

Monday 25 September 2023

Honouring local badminton legend Anna Lao

The City of Ryde honoured local badminton legend Anna Lao AM with a plaque recognising her many incredible sporting and community achievements during a special ceremony at the Ryde Aquatic Leisure Centre today.

Anna is the most successful player in the history of Australian badminton.

An ex-Olympian, her impressive list of major international championship victories places her at the highest level of sporting achievement in this country.

Anna started her amazing run in 1988 when she took out her first Australian Open Ladies Singles title.

In 1989 and 1991 she went three better – winning the Singles, Doubles and Mixed Doubles at both of those Australian Open events in what was a remarkable sweep.

She was third in Doubles at the 1989 Malaysian Open and won both Singles and Doubles at the 1991 New Zealand Open.

1992 was an especially big and successful year.

In July, Anna proudly represented Australia at the Barcelona Olympics, ranking fifth in both Singles and Doubles against the world's best players in the first ever badminton competition to be staged at the Games. It's a result that has yet to be surpassed by any other Australian player.

That year also brought a Doubles title at the French Open and a third placed Doubles finish at the Swedish Open.

But Anna's highly successful international playing career only tells part of the story about her dedication to badminton.

After hanging up her racquet competitively, Anna moved into coaching and administration – helping countless young Australian players and coaches succeed in the sport she continues to love and support.

She has been a Badminton Australia National Level Coach since 2000, was a member of Badminton Australia's Coaching Panel between 2010-2014 and is Founder/Principal of the Australian Badminton Academy, which she established in 2002.

In the 2021 Queen's Birthday Honours, Anna was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia for her significant service to badminton, sports and to the multicultural community.

That community service includes being a Committee Member for the Australian Guangxi Friendship Association since 2015, a former Committee Member for the Eastwood Chinese

Senior Citizens Club, a member of the Australian Asian Association of Bennelong in 2011, a current Member of the Australian Chinese and Descendants Mutual Association, and a former Sponsor and Volunteer at the Ryde Eastwood Lunar New Year Celebrations.

In his speech, City of Ryde Mayor Cllr Sarkis Yedelian OAM described Anna as “a true local sporting and community legend”.

“Anna’s life is one of achievement and of giving back to her sport and her community,” he said.

“So, we say today as we unveil this plaque in her honour, congratulations Anna and thank you!”

The morning tea and plaque presentation was a resolution of Council from the Council Meeting held on 28 February 2023.

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