

MEDIA RELEASE
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2021 AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS FINALISTS WHO'S IN THE RUNNING FOR NATIONAL AWARDS?

Awards to be announced 25 January 2021

australianoftheyear.org.au

Health leaders, bushfire heroes, pandemic helpers, scientists, environmental guardians, human rights advocates and Indigenous leaders are among the inspiring Australians now in the running for the 2021 Australian of the Year Awards to be announced on the evening of 25 January 2021.

Public nominations for the 2021 Australian of the Year Awards closed in July 2020. State and territory nominees were selected from these public submissions and recipients then announced during October and November 2020. These state and territory award recipients are now the national finalists.

There are 33 finalists across four award categories:

- 2021 Australian of the Year
- 2021 Senior Australian of the Year
- 2021 Young Australian of the Year
- 2021 Australia's Local Hero

National Australia Day Council CEO, Ms Karlie Brand, said the national finalists reflected the many faces of Australian society and the many ways in which many Australians contributed in times of crisis.

"The past year has been particularly challenging and many of the finalists have shown incredible leadership or stepped up to help in extraordinary ways," said Ms Brand.

"At the same time, ongoing social issues and challenges continue. Many of the award finalists are champions of causes and issues which require long-term dedication and passion.

"These are the people who make our nation and our communities great – real people doing important work and showing leadership when it's needed most."

The national finalists for the 2021 Australian of the Year Awards are:

2021 AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

ACT Professor Brendan Murphy - Former Chief Medical Officer to the Federal Government
NSW Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM - Ex-NSW Fire Commissioner, leader of Resilience NSW
NT Dr Wendy Page - Global expert in Aboriginal health
QLD Dr Dinesh Palipana OAM - Advocate for doctors with disabilities
SA Tanya Hosch - Leader, changemaker and visionary
TAS Grace Tame - Advocate for survivors of sexual assault
VIC Donna Stolzenberg - Founder and CEO, the National Homeless Collective
WA Professor Helen Milroy - Australia's first Indigenous doctor

2021 SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

ACT Patricia Anderson AO - Writer and advocate for the health of Australia's First Peoples
NSW Isabel Reid - Elder and advocate for the Stolen Generation
NT Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr Baumann AM - Aboriginal activist, educator and artist
QLD Aunty McRose Elu - Advocate for Torres Strait communities and climate change
SA Professor Richard Bruggemann - Disability advocate
TAS Brian Williams - Scout leader and mentor
VIC Bich Cam Nguyen - Founder, CEO, Honorary Secretary, Australian Vietnamese Women's Assoc
WA Dr Richard Walley OAM - Champion of Aboriginal culture

2021 YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

ACT Tara McClelland - Advocate for the rights of young people
NSW Nathan Parker - Pilot, Invictus Games gold medallist
NT Stuart McGrath - Aboriginal health practitioner
QLD Daniel & William Clarke - Conservationists for the endangered orangutan
SA Isobel Marshall - Social entrepreneur
TAS Toby Thorpe - Advocate for youth empowerment and climate action
VIC Tayla Harris - Footballer, boxer, respectful relationships ambassador
WA Grace Forrest - Founder and director of Walk Free

2021 AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO

ACT Timothy Miller - Founder of Lids4Kids
NSW Rosemary Kariuki - Advocate for migrant and refugee women
NT Erica Gibson - Police officer and safer communities advocate
QLD Natasha Johnston - Founder and Director of Drought Angels
SA Russell Ebert OAM - Respectful relationships advocate
TAS Edna Pennicott OAM - Founder of Kingborough Helping Hands
VIC Dr Kirby White - Founder of Gowns for Doctors
WA Rebecca Prince-Ruiz - Founder of Plastic Free July

* Bios on following pages

For more information on the Australian of the Year Awards visit australianoftheyear.org.au.

ENDS.

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PHOTOS: Of national finalists can be downloaded from here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yxmm0ay8ru4gkuk/AADGs2Nc1qzLHoNPmZbZioDla?dl=0>

Please credit Salty Dingo for photos.

