

STATE LIBRARY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Transcript of an interview with

Lydia Williams

ACCESS

RESEARCH: OPEN

PUBLICATION: To be advised of request to publish

STATE LIBRARY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 2023

INTERVIEWER: Kris Marano

TRANSCRIBER: Centre for Stories

DURATION: 39 min., 42 sec.

REFERENCE NUMBER: OH4742/10

COPYRIGHT: State Library of Western Australia/Lydia Williams

## NOTE TO READER

Readers of this oral history transcript should bear in mind that it is a verbatim transcript of the spoken word and reflects the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The State Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, or for the views expressed therein.

*Disclaimer - E&OE* (Errors and Omissions Excepted) in the transcribing.

**Bold** type face indicates a difference between transcript and tape, as a result of corrections made to the transcript only, usually at the request of the person interviewed.

FULL CAPITALS in the text indicate a word or words emphasised by the person interviewed.



## LYDIA WILLIAMS TRANSCRIPT – GAME CHANGERS COLLECTION

**INTRO [LUIZA]:** *Welcome to GAME CHANGERS, a podcast about trailblazing West Australian women and their contribution to the wonderful game of soccer. This collection was produced and developed by the Centre for Stories and the State Library of Western Australia. Together, we are sharing stories that reflect our state's rich heritage, diversity and history.*

*The interviews you're about to hear were recorded on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar, and we pay our respects to their elders, traditional custodians, and knowledge-keepers, who are the first storytellers of this place.*

*In the lead up to Perth hosting some of the games for one of the world's largest sporting tournaments, the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023, we hear stories from local women who rose up against inequality and stereotypes to champion the game of soccer as far back as the 1970s.*

*We hear from elite athletes past and present considered to be the best in the game, both locally and globally; and we hear from community role models who are courageously making soccer more accessible and equitable for future generations of women, young girls and newcomers of all genders to the game.*

*Sports media journalist Kris Marano sat down and heard why self-belief, sacrifice and strength is what it takes to become champions of soccer.*

*In today's episode, Kris talks to goalkeeper for international Women's Super League clubs and Australia's national team the Matildas, Lydia Williams. A proud Nyungar woman, Lydia grew up playing in the red dirt of Kalgoorlie, a small town north-east of Perth. She was inducted into the Aboriginal and Islander Sports Hall of Fame and is also a published author of two children's books, Saved!!! and Goal!!! Enjoy.*

**KRIS:** You grew up in Kalgoorlie in the Golden Outback, which is about 500 kilometers from Perth. Can you tell me about your earliest childhood memories?

**LYDIA:** Oh, gosh. I probably think it was a lot of red dirt, definitely, and a lot of like openness and space. Kind of like a lot of nature and not really like, built up much outside of the city or the town. And yeah, just like living at home with family and, you know, then going out in the desert probably every weekend and you know, visiting Aboriginal communities around the west. And yeah, just living in like a place that was a small country town, but then like, so much like vast space around it.

**KRIS:** And at what point did you start kicking a soccer ball?

**LYDIA:** Well, being in a small country town, it was like all weekends where families got to mingle with each other again with their kids. And that was joining sports. So basically, every weekend was like

athletics, football, AFL, basketball, T-ball, anything you can think of. I wanted to do all sports, so yeah, that's probably like around eight years old, I remember. But I think everyone did it in the whole town.

I grew up playing AFL and going out in the desert and being in WA especially, there wasn't a lot of football. It was mostly AFL and during that time there was no real teams outside of the men's competition. And football was kind of the most similar to that, where you were playing outside and you got to jump and dive and catch a ball and run around and kick. And I just enjoyed it a lot more because it was, you know, a lot of your friends were playing, a big team. You could kick and catch and run around and that was probably why I kind of got more drawn towards that than any other sport.

