

Wayne Schwass

Former Australian Rules football player, Mental Health Advocate

Since capturing Australia's attention as one of the most successful football players in AFL history, Wayne Schwass has gone on to make a name for himself in more ways than one.

Born in New Zealand and raised in Warrnambool, Western Victoria, Wayne Schwass began playing Aussie Rules football at the age of ten. But with his undeniable talent and passion, it was not long before he was recruited to join the AFL— so in 1986, Wayne began playing for the North Melbourne Football Club.

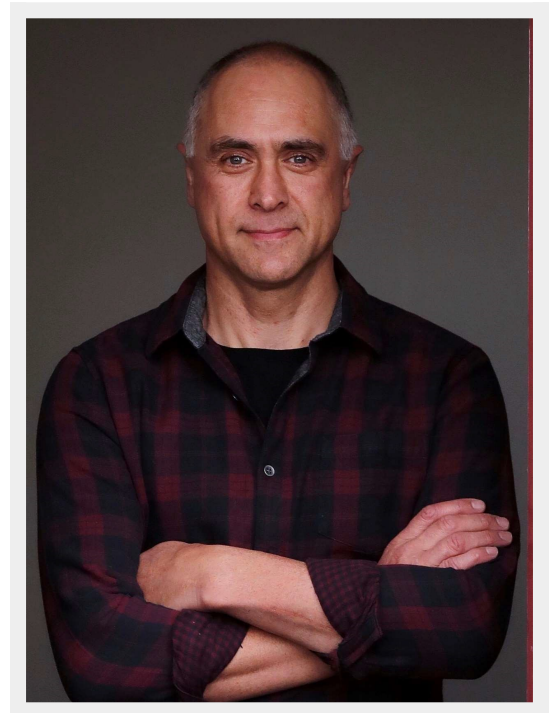
From here, Wayne went from strength to strength, quickly becoming one of the most highly-rated players in AFL history. Over 14 years Wayne played 282 games at the elite level, both with the North Melbourne Football Club (1988-1997) and the Sydney Swans (1998-2002). During his outstanding career Wayne won 3 Best and Fairest's at the NMFC, he was a premiership player with NMFC in 1996, All-Australian in 1999 and part of the NMFC Team of the Century and inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Since retiring in 2002, Wayne has established himself as a highly respected AFL broadcaster on TV, radio, print and online. However, in addition to his work within the sporting world, Wayne has also become a passionate and leading advocate for mental health awareness.

In 2017 Wayne founded PukaUp a social enterprise focusing on mental health, emotional wellbeing and, importantly, suicide prevention. According to Wayne, the PukaUp vision is to 'create the environments for every person to have authentic and genuine conversations about mental health and emotional wellbeing'.

As well as running PukaUp, Wayne also delivers powerful and honest keynote speeches at countless mental health seminars and workshops, where his message never fails to resonate with audiences.

In 2019 saw Wayne finish up as part of the Triple M AFL commentary Team and as host of 'Off the Bench TV'. Wayne is focusing up on eliminating the stigma of Men's Mental Health and focusing on his organization PukaUp.



Testimonials

“ We were privileged to have Wayne present a webinar to our entire client base, friends and family about mental health and emotional wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Wayne speaks with incredible passion and energy and is highly engaging and captivating. Wayne had a profound impact on each and every person that dialed in to the webinar. Grimsey Wealth couldn't be any prouder to be supporters and sponsors of Wayne and Puka Up.

- **Stuart Grimsey, Client Relationship Manager.**

“ Give yourself the permission to feel your emotions and to express them. A simple yet often underestimated concept that has re-energised our Wellbeing Team! Thank you, Wayne. Your words have empowered us to acknowledge, validate and express our thoughts and emotions; encouraged us to self-regulate and to implement wellbeing strategies to reduce fear or anxiety. Your energy, spirit and genuineness is positively infectious and thank you for lifting us up at a time where we have needed it the most! Thank you for sharing your knowledge, your lived experience and your learnings with Us. We look forward to our next session.

- **Angela Williams, Director of Wellbeing, Hospital Social Work and Wellbeing Program**

“ Wayne was able to deliver a powerful and impactful presentation that received a lot of positive feedback from the community. The delivery itself was online and had the audience captivated from the beginning. Even though we all weren't in the same room, it felt like we were, highly recommended.

- **Sam Story, Suicide Prevention Project Officer**

“ Wayne shared with the audience the practical strategies and techniques he uses on a daily basis, to help him minimize stress and to prevent anxiety. He discussed the importance of a healthy daily routine, a balanced diet, exercise and sound sleep. The response I received following the webinar has been overwhelming. People have reported to me the personal results they have experienced, having implemented elements of what they learned from Wayne during the session. I sincerely thank, commend and recommend Wayne and the PukaUp organization for the wonderful work they do within the community.

- **Matthew Gray, Sales Consultant**

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