For more information on the Australian of the Year Awards visit <https://www.australianoftheyear.org.au/nominate/frequently-asked-questions/>

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BIOGRAPHIES – NATIONAL FINALISTS, 2021 AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

AWARD CATEGORY: 2021 AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

ACT

Professor Brendan Murphy

Former Chief Medical Officer to the Federal Government

Age: 65

Lives: Kingston

Professor Brendan Murphy is the former Government Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and current Secretary of the Department of Health. Brendan provided expert advice to the Federal Government to close the international borders before the spread of COVID-19 – a decision which saved tens of thousands of Australian lives. Thanks to his calm leadership, Australia was able to prevent the COVID-19 virus taking hold in the community during the first wave of the global pandemic. In his role as CMO, Brendan, as Chair of the Australian Health Principal Protection Committee (AHPPC) provided clear consensus guidance to all Australian Governments around shutting down Australian business and community activities. AHPPC, under his leadership, was responsible for introducing physical distancing measures – and overseeing their implementation in Australia before WHO advice and in advance of other developed countries. A respected medical expert, Brendan chairs many national committees, and represents Australia at the World Health Assembly.

NSW

Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM

Ex-NSW Fire Commissioner, leader of Resilience NSW

Age: 51

Lives: Berowra Heights

In the terrifying 2019/20 bushfire season, Australians were reassured by the exemplary leadership and empathetic presence of then NSW Fire Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons. Shane began as a volunteer with NSW RFS in 1985, in the footsteps of his father George – a full-time firefighter who was tragically killed in an out-of-control hazard reduction burn in 2000. In 1994, Shane joined the NSW RFS full-time, working in a range of leadership positions before being endorsed as the organisation's commissioner in 2007 – a role he held for 12 years. In 2019/20, Shane guided a state-wide response including a 74,000-strong crew of mostly volunteers through one of Australia's worst fire seasons. Working long hours, he informed and calmed the public in daily press conferences, liaised with government leaders and provided comfort to colleagues and family members of firefighters who lost their lives in service to others.

NT

Dr Wendy Page

Global expert in Aboriginal health

Age: 65

Lives: Nhulunbuy

For more than 30 years, Dr Wendy Page has been dedicated to improving Aboriginal health outcomes, working tirelessly at the grassroots level for the communities in North East Arnhem Land. In 1993, Wendy took up a position at the newly established Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation in Nhulunbuy, where she is now medical director. Wendy has worked to highlight and eliminate a parasitic roundworm prevalent in Aboriginal communities across Northern Australia. She set up the first national workshop for strongyloidiasis, a disease caused by the Strongyloides worm. Wendy's efforts have been instrumental in reducing the prevalence of strongyloidiasis in local East Arnhem Land communities – from 60 per cent to below 10 per cent. Her many published papers on the Strongyloides worm have made her a world-recognised expert and are used to inform all medical practitioners. Wendy is passionate about mentoring young doctors. She has taken on roles as a lead supervisor in Nhulunbuy and as an examiner in Darwin to help registrars become qualified GPs.

QLD

Dr Dinesh Palipana OAM

Advocate for doctors with disabilities

Age: 36

Lives: Gold Coast

Dr Dinesh Palipana OAM is a senior resident doctor at Gold Coast University Hospital. Despite facing numerous barriers, he became the first quadriplegic medical graduate and medical intern in Queensland. He was recently admitted as a lawyer. As co-founder of Doctors With Disabilities Australia, Dinesh has worked with the Australian Medical Association to create first-of-kind national policies for inclusivity in medical education and employment. Dinesh is a doctor for the Gold Coast Titans physical disability rugby league team. He is also a member of multiple committees for disability advocacy and has spoken in world-renowned forums such as TEDx. Through COVID-19, he advocated for equitable treatment for people with disabilities, including as a witness to the Disability Royal Commission. Dinesh has also contributed significantly to scientific advances in treating spinal cord injury and restoring function to people with paralysis. His national and global impact has been recognised with numerous awards, including Junior Doctor of the Year and the Order of Australia.