I think because Kalgoorlie was so small, every team was mixed. I don't think I ever was in a specific girl's team. I think it was our school team. They had for their age group, I think as many teams as they could in all kinds of sporting competitions. So, St. Joseph's Primary was my school and we had a mixed team of boys and girls playing football on the weekends. And that, that was my kind of first one. It wasn't until I moved to Canberra where you had to join a club. And it was an all-girls team.

**KRIS:** Okay. So, at what age was that? I'm just trying to get a sense of your like playing in community clubs before you started playing more competitively.

**LYDIA:** We moved when I was 11, so because it was from WA all the way to Canberra, I didn't know a lot of people at all. So, mum was like, let's join you in some sporting teams and it ended up being basketball and football. So at about 11 years old, I kind of made the jump into like a proper competition, a little bit more structured and, you know, paying registration fees and all that kind of stuff.

I think I was playing for fun until I was about 16 when I first made my first camp with the national team and then I realized like, oh, this is actually a career. I was still at school. It was very important to my mum that I finished school and I made that a priority in my pathway. And then football kind of followed right alongside it. So, we had to make both work at the same time. But it wasn't until I was older that I realised this was a career that I could do. I started getting selected in state competitions when I was 13 all the way to to 16 years old. And then from there, that was my first national team camp. There's no really kind of turning around. So that's where it really was. You know, I saw some investment in me with getting a proper goalkeeper coach, making sure I went in the gym and had a, you know, schedule of what I was doing in the gym. So, it was really kind of around 15 to 16 years old that, you know, there was more investment in me and that's when I kind of knew I had to really pursue it.

**KRIS:** So, through that time, like when you were a 13-year-old playing, like what was the atmosphere like and how did you feel when you were on the pitch?

**LYDIA:** I think it was just fun. I played a lot with kids at school and all my groups of friends, they all played football, from school and in, I guess, our youth group. And then obviously teams. Everyone loved football, everyone played football. And just a sense of community was really good and it was just, it was just fun. Especially being in Canberra and coming from like a really small town like Kalgoorlie, it was like, oh, this is huge, this place is massive, 300,000 people! But yeah, it was really fun and yeah, it was still all for, you know, the enjoyment and obviously my parents were all really supportive and kind of helped me along the journey. You know, stayed late for training, stayed late for games, volunteered, raised money. We didn't realize how expensive I guess registration was and my mum was earning all the income. And then we had to do a lot of fundraising through Aboriginal sporting government grants, through my dad,

and trying to get a little bit more help to try and fund everything leading up until, you know, I started making national teams.

**KRIS:** I don't know, you get a sense through the stories I've read about you and your mum, like on Football Australia or in the series that you're really quite close.

**LYDIA:** Yeah, I think a lot of it was obviously my dad passed away when I was 15 just before I made any national team. So, he was really supportive and kind of did all the dirty work of like hanging around till 9:00PM to be at the north side of Canberra to drive around back down to the south side. And you know, he was really proud because he didn't really have a lot growing up in himself. So yeah, for me he was kind of... whatever I needed to do to make it happen, he would do that. And then obviously mum, you know, working, she had long days and stuff, so he would volunteer to take me to places and make friends with the other parents and kind of be there for all games, take down the nets, put up the nets and you know, he was probably a lot of people's first time in meeting like an Aboriginal person. You know, that wasn't, outside of, you know, I guess in Canberra there probably wasn't a lot at the time playing football either. So, a lot of it was, you know, people learning about him and culture as well.

It was my dad, so to me it was embarrassing cause this like, oh, here we go again, we're gonna be late. And he's telling another story. But you know, a lot of my friends, they'll, you know, when it's the date of his anniversary of when he passed or, a birthday or something, I post something, they always write something really nice or text me and remember him from how he made them feel. He went along to our Year Six camps at school. So, you know, a lot of the kids at school actually learn about Aboriginal culture at school which was really cool. And you know, they do reflect a little bit on that with me at times.

**KRIS:** Can you share a little bit about how that's shaped who you are through these years? It certainly sounds like you've always got your dad kind of beside you.

