

MEDIA RELEASE

MONDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2022

WESTERN AUSTRALIA (WA) 2023 AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

2023 WA Australian of the Year – Professor Samar Aoun (Bunbury)
2023 WA Senior Australian of the Year – Theresa Kwok (Joondanna)
2023 WA Young Australian of the Year – Nagmeldin (Peter) Bol (Thornlie)
2023 WA Local Hero – James ‘Jimmy’ Murphy (Leederville)

Awards event livestreamed via a link available at australianoftheyear.org.au or on ABC iView

Monday 14 November 2022, 8:45PM (AWST) Perth: The 2023 WA Australian of the Year Awards have been announced in the presence of His Excellency the Honourable Chris Dawson APM, Governor of Western Australia, at a ceremony at Government House, Perth.

The four Western Australian recipients will join those from the other states and territories for the national awards to be announced on 25 January 2023.

The 2023 WA Australian of the Year is researcher and advocate for end-of-life care, bereavement and grief support, Professor Samar Aoun.

Professor Samar Aoun advocates for a person-centred approach to end-of-life care. She focuses on underserved groups such as those with motor neurone disease (MND) and dementia, terminally ill people who live alone and family carers.

As Perron Institute Research Chair in Palliative Care at the University of Western Australia, Samar is known as an international leader in the advocacy of public health approaches to palliative care.

Her work has strengthened the Compassionate Communities movement that mobilises and equips people to better support those facing death and bereavement.

As co-founder and chair of the South West Compassionate Communities Network, Samar also volunteers in roles including director on the MND Australia Board, president of the MND Association of WA and a board member of Palliative Care WA.

Among numerous awards, 63-year-old Samar received the Medal for Excellence from the European Society for Person Centered Healthcare in 2018 and the Centenary Medal in 2003 from Australia's Prime Minister.

Community advocate Theresa Kwok is the 2023 WA Senior Australian of the Year.

With a background in social work, Theresa Kwok has been helping migrants settle in Australia from the moment she arrived from Hong Kong 35 years ago.

For most of this time, she has supported older migrants from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities at Perth's Chung Wah Community and Aged Care. Theresa is now CEO of the organisation, which delivers a range of community care programs for clients, their families and ethnic communities. She looks after about 800 clients.

Theresa helps elderly members of CALD communities to live independently and has created more equitable access to culturally appropriate migrant and aged-care services across all communities.

Recognised with multiple awards for her efforts, 68-year-old Theresa is constantly reshaping how aged and community care services are delivered to meet changing demands.

Her advocacy continues to raise awareness of the unique challenges and strengths of CALD older people within government, service providers and CALD communities.

The 2023 WA Young Australian of the Year is athlete and Olympian, Nagmeldin (Peter) Bol.

Nagmeldin (Peter) Bol is a two-time Olympian, holds the current national 800m record, and in 2021 was the first Australian runner in 53 years to make it into an Olympic 800m final.

Peter and his family, originally from Sudan, arrived in Australia from Egypt when he was eight. His sporting talent was soon recognised with a sporting scholarship to Perth's St Norbert College for basketball. When he was 16, a coach persuaded him to try athletics.

His running soon started getting him noticed and Peter debuted for Australia at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. He became a household name at the Tokyo Games, held in 2021, where he won his semi-final and became the fastest-ever Australian over 800 metres.

When he's not training or studying, 28-year-old Peter works as a coach, mentor and keynote speaker, aiming to help others achieve their dreams. His philanthropic efforts were recently recognised by Athletics Australia with the prestigious 2022 Peter Norman Humanitarian Award.

Co-founder of Town Team Movement, James (Jimmy) Murphy, is the 2023 WA Local Hero.

Social entrepreneur James (Jimmy) Murphy founded the Town Team Movement to inspire and support people to be responsible for improving their communities. The non-profit social enterprise enables people and local government to connect, organise and act to regenerate neighbourhoods.

Jimmy uses Town Teams to advocate for more accessible and affordable community spaces that reflect the people who inhabit them. Residents, businesses and other community members are encouraged to form or join an existing Town Team group. Town Team Movement groups have held street festivals, run working bees, introduced street art, built community gardens, rewilded areas and created food co-ops.

Jimmy, 42, also co-founded Arts Impact WA, a philanthropic organisation that funds arts projects. Jimmy's practical, positive approach has spread from Western Australia across the nation and to New Zealand. There are now more than 108 Town Teams making the world better – one community at a time.

Old Parliament House,
King George Terrace,
Parkes ACT 2600

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National Australia Day Council CEO Karlie Brand congratulated the award recipients from Western Australia.

“The WA award recipients are leaders taking action where it is needed to bring about change, to save lives, to foster inclusiveness and to create brighter futures,” said Ms Brand.

“We look forward to welcoming them to Canberra for the national Australian of the Year Awards to be announced on 25 January 2023.”

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

ENDS.

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PHOTOS: From the awards announcement event can be downloaded as available after approx. 9:15pm Perth time from this link (credit NADC/Salty Dingo):

[221114 NADC WA Media Distribution photos \(high res\)](#)

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