

22 June 2018

The Australian Olympic Committee believes that recognition of Peter's decision to stand up for human rights as he did in 1968 is overdue, and the ceremony in Melbourne on June 22nd with Peter's family addresses the issue of recognition.

However, the notion that Peter was snubbed is a more recent narrative for which there is little evidence in support.

Peter was celebrated in the leadup to the Sydney 2000 Olympics – the opposite of what has been suggested by some.

He carried the Olympic Torch as a torch bearer across the West Gate Bridge in 2000 and was one of five athletes selected to launch the Olympic Medals Set at the Sydney Opera House.

He was also an AOC ambassador at the announcement for several teams in the lead-up to those Games.

Peter was given exactly the same rights to tickets as all other Olympians and was treated no differently to all those athletes.

With regard to the claim he was excluded from the Munich 1972 Games because of his actions in Mexico, sadly Peter is not here to corroborate that claim.

What is clear is that by running third in the National Championship in Perth that year, Peter knew he was out of the Games and told the media as much at the time. He had failed to qualify.

No Australian sprinters were sent to those Games. Whether exceptions could have been made is another matter. Arguments about other times he ran prior remained moot. These were the rules of that era.

Peter was a man known to speak his mind but he made nothing of that omission at the time, or for many years later, other than to acknowledge that he was at the end of his career, aged over thirty.

The failure to run a qualifying time at the Nationals remained the media focus for decades to come.

Not long before Peter's passing in 2006, he made a reference to the fact that he may not have been popular with some because of his actions and that may have contributed to his non-selection.

He certainly did not campaign on the issue and it was not a matter he discussed or complained about broadly, if at all.

And it is well documented that his so-called "reprimand" in Mexico was a token gesture at best, if it was a reprimand at all. The Chef de Mission of the Games, Julius Patching, sent him on his way with tickets to the hockey, not a plane ticket home.

The AOC is proud to present Peter's family with the Order of Merit and is very appreciative of the good grace and excitement that has greeted this announcement.