**LYDIA:** Yeah, I think I took a lot of pride because he was so passionate about Aboriginal people. And he didn't come from a lot of money. He didn't come from any money. He was a part of the Stolen Generation in Australia and didn't know his father. What he could have been like... He could have had a lot of resentment and anger towards people, but he chose to be kindhearted and caring and giving and I think seeing that in real life, of both the racism he faced and then how he chose to respond to that, really kind of, I guess helped me to have the same kind of mentality to, you know... You'll always remember how someone treated you rather than maybe what they say or did or anything, it's the actions that they took. That helped shape me. You know, that's something that my mum does as well and I think it's been nice kind of having both, you know, my dad in my younger childhood and then my mum leading into this part of how, you know, I can really see both of them in me and you know, how both resilient they are in, you know, what they've gone through.

Obviously my dad didn't see me play in the national team, so that's always hard to kind of, you know, see one game or anything like that where you wanna share that with him. Oh, he would've made like 20 songs and banners and... He would've requested to be the official, like, I don't even know, he used to play the gum leaf, so he would get the gum leaf and play it. So, he would literally probably ask to make a tune with the gum leaf and have his uncle play the digeridoo or something like that. Who knows.

**KRIS:** Had you had conversations about, you know, rising to the Matildas or having that dream? Was that something that the two of you talked about?

**LYDIA:** One of the things that they, quite a few of 'em recollect is, you know, my dad saying to them that I'll make it. I'll be like Cathy Freeman and represent Australia for Indigenous people. And he really kind of believed that. So, he never really said it directly to me, but hearing it back from a lot of family friends, it is something that I think he really believed in and made sure that he was there doing the best he could leading into, you know, achieving that.

I think you know, just going even back in the bush not long ago and you know, saying my dad's name and people just responding and being like, oh, like I miss him and, you know, oh, he was a great man and, you know, all this kind of feedback just from, you know, it's been over 20, nearly 20 years, of him passing. And just, saying again, like just what he provided people. And I guess there's, you know, the younger players coming in the team that's, you know, something that it is, it can be a really short career or it can be a long career, but you never wanna look back and regret anything. So I guess, you know, the young ones coming in, I've always wanted to make them feel welcome and you know, take them under the wing and kind of show them know this, this, this is professional, this is not professional, do this, be on time here and you know, kind of make sure that I guess the, the DNA of Australian football is still there, but also they're taking it and shaping it into what new football is. 'Cause football's always evolving so it's, you know, you can't keep it how it was, it always has to change, but you can kind of keep how people feel in a team as like the number one priority. I think it helps for the transition into the next phase go quite smoothly.

**KRIS:** And how about your mum? What does she think about your career up until this point?

**LYDIA:** You know, she is my biggest supporter but is also like my best friend as well that I can be really honest to. Yeah, I'm really happy that she's really allowed me in all my life to make my own decisions, but will be there to advise me when she thinks I'm doing something wrong or if I need help.

**KRIS:** Is your mum still in Kalgoorlie?

**LYDIA:** No, she's in Canberra.

**KRIS:** Oh, Canberra, okay. So, with your mom in Canberra and, and you living in Europe and traveling around, I'm just curious, like what does, what does home mean to you?

**LYDIA:** I think home is wherever you feel you are loved and taken care of. So it can be, you know, when we're on the road and with our national team. It can be, you know, here and talking to my mum on the phone. But I think it's wherever you feel like you have support whether that be in person or online, I think, it's more of a feeling rather than a place.

**KRIS:** Like joining the Matildas, can you take us through what that first year was like? Because I think it's been about 18 years now and you're the longest serving Matilda?

