



Monday 21 July 2025

A LEGACY TAKES ROOT

COMMONWEALTH GAMES ALUMNI RECOGNITION PROGRAM LAUNCHED

Legacy Leaves, the first-ever alumni recognition program of Commonwealth Games Australia (CGA), has today been proudly launched as the countdown to the one-year-to-go milestone for Glasgow 2026 fast approaches.

Set to honour the 3605 Australian athletes who have proudly worn the green and gold on the Commonwealth Games stage, the initiative includes athletes who have competed from the inaugural 1930 British Empire Games in Hamilton, Canada to today.

By planting a native tree for every Games an athlete has participated, CGA has created a living legacy that honours the past while at the same time growing the future.

The planted trees will form part of an establishing ecological corridor at Wilyun Pools, nestled near the Stirling Ranges in Western Australia that was chosen for its powerful environmental impact and cultural significance.

It is being delivered in partnership with climate solutions organisation [Carbon Neutral](#), alongside [Gondwana Link](#) and [Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories](#), creating a living legacy that grows over time, rejuvenating land, restoring biodiversity and reconnecting communities.

"Legacy Leaves recognises greatness in a way that gives back, not only to athletes, but to Country, community and future generations," Ben Houston, CGA President, said.

"Instead of giving something, we're growing something."

"Recognition goes beyond simple thanks, it acknowledges the dedication, resilience and achievements of our Commonwealth Games alumni," Houston added.

To view and download a video news release of Commonwealth Games Australia's visit to Wilyun Pools and including comments from Petria Thomas OAM, Steve Moneghetti AM, Milly Tapper, Sam Fricker and Emily Whitehead, please [click here](#).

A little under 5,000 trees will be planted in this first phase, symbolising every Games appearance made by an Australian athlete at the Commonwealth Games, with the initiative supporting large-scale landscape restoration, carbon sequestration and critical wildlife habitat growth.

As part of the launch, Birmingham 2022 diving bronze medallist Sam Fricker and four-time gymnastics medallist Emily Whitehead visited the reforested area to see the undertaking at work.

"As athletes, we're used to thinking about long-term, growth, progress and legacy," Fricker said.

"Seeing the project confirmed that our participation isn't just about highlighting our past; it's about the world we leave behind."

"A medal celebrates a moment, but this grows with time," Whitehead said.

"It connects us to the past, honours our contribution, and plants something real for the future."

"Legacy Leaves is an exciting way to celebrate the Games athletes," two-time Commonwealth Games medallist, **Milly Tapper**, added.

"It's more than just recognition; it's a powerful reminder that every time we compete, we leave a mark."

The planting area, Wilyun Pools, is located 100 kilometres from Albany, Western Australia.

Once degraded farmland, it is now being transformed into a thriving ecosystem that supports providing a home for endangered wildlife, restoring fragile bushland, and telling stories that stretch back thousands of years.

"Wilyun Pools is more than just a planting site, it's a place where culture, sustainability, and now sporting spirit come together," **Dr. Phil Ireland**, CEO of Carbon Neutral, said.

"It's a living landscape of connection and renewal, where each tree planted represents not only environmental restoration but also the enduring legacy of athletes and community working hand in hand."

About Legacy Leaves:

This program marks the first step in the development of a comprehensive Commonwealth Games alumni recognition program, designed to honour the past, celebrate the present and build stronger connections for the future.

The Legacy Leaves Alumni Recognition Program recognises Australian athletes who have proudly represented the nation at the Commonwealth Games and its historical iterations, including and limited to the British Empire Games, British Empire and Commonwealth Games and British Commonwealth Games from 1930 to present day.

Recognition is based on the best available data and historical records, which CGA commits to refining continuously to ensure inclusivity, accuracy and comprehensive acknowledgment of all eligible athletes.

Recognition is granted per Games attended, reflecting participation in each eligible edition.

Alumni will receive a personalised communication acknowledging their contribution and recognition within the program.

About Carbon Neutral:

Carbon Neutral is one of Australia's longest-standing environmental organisations, specialising in nature-based solutions to mitigate carbon emissions and protect native ecosystems.

Through its Plant-a-Tree program, Carbon Neutral restores native biodiversity, rejuvenates degraded landscapes through large-scale planting initiatives across Australia.

With over two decades of experience, Carbon Neutral partners with businesses and communities to drive measurable and lasting environmental impact.

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