

## VICKI WILSON

Vicki Wilson, OAM, was born in Brisbane in 1965. Growing up in the Brisbane suburb of Murrarie, Vicki attended the Murrarie State School and the Balmoral High School.

Vicki's parents encouraged Vicki and her brother to pursue their sporting activities. Vicki's talent for sport was nurtured while she was still in primary school when she played netball with the Cannon Hill Stars. Vicki also enjoyed softball and played in State and district softball teams as well as netball teams. Vicki's mother and teachers ensured that she didn't fall behind in her schoolwork when she was away with representative teams.

Vicki became an A grade player for the Hytec when she was sixteen and still at school. Originally a defence player, Vicki always wanted to be a goal shooter. Vicki then joined the Police Youth Club team. At the Under 19 championships, she was identified by the Australian Institute of Sport as a player they hoped would join them. However, Vicki was still a student in the Physical Education course at the Queensland University of Technology and decided against the move from Brisbane to join the Australian Institute of Sport for more than a year.

During her year of full-time training at the AIS, Vicki was coached by the specialist goal shooting coach, Margie Caldwell in the early days of the AIS specialist coaching programme which began in the mid 1980s. Vicki found the AIS coaches under Wilma Shakespeare as head coach, to be highly intelligent, innovative women who were before their time in many of their ideas and approaches to the game. This meant that Australian netball was well ahead of the competition.

Wilma Shakespeare's commitment to excellence and the determination and focus she instilled stood her players in good stead. Vicki was among a new generation of women players who were determined, even aggressive, on the court, but once the game was over, relaxed and enjoyed themselves. Vicki first played for Australia in 1985, when she was twenty. She continued to represent Queensland as captain of the Firebirds team in the national league competition, a challenging position because many of the team in the early days were young and inexperienced.

Leadership and continual education in this situation, and in all others, is very important to Vicki Wilson. Both as a player and a coach since her retirement from representative sides in 1999, Vicki believes that teaching the players new ideas and skills week by week, and feeling for them, is important in helping them to achieve their potential. During her representative career, Vicki put her ideas and her degree in Physical Education into effect as a teacher in secondary schools. She believes she has much to contribute as a role model for younger girls. In 1992, Vicki moved from teaching at school to the position of Schools Sports Promotions Officer with the Department of Education in Queensland.

Australian netball gradually secured more media coverage and more corporate sponsorship. Continuous marketing, Vicki believes, is necessary to ensure that, even though netball is Australia's largest participative sport, big crowds continue to attend matches. Vicki was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1992, named Queensland Sportswoman of the Year in 1993, presented with the keys to the city of Brisbane in 1999 and awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Griffith University. All were personal thrills and important milestones for the recognition of netball.

At the time of her retirement from representative sport, Vicki Wilson was the world's greatest goal shooter in netball and the only Australian player to have played in four world championships. She also captained the Australian team to inaugural Commonwealth Games netball gold medal in 1998.

Vicki has always been committed to the future development of the sport she loves. She was the Founder and coordinator of the Secondary Schools Netball championships. As well as her coaching activities, Vicki is a member of the board of the Queensland Academy of Sport, the Gabba Trust, the Womensport Queensland Board and the Centenary of Federation committee.

Vicki Wilson relishes all challenges and believes strongly in recognising good opportunities. She continues to coach and mentor talented players and is currently a senior project manager with the Queensland Events Corporation in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.