



Australian of the Year Awards 2016

**MEDIA RELEASE
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DO NOT CONTACT AWARD RECIPIENTS AS THEY ARE NOT AWARE OF THE OUTCOME
UNTIL NAMES ARE ANNOUNCED ON STAGE

2016 WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

2016 Western Australia's Australian of the Year - Anne Carey (Esperance)
2016 Western Australia's Senior Australian of the Year - The Hon Graham Edwards AM - (North Beach)
2016 Western Australia's Young Australian of the Year - Catherine Hughes (Claremont)
2016 Western Australia's Local Hero - Dr Stephen Langford (Applecross)

The Governor of Western Australia, Her Excellency the Honourable Kerry Sanderson AO, has announced the 2016 Western Australia's Australian of the Year Award recipients at a ceremony at the Government House Ballroom in Perth this afternoon.

Her Excellency said she was inspired by the stories of courage, advocacy, leadership and determination from all of the finalists and was very proud of the four recipients who would represent Western Australia as National finalists in January.

Anne Carey has been named **2016 Western Australia's Australian of the Year** for her work as a medical warrior.

A nurse, midwife and medical warrior, Anne Carey has spent her life helping others – even when it has been at great personal risk. Volunteering in some of the world's hotspots, including Darfur, Papua New Guinea and most recently Sierra Leone, Anne leaves an impact on everyone she meets. During her time in Darfur, Anne and her colleagues came under attack, but while others left they courageously stayed put to help the local residents. In Sierra Leone, she spent three assignments battling on the frontline against the deadly Ebola virus and was amongst the first volunteers to assist. Every day, she was taped into a personal protection suit, and while she may have looked inhuman in her all-white sterilised suit, thick rubber gloves and perspex goggles, Anne extended humanity with a simple touch that helped people understand they were not alone. Despite the death, fear and despair felt during the Ebola outbreak, Anne was a beacon of hope and continues the desperate fight to save the lives of people most in need.

Veterans' advocate **the Hon Graham Edwards AM** has been awarded **2016 Western Australia's Senior Australian of the Year**.

While serving in Vietnam in 1970, Graham Edwards was hit by an exploding mine. Both his legs had to be amputated, but he never let his disability get the better of him. Returning to civilian life, he battled the aftershocks of war and fought discrimination before moving into public affairs and politics. Spending 14 years of service in the WA Legislative Council, including as a senior minister and nine years in the federal parliament, Graham actively contributed to defence, disability services and veterans' policy. While juggling his parliamentary responsibilities, Graham devoted many hours to his twin passions: the Paralympic movement and veterans' rights. Today, as State President of the Returned & Services League of Australia, 69 year old Graham oversees a membership base of 10,000 people, sits by bedsides, lobbies government for funding and organises large events to commemorate the sacrifice made by many, particularly for the 2015 Centenary of Gallipoli. A board member of the Australian War Memorial, Graham is ensuring that the nation's war heroes gain the recognition they deserve.

The **2016 Western Australia's Young Australian of the Year** is 28 year old Claremont resident **Catherine Hughes**.

After her youngest child Riley died from whooping cough, Catherine Hughes became an ardent campaigner for vaccination. One month old Riley was too young to be immunised against the deadly respiratory bacteria, also known as pertussis. Rather than allow her grief to overwhelm her, Catherine has channelled her energy into immunisation awareness. Within days of Riley's death, she established the "Light for Riley" Facebook page which now reaches more than 70,000 people. As a direct result of Riley's death, every State and Territory in Australia has implemented free booster shots for pregnant women to provide the best defence against whooping cough in newborn babies. With no thought of reward, Catherine has met with politicians, attended parenting expos, raised over \$70,000 for whooping cough research, instigated a viral campaign for the donation of over 45,000 vaccines to UNICEF and shared her story to ensure no other family has to live without their child due to a preventable disease.



Applecross's **Dr Stephen Langford** has been awarded **2016 Western Australia's Local Hero** for his work as a flying doctor.

During his 32 year career with the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS), Dr Stephen Langford has saved countless lives and eased tremendous suffering. Starting at the front line in 1983, Stephen was astounded to discover the limited resources available within the RFDS. Working tirelessly over many years, Stephen introduced dozens of innovations, from treatment preventing premature birth to ultrasound diagnostic capabilities, special transfer equipment for heavy patients, and blood clot-busting drugs for heart patients. Tackling the tyranny of distance, Stephen campaigned for a fast Hawker 800 jet, transforming how emergency medical teams could respond to remote incidents – some of which were 2,000 kilometres from the nearest hospital. Now the Medical Director of the RFDS in Western Australia, Stephen has made a tremendous impact on health in remote Indigenous communities. A recent study confirms that patients who are badly injured in remote Western Australia have significantly higher chances of survival if they receive early medical care from Stephen's team.

The Western Australian 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 Western Australian Award recipients are four inspirational Australians.

"The Western Australian Award recipients are extraordinary Australians making a real difference to the lives of many both internationally, nationally and in their home State. We are extremely proud of all four 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 Western Australian Award recipients.

"Congratulations to the Western Australian 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.

