

**MEDIA RELEASE  
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**EMBARGOED UNTIL 7.15PM DARWIN 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 NORTHERN TERRITORY AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED**

**2016 Northern Territory Australian of the Year - Will MacGregor (Alice Springs)**  
**2016 Northern Territory Senior Australian of the Year - Bob Shewring (Howard Springs)**  
**2016 Northern Territory Young Australian of the Year - Benjamin Masters (Woodroffe)**  
**2016 Northern Territory's Local Hero - David Taylor (Coconut Grove)**

The Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, The Hon Adam Giles MLA, has announced the 2016 Northern Territory Australian of the Year Award recipients at a ceremony at the Darwin Convention Centre this evening.

Australia Day Council NT Chair, Daryl Manzie, said the Territory Award recipients are four inspirational Australians.

"I never tire of the amazing achievements and contributions Territorians make in our communities, this year's recipients are no exception.

"From helping the homeless to working with young people or campaigning for the repatriation of our fallen soldiers from abroad, these Territorians have all demonstrated their commitment and dedication to wider the community. They are willing to stand up for what they believe in, to mentor and to take others on their journey.

"It is an honour to recognise them through this esteemed Award process and I wish them every success as they go on to the national Australian of the Year Award ceremony in January. Good luck and thank you."

**Will MacGregor** has been named **2016 Northern Territory Australian of the Year** for his work as a youth worker.

Having experienced severe drug and alcohol problems in his youth, Will MacGregor understands the challenges facing many young people in the Northern Territory. After getting help for his addictions – and remaining sober for more than three decades – Will wanted to help others. Following consultation with Aboriginal elders and community leaders from across the Territory, Will started taking young people into the bush for days at a time to help them dry out and detox. After several years of operating from the back of a 4WD, Will gained funding in 2009 and BushMob was born. Now a 20-bed facility with 28 staff, BushMob takes marginalised young people 'out bush' to build their self-esteem and respect for each other. The participants tackle problems like alcohol and drug abuse, violence and suicide and can remain in the program for up to two months. Will is focused on natural healing, cultural respect and empowerment to help young people make positive choices and rebuild their lives.

Repatriation campaigner **Bob Shewring** has been awarded **2016 Northern Territory Senior Australian of the Year**.

Twenty five Australian soldiers killed in the Vietnam War never returned home to Australia. 69 year old Vietnam veteran, Bob Shewring has spent years lobbying governments to bring home the bodies of these soldiers buried overseas after they were killed in the line of duty. Bob established Operation "Bring Them Home" in 2014 and spent countless hours researching war history and legislation. He garnered more than 40,000 signatures through an online petition before the Australian Government announced in May 2015 it would repatriate the bodies from cemeteries in Malaysia and Singapore back home to Australia, providing the next of kin's agree. Until February 1966, the government required soldiers' families to pay for their bodies to be repatriated back to Australia. For Bob, this campaign is personal. Twenty five of the 521 Australians killed in the Vietnam War didn't make it home and Bob's mate Reg Hillier is one of them. Bob is determined to see these soldiers finally welcomed home, receive full military honours at "one of the biggest ramp ceremonies in Australia's history" and to right a terrible wrong from the Vietnam War.

The **2016 Northern Territory Young Australian of the Year** is 19 year old Woodroffe resident **Benjamin Masters**.

The drive of this young Darwin drummer is making opportunities for up-and-coming performers in the Top End. Benjamin Masters is passionately engaged in his local music scene, performing, mentoring and supporting local talent. Ben's all-ages, drug and alcohol free music gigs have grown in size and create opportunities for Darwin bands to play





# Australian of the Year Awards 2016

to a big crowd. The driving force behind the Terrorfest music festival, Ben coordinates an event which attracts a line-up of more than 10 bands and receives a rapturous response from the crowd. Ben's heavy metal band, I, The Burden, has won awards, produced EPs and music videos and toured nationally. A drumming tutor for high school musicians and mentor for MusicNT, Ben also established his own booking agency to give beginner bands a shot at jumping on stage with some of their national idols. A shining example of a young leader, Ben is using his passion for music to help others and strengthen his community.

Coconut Grove's **David Taylor** has been awarded **2016 Northern Territory's Local Hero** for his work as a homeless mentor and arts advocate.

For the past six years, David Taylor has provided 200 meals a day for Darwin's homeless people. David runs the St Vincent de Paul Society's Knockabout Chefs program, training and mentoring homeless and at-risk people, refugees and those with learning difficulties, in commercial cookery. Some participants go on to work in commercial kitchens, while others learn valuable life skills, improve their English or build their self-esteem. With patience, love and care, David builds up people who are experiencing extreme hardship and disadvantage, and changes their lives, one at a time. While he's a passionate 'foodie', David also devotes much time to Tracks Dance, a local dance organisation committed to developing people from diverse backgrounds. A committee member since 1999, David volunteers on stage as a performer, in wardrobe and prop production, or front-of-house management to support Tracks Dance in celebrating the stories, truths and diverse heritage of people in the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory 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 Northern Territory Award recipients are four inspirational Australians.

"The Northern Territory Award recipients come from many different walks of life but these four hard working Australians are following their passions to create positive change in society," 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 Northern Territory Award recipients.

"Congratulations to the Northern Territory 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](http://australianoftheyear.org.au).

**ENDS.**

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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.