SA

Tanya Hosch

Leader, changemaker and visionary

Age: 50

Lives: Golden Grove, Adelaide

Tanya Hosch is the first Indigenous person and second woman appointed to the AFL executive. She has held leadership roles in sport, the arts, culture, social justice and public policy. One of the pre-eminent Indigenous leaders pursuing constitutional recognition of Australia's First Nations people, Tanya's principled leadership is transforming the AFL – advancing women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, gender-diverse Australians and the entire community. Tanya championed the first Indigenous player statue of Nicky Winmar and instigated a review of anti-vilification policy within the code. She helped secure an apology for Adam Goodes from the AFL and delivered a new industry framework to help prevent racist treatment of players. Tanya also helped found advocacy organisation The Indigenous Players Alliance. She drove a new respect and responsibility policy enabling women to seek redress for unacceptable behaviour, and a world-first gender diversity policy for a contact sport. In 2020, she drove a hugely successful social media campaign aimed at informing and protecting Indigenous communities from COVID-19.

TAS

Grace Tame

Advocate for survivors of sexual assault

Age: 26

Lives: Bellerive, Hobart

Grace Tame is an outspoken advocate for survivors of sexual assault, particularly those who were abused in institutional settings. From age 15, Grace was groomed and raped by her 58-year-old maths teacher, who was found guilty and jailed for his crimes. However, under Tasmania's sexual-assault victim gag laws, Grace couldn't legally speak out about her experience – despite the perpetrator and media being free to do so. Assisted by the #LetHerSpeak campaign, Grace applied to the Supreme Court to win the right to publicly self-identify as a rape survivor, becoming the first Tasmanian woman to do so. Grace has demonstrated extraordinary courage, using her voice to push for legal reform and raise public awareness about the impacts of sexual violence. She is a regular guest speaker for high-profile events and television programs and uses her media profile to advocate for other vulnerable groups in the community.

VIC

Donna Stolzenberg

Founder and CEO, the National Homeless Collective

Age: 52

Lives: Melbourne

Proud Indigenous woman Donna Stolzenberg is a CEO, keynote speaker and trainer. In 2014, she had the simple idea of handing out 50 donated sleeping bags to homeless people. That idea has evolved into a nationwide charity. The National Homeless Collective (NHC) is a grassroots Australian organisation that helps people affected by homelessness, domestic violence and social disadvantage. A mother of five boys and a grandmother of two,

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Donna has lived experience of overcoming homelessness and hardship. Under Donna's direction, NHC has created six sub-charities targeting different issues – Period Project, School Project, Plate Up Project, Sleeping Bags for Homelessness, and Secret Women's Business. It also runs Kala Space, an op shop employing women affected by domestic abuse or homelessness. Donna's generosity and resourcefulness have provided practical solutions in Australia's most recent crises. This includes helping women to safely escape homelessness, people affected by bushfires, or those locked down in the Melbourne towers during COVID-19.

WA

Professor Helen Milroy

Australia's first Indigenous doctor

Age: 61

Lives: Perth

Prof Helen Milroy was Australia's first Indigenous doctor and is now a highly regarded expert in child and adolescent psychiatry. For more than 25 years, Helen has been a pioneer in research, education and training in Aboriginal and child mental health, and recovery from grief and trauma. She has supported the Aboriginal and medical workforce in applying Indigenous knowledge and cultural models of care. Helen has played a key role on numerous mental health advisory committees and boards, including the National Mental Health Commission. She was appointed as commissioner for the Australian Government's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse from 2013-2017. Helen was also the first Indigenous commissioner to the Australian Football League. A talented artist and published author, Helen's books have been shortlisted for several major awards. In 2018, she received the Australian Indigenous Doctor of the Year Award, recognising her many achievements.

AWARD CATEGORY: 2021 SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

ACT

Patricia Anderson AO

Writer and advocate for the health of Australia's First Peoples

Age: 76

Lives: Hackett

Patricia Anderson AO is an Alyawarre woman who has built a national and international reputation as a powerful advocate for the health of Australia's First Peoples. With an extensive career spanning community development, policy formation, and research ethics, Pat has dedicated her life to creating and nurturing understanding and compassion between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians. A widely-published writer, Pat has served as Chair on multiple organisations, including the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory, and the Prime Minister's Referendum Council. She is the inaugural patron of the Women's Safety Services of Central Australia and has presented to the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous People. Pat's achievements have been recognised with numerous honours, including the HRC's Human Rights Medal, a Westpac 100 Women of Influence Award, and a NAIDOC Lifetime Achievement Award. She has received an honorary doctorate and an Order of Australia for her leadership in promoting improved health and educational outcomes.