**LYDIA:** Oh, the first camp I ever went to was actually a young Matildas camp and I remember it was in Perth and there was a camp before they went away for the 2004 Youth World Cup, I think that was in Thailand. And I got called into camp in 2004. I must have been 16. Yeah, I was a baby. And I remember them saying you know, you're just too young. This is your first camp. It's nice to see you, but like, and we'd love to take you, but you've only been here once. You don't, you know, it's like your first journey

into, you know, professional football, we're not gonna do that, but we really wanna invest in you and we feel like, you know, in the future you'll definitely be back here. And I remember I didn't get selected and I was, I was okay. I was a little bit hurt, but it's also my first camp, so I was realistic about it. And at that time I was training at the AIS with boys, the boys team. During that time, the coach Tom Samani, they would have camps at the AUS and obviously we'd pass by and he'd see me train and whatnot. And so I didn't get into the young Matildas camp. And then a couple maybe months later, Tom called me and was like, would like to invite you into a Matildas camp. And I was like, wait, what?

Tom Samani, he saw a kid just training, so I wasn't even in any, you know youth programs or anything like that. He's just seen me training, you know, a couple times during, you know, over some months and saw the improvement. So, probably his eye for bringing in players. He brought in obviously Sam and Kate and Em and you know, quite a few other ones, and identified them. So, I think he's always been supportive of the national team and really kind of made us believe in our ability for the first time. But it was probably the first time he really made us believe in our ability as a nation and as women as well. So, and you know, he still keeps in touch with us every once in a while. So yeah, he's been a real big support of the national team, but also of me as well.

So, at 16 years old, that's when I got called into my first Matildas camp and started being a part of that quite regularly. And then from there, obviously I kind of almost went back to doing both Matildas and Young Matildas for, it was three years, before I was too old. But yeah, it was pretty surreal going from like, oh, you know, you didn't make it this time. And then literally a couple months later being in the full-blown Matildas and not knowing anyone, not knowing that this was a national competition, I was still playing in state league representation rather than like AIS or ACTAS or anything like that. I didn't know any of these women. I didn't know like where they traveled. I was really kind of just rolling through it and really taking it one day at a time.

I've always been pretty open and willing to adapt to different circumstances I think from such a young age. I was pretty lucky growing up being an only child. When my parents traveled and did community and missionary work, I had to still be in school. But I couldn't stay at home by myself. So, I would travel with them and then kind of be put with family friends, sometimes for a couple weeks, sometimes for a few months. And I went to different schools, made different friends. I think I stayed in Sydney for four months for a whole term and a half and went to school there. I think obviously being away from home a lot, as I started traveling, obviously got a little bit homesick. But I think just because I've been doing it from such a young age of like traveling around the desert and making new friends, it was quite easy for me to be used to being away from home quite a bit. I think the one thing that was the hardest in growing up and like adolescence was obviously missing a lot of friends' birthdays and you know, what they were doing, and they all now have like different careers and families and stuff and I'm still doing, you know, what I've been doing, so...

**KRIS:** Do you remember your first game, like stepping onto the grass and how that felt?

**LYDIA:** I remember we played a practice game in China which was my first camp or international camp. And it was against a club team, and we lost I think, or we won two-one maybe. And I got subbed on and I remember like Sheryl Solesbury just being like, just relax, it's your first big game. Like just relax, take it all in. And they're all really supportive of kind of, you know, this is I guess the first step in what would be a really long career. And I just was kind of like, oh, there's a big crowd here. And it's like, I think it was like 15,000 in China. I was like, oh my gosh. Obviously further along in the, the tour we played China and Japan, even bigger crowds and I was just like pretty blown away and my first cap was actually against

South Korea, which we lost that game. But you know, after the game everyone was giving photos and being like, here's your first cap, this is really cool. Like welcome to the team, in 2005. And that was really kind of cool to be a part of that and you know, being like, oh wow, it actually happened. So yeah, it was kind of really surreal into that and I think that only helped me grow into, obviously the young Matildas being exposed to like a higher level with the national team, being a part of that as well. We went to our first World Cup in Russia in 2006. And so yeah, it's all kind of been like one thing after another, 2005 getting first cap, 2006 going to World Cup and qualifying for that; 2007 World Women's World Cup. And slowly starting to get more caps and more games during that time and you know, really solidifying playing and being around the team in 2012. So yeah, it's a really kind of slow progression but you know, I was always involved with it right from the get-go unless it was like a major injury. But yeah, it's been kind of surreal in how it's all panned out.

