

## **FINALISTS FOR STATE & TERRITORY AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2013 ANNOUNCED**

The 132 finalists in the State & Territory level Australian of the Year Awards for 2013 include an adventure teacher, paediatrician, paralympian, submarine designer, global gardener, social change leader, meningococcal campaigners, cancer researcher, youth advocate and firefighter.

Four finalists have been selected in each award category - Australian of the Year, Senior Australian of the Year, Young Australian of the Year and Australia's Local Hero - for each State and Territory.

These remarkable Australians will be acknowledged at State and Territory presentation ceremonies held around the country throughout November. Here the award recipients for each category will be announced. Award recipients will become finalists for the national awards to be held on 25 January 2013 in Canberra.

Program Director at the National Australia Day Council, Ms Tam Johnston, said the wide variety of contributions and accomplishments of the finalists show the values that Australians hold in high esteem.

"These exceptional finalists have been selected from thousands of nominations submitted by the public in the search for the Australian of the Year Award recipients for 2013," said Ms Johnston.

"They have made incredible contributions to their local community, Australia wide and throughout the world.

"From these remarkable finalists we will eventually find the national award recipients in January."

The Commonwealth Bank has been the Major Sponsor of the Australian of the Year Awards for more than 30 years. Chief Executive Officer Ian Narev congratulated the state and territory finalists.

"On behalf of the Commonwealth Bank, I congratulate all State and Territory finalists in the 2013 Australian of the Year Awards. To emerge as a finalist from the thousands of nominated Australians is a great achievement. I wish you all the best of luck in the next stage of the program." said Mr Narev.

Finalists for each State and Territory are:

### **NSW AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Professor Christine Bennett – Health campaigner (*Greenwich*)  
Professor John Boyages – Breast cancer specialist (*Cheltenham*)  
Ita Buttrose AO OBE – Media icon (*Double Bay*)  
Gemma Sisia – African educator (*Tanzania*)

### **NSW SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Ron Allum – Submarine designer (*Lilyfield*)  
Robyn Nevin AM – Actor and director  
Professor Martin Silink AM – Paediatrician (*East Killara*)  
Professor Alan Trounson – Scientist (*Ashburton*)

### **NSW YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALIST**

Ryley Batt, 23 – Paralympian (*Port Macquarie*)  
Dr Genevieve Nelson, 30 – Kokoda campaigner (*Manly*)  
Tshibanda Ngoy, 28 – Writer and mentor (*Figtree*)  
Corey Payne, 28 – Footballer and mentor (*St Johns Park*)

### **NSW LOCAL HERO FINALISTS**

Dr Stephen Flecknoe-Brown – Doctor (*Broken Hill*)  
Sarah Garnett – Footpath librarian (*Newport Beach*)  
Dr Anita Heiss – Writer and educator (*Matraville*)  
Shane Phillips – Indigenous leader (*Redfern*)

*The NSW Awards will be announced in Sydney on Monday 26 November 2012 at the Museum of Contemporary Art.*



#### **VICTORIAN AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Victoria Anderson – Children’s advocate (*East Melbourne*)  
Dr Ian Holten – Plastic surgeon (*Leopold*)  
Harold Mitchell AC – Businessman and philanthropist (*South Melbourne*)  
Dr Ahmad Sarmast – Musician for peace (*Narre Warren*)

#### **VICTORIAN SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Graham Atkinson – Land justice activist (*Heidelberg Heights*)  
Dorothy Hamilton – Music teacher (*Glen Iris*)  
Marilyn King – Employment activist (*West Footscray*)  
Emeritus Professor T John Martin AO – Medical scientist (*Kew*)

#### **VICTORIAN YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Hayley Bolding, 30 – Anti-poverty campaigner (*Lakes Entrance*)  
Simon Griffiths, 30 – Social philanthropist (*Fitzroy*)  
Kumari Middleton, 27 – Youth campaigner (*Richmond*)  
Dr Linny Phuong, 30 – Community doctor (*Armadale*)