NSW

Isabel Reid

Elder and advocate for the Stolen Generation

Age: 88

Lives: Wagga Wagga

Born in 1932, Isabel Reid is the oldest living survivor of those who were forcibly removed under the NSW Aborigines Protection Act 1909-1969 – children who were forcibly removed from their families because they were Aboriginal. Isabel, her sister Betty and brother Jack were taken on the way home from school. Their parents had no idea what had happened to them. Isabel and Betty were sent to the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home, becoming domestic servants with their wages paid to the NSW Government. As an Elder of the Wiradjuri people, Isabel has worked tirelessly to raise awareness of the Stolen Generation to help prevent it from happening again. In 2013, she was made an inaugural director of the Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation, and in 2016, she was appointed as an inaugural member and Chairperson of the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee. Her strong leadership was instrumental to the NSW Government offering a \$74 million reparation package to those forcibly removed under the Aborigines Protection Act 1909-1969. A natural leader and outstanding public speaker, Isabel is respected and loved by all.

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NT

Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr Baumann AM **Aboriginal activist, educator and artist**

Age: 73

Lives: Daly River

Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr Baumann AM is an Aboriginal elder from Nauiyu and a renowned artist, activist, writer and public speaker. In 1975, Miriam-Rose became the Territory's first fully qualified Aboriginal teacher. As an art consultant for the Department of Education, she visited schools through the Top End, advocating for the inclusion of visual art as part of every child's education. Miriam-Rose later became the principal of the Catholic school in her home community before being appointed to the Federal Government's advisory body, the National Indigenous Council. In 2013, she established the Miriam Rose Foundation, to bridge the divide between Aboriginal culture and mainstream society – driving reconciliation at a grassroots level. Through her professional and creative life, Miriam-Rose has remained dedicated to maintaining the cultural independence of her people and being a spokesperson for the Aboriginal worldview. In recognition of her leadership, she was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia medal and an Honorary PhD in Education from Charles Darwin University.

QLD

Aunty McRose Elu **Advocate for Torres Strait communities and climate change**

Age: 75

Lives: Brisbane

Torres Strait Island Elder McRose Elu is a tireless advocate for her community. She has an unwavering vision to bring about change to better the lives of children and families. McRose is committed to reconciliation and sharing the traditional practices of her people at local, state and federal levels. She was instrumental in negotiations to legally recognise the traditional customary adoption practices of Torres Strait Islander families, which led to the introduction of a landmark Bill to the Queensland Parliament. Since 1980, McRose has been drawing global attention to the impact of climate change on the Torres Strait, including speaking at the UN and to business and political leaders. As a member of the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARCC), she advocates for renewable energy and sustainable methods of production. McRose also provides essential translation for Torres Strait Islander communities to help them access services and lobbies for funding to support community capacity building.

SA

Professor Richard Bruggemann **Disability advocate**

Age: 77

Lives: Kensington Park, Adelaide

At 76 years old, Professor Richard Bruggemann is continuing to make a difference to the lives of people living with an intellectual disability. Throughout his career, he has provided expert advice to governments on disability services, legislation, inclusion and rights. He is a dedicated volunteer, has sat on more than 20 non-government boards and committees, and is a prolific writer on topics of concern for the disability community. This year, he was called on by the South Australian Government to join the special taskforce investigating the tragic death of cerebral palsy sufferer, Ann Marie Smith. Richard was also appointed to a new government role to assess the temporary orders to protect people living with a cognitive or mental impairment from the spread of the COVID-19 virus. His ongoing leadership has helped create a community service system that helps people with intellectual disability and their families enjoy a better quality of life.

TAS

Brian Williams **Scout leader and mentor**

Age: 73

Lives: Blackmans Bay, Hobart

Brian Williams has devoted more than 50 years to Scouts and has been a highly respected mentor to thousands of youth. Under his leadership, the Blackmans Bay Scout Group has become one of the largest and most successful in Tasmania. Brian organised the inaugural Australian Venture in Launceston, bringing together young people from around Australia and overseas for 12 days of fun and activities. Due to the success of this event, the state been invited to run several additional national events. Brian is deputy chair on the committee for A Day on The Beach,

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a local Australia Day celebration of Australian life and culture. His efforts mean his scouts can participate in these local events, gaining valuable community engagement and life experience. Since 1983, Brian has been on the state training team, where he has trained and nurtured more than 100 leaders in the Venturer Scout Section – ensuring the ongoing success of the organisation.