**KRIS:** Does it feel like the amount of time that has gone by has actually gone by?

**LYDIA:** No. It definitely does. Like I don't really get that much time to look back at my career and how long it's been. Sometimes there will be like little reminders on, you know, Facebook and stuff like that, but it's, obviously back in the day there wasn't much social media, there wasn't a lot of like posting. Journalism was done, you know, via like a phone call or someone coming out with a pen and paper. You know, a lot of the, I guess, memories from back when I first started is more so like paper clippings. I know my grandpa in America, anything that had something that I was posted about, he's collected every single thing. He has three massive manila folders. And he's like sent them over from America to my mum for whenever I have a chance to read from right from the beginning to when he passed away last year. But yeah, he made sure that I had something to kind of look back and be like, that was long. I'm grateful for the people that are in my life that can do that. Sometimes I don't have, I don't have all the time. So, it's nice to kind of know that, you know, there is something special to look back on once I'm retired.

**KRIS:** Yeah. I can imagine how proud your grandpa would've been of you.

**LYDIA:** I mean, yeah, he, besides mum, I think he was the biggest fan as well, so I'm pretty sure he wrote, wrote to FA one time saying your copies aren't printer friendly, so...

**KRIS:** Oh, that's very sweet. When you first joined the Matildas, do you remember like, was there any one particularly in the team who really embraced you and you all seem like such great friends. What, you know, as a young person coming in, what was that support like?

**LYDIA:** I was lucky 'cause I had Sally Shipphard who was, she made her debut not long before me. And so she's only a year older than me, so really I kind of, the young people really gravitated to themselves. So, I was really lucky that, you know, she was my first kind of friend on the team and took me under her wing and then all of a sudden the next year Polks came on the team. So then all of a sudden there was like three of us that were around the same age and then we had Lauren Cole Thorpe and yeah, then we became like a little group of girls that were around the same age and the younger ones of the group and still learning, still having a lot of fun and taking it day by day and gaining all the experience. From there, obviously, you know, it's the next generations of the Sams, the Caitlins, the Emily; they all came in and yeah, then it kind of followed through from that. So yeah, it's always kind of been really inclusive and family-like right from the beginning. Especially the younger ones that are coming in, they're getting thrown right into the spotlight right away. Where us, it was, you know, we were fighting for, you know, equal pay and making sure that we had enough money to kind of make sure we're not working. So,



things that have definitely changed in terms of that aspect, but kind of the whole vibe of the team has always been the same.

I think there's like a lot less time for people to kind of fit into a team or the pressure of the outside for people to perform right away. We were quite lucky, a lot of us started when we were 15 and 16 in the national team, 17, so we kind of got a grace period and especially with not a lot of social media to, you know, have ups and downs and challenge our consistency and kind of develop at a longer rate. And also, you know, our performance back then, you know, we weren't in the top 10, I don't think, so there was a lot less pressure of, you know, making sure we get this result or that result or this person's score or that person do this. And I noticed like a lot of the young ones coming through the... if they'd sign at a big club, they're expected to play right away or the expectation to challenge someone who's been there for maybe five years versus them for like however long. So, there's definitely a, I think a lot more of the same pressure but without a lot of grace period.

**KRIS:** When we look at your whole journey, which is it 18 years? I was trying to count... Okay, so 18 years, which is incredible. But I'm really curious, as a goalkeeper especially, but as a player, you know, what do you think it is about you and about your playing that has allowed you to have such a long career?

