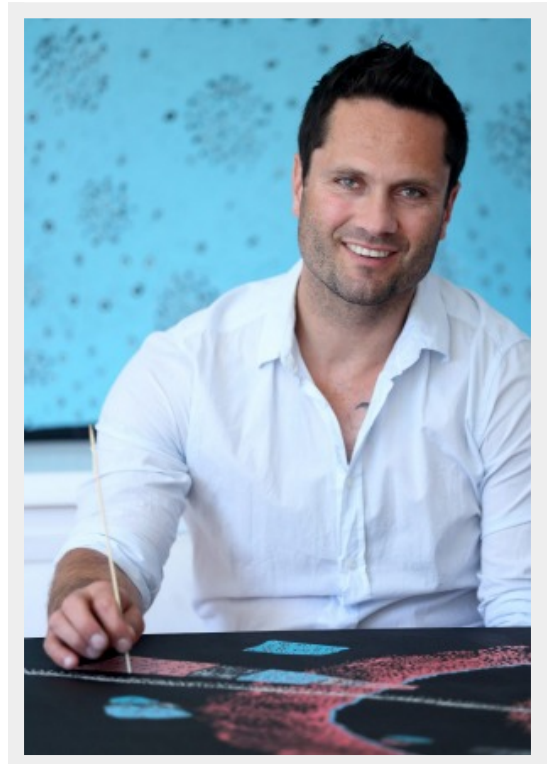


# Gavin Wanganeen

## *AFL legend, Aboriginal Artist, Businessman & Advocate*

Gavin Wanganeen is an Australian Football League (AFL) legend, acclaimed contemporary Aboriginal artist, a businessman and an advocate for Indigenous empowerment.



### **More about Gavin Wanganeen:**

Two-time Premiership winner, member of the AFL Hall of Fame and Brownlow medalist, Gavin Wanganeen is respected for his significant contribution to the game.

Gavin's AFL career spanned 300 senior games at the Essendon and Port Adelaide Football Clubs, earning him countless accolades, including the dedication of a grandstand at Adelaide Oval in 2015, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the game.

Gavin blazed a trail as the first Indigenous player to receive a Brownlow medal and reach 300 games. In February 2019 he again broke new ground with his appointment to the board of the Port Adelaide Football Club. This achievement makes him the first Aboriginal ex-AFL player ever to be elected to an AFL club board and the first Indigenous member of the Port Adelaide Football Club board in its 150 year history.

Having retired from the AFL over a decade ago, Gavin continues to inspire and innovate through his work as a contemporary Aboriginal artist.

Born in Mount Gambier, South Australia, Gavin is a proud descendent of the Kokatha Mula people of the Western Desert in South Australia. The Kokatha people hold the Tjukupa (lore) and have a strong connection to country, the night sky and stories in the stars - a deep source of inspiration for Gavin's paintings.

Growing up, Gavin spent time on South Australia's west coast where his maternal great-grandfather, Dick Davey, was a respected leader of the people of Koonibba Mission and the community at large. Davey was one of the first Indigenous people to be "permitted" to purchase land, and was a talented footballer, playing for the Koonibba Football Club, today recognised as the country's oldest surviving Aboriginal football club.

From a young age, Gavin embraced a love of colour and storytelling through art. Yet it wasn't until his twenties, through a friendly competition with his Indigenous Port Adelaide Football Club teammates to produce an artwork from their respective regions, that Gavin made the life changing decision to start painting.

Gavin began exploring his ancestral links on canvas, recreating memories and capturing the beauty of the Australian outback. Today Gavin's astonishing natural talent continues to blossom, attracting national attention and acclaim and firmly establishing him as a contemporary Aboriginal artist to watch.

Gavin's first solo exhibition in 2016 was inspired by a camping trip with his wife Pippa on Wardang Island, where he saw a shooting star. The experience had a profound effect on him, connecting him to his Kokatha ancestors and inspiring him to further explore this spiritual relationship through art.

Gavin is an advocate for Indigenous empowerment, frequently travelling to remote Aboriginal communities predominantly in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjattjara (APY) Lands in north-west South Australia, encouraging positive life choices through sport, education, culture and community.

As well as sitting on the board of the State Theatre Company South Australia and CALHN, Gavin is a driving force behind key organisations including the Indigenous Players Alliance, created in 2018 to support Indigenous Australian Football League players throughout their life and career both on and off the field.

Gavin is the owner and Director of MURRA Partners, an Aboriginal owned executive search and recruitment firm based in South Australia, and has recently launched his own coffee bean and pod business called Jooju.

Gavin is devoted to giving back to community. He is a Statewide Wellbeing Strategy Ambassador for the State Government and Well-being SA's Open Your World initiative created in 2020. Gavin has also been ambassador for Power Community Programs, and Power to End Violence Against Women with the Port Adelaide Football Club and Deadly Choices, an initiative run by Aboriginal Health. He is an ambassador for the AFL's Aboriginal youth football team, the Boomerangs, and The White Ribbon Foundation, as well as an advisor to the United Nations Association of Australia SA, and sits on the RAP committee for UNAASA and The Adelaide Fringe Festival.

The Gavin Wanganeen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholarship at the University of South Australia was established in 2005 to provide support for disadvantaged Indigenous students with a

strong desire to succeed and contribute to their community, by enabling them to complete a university degree. Through the power of education, the Gavin Wanganeen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarships have changed the lives of its 45 recipients to date who, in turn, are inspiring others to change their lives. Many scholarship graduates now work in the fields of Indigenous health, education and social work, while others are making their mark in the arts and media.

### ***Gavin Wanganeen talks about:***

Topics about resilience and leadership are familiar to Gavin. His entire life story has involved triumph through challenge, and it is incredibly powerful and inspiring. From growing up in Aboriginal communities in low socioeconomic areas in South Australia, his incredible career as an AFL star, his adjustment as he transitioned from football into what he describes as the real world, and now to life as an acclaimed working artist, there will certainly be value for everyone in the room.

He can tailor to any audience demographic and some of the themes are:

- Wellbeing
- Leadership
- Successful teams
- Resilience
- Racism in Sport (and racism generally)
- Cultural safety and Identity
- Culture
- The Arts
- Entrepreneurship
- Altruism
- AFL and elite sports
- Champion mindset

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