VIC
Bich Cam Nguyen
Founder, CEO and Honorary Secretary of the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association

Age: 80

Lives: Melbourne

Eighty-year-old Bich Cam Nguyen is the full-time CEO and secretary of the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association (AVWA). This flourishing, fast-growing organisation has 3 offices, more than 200 paid staff, plus volunteers. Cam and her family came to Australia in 1975 as refugees. With her husband and friends – and without any funding – they founded the Vietnamese Friendly Society to provide interpreting services and information about Australia to new Vietnamese refugees. In 1983, supported by 16 Vietnamese professional women, Cam formed the AVWA while bringing up her family and working full-time. The apolitical organisation helps Vietnamese and Victorians of all backgrounds with programs including home care, training, and counselling. In 1995, Cam became AVWA's full-time executive director and then its CEO since 2004. Fit, healthy and active, Cam has served on numerous committees including as honorary secretary for a consortium of African organisations. Cam's dedication has helped refugees and migrants from many backgrounds to feel valued and empowered.

WA
Dr Richard Walley OAM
Champion of Aboriginal culture

Age: 67

Lives: Perth

Dr Richard Walley guides people and organisations on their journey of reconciliation through cultural awareness. A champion of Wadjuk and Noongar people, he shares his profound knowledge of language, cultural practices and historic injustices – cultivating a deeper respect and recognition of Aboriginal culture. Richard reinvigorated the practice of the modern-day Welcome To Country in Noongar Country, a ceremony that is now commonplace across Australia. He sits on multiple committees and is a consultant to both government and corporate agencies where he is engaged to provide cultural advice for major projects. Richard's expertise is also sought out by the private sector to provide Welcome to Country, undertake cultural awareness training and advise on Indigenous affairs. A musician, performer and artist, Richard's designs adorn jerseys in the Indigenous rounds of sporting events. He is creatively involved with many local festivals and events. Richard has received numerous honours including an Order of Australia, Honorary Doctorate, and WA Citizen Of The Year.

AWARD CATEGORY: 2021 YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

ACT
Tara McClelland
Advocate for the rights of young people

Age: 24 (will be 25 when Awards are announced on 25 Jan)

Lives: Dickson

Tara McClelland works tirelessly to support and advocate for the rights and wellbeing of ACT's young people. In her professional role as Youth Worker with the Salvation Army, Tara works with 16-25 year olds experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, homelessness, helping to expand their skills while in crisis accommodation. She is particularly passionate about advocating for young people's mental health issues, which is the focus of her strength-based empowerment practice. Tara also dedicates her free time to volunteer work with the Youth Reference Group at Headspace Canberra, where she helps apply for funding, organises events to support mental wellbeing, and holds school information sessions. Tara is on the Canberra Youth Theatre's Youth Artists Advisory Panel, and has assisted the Children and Young People Commissioner's Office with their work on family violence. Her significant contributions have been recognised with a commendation for a 2019 Youth Coalition of the ACT YOGIE Award and a nomination for 2020 Young Canberra Citizen of the Year.

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NSW

Nathan Parker

Pilot, Invictus Games gold medallist

Age: 25

Lives: Lismore

Nathan Parker was on the way to his dream job as a fighter pilot when a military bus accident left him badly injured and his left hand amputated. Despite his injuries, Nathan returned to civilian flying in three months, resuming military and university duties within seven months. He was the first upper-limb amputee in the Australian Defence Force Academy's history to complete his final 12 months and graduate. After completing his degree in 2017, Nathan was medically discharged in 2019 to become a commercial pilot. He works as a senior RA-Aus flying instructor in Lismore, obtaining his commercial pilot's licence and achieving his aerobatic endorsement. A public speaker, mentor, flight instructor and now aspiring to provide joy flights for sick children, Nathan is also a gold-medal athlete. He represented Australia in the Invictus Games in Canada 2017 and Sydney 2018, winning nine medals including three gold in Sydney. He also brought home 17 medals from two USA Warrior Games.

