

## **JIM STYNES**

Born in Dublin, Jim Stynes was brought from Ireland to Australia as part of a Ron Barrassi inspired experiment in the mid 1980's to recruit Irish footballers for the Melbourne Football Club. He has been described as "Australia's most successful sporting experiment."

The 1991 Brownlow Medal winner, Jim Stynes has been Melbourne's Best and Fairest four times. His most extraordinary performance was to play an AFL record breaking 244 consecutive games between round 17 in 1987 and round 4 in 1998 when his hand was broken, a tribute to his guts, determination and commitment to fair play.

Despite his outstanding sports' record, Stynes is now becoming equally famous for his work with children. Together with actor friend Paul Currie, Jim set up the Melbourne-based Reach Youth in 1994, a non-profit non-denominational organisation dedicated to inspiring young people from all walks of life between 8 -18 years. Since founding the organisation REACH more than ten years ago, former AFL star, Jim Stynes has helped realise the dreams of more than 100,000 young Australians. From the drug affected and homeless, to teenagers simply searching for direction, the organisation holds camps and workshops.

The aim of Reach is to support young people on their journey to find their own truth, and to follow their dreams. Reach achieves this by creating a "safe space" for groups of young people to develop trust, openness and the freedom to express their concerns, perceptions, fears and aspirations and to recognise that they are not alone. In recognition of his hard work and contribution to the wider community, Jim Stynes was named Victorian of the Year in 2003.

