian sport inclusive of LGBTI communities. For more information, visit the Pride Inclusion Programs website [here](#).

### ABOUT THE PRIDE IN SPORT INDEX

The Pride in Sport Index (PSI) is an independently administered benchmarking system that provides the opportunity for all national and state sporting organisations to have their LGBTI related initiatives, programs and policies reviewed, measured and monitored. An initiative of the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Australian Sports Commission and a legacy of the Bingham Cup Sydney 2014 (the world cup of gay rugby), it was developed alongside an advisory group that includes representatives from the National Rugby League (NRL), the Australian Football League (AFL), the Australian Rugby Union (ARU), Football Federation Australia (FFA), Cricket Australia, Swimming Australia, Water Polo Australia, Basketball Australia and Golf Australia. For more information, visit the Pride in Sport website [here](#).

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