

13 February 2020

## ABC's Karen Tighe receives Lifetime Achievement Award

### All 14 winners from the 18<sup>th</sup> annual Sport Australia Media Awards

ABC broadcaster Karen Tighe says she hopes to see the continued rise of female sport commentators and Paralympic sport, accepting the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 18<sup>th</sup> annual Sport Australia Media Awards in Sydney tonight.

Tighe accepted the award at a gala ceremony attended by the best in Australian sports media, and her family, recognition for a career spanning more than 30 years. Tighe recalled phoning her father, Mike, the day she got her first job with ABC Sport in 1989.

"My mum had died three years earlier so times had been tough and I remember getting off the train at Gordon Station, finding a phone booth and ringing him to say I got a job at ABC sport," Tighe said.

"There were few other women in sports media when I started so to see now the increasing number of passionate intelligent women part of the mainstream sports broadcasting mix and without constant reference of being a woman in a man's world is a significant, overdue shift.

"What I would love to see now is more women in our broadcast teams in the play-by-play all round commentator role to build on the fine work of a very small number of women at the moment in that space. They are pioneers."

Joining the ABC in 1989, she was an anchor for golf, tennis and other major sporting broadcasts, including 16 years hosting the Hopman Cup. She forged a national profile in the early 1990s as part of the Friday night television show Live and Sweaty and in 1997 became anchor for ABC Grandstand, where she remains a staple of weekend sport.

A voice synonymous with ABC Grandstand, Tighe has covered a breadth of major sporting events including Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games World championships in swimming, basketball and netball, as well as 16 years hosting the Hopman Cup of tennis.

Of her sporting highlights, Tighe focused attention on her coverage of six Paralympic Games.

"I felt a connection with the Paralympic movement from the very first Games I attended in Barcelona 1992, where I was introduced to two athletes in particular who would go on to become synonymous with the Paralympics and transcend their sports, wheelchair racer Louise Sauvage and swimmer Priya Cooper, both multiple gold medallists," Tighe said.

"To help tell their stories and share their events and those of many others – to focus on ability rather than disability - and the role sport can play - the Paralympic movement was showing what was possible.

"That the Paralympics is now part of our commercial colleagues' sporting menu and that athletes like Kurt Fearnley and Dylan Alcott have also transcended their sports - speaks volumes for what the Paralympic movement has become and I hope will grow further."

Fittingly, ABC received the award for Best Coverage of Sport for People with Disability, recognition for its broadcast of the Invictus Games in Sydney.

With the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics approaching this year, Sport Australia Chair John Wylie commended all finalists and winners for telling the story of sport, adding "nothing comes close to sport as a force to unite, motivate and inspire us".

"We have amazing athletes who will do our country proud in Tokyo and they're being well supported to achieve their best. The AIS has invested more than \$500 million in funding directly into sports and athletes in the four years leading to the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. We look forward to these Games with quiet optimism."

## Sport Australia Media Awards winners

**Lifetime achievement award for sports journalism:** Karen Tighe

**Best reporting of an issue in sport:** Shark Island Productions, 'The Final Quarter'

**Highly Commended:** Jamie Pandaram, 'Israel's holy war', News Corp Australia

**Best sport coverage by an individual - broadcast:** Gerard Whateley, SEN Radio and Fox Footy

**Best sport coverage by an individual - written:** Konrad Marshall, Good Weekend

**Best sport coverage by an individual - digital:** Mary Konstantopoulos, Ladies Who League

**Best coverage of a sporting event:** The Age & The Sydney Morning Herald, 'The Ashes'

**Best sport profile - broadcast:** Josh Cable, Marcus Cobbledick, 'Collingwood: From the Inside Out', Good Thing Productions

**Best sport profile – written:** Samantha Lane, 'Adam Goodes', The Sydney Morning Herald & The Age

**Best coverage of sport for people with disability:** ABC, 'Invictus Games 2018'

**Highly Commended:** Catherine Marciniak, 'Leagueability', ABC

**Best regional, rural and suburban sport coverage:** Stuart Walmsley, RUGBY.com.au

**Best depiction of inclusive sport:** Media Stockade, 'Power Meri'

**Best contribution to sport via digital media:** The Herald Sun, 'Sacked'

**Best analysis of sport business:** Tracey Holmes, The Ticket, ABC

**Best sports photography:** Michael Willson, 'The Kick', AFL Photos

### ABOUT THE SPORT AUSTRALIA MEDIA AWARDS

The Sport Australia Media Awards (#SportAUSMediaAwards) have been running since 2002 and are Australia's only awards dedicated to recognising excellence in sports journalism, broadcasting, production and photography.

For more information, including access to photos and vision of tonight's winners, please contact: Chris Wilson 0407 135 280 or [chris.wilson@sportaus.gov.au](mailto:chris.wilson@sportaus.gov.au)

