



Australian of the Year Awards 2016

**MEDIA RELEASE
16 NOVEMBER 2016**

EMBARGOED UNTIL 7.00PM SYDNEY TIME OR AS ANNOUNCED AT EVENT
DO NOT CONTACT AWARD RECIPIENTS AS THEY ARE NOT AWARE OF THE OUTCOME
UNTIL NAMES ARE ANNOUNCED ON STAGE

2016 NSW AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

2016 NSW Australian of the Year - Elizabeth Broderick (Sydney)
2016 NSW Senior Australian of the Year - Professor Gordian Fulde (Bondi)
2016 NSW Young Australian of the Year - Melissa Abu-Gazaleh (Kanhooka)
2016 NSW Local Hero - Dr Catherine Keenan (Sydney)

Chairman of the Australia Day Council of NSW, Angelos Frangopoulos, has announced the 2016 NSW Australian of the Year Award recipients at a ceremony at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney this evening.

The NSW Premier Mike Baird praised the 2016 NSW Australian of the Year Award recipients.

“Congratulations to all of the NSW finalists who should be so proud that the contributions they make to our society have been recognised at this level,” Mr Baird said.

“Together they have advocated for equality, supported the disadvantaged, and cared those less fortunate than themselves. Their efforts and leadership have helped so many people and will continue to do so as they inspire others to lead by example.

“I would like to commend each of our four winners and wish them the best of luck as they are considered for the national Awards to be announced on Australia Day eve.”

Elizabeth Broderick has been named **2016 NSW Australian of the Year** for her work as a social change innovator.

It takes a special person to bring together captains of industry and Defence Force chiefs to address gender inequality. But that's exactly what Elizabeth Broderick has done. As Sex Discrimination Commissioner from 2007 to 2015, Elizabeth was single-minded in her determination to break down the structural and social barriers preventing women from reaching their potential. A key advocate for Australia's national paid parental leave scheme, Elizabeth fought for changes to the ASX Corporate Governance Principles to increase the number of women at decision-making level. She developed the Male Champions of Change strategy, enlisting a 'who's who' of powerful businessmen to tackle sex discrimination in the workplace and her review into the treatment of women in the Australian Defence Force led to large-scale cultural change. Elizabeth has advised the United Nations and NATO, established mentoring programs for women and is a loud voice in the struggle against gender-based violence. Elizabeth continues to speak out and strive for gender equality.

Professor Gordian Fulde has been awarded **2016 NSW Senior Australian of the Year**.

From midnight to dawn, while most people are in bed, 67 year old Professor Gordian Fulde is presiding over one of Australia's busiest emergency departments. The Director of Emergency at St Vincent's Hospital and Sydney Hospital for more than three decades, Gordian is the longest serving emergency department director in Australia. The doctor on call when disaster strikes, Gordian has seen it all and is passionately outspoken about the scourge of 'ice' and alcohol-fuelled violence which delivers a flood of people into Australian hospitals each weekend. While you will occasionally see him appear on *Kings Cross ER*, Gordian is also actively involved in teaching and training students and staff in many facets of emergency medicine. A member of the Board of the Thomas Kelly Youth Foundation, Gordian also supports many schools and community organisations, sharing his stories of working in an urban warzone, and warning of the dangers of a binge drinking culture, which is overwhelmingly the main cause of injury in Australia's emergency departments.

The **2016 NSW Young Australian of the Year** is 29 year old Kanhooka resident **Melissa Abu-Gazaleh**.

Tired of seeing young men painted as drunk and violent no-hopers, Melissa Abu-Gazaleh established the youth-led Top Blokes Foundation when she was just 19. As Chief Executive Officer of the New South Wales organisation, Melissa is helping Australia combat anti-social and risk-taking behaviours among young men and busting many





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negative stereotypes along the way. Reaching thousands of 14 to 24 year olds each year, the Top Blokes Foundation fosters young men's social inclusion, resilience and mental health, while empowering them to contribute to their community through volunteering. Melissa's Junior Top Blokes Mentoring Program, for example, uses social education to challenge boys to address issues like alcohol, drugs, mental health, anger, masculinity and pornography. What started off as a "thing to do in her spare time" now occupies her every waking moment, and Melissa sits on boards, chairs committees and manages a team of 14 people who are passionate about youth leadership and empowering people to be agents of change.

Sydney's **Dr Catherine Keenan** has been awarded **2016 NSW Local Hero** for her work as a youth educator.

A former journalist, arts writer and literary editor, Catherine Keenan turned her back on her career in 2012 to help nurture the talent and creativity of marginalised young Australians. As the co-founder and executive director of the Sydney Story Factory, Catherine has helped thousands of primary and high school students express themselves through writing and storytelling. Catherine, who has a doctorate in English literature from Oxford University, is focused on helping people from Indigenous and non-English speaking backgrounds, but everyone is welcome to attend the Sydney Story Factory and all classes are free. With energy, enthusiasm and sheer hard work, Catherine has raised funds, established partnerships and trained more than 1,200 volunteers who work with students one-on-one or in small groups to teach them writing skills, cultivate their creativity and help them find their own voice. Catherine's passion for language, literature and creative writing is building self-esteem and academic achievement, opening pathways to higher education and improving the life choices of many young Australians.

The NSW Award recipients will join recipients from the other States and Territories as finalists for the national Awards to be announced on 25 January 2016 in Canberra.

National Australia Day Council CEO, Jeremy Lasek, said the NSW Award recipients are four inspirational Australians.

"The NSW Award recipients are all extraordinary Australians passionately working to create a better society for now and the future. We are proud of all of them," said Mr Lasek.

For more than 36 years, the Commonwealth Bank has been a proud sponsor of the Australian of the Year Awards. Commonwealth Bank Chief Executive Officer, Ian Narev, congratulated the NSW Award recipients.

"Congratulations to the NSW recipients on being named national finalists in the Australian of the Year Awards. We recognise their inspirational contribution to our community and wish them well for the national Awards," said Mr Narev.

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

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EMBARGO NOTE: Media attending the Awards event may of course report Award recipients as they are announced on stage OR follow Australian of the Year Awards on Twitter @ausoftheyear or Facebook @australianoftheyear for the Awards announcements as they happen - once each Award is announced, it can be reported.