**LYDIA:** I guess to be honest, it's probably like a lot of resilience, especially in women's sport with everything that happens not only in football, but women's sport worldwide. I think you have to have a little bit more resilience and especially as it grows and grows there's obviously more pressure. When my dad was really sick, the last thing he kind of said to me was, you know, like, I'm always proud of you and make sure you don't give up and keep doing, you know, what you're doing, and like, I'm always here with you. So, for me it was like I never really even... I went back to school after a week off. And I've never really had the, been the person to kind of sit still with a feeling or with, you know, any negativity.

I've always wanted to progress and be better and kind of always challenge myself to be a better person. So, I think that's probably been the one thing that's kind of helped me with being a goalkeeper as well. It's a pretty thankless task sometimes. But you know, I've never gone out there looking for that on a bigger scale. It's, you know, always making myself proud and my family proud and my teammates proud and that's kind of, I think where I've gotten more resilience through playing a goalkeeper and being around for such a long time is, is kind of, really trying to nurture the next generation coming through, but really kind of honoring what I really believe in myself and what values I hold as well.

You know, people are allowed to make mistakes and they're allowed to, you know, be sad and upset and I think resilience is, you know, the process and how you move on from that and the lessons you gain out of that. I think sometimes it can either be like, I don't wanna do that again 'cause it hurt me, or it could be, I'm gonna do that again because I've learned from it and I know what not to do next time. Yeah, I've always kind of been someone that wants to live life to the fullest and learn and develop and so I think I've always gone to a challenge rather than run away from it.

**KRIS:** I wanna talk about the Women's World Cup. I think we said, is this gonna be your fifth or sixth?

**LYDIA:** Yeah, fifth. Ridiculous.

**KRIS:** Which is amazing, but to have it on home soil, how's that feeling for you in two months that, you know, the world's biggest tournament will be played there?

**LYDIA:** Just hearing that we were bidding, it was like, oh, okay. 'Cause obviously we had the failed event of, you know, the men's World Cup. So, we're like, oh yeah, this is not, we're not gonna win this either. And then obviously it got down to the final US and Columbia and it was like, oh, we might actually do this. And then being there for the announcement was unreal, especially in Covid when all the world stopped and then all of a sudden, we got the best news that we could possibly have, that we were gonna host the Women's World Cup. And it just kind of felt like a little bit of a whirlwind since then. Like it's, we've had, you know, the Olympics, we had, you know, Women's Asian Cup, a few more competitions and so like, it's kind of felt like it's been put on the back burner a little bit and then now all of a sudden, it's like, oh, it's just around the corner. So yeah, it is a bit of a whirlwind. It's definitely amazing being there from all of those starting points. And yeah, I'm sure I'm gonna feel the same way when we kick off in Sydney.

**KRIS:** And with the tournament, you know, it's talked about as, you know, these types of tournaments can create positive change and create social change. What do you think the women's game needs most? And if you can tell us a bit from a West Australian perspective as well?

**LYDIA:** For me it was my role models were all AFL players. And even Basketballers in Perth with the Wildcats. I didn't really know anybody except Cathy Freeman. And that was, you know, only because that she was like a superstar and you know, was an Indigenous woman. So, I think the more exposure of the World Cup and females in sports is just gonna really help grow the game and grow opportunities for women. But obviously, you know, I think WA and a lot of Aboriginal communities don't have a lot of access unless I... if I didn't move to Canberra, I probably wouldn't have been, you know, selected or had the same opportunities as, you know, some girls that maybe lived in Sydney or Brisbane. And I think that's the point, is that there's a lot of hidden talent in communities in small places that may not have that exposure or that opportunity to leave or fund their sponsorship to try and play. And I think, you know, the one thing that I'd like to see is that being a lot more accessible. And you know, it's not just football, it's, you know, other sports too have a hard time with kind of going out in communities and really helping young players and potentials have that opportunity. And I think that's something that, you know, if we do that, we can really kind of unlock something really cool and special, I think.

