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# OUR SPORTING GREATS

MURRI AND AILAN ATHLETES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## DANNY MORSEU

OLYMPIAN BASKETBALLER AND COACH

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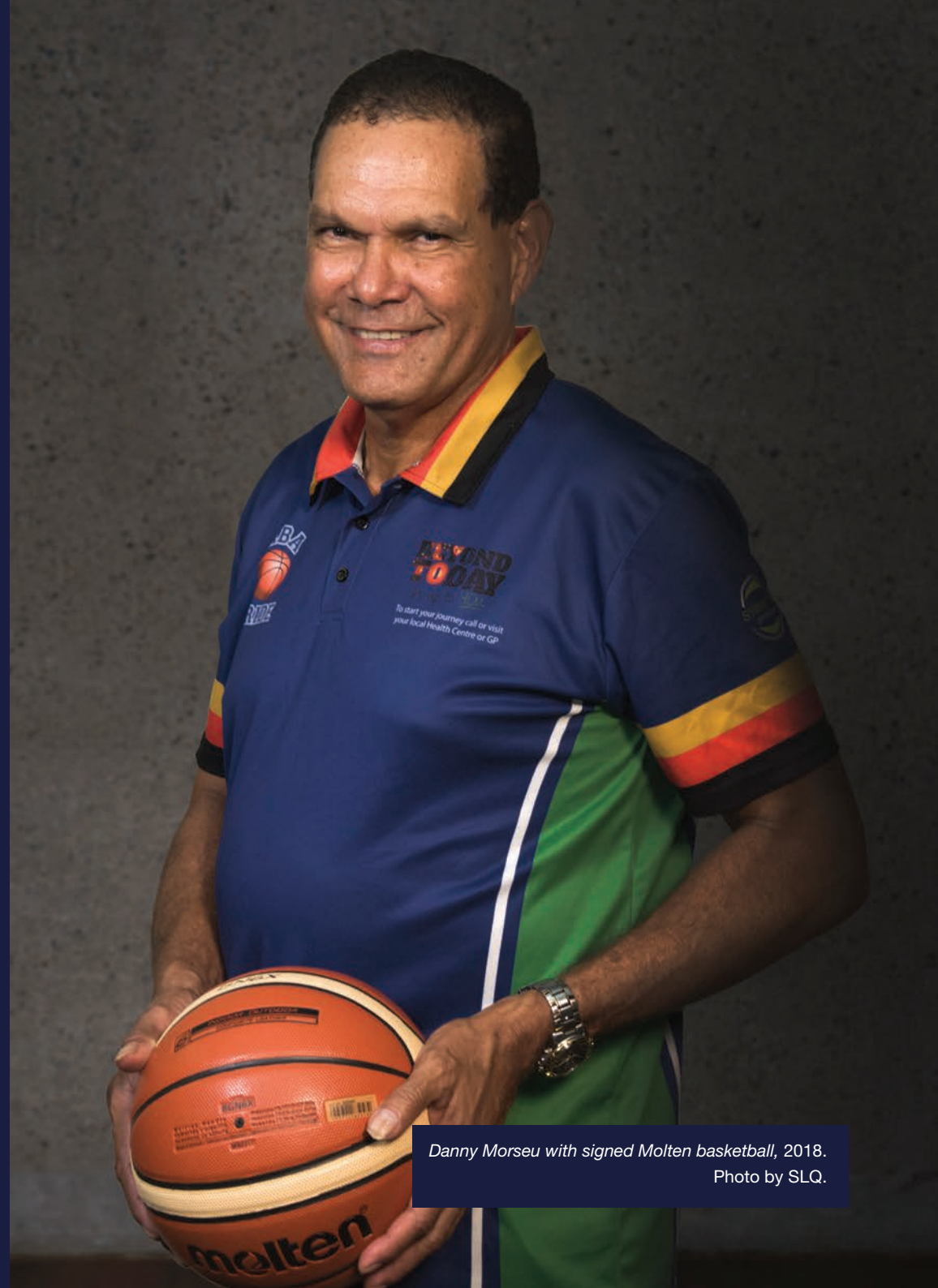
# DANNY MORSEU

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Danny Morseu is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander athlete who had a highly decorated national and international basketball career, including competing in two Olympics and one World Championship, and leads many community initiatives.

Born on Thursday Island in 1958 and from a Mer family, Danny Morseu started playing basketball at school. After completing school, he moved to Cairns for employment where he played basketball and rugby league for the local teams.

In 1977, he was 'discovered' by St Kilda Pumas coach, Brian Kerle, while playing in Cairns, and he moved to Melbourne to play professionally with St Kilda. From the late 70s, basketball was becoming a popular national sport, and Danny was one of its heroes in the spotlight. In 1979, Danny was a member of the St Kilda team to win the inaugural National Basketball League (NBL) title, and again in 1980. He was named in the NBL-All Star lists in 1980 and 1981. He played 217 NBL games in total, winning another NBL championship with the Brisbane Bullets in 1987.



*Danny Morseu with signed Molten basketball, 2018.*

Photo by SLQ.

Danny first represented Australia in the 1978 World Championship in the Philippines. At the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow, Danny became the first Torres Strait Islander born in the Torres Strait to compete in the Olympics. Aboriginal boxer, Norman Stevens, created a further Indigenous presence at the Games. Australia's team 'The Boomers' tied their best outcome of an Olympic Games to date, finishing in eighth place, and beating eventual silver-medalist Italy in the group stage. When Danny returned to the Torres Strait from his first Olympics, he was presented with a hand-carved shell from his community in recognition of his achievements. The National Museum of Australia now holds an extensive and rare bibliographic collection of Danny Morseu's objects.

Danny also competed in the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. In all, Danny represented Australia 47 times before retiring from international competition in 1984 and from the NBL in 1989. He was inducted into what is now the Australian Basketball Hall of Fame in 2001.

The first Indigenous professional basketball player, he left footprints behind for the following generations. He is an uncle of Patty Mills and mentored him and Nathan Jawai during their very successful international careers.

Danny coached the first Australian Indigenous basketball team to tour internationally in 1988, and from 2000 to 2004 coached Kuyam Pride, based in Cairns, the first Indigenous team to play in an Australian national league. He is the current coach of the Apunipima Australian Indigenous Basketball Women's All Stars and the Toowoomba Mountaineers in the Queensland State League. He is involved in a number of national and state initiatives, including the development of a National Indigenous Basketball Academy.