

MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL FRIDAY 21 OCTOBER 2016

**FINALISTS ANNOUNCED FOR 2017 WESTERN AUSTRALIA
AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

A gospel singer, a foster carer, an anti-alcohol activist, a Formula One driver, a global education innovator and a philanthropic businessman are among the finalists in the 2017 Western Australia Australian of the Year Awards.

The Western Australia Award finalists announced today are in the running to be named WA Australian of the Year, WA Senior Australian of the Year, WA Young Australian of the Year and WA Local Hero.

The 2017 Western Australia Award finalists are:

2017 WA AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

Professor Arlene Chan – Breast cancer researcher (Perth)
Dr Martin Dougiamas – Online education pioneer (West Perth)
Dr James Fitzpatrick – Paediatrician (Cottesloe)
Andrew Forrest – Philanthropist and anti-slavery advocate (Perth)

2017 WA SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

Fay Alford – Foster carer (Carine)
Michael Gurry – Charity founder (Mount Lawley)
Peter Kenyon – Social entrepreneur (Kalamunda)
Olive Knight (Kankawa Nagarra) – Gospel and contemporary Blues singer (Wangkatjungka community)

2017 WA YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

Abdullahi Alim – Social innovator (Manning)
Ryan Morich – Wheelchair basketballer (Perth)
Daniel Ricciardo – Formula One driver (Perth)
Troye Sivan – Performer and youth supporter (Dianella)

2017 WA LOCAL HERO

Griffin Longley – Outdoor play champion (Fremantle)
Peter Lyndon-James – Drug rehabilitation volunteer (West Swan)
Michael Norman – Conservationist and sustainability champion (Sorrento)
June Oscar AO – Anti-alcohol activist (Fitzroy Crossing)

Western Australia's Australian of the Year, Senior Australian of the Year, Young Australian of the Year and Local Hero Award recipients will be announced on Sunday 20 November 2016 at Government House in Perth.

The Western Australia Award recipients will then join recipients from all other States and Territories as finalists for the national awards, which will be held in Canberra on 25 January 2017.

National Australia Day Council CEO, Mr Chris Kirby, said the Western Australia finalists are among 131 great Australians being recognised as State and Territory finalists in the Australian of the Year Awards.

"The Australian of the Year Awards allow us to recognise and celebrate the achievements of outstanding Australians – people from all walks of life making extraordinary contributions to our society," said Mr Kirby.

"The Western Australia Award finalists are role models in their respective fields and inspirational leaders in our communities – they lead by example, they seek to make a difference and they forge a path for others to benefit in the future."



Commonwealth Bank has been a major sponsor of the Australian of the Year Awards for 37 years.

“We are proud to support the Australian of the Year Awards, a national program that showcases the Australian spirit,” said Mr Ian Narev, Chief Executive Officer of the Commonwealth Bank.

“Thank you to all of the State and Territory finalists, who have all have made an important contribution to their communities through their achievements.”

ENDS.

Finalist bios attached with this media release or can be viewed from www.australianoftheyear.org.au

Finalist photos can be downloaded from <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3zfB7dMM-RmZGJvTWhpOGVuU1U>

For more information on the Australian of the Year Awards or members of the selection panel visit australianoftheyear.org.au

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BIOGRAPHIES

WA - FINALISTS - AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

Professor Arlene Chan

Breast cancer researcher

The principal investigator of more than 80 breast cancer clinical trials, Professor Arlene Chan is single-minded in her determination to help the 15,000-plus women diagnosed with breast cancer each year. In 2003, Arlene established the Breast Clinical Trials Unit at the Mount Hospital to conduct research into the causes, prevention and treatment of breast cancer and enhance patient care. She has treated nearly 4,000 breast cancer patients and results from 10 international studies that she has conducted have led to changes in global standards of care. An adjunct professor at the Curtin University Medical School, she has authored more than 140 publications, sits on academic steering committees and advises several pharmaceutical companies. She is also Director of the Breast Clinical Trials Unit at Hollywood Private Hospital and is founding member and Vice Chair of Breast Cancer Research Centre – WA. With incredible expertise, wisdom and faith, Arlene inspires her patients, and they in turn inspire her to continue her research so that fewer people will suffer and die from breast cancer.