I mean, I think AFL do it quite well with going out in the communities and they make relationships with elders and teachers and everything and then they can kind of teach kids how to kick a football, give them a football and then, all of a sudden, they're playing and they're looking, they're watching for games, they're gonna be like, oh, if I get a chance to go to Perth, I'm gonna go to this game. And, you know. And I think the more opportunities we have to give back to the community and help them and expose them to just, maybe here's a round ball, or like this is a goalkeeper glove, or I think, you know, it really kind of ignites a fire in them to maybe pursue it. And if they get the opportunity to leave or a scholarship, maybe they'll take that and, you know, make something of themselves in the sporting sense.

**KRIS:** So, I'm just thinking all the young girls are even women, like same age as us, you know, playing for the first time when they're watching the World Cup and then the World Cup ends. It's like what you, what do you want the legacy to be for them when they're playing for the first time?

**LYDIA:** I just think Australia doesn't really know the potential it can have. Obviously going to Rio in Brazil, you see little games on the street or you see like in the middle of like a favela, there's like a football field and it's sacred and it's like people were there just playing. You hear about obviously the Brazilian teams of, you know, quite a number of them have grown up in favelas and then made it to world stadiums and winning gold medals and trophies and you know, I wanna kind of see, you know, places that are like, oh, kids are playing that in the street. You know, we used to always play outdoor cricket at home. You know, it'd be nice to see like every backyard or front yard having a little football net or you know, kids just like kicking the ball away 'cause a car's coming and okay, start again! Yeah. And kind of that it becomes more of a joy thing rather than a hobby maybe, or something that people have to pay a lot of money for, that they're just playing for the love of it.

**KRIS:** Yeah. Like also means of developing community or more community connection and social connection.

**LYDIA:** And I think Australia's such a multicultural place that it will help everybody to unite a little bit more. Sport brings people together. You see it at Olympics, so why can't football all of a sudden ignite people in one country to all join and play it.

**KRIS:** You know, you've played for 18 years, have you started thinking about kind of what the future looks like? Or is your head more still, you know, very present in what you're doing?

**LYDIA:** A bit of both. Obviously, it's, you know, World Cup's the most important thing in on my head and what I'm doing at the moment. But yeah, definitely I think I've had to start planning and assessing future options as well. I've always been a big, I guess supporter of advocacy and making sure that there's opportunity to grow the game, whether it's you know, for multicultural reasons, women's rights, you know, just people enjoying it and trying to help people and create opportunities. For me, that's kind of where I find my passion lies and obviously doing a lot of work with the PFA and helping out there, you know, I'm not really, I guess afraid of a challenge, so for me that's something that I think I'm more passionate about. I don't think I'd go down the coaching route, even though I think I might be okay, maybe. But I'd much rather help grow the game in opportunities rather than, you know, kind of coaching or anything like that.

**KRIS:** The World Cup's also happening at such a pivotal moment for, you know, gender equity and women everywhere. What does it mean to you to be a woman today?

**LYDIA:** Oh, I think it's opportunistic. I think it's still a lot of hard work, but I think if you put in the hard work, there's always gonna be a payoff. So yeah, I think it's, you know, nothing's ever free and it's always a battle, but I think, you know, right now, women's opportunities are massive, and I think the battle pays off if you are willing to put in the work.

**OUTRO:** *Thank you for listening. This podcast was produced by the Centre for Stories. It was developed in conjunction with and funded by the State Library of Western Australia. Our organisations believe in storytelling as a way to build more inclusive communities. Head to [slwa.wa.gov.au](http://slwa.wa.gov.au) to listen to the rest of this oral history collection, or to [centreforstories.com](http://centreforstories.com) to learn more about our storytelling services and mission. Special thanks to our production team, script editor and executive producer Luisa Mitchell – that's me – producer and interviewer Kris Marano, and audio engineer Mason Vellios. Thank you.*