NT

Stuart McGrath

Aboriginal health practitioner

Age: 30

Lives: Galiwin'ku Community, Elcho Island

Stuart McGrath is an Aboriginal health practitioner. On graduation, he will become the first Yolngu registered nurse. At age 29 Stuart has already been exposed to experiences which give him special insight into the needs of different community groups – from his nomadic upbringing in remote Indigenous communities, to schooling in Canberra and studying in Darwin. Stuart has overcome significant challenges to follow his dreams – including completing his first year of a Bachelor of Nursing degree remotely while working full-time and being a father to two young girls. He helped produce the 'Ask the Specialist' podcast, with the Menzies School of Health Research, to improve communication between health professionals and patients. A natural leader, Stuart is committed to closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. His passion for helping his community will inspire other First Nations young people to participate in the health workforce, leading to happier and healthier lives.

QLD

Daniel and William Clarke

Conservationists for the endangered orangutan

Age: Daniel 24 and William 22

Live: Redland City

Brothers Daniel and William Clarke are passionate conservationists for the critically endangered orangutan populations in Borneo and Sumatra. Since 2008, they have highlighted the species' plight and raised more than \$900,000 to help protect the animals. The funds have supported orangutan care centres by building new holding enclosures and enabling investment in veterinary equipment. The brothers have also sponsored more than 50,000 hectares of orangutan habitat and adopted more than 100 animals. Daniel and William's literary work on orangutan conservation has been incorporated into the NSW Department of Education Curriculum. To date, the brothers have spoken in at least 80 schools to more than 60,000 students Australia-wide, inspiring other young people to make a positive difference in the world. Daniel and William are regularly invited to speak at events to address industry leaders and politicians on sustainability and the environment. Their conservation efforts have been recognised by former US President Barack Obama and Dame Dr Jane Goodall.

SA

Isobel Marshall

Social entrepreneur

Age: 22

Lives: Adelaide

At just 18 years of age, Isobel Marshall co-founded TABOO with school friend Eloise Hall, to help women around the world by breaking down stigma around menstruation and providing greater access to hygiene products. Isobel and business partner Eloise, crowdfunded \$56,000 to launch their range of products in August 2019. TABOO sells high quality, ethically sourced, organic cotton pads and tampons to an Australian market, with 100 per cent of net profits going to One Girls – a charity providing education programs for girls and women in Sierra Leone and Uganda. Locally, Isobel and TABOO have partnered with Vinnies Women's Crisis centre, providing free

access to pads and tampons for women who require emergency accommodation in South Australia. Recognising period poverty is not just a big city issue, they also support the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council. Isobel is also a full-time student at the University of Adelaide, where she is studying a Bachelor of Medicine (MBBS) and a Bachelor of Surgery.

TAS

Toby Thorpe

Advocate for youth empowerment and climate action

Age: 19

Lives: Huonville

Toby Thorpe is a passionate advocate for youth empowerment and climate action. Through his initiatives, Huonville High School became the second Australian winner of the international Zayed Sustainability Prize – launching Tasmania as a global leader in renewable energy innovation. Toby organised the first state-wide climate leaders' conference in three Tasmanian cities, attracting more than 350 student participants. Now in its third year, the Global Energy Award-winning program empowers young people to lead sustainability projects that will contribute positively to the environment and their communities. Toby has twice led the Tasmanian Youth Delegation, as part of the United Nations Climate Change Conference. He worked tirelessly to enable students to meet with Australian Government representatives as well as international changemakers such as Greta Thunberg. Toby is executive director at the Climate Justice Initiative, which runs in-school workshops to help young people understand their power to make a positive impact and connects them with activists around the world.

VIC

Tayla Harris

Footballer, boxer, respectful relationships ambassador

Age: 23

Lives: Melbourne

Tayla Harris is a young Australian athlete making her mark on the sports field and beyond. As a footballer in the AFLW, she was Carlton Football Club's leading goal-kicker in 2019, receiving the JLT Mark of the Year Award for two years running. In boxing, Tayla holds the Australian super welterweight title and is undefeated in eight professional fights. After a photograph of Tayla kicking a goal became the target of sexualised trolling online in 2019, she courageously used this experience to fight online bullying and disrespect towards women. Tayla is now a powerful advocate for respectful relationships. She is an ambassador for Our Watch, an organisation working to prevent violence against women. She is also active in Carlton Respects, a Carlton Football Club community initiative that promotes gender equality in Australian schools and workplaces. Her co-authored 2020 book, 'More Than a Kick', provides advice to young people on how to navigate social media and deal with online bullying.