Dr Martin Dougiamas

Online education pioneer

Few people can say they've turned down a \$20 million offer because they wanted their product to remain free for everyone to use, but that's exactly what Dr Martin Dougiamas did. Martin created Moodle, an open source learning management system now used in every country around the world by countless people. With a background in computer science, Martin developed a platform to help educators – many of them renowned universities – to build their own highly-customised sites for online learning. Today, Moodle is a global project with an ecosystem of contributors in a vast array of settings– from primary schools and workplaces to hospitals and war zones. World Vision uses Martin's brainchild to train staff in the field. And just recently it enabled Syrian teachers to access learning material to educate students about the dangers of mines. With a deeply-held belief in the importance of unrestricted education, Martin believes Moodle is the best way he can empower teachers around the world.

Dr James Fitzpatrick

Paediatrician

Working with children in need – even those not yet born – Dr James Fitzpatrick is tackling the seemingly intractable issue of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). After being awarded Young Australian of the Year in 2001 for his work in youth suicide prevention and rural health, James founded the True Blue Dreaming not-for-profit youth mentoring organisation and has expanded his enterprise, PATCHES Paediatrics, to deliver child development and disability services throughout Western Australia. Inspiring, leading and building collaborations, James drives an internationally-renowned FASD research program, working across multiple roles – from frontline paediatrician to health service entrepreneur, and from academic to policy advisor. The inaugural Chair of the Australian FASD Clinical Network, James has developed a FASD prevention strategy, slashing rates of drinking in pregnancy from 65 per cent in 2010 to 18 per cent in 2016; while writing FASD therapy models into the National Disability Insurance Scheme. James' message is one of hope, demonstrating empirically that it is possible to make FASD history.

Andrew Forrest

Philanthropist and anti-slavery advocate

With self-made wealth, Andrew Forrest drives hands-on philanthropy, leading Australian initiatives for some 250 community strengthening causes. He is the first Australasian to pledge to give away the overwhelming majority of his wealth. Never daunted by the scale of challenge, Andrew devotes his relentless energy to society's most vulnerable, tirelessly ending Australia's Indigenous disparity and drawing attention to and liberating 45.8 million people trapped in modern slavery around the world. His highly successful Fortescue Metals Group is Australia's largest sponsor of Aboriginal businesses and employment. Andrew publicly encourages 'honest failure' as key to any country's success and humility as crucial to sustainable leadership. He promotes that he failed his way to success and encourages us all to stay above the politics of small thinking. Andrew wrote 'Creating Parity' for Prime Minister and Cabinet, served on the Global Citizenship Commission to refresh the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights for the United Nations, and is widely considered as one of Australia's greatest philanthropists, business leaders and change agents.



WA - FINALISTS - SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

Fay Alford, 70

Foster carer

With boundless love and vast reserves of energy, Fay Alford puts the welfare and wellbeing of children at the centre of all she does. Fay and her husband David have fostered more than 80 vulnerable children over the last three decades while raising their two biological daughters. They have adopted two foster children, and a third chose to be adopted by the Alford family when she turned 18. The Director of the Foster Care Association of WA for 12 years, Fay provides support and advocacy to foster carers throughout the state. She is an advisor to the minister, a guest speaker at conferences, and a key figure in the training and recruitment of new foster carers. Fay's work has placed her at the frontline tackling a range of issues from methamphetamine addiction to domestic violence, and from Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders to entrenched intergenerational disadvantage. But first and foremost, Fay says her job is to make the children in her care feel safe.

Michael Gurry, 69

Charity founder

During his successful corporate career, Michael Gurry was struck by the poverty he encountered around the world, and was determined to be an agent of change. Now retired, Mike and his wife Corinne channel their energies into the Helping Foundation, a not-for-profit that links individuals to reputable charities. For the last decade Mike has supported the work of the Tabitha Foundation, helping build schools and homes in Cambodia, support orphans and victims of human trafficking, and change the lives of thousands. Since 2010, he's taken volunteers – from young AFL footballers to retired Rotarians – to Cambodia to build 800 houses and 12 schools. He's developed the Animal Bank, a program which enables poor families to raise animals for food and sale. Now Chairman of Tabitha Australia, Mike is just as committed to his own back yard. As Chair of Foundation Housing for six years, Mike is expanding the pool of affordable housing in Western Australia. Motivated and energetic, Mike engages people of all ages and backgrounds to build better communities.

