

By Tayla Harris

**Recommended for 12-18-year-olds**



**Contact Carolyn Walsh, Education Marketing Manager,  
Ph: +02 8425 0150 Email: [education@allenandunwin.com](mailto:education@allenandunwin.com)**

## Themes

- AFLW • online harassment • social media • bullying • online trolls

## Discussion questions

- Before reading *More than a Kick* discuss with your class if anyone remembers an incident involving an AFLW player and a photo that went viral in 2019.

Prompt discussion with the following questions:

- What was the photo showing? [Show the photo of Tayla Harris' kick and steer the conversation to a discussion of how the image might reinforce positive messages about sport, the amazing athleticism of professional sportspeople, the growing participation of women in all sports, and broader gender equality issues.]
- Can you define the term *online troll*? How do they typically target women? Do you think they would react differently if this photo had been of a man? Why do you think this is the case?
- Do you know what happened next and how this picture became so influential that a bronze statue was commissioned to commemorate it which was unveiled in Melbourne's Federation Square and is currently located at the Docklands headquarters of NAB?
- After reading *More than a Kick* encourage students to talk about their initial reaction to Tayla's story. Were they angered and surprised by what happened to her? Why? Or did it seem to them the sort of thing celebrities should expect on social media? If so, why do they think our society accepts this?
- Were the people in charge of the 7AFL page right to take down the photo when it started to attract negative comments? Do you think Tayla was right to repost the photo straight after it was taken down? Do you agree with Patty Kinnersly's advice, 'If we can, we should'? Page 148.
- Did you like the captions that Tayla posted with the photo on Twitter and Instagram? Page 89. Can you come up with new captions that you would like to see go with the photo?
- Tayla talks about social media as being 'a huge part of how I connect and move through my world, and basically I don't know what I'd do without it.' but that at the same time she has a bittersweet relationship with it. Page 128.

How does social media impact on your life both positively and negatively? Is it something that you feel you control or something that controls you? If you had the power to turn back the clock and live in a generation that didn't grow up with social media would you choose to?

- Did you find Tayla's **Things I do to Stay Safe** and **Things I do to Feel Okay** sections useful? Would you add or delete anything from these lists? Try making a poster of these rules and hang it somewhere so you are constantly reminded of them.
- If you are being targeted by cyberbullies or trolls Tayla suggests you should not engage and try to take a break from social media. However, if the targeting continues what five steps does she suggest you take?
- 'I finished up by saying, "But it isn't about me now, it's about a way bigger picture.'" Page 95. By late 2019 the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) named Tayla Harris one of the 100 most influential women that year. She was the only Australian named in the list.
  - Write a paragraph on why you think she was chosen and how her experiences and advice have influenced you.

## Author's inspiration

'Writing a book has never been on my to-do list and, to be honest, a year ago it was the last thing on my mind. But after it all blew-up I was continually being asked about the kick, the photo and the trolling. There was a ton of media surrounding the story and I needed to set the record straight.

'I also wanted to share what I'd learned from the experience. I figure if I can help just one young person feel better about navigating social media, then this is a good way to do it.

'I've put in some background about the influences that shaped me so you can see where I'm coming from.

'And there's lots of stuff about the socials – the good, the bad and the ugly – with bits of advice that I've picked up along the way.

'Also photos. Lots of photos.'

Tayla Harris

## The author

Tayla Harris is an AFLW player for the Carlton Football Club. She previously played for Brisbane in the inaugural AFL Women's season in 2017. She received All Australian honours two years in a row, as well as winning Mark of the Year in season 2018. She is also a professional boxer. In March 2019 Tayla was subjected to extreme online trolling when a photo showing her kicking for goal was posted to social media. She has been lauded for how she navigated the social and mainstream media storm that followed and is proud to use her platform to speak out about the issue, raising awareness around trolls and online bullying, calling out unacceptable behaviour online and inspiring young women.



## Related texts/Further reading

- 'Our Watch'  
<https://www.ourwatch.org.au/>
- 'Tayla Harris has been immortalised in Bronze. It is a win for women's sport'  
<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2019/sep/11/tayla-harris-has-been-immortalised-in-bronze-it-is-a-win-for-womens-sport>
- 'BBC reveals 100 most inspiring woman around the world'  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/women/bbc-women-100-most-inspiring-world-2019-greta-thunberg-dina-asher-smith-aoc-a9157806.html>