WA

Grace Forrest

Founder and director of Walk Free

Age: 27

Lives: Perth

Grace Forrest is the founding director of Walk Free, an international human rights organisation working to eradicate modern slavery, which affects over 40 million people globally. Together with the all-female Walk Free team, they develop the Global Slavery Index, the world's leading data set on measuring and understanding modern slavery – informing international legislation. In 2018, Walk Free successfully campaigned for the implementation of an Australian Modern Slavery Act, which received the support of both major parties and the business community. A highly sought-after public speaker, Grace has presented at the World Economic Forum Sustainable Development Impact Summit, the CHOGM Women's Forum, and the United Nations on multiple occasions, most recently to the U.N. Security Council on Walk Free's new report 'Stacked Odds'. In recognition of her work and impact, Grace was appointed the United Nations Association of Australia's youngest-ever Goodwill Ambassador, for Anti-Slavery. She continues to be a voice for the UN in Australia and abroad.

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AWARD CATEGORY: 2021 AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO

ACT

Timothy Miller

Founder of Lids4Kids

Age: 45

Lives: Belconnen

Timothy Miller runs Lids4Kids, a national organisation which encourages households, schools, businesses, and organisations to collect plastic lids to be recycled into sustainable products for children. Previously, Tim spent much of his career working in road safety and environmentalism, leading the development of a 5-star environmental rating for vehicles as well as an important online resource for consumers on the efficiency and environmental impact of their cars. He has also used his passion for cars to take part in outback rallies to fundraise for various charities that help sick, disadvantaged, or disabled children. Lids4Kids now has over 25,000 participants across Australia. Tim coordinates leaders from all states to spread the message about Lids4Kids in their communities and collect, clean and sort lids from drop off points around towns and cities. His efforts have saved millions of lids from landfill, while educating children about the issue of plastic waste and empowering them to take action.

NSW

Rosemary Kariuki

Advocate for migrant and refugee women

Age: 60

Lives: Oran Park

Rosemary Kariuki is the multicultural community liaison officer for the Parramatta Police. She specialises in helping migrants who are facing domestic violence, language barriers and financial distress. Fleeing Kenya alone in 1999 to escape family abuse and tribal clashes, her early years in Australia were terribly lonely. Her experience helped Rosemary recognise that isolation is a huge issue for many migrant women. Many aren't used to going out alone, have no transport and speak little or no English. So Rosemary devised ways to help women leave their house and meet women in similar circumstances. In partnership with the African Women's Group, she helped start the African Women's Dinner Dance. Now in its 14th year, more than 400 women attend the annual event. She also started the African Village Market – a program to help migrants and refugees start their own businesses – which ran for four years. Rosemary's warmth, courage and kindness inspire all who meet her. Her work was the subject of the documentary 'Rosemary's Way'.

NT

Sergeant Erica Gibson

Police officer and safer communities advocate

Age: 54

Lives: Katherine

Sergeant Erica Gibson is an engaging and enthusiastic leader who is creating safer communities for Northern Territory women. A police officer for more than 30 years, she passionately drives and supports community programs that help to combat family violence. Erica oversaw implementation of the Family Safety Framework program, which provides a network of safe homes in remote communities for people in domestic violence situations. She actively supports the Stars Foundation of East Arnhem region, which helps women and girls choose healthy, active lifestyles and positive relationships. She was also a key organiser in Nhulunbuy's inaugural White Ribbon Day event, which raised approximately \$50,000. In 2016, Erica was appointed a member of the RCAG Regional Community Advisory Group for Top End Health Services. And in 2017, she received a Telstra NT Business Women's Award. A keen mentor of other women in the police force, Erica's integrity and leadership inspire others to make positive change.

QLD

Natasha Johnston

Founder and Director of Drought Angels

Age: 47

Lives: Chinchilla

Natasha Johnston is the founder and director of Drought Angels, a service that delivers care packages and financial assistance to thousands of drought-stricken farming families across Queensland and New South Wales. Natasha and her friend Nicki Blackwell were inspired to help after hearing stories of farmers struggling to put food on the table.