Peter Kenyon, 65

Social entrepreneur

A community enthusiast and social entrepreneur, Peter Kenyon has worked with more than 1,600 communities in Australia and 59 overseas to stimulate economic renewal. Motivated by the desire to create healthy, inclusive and enterprising local economies, in 1989 Peter started Bank of I.D.E.A.S (Initiatives for the Development of Enterprising Action and Strategies). Since then, he's helped communities spark their own ideas and invest in themselves to build a sustainable future. He's worked with communities to build economic strategies in locations as far flung as Kuwait and Kakadu, Somalia and Subiaco. A keen author, Peter has written 16 books on community and economic development, youth policy and enterprise. A master communicator, he is a sought-after presenter and speaker, and tirelessly supports other international thought leaders in the pursuit of community activation. Peter's passion and purpose has seen him traverse the globe over 35 years in his relentless ambition to enable communities to discover their strengths and transform themselves.

Olive Knight (Kankawa Nagarra), 70

Gospel and contemporary Blues singer

Growing up with the Gooniyandi and Walmatjarri peoples of north Western Australia, Olive Knight, or Kankawa Nagarra, was nearly killed on the day of her birth, as was customary for half-blood children in her community. Spared by an elder, Olive would grow to become a respected translator, community leader and the only Walmatjarri Gospel Blues singer in the world. Olive's songs offer messages of hope and strength, and share stories of determination despite the loss of land and loved ones. While she remains quiet and unassuming, Olive's talent has led to collaborations with many other artists and performers, many of whom have sought her unique voice and ability to translate songs into her traditional language. In 2011, Olive was invited to sing as part of Hugh Jackman's Back on Broadway production. From the grassroots to the global scale, Olive's positive and healing influence is profound, and her commitment to preserving her culture and language is an inspiration to others.



WA - FINALISTS - YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

Abdullahi Alim, 24

Social innovator

He graduated from his honours degree in finance last year, but Abdullahi Alim has already co-founded an innovation lab to solve issues of contemporary concern. Abdullahi came to Australia as a Somali refugee at the age of five.

At 23, he is pursuing studies through Stanford University. Now, through the Lighthouse Strategy, Abdullahi runs 'hackathons' – fast-paced and intense exercises that bring bright young innovators together to develop solutions to global challenges. Abdullahi's approach has attracted partners from the Australian Government to Google and the US Department of State. For example, MYHACK, an anti-extremism hackathon he coordinates, has seen young Australians create cutting-edge digital solutions to undermine the influence and pervasive appeal of violent extremist propaganda. Abdullahi's goal is to create hubs or 'lighthouses' around the world to promote social impact and youth entrepreneurship. He's set his sights on innovation challenges to empower more young Australians to solve international issues including the global refugee crisis and Indigenous disadvantage in the West.

Ryan Morich, 22

Wheelchair basketballer

The founder of the Red Dust Healers' Wheeling and Healing Program, Ryan Morich helps Indigenous people living with disability, while promoting reconciliation through basketball. Born in Karratha, Ryan was diagnosed with a rare bone cancer when he was 12, and he lost his leg from below his knee. Taking up wheelchair basketball, Ryan has since won bronze at the Under 23 World Championships, competed at the Australian Paralympic Youth Games and is now a member of the Australian Rollers senior squad. The captain of the Red Dust Healers, Adelaide's team in the National Wheelchair Basketball League, Ryan is currently finishing his first year at the University of Alabama on a wheelchair basketball sports scholarship. He made history as the first Aboriginal person with a disability to be awarded such a sports scholarship in the US. Through Wheeling and Healing, Ryan is helping to unearth future Indigenous athletes with disability and provide support to them in their chosen sport, while spreading a message of reconciliation.

Daniel Ricciardo, 27

Formula One driver

In the world of motor sports, Daniel Ricciardo has proven that he's got it all: speed, ambition and more than enough talent to drive the Red Bull Racing team to success. Born in Perth in 1989, Daniel grew up idolising Ayrton Senna. Racing on the go-kart track from the age of nine, Daniel competed locally and interstate before travelling to Bahrain in 2005 to win a scholarship with Formula BMW. After competing in the 2006 Asian Championship, Daniel made an impression, finishing fifth in the BMW World Final that year. In 2008 he was scouted by Red Bull and joined its junior program, and commenced his Formula 1 career in 2011. In his first full season with Red Bull Racing Daniel finished third in the 2014 World Championship, taking home three Grand Prix wins in Canada, Hungary and Belgium. Famed for his smile and positive attitude, Daniel continues to push himself towards his ultimate goal: world champion.

