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CGF Athletes Advisory Commission pledges to instil culture of pride and purpose in being a Commonwealth Athlete

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The Commonwealth Games Federation Athletes Advisory Commission (CGFAAC) held its first ever meeting today, on the Gold Coast, Australia, and pledged to instil a culture of pride and purpose in being a Commonwealth athlete.

Meeting on the eve of Gold Coast 2018, the seven-member CGFAAC made a specific commitment to work with athletes of all Commonwealth nations and territories to learn what being a Commonwealth athlete means to them, in this era of renewed relevance for the Movement.

CGF Athletes Advisory Commission Chair, Rhona Toft said: **“Having competed for, and led, my country in international hockey, I know what it feels like to compete at a Commonwealth Games and what it means to be a Commonwealth athlete. The Commonwealth is a truly distinctive family of nations, and something that we can all feel proud to be part of and to contribute to, whether you are from Nauru or Nigeria, the Isle of Man or India.**

“We are an incredibly diverse yet unified family of nations that has a shared history, shared values and a collective common vision for the future: to be a force for good in the world, whether it be by championing human rights, promoting gender equality or ensuring reconciliation and recognition of indigenous first nations people in the countries in which we operate,” she said.

“I am excited about meeting and working with all Commonwealth athletes to hear how they identify with the Commonwealth, and, crucially, to ensure that their leadership is recognised, and voice is heard at the decision-making table,” added Toft.

In line with the CGF’s Strategic Plan, *Transformation 2022*, the CGFAAC agreed that their main aim would be to champion athlete views and help understand and grow the profile, meaning and impact of the Movement’s athletes at a time of significant focus on the Commonwealth and Commonwealth Sport. Members discussed their aspirations to be an influential voice to strengthen the links between athletes, administrators and Games organisers. In addition to considering how they could participate in Games and Board decision-making, the CGFAAC also discussed their mandate to empower and uphold the rights of Commonwealth athletes to advance the aims and objectives of the Commonwealth Sports Movement.



During the meeting, the Commission agreed to determine two specific objectives to be achieved during its first 12 months, both of which will be influenced by the members' collective passions and causes. The two objectives will be announced at a special CGFAAC Media Conference during Gold Coast 2018.

CGF Athletes Advisory Commission Member, Brendan Williams said: **“One aspect that emerged loud and clear from the meeting was our opportunity, our responsibility even, to ‘give back’ to society. To me, ‘giving back’ is what being a Commonwealth athlete is all about. It represents who we, as a family of nations, really are.**

“As an Athletes Commission, we are united in our belief that Commonwealth sport is best placed to impact and transform the lives of citizens and communities in every corner of the Commonwealth, and we are eagerly anticipating getting started” added Williams.

In addition to setting its annual objectives, the CGFAAC will also be running an Athletes' Survey in the Athletes' Village Dining Hall; and will be encouraging as many athletes as possible to complete the survey, so that their interests can be represented effectively now and in the future. The Commission will also run workshops throughout the Games. The workshops are an opportunity for athletes to provide the Commission with feedback on important athlete-related issues; which, in turn, will ensure that the CGFAAC can support them effectively.

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About the CGF

The Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) is the organisation that is responsible for the direction and control of the Commonwealth Games, and for delivering on the vision of the Commonwealth Sports Movement: to build peaceful, sustainable and prosperous communities globally by inspiring Commonwealth Athletes to drive the impact and ambition of all Commonwealth Citizens through Sport.

About the CGFAAC

The CGF Athletes Advisory Commission (CGFAAC) is the body that represents and speaks on behalf of all Commonwealth athletes. The CGFAAC is currently comprised of seven highly-accomplished Commonwealth athletes and medallists with significant previous Games and sports, civic and academic leadership experience. The CGFAAC members were selected to ensure an optimum mix of skills and competencies and balanced representation in relation to geography, religion, team and individual sports, and para sport. THE CGFAAC aims to have equal female and male representation, in support of the Federation's commitment to gender equality. Members will hold office for a period not exceeding four years and shall be eligible to serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.

The CGFAAC's main aim is to engage and represent athlete views and help understand and grow the profile, meaning and impact of the Movement's Athletes at a time of renewed relevance for the Commonwealth and Commonwealth sport.

About the CGFAAC Chair

Now working as Director of Sport and Teacher of Physical Education for The Glasgow Academy school in Scotland, Rhona is Scotland's most decorated and leading hockey goal-scorer of all time, having competed for her country in hockey at the 1998, 2002 and 2006 Commonwealth Games, and for Great Britain at the Atlanta 1996 and Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. Rhona is also an experienced hockey coach, taking the Great Britain Youth Olympic Squad to a Gold medal at the Youth Olympics in 2009.

About CGFAAC Members



Ms Rhona Toft (Chair): Scotland, Hockey, 1998, 2002 and 2006 Commonwealth Games, Scotland's most decorated and leading hockey goal-scorer of all time;

Ms Natalie Du Toit (para-sport representative): South Africa, Swimming, seven-time Commonwealth Gold medallist at 2002, 2006 and 2010 Games;

Dr Nicole Forrester: Canada, Athletics (High Jump), Commonwealth Gold medal (2010) and Bronze (2002);

Mr Colin Gregor: Scotland, Rugby Sevens, 2006 and 2014 Games and Captain from 2009-2014;

Mr Lechezdani Luza: Botswana, Boxing (51kg), 2006 and Commonwealth Silver medallist at 2002 Games;

Ms Alison Shanks: New Zealand, Track Cycling, 2006 and Commonwealth Gold medallist (3000m Individual Pursuit) at 2010 Games;

Mr Brendan Williams: Dominica, Athletics (High Jump), 2010 and 2014 Games.

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