

Michael Long (1969–)

Michael Long

Quick facts

Name: Michael Long
Born: Northern Territory, 1 October 1969

Doing Your Best

Norm Smith Medallist 1993
1995 Brownlow Medal runner-up
Walked from Melbourne to Canberra (The Long Walk) to meet Prime Minister John Howard and draw attention to Indigenous issues

Biography

Fair Go
Integrity

Michael Long is one of the most talented footballers to have played in the Australian Football League (AFL). Long is respected as a footballer and a spokesperson for Aboriginal people. Michael Long's parents had been removed from their families as children and were raised in the Tiwi Islands. His parents' experiences shaped Michael's determination to fight racial discrimination.

Fair Go
Freedom

Doing Your Best

Recruited in 1989 by Essendon from St Mary's Football Club in the Northern Territory, Long's skills earned him the Best First Year Player award. He played 190 games for Essendon, was Co-Captain in 1999 and played in two premierships.

In 1995, following an ANZAC Day game against Collingwood, Long became the first Indigenous player to highlight racial abuse when he reported offensive language used by an opposition player. The player later apologised to Long. As a result of Long's actions, the AFL adopted a new rule aimed at stopping racial and religious vilification. In 2001 Long retired as a professional footballer, but not from working to help Indigenous Australians.

Integrity
Responsibility

In November 2004, Long left his Melbourne home to walk to Canberra to meet Prime Minister John Howard to discuss the plight of Indigenous Australians and raise public awareness of the issues of concern to Indigenous communities. Thousands of people joined the walk which became known as 'The Long Walk'. In 2005, the Long Walk took place again to raise funds for the Sir Doug Nicholls Fellowship. The 2006 Long Walk was held just before a big football match called 'Dreamtime at the G' held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The match was dedicated to the role Indigenous footballers like Long play in Australian Rules Football.

Integrity

Michael Long is now the AFL's Indigenous Programs Manager. He says, 'We can't forget kids ... We want them to know we care ... not only for their football development, but their character development.'

Media

Freedom
Integrity

Care and
Compassion

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