Troye Sivan, 21

Musician, Performer, YouTube Personality and Social activist

A singer, songwriter and actor, Troye Sivan started making YouTube videos when he was 12. Three years later, after telling his parents he was gay, Troye came out to his YouTube followers. "This is not something that I'm ashamed of," he said, "and it's not something that anyone should have to be ashamed of." This video has since helped countless teens gain courage and self-acceptance. Today, Troye has four million YouTube subscribers, 3.6 million Twitter followers, and 3.6 million Instagram fans. He's acted alongside Hugh Jackman in X-Men Origins: Wolverine, and debut album, Blue Neighbourhood, went to number one on the iTunes charts in 24 countries. Another single, The Fault in our Stars, sold more than 100,000 copies – with all proceeds going to the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation in Perth. In 2014, Troye made it onto Time Magazine's list of most influential teenagers. He is admired for his ability to tackle challenging issues facing young people – from safe sex to self-esteem.



WA - FINALISTS - AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO

Griffin Longley (Fremantle)

Outdoor play champion

An award-winning journalist and former weekly columnist with The West Australian newspaper, Griffin Longley started observing that kids had forgotten how to play and that random mucking around had almost disappeared. Alarmed by the statistics which revealed that rates in sport, physical activity and even creativity were declining, Griffin wrote about the problem in his columns and was invited by the West Australian Department of Sport and Recreation to help create the not-for-profit group Nature Play WA to work with schools and communities and get kids back outdoors. As Chief Executive Officer, Griffin has built Nature Play into a thriving organisation, with independent Nature Play organisations now established around Australia. Griffin is also helping get at-risk youth off the streets and on to the basketball court through the Night Hoops youth engagement project. Griffin's impressive, altruistic and timely contribution to the community is prying children away from televisions, tablets and other screens, and helping them re-discover the joys of mud pies, swings and backyard cricket.

Peter Lyndon-James (West Swan)

Drug rehabilitation volunteer

Overcoming personal adversity, including 26 years of drug addiction and a life of crime, Peter Lyndon-James now changes the lives of other men and families in Western Australia. The founder and full-time volunteer of Shalom House in Perth, Peter supports recovering addicts in every aspect of their lives – from developing a program to help men pay court fines, to helping them find employment, seek medical attention, repair damaged relationships and find spiritual solace. With a no nonsense approach, Peter personally works with 60 residents at any one time, tirelessly communicating with doctors, banks, welfare organisations, counsellors and families, while teaching leadership and communication skills, and how to respect authority, others and themselves. Devoted to his life's work, Peter visits schools to educate children on the importance of smart life choices, explores drug addiction in a regular radio spot and fields calls from people day and night wanting to understand how to handle a loved one in the grip of addiction.

Michael Norman (Sorrento)

Conservationist and sustainability champion

Planting hundreds of thousands of trees and understorey plants, Michael Norman has made a sustained contribution to his local environment over many decades. A founding member of the Men of the Trees group in WA, Mike coordinated many planting projects in the 1980s. He co-founded the Farm Tree Help Scheme to help revegetate wheatbelt farms. Then he turned his attention to local projects, and co-founded a very successful coast care group, restoring seven kilometres of coastal reserve within the City of Joondalup. Mike partners with local businesses, mentors young people and educates school groups about coastal care. Mike is also a safe cycling advocate to reduce car use and improve health, even becoming an accredited cycling coach for beginners. Elected a Councillor to the City of Joondalup in 2007, Mike has driven many sustainability initiatives – from nature play parks to green buildings. A local hero, Mike's passion for his local environment will ensure it can continue to be enjoyed by future generations.

June Oscar AO (Fitzroy Crossing)

Anti-alcohol activist

A senior Bunuba woman from Fitzroy Crossing, June Oscar upset businesses and even members of her own extended family when she began the tough work of securing alcohol restrictions in her community in 2007. But those restrictions acted as a circuit-breaker for a town in crisis. Frequent alcohol-fuelled violence and suicide had cast a shadow over Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley when June enlisted the support of West Australian Police Commissioner Karl O'Callaghan to lobby for a ban on full-strength takeaway alcohol. Since then, June has overseen the nation's first study of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), discovering what many suspected: that her community has one of the highest rates of permanent brain damage from maternal alcohol abuse in the world. With remarkable strength and an extraordinary commitment to collaboration, June has brought about constructive discussion between often conflicting groups to support Indigenous families affected by FASD, and to build a safe and healthy future for the generations ahead of her.

