

Nicky Winmar statue to be placed in Perth, not Victoria

By Warwick Green
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Twenty-five years on from his defiant response to the racist taunting of Collingwood fans, Nicky Winmar will have his iconic gesture immortalised with a bronze statue later this year.

The AFL has thrown its organisational and financial support behind the project, with the 1.5 x lifesize statue expected to cost more than \$200,000.



A crowd funding campaign has been launched to raise funds to create a statue of the iconic moment.

Somewhat controversially, the statue will be placed at Perth's new Optus Stadium, despite lobbying to have it situated at either Victoria Park or Moorabbin.

The statue concept was first floated last year by advertising creatives and football fans Alex Wadelton and Aaron Tyler, who set up a [crowd-funding web page](#) for a statue at Victoria Park, the ground where Winmar – after an historic St Kilda win in 1993 – lifted his jumper and pointed to his skin, declaring: "I'm black – and I'm proud to be black".

Supporters pledged more than \$15,000 for the campaign.

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St Kilda Football Club had also pushed to have the statue at its refurbished training base at Moorabbin, where Winmar played 45 of his 251 AFL games. It is believed the Saints will instead include Winmar in a sculptural montage of former champions, featuring the likes of Tony Lockett and Nick Riewoldt.

Winmar is originally from Western Australia's wheatbelt, east of Perth, and is one of the numerous Noongar footballers to have played the game, a feted group that includes Graham "Polly" Farmer, the Krakouer brothers, Barry Cable, Lance Franklin, the Materas and the Kicketts.

Melbourne-based sculptor Louis Laumen, whose sporting sculptures include the MCG depictions of Dick Reynolds, Haydn Bunton, Ron Barassi, Leigh Matthews and Tom Wills, is expected to fly to be commissioned for the Winmar project. Laumen also has done sculptures of Don Bradman, Shane Warne, Dennis Lillee and Betty Cuthbert, as well as the depiction of John Kennedy snr at Hawthorn's Waverley Park base.



Nicky Winmar stands on the patch of ground at Victoria Park where the picture was taken of him pointing to the colour of his skin, at the launch of the 2013 AFL Indigenous Round.

In order to organise some modelling and measurements, Laumen would need to fly to the Gold Coast, where 52-year-old Winmar now lives and works as a mentor to Indigenous workers at a large community-based organisation. The sculpting process would take at least six months.

The AFL had originally hoped the sculpture would be ready for Indigenous Round in June, but the best-case scenario would now be to have it unveiled late in the season.

Winmar was unavailable for comment about the statue, but when asked about the possibility in 2017 he said he thought campaigners "were just mucking around".

"If it happens, I'm proud to be a part of that," Winmar told Fox Footy last year.

"The family and the grandkids are coming through as well – they'd probably go around and see it one day."

Nicky Winmar's famous protest.

Winmar's 1993 stance, which came after the final siren as St Kilda won its first match at Collingwood in more than two decades, was the catalyst for a groundshift in attitudes towards racial and religious vilification, not just in Australian football but in the broader community.

St Kilda teammate Gilbert McAdam, another Indigenous footballer who was best afield in that match, described it as "a line in the sand" and suggested "that's where it all changed".

Reflecting on the day in 2013, Winmar said he and McAdam were determined to make a stand to counter the personal abuse. He said words "can lift a person or destroy a person. So that day I responded by saying to those people, and I still say it today, 'I'm black and I'm proud'."

Winmar was the first Indigenous footballer to reach the 250-game AFL milestone, and won two best-and-fairest awards during a celebrated 12-season career with St Kilda between 1987-98. He also played 21 games with the Western Bulldogs in 1999.