

# LEGENDS

## The AFL Indigenous Team of the Century

By SEAN GORMAN

Aboriginal Studies Press, published 15 August 2011, \$34.95RRP

*This book, with its fine introductory essay, and terrific profiles of these champions, should be in every Australian home. It celebrates these men we know as footballers, but presents them as real people. It shows how the political and cultural forces of their day had an impact on them. No punches are pulled. And, importantly, it shows the impact these players have had, through their prominence and courage, on those very forces. — John Harms, The Footy Almanac*

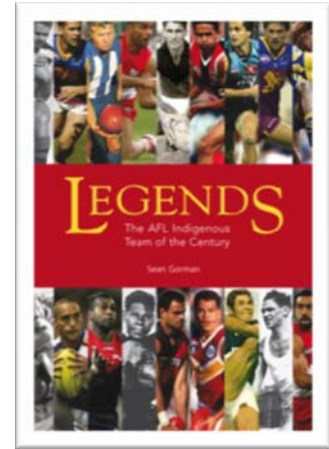
**Legends will be launched by Michael Long at the MCG on Monday 15 August.**

**Legends: The AFL Indigenous Team of the Century** is the first book of Indigenous football and sporting history told by the players, and at its heart is a powerful and engaging social history.

Indigenous Australians have given us some of our greatest football champions and *Legends* will provide sports fans with much to enjoy. With names like Farmer, Winmar, Long, Rioli and Goodes; these stories are some of the most compelling in the game of AFL. The journey for some has been one of great struggle and difficulty. For them, football was the only way out. Although not every story is the same, collectively there are commonalities that appear and they present a different narrative to the one normally told about Indigenous sportspeople. All are superb athletes, many having played other sports. Nonetheless, for most, Australian football was the only game in town. However there's no 'black magic' here, simply skill and dedication. The men's strong ties to family and community shine through. They could achieve what they set out to do because of the support from their families and community back home. Another feature is the men's acknowledgment of the debt owed by them to the players who went before them: players like Pastor Doug Nicholls and for the younger players, Michael Long and Nicky Winmar. Although they've all won many accolades, all were genuinely humbled when chosen to be part of the Team of the Century.

The players describe their lives and sporting achievements, including the way they dealt with racism on and off the field, and the people who helped them achieve success. All the stories are inspirational. From Farmer to McLeod, and Jackson to Matera, these men's lives are great Australian stories about Aboriginal Football Legends.

Australian football represents one of the few areas where Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians come together to celebrate and participate as a community. More than 250,000 people attend an AFL game on a weekly basis and many tens of thousands more watch it on TV. It's well known that Indigenous players represent twelve per cent of the elite players in these matches, well outstripping their percentage of the population. *Legends* lets us understand why that might be.



To arrange an interview, please call Debbie or Catherine  
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**SEAN GORMAN** has studied and worked in the Indigenous studies field for nearly 20 years. His first book *Brotherboys: The Story of Jim and Phillip Krakouer* was published in 2005 and was adapted for theatre. He currently works as a research fellow at Curtin University at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Perth. He is the lead investigator on research into the AFL's anti-vilification laws and policies.

### **FROM THE AUTHOR, SEAN GORMAN**

In 1992, having finished a stint in the country, working on farms and in shearing teams, I re-entered high school as a mature age student. I was 23. I had to tick a box as to what university course I wanted to do.

In 1993, Murdoch University offered a degree for the first time: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. I still don't know why I ticked the box but I can honestly say that through that simple action, and having worked with Indigenous Australians since then, my life has been enriched beyond any measure. It seems like the blink of an eye but 18 years later I am still working and studying in the same field. More importantly I am still learning.

My aim with this book is to get people to ask a simple question: if we have a common love of football and we can create positive experiences through it, why can't this flow through to other areas? If Indigenous and non-Indigenous teammates can work together playing football why can't these types of relationships filter into other sectors in Australian society?

*Football, and our appreciation of it, can and does assist in developing a greater awareness about the contributions every player makes to the game. In some small way, we can watch television or go to a football game on any weekend during winter and come to a greater appreciation of what football means to us all. This can lead to greater engagements and appreciation at other levels, and the spirit of coexistence can take root. In a post-Apology Australia, and in a country that loves its sport, this seems a fitting path to take. (From the Introduction)*

### **THE TEAM**

Graham 'Polly' Farmer, Ted 'Square' Kilmurray, Bill Dempsey, Syd Jackson, Barry Cable, Michael 'Flash' Graham, Maurice Rioli, Stephen Michael, Glenn James, Jim Krakouer, Michael McLean, Nicky Winmar, Chris Lewis, Michael Long, Peter Matera, Gavin Wanganeen, Darryl White, Chris Johnson, Michael O'Loughlin, Andrew McLeod, Byron Pickett, Peter Burgoyne, Adam Goodes, David Kantilla & Norm McDonald.

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