

## **Indigenous leader AFL's diversity boss**

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Tanya Hosch, one of Australia's highest-profile Indigenous women, has been appointed to lead the AFL's campaign to battle violence against women.

The Torres Strait Islander - who led a campaign to promote Indigenous recognition in the constitution - will join the AFL executive in a new super portfolio to promote diversity and social inclusion covering race, gender, multiculturalism, sexuality and disability.

The appointment was announced on Wednesday after a week dominated by fall-out from Collingwood president Eddie McGuire's comments about Fairfax Media football writer Caroline Wilson.

Hosch, who has never met McGuire, has been a passionate campaigner against family violence since she worked on a call centre for those subject to domestic violence.

"I think we're seeing a nationwide movement to bring greater consciousness across the country about what a damaging thing violence against women is," Hosch told Fairfax Media in an exclusive interview.

"I always think when it comes to violence against women, or a lot of areas where people are treated badly, that you always want to focus more on the person who has been abused and focus on their voice and their perspective. The reality is, however, that joking about violence against women is wrong, it's never OK, and I don't think it's more complicated than that."

Hosch was headhunted to fill the AFL role after four years as co-campaign director of Recognise, the campaign to win support for constitutional recognition of Indigenous Australians.

Among the unsuccessful candidates for the AFL position was the Indigenous Olympic medallist Nova Peris, who quit the Senate at the start of the election campaign, partly in the hope of being appointed to the AFL role.

"I've had a few job offers in the last few years that I wouldn't have pursued, but this one gives me an opportunity to work inside a game that I love, and has a massive reach across the country," Hosch said.

"In previous jobs I've worked in a women's telephone service that dealt with a lot of domestic violence calls. I've got a history in that kind of work and it's something I've always felt very passionately about.

"To be honest it was something I hoped that, post-Recognise, I could be more involved in, and this is going to provide that opportunity."

Hosch will step down from Recognise as co-campaign director but remain an ambassador for constitutional recognition. She will remain on the Referendum

Council, set up to oversee consultations on the question to be put to the people, and the Indigenous Land Corporation.

"Just like there is no room for racism on the football field, there is no room for racism in the constitution," she told Fairfax Media.

"Because the AFL has strongly supported Recognise, that made the decision easier."

Recognise joint campaign director Tim Gartrell praised Hosch after Wednesday's announcement, saying: "For four years Tanya's extraordinary courage and tenacity has been exemplary. Tanya possesses an almost unrivalled ability to engage people across the span of Australian society - from local communities to the Prime Minister's office, from radical activists to conservatives. "