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After loading a ute with supplies to take to one family in 2014, they soon started responding to calls for assistance from other families in urgent need. Drought Angels is a unique service that provides a listening ear in addition to financial assistance and food hampers. This personalised support is a lifeline for farmers who often don't reach out for help. Natasha's work plays a vital role in reducing rates of depression and suicide, as well as helping to keep farmers on their land. Thanks to her hard work and dedication, Natasha frequently receives heartfelt responses of gratitude.

SA

Russell Ebert OAM

Respectful relationships advocate

Age: 71

Lives: West Lakes, Adelaide

Former footballer Russell Ebert OAM is a legendary figure with the Port Adelaide Football Club. A four-time winner of the Magarey Medal, awarded to the best and fairest player in the South Australian National Football League, he's considered one of the club's greatest players of all time. Today, Russell continues to give back to the club and the South Australian community through his leadership of the club's Power Community Ltd (PCL) youth programs. He is particularly passionate about PCL's Power to End Violence Against Women (PTEVAW) program, which he delivers to Year 10 students around the state. Developed with Centacare Catholic Family Services and the South Australian Department for Education, PTEVAW challenges gender-based attitudes and promotes respectful relationships and an end to domestic violence. The program has reached more than 5,000 students since starting in 2016. Russell is also a passionate supporter of children living with disabilities and is a fundraising ambassador for disability services organisation, Novita.

TAS

Edna Pennicott

Founder of Kingborough Helping Hands

Age: 73

Lives: Kingston, Hobart

Edna Pennicott's organisation provides support to people facing financial hardship. Kingborough Helping Hands (KHH) delivers care packages of food and other essential items for community members who have fallen on hard times. Edna collects these goods herself and personally delivers many of the packages. At Christmas, she organises the packing and delivery of around 250 hampers and 300 children's presents for families in need. Through KHH, Edna supports several local women's shelters, providing household essentials, furniture and clothes for women and children who are fleeing domestic violence. She also operates an after-hours mobile van service that offers hot food and support to people who are sleeping rough. The majority of KHH's programs are community-funded, and Edna is the driving force behind all fundraising activities. Edna recently received an inaugural Aurora Energy Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of 40 years of dedicated service to the most vulnerable members of the community.

VIC

Dr Kirby White

Founder of Gowns for Doctors

Age: 35

Lives: Bendigo

When Bendigo GP Dr Kirby White's supply of disposable gowns ran out in the third week of the COVID-19 outbreak, she and colleague Dr Nicole Townsend decided to act. Together, they developed a gown that could be laundered and re-used, allowing them to keep seeing patients. From their own need, Gowns for Doctors was born. To fund the initiative, Kirby raised more than \$40,000 through a GoFundMe page, and by lobbying local, state and federal organisations and governments. She then engaged local volunteers and commercial textile companies – even her own wedding dress supplier – to make the gowns. Kirby has now produced well over 5,200 gowns, supplying more than 750 regional Victorian GP clinics with these essential garments. She has also built up a stockpile of surplus gowns, which are ready to go out to other clinics when needed. A dedicated and passionate GP, Kirby often checks up on patients late in the evening. She has gone above and beyond for her community and regional Victoria.

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WA

Rebecca Prince-Ruiz

Founder of Plastic Free July

Age: 50 (will be 51 when Awards are announced on 25 Jan)

Lives: Fremantle

Rebecca Prince-Ruiz is the founder of a global movement that helps millions of people be part of the solution to plastic pollution. Ten years ago, Rebecca became concerned by the amount of plastics going into landfill and encouraged her family to go plastic-free for the month of July. Her idea is now a global initiative, with an estimated 326 million people participating worldwide. Rebecca has worked with state governments and business leaders on reducing single use plastics and is on the board of the government's Container Deposit Scheme – a new recycling program for WA. At a local level, Rebecca engages with community groups by hosting presentations and workshops for schools, aged care facilities and other community groups. Rebecca has appeared on the ABC show 'War on Waste' to increase awareness of the plastics issue and the solutions available. She has published a book on the Plastic Free movement, and created a vast social media following – inspiring countless others to do more for the planet.

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