#### **VICTORIAN LOCAL HERO FINALISTS**

Pam Adams – Community volunteer (*Wodonga*)  
Christine Reade – Community volunteer (*North Warrandyte*)  
Dr Rita Seethaler – Musician (*Taggerty*)  
Andrew Taylor – Scout leader (*Fitzroy*)

*The Victorian Awards will be announced in Melbourne on Thursday 22 November 2012, at the Arts Centre Melbourne.*

#### **QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Lisa Gasteen AO – Opera singer (*Corinda*)  
Professor Adèle Green AC – Cancer researcher (*Toowong*)  
Anna Meares OAM – Olympic cyclist (*Mile End*)  
Graeme Wood – Conservationist and philanthropist (*Milton*)

#### **QUEENSLAND SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

John Curro AM MBE – Musical maestro (*New Farm*)  
Aunty Joan Hendriks – Reconciliation advocate  
Laurie Lawrence – Swimming coach (*Currumbin*)  
Paul Stanley – Anti-violence campaigner (*Thornlands*)

#### **QUEENSLAND YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Nicole Buttner, 23 – Humanitarian (*Mundingburra*)  
Joshua Lang, 17 – Gift giver (*Loganlea*)  
Sally Pearson, 26 – Olympic champion  
Charles Thomas, 21 – Anti-bullying campaigner (*Holland Park*)

#### **QUEENSLAND LOCAL HERO FINALISTS**

Sergeant Dimitrios Bellos – Community champion (*Calamvale*)  
Elizabeth Handley – Teacher (*Charleville*)  
Clinton Stanley – Swimming champion (*Cooroy*)  
Scott Stidston OAM – Disability campaigner (*Ayr*)

*The Queensland Awards will be announced in Brisbane on Thursday 15th November 2012, at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre.*



#### **WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Dr David Joske – Haematologist (*Floreat*)  
Professor Kim Scott Writer (*Coolbellup*)  
Professor Kadambot Siddique AM FTSE – Scientist and mentor (*Applecross*)  
Kerry Stokes AC – Entrepreneur and philanthropist

#### **WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Beverley and John Lowe OAM – Community welfare leaders (*Thornlie*)  
Anne Moore – Anti-violence campaigner (*Hillman*)  
Professor Jennifer Searcy – Teacher (*Nedlands*)  
Lorraine and Barry Young – Meningococcal campaigners (*Southern River*)

#### **WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Akram Azimi, 25 – Mentor (*Marangaroo*)  
Holly Ransom, 22 – Social entrepreneur (*Subiaco*)  
Lachlan Ritchie, 26 – Social change leader (*Beaconsfield*)  
Michael Sheldrick, 24 – Polio campaigner (*Kinross*)

#### **WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO FINALISTS**

Glenn Baker – Children's champion (*Ardross*)  
Wilma Bruce – Community volunteer (*Maddington*)  
Caroline de Mori – Indigenous health advocate (*West Perth*)  
Linda Watson – Women's advocate (*Perth*)

*The Western Australia Awards will be announced in Perth on Saturday 24 November 2012, at the Government House Ballroom.*

#### **SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Ray Creen – Ambulance chief (*Lobethal*)  
Scott Neeson – Humanitarian (*Cambodia*)  
Dr Gerry O'Callaghan – Medical campaigner (*Hyde Park*)  
Sonya Ryan – Cyber safety campaigner (*Stirling*)

#### **SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Michael Angelakis AM – Entrepreneurial businessman (*Netherby*)  
Emeritus Professor Ian Maddocks AM – Palliative care specialist (*Seacliff*)  
Ernest (Keith) Skillicorn AM – Medical missionary (*Modbury*)  
Jock Statton OAM – Veterans' campaigner (*Kangarilla*)

#### **SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Rima Chahoud, 28 – Mental health activist (*Bellevue Heights*)  
Rachel Dreyer, 27 – Cardiac researcher (*Magill*)  
Vanessa Picker, 21 – Social campaigner (*Adelaide*)  
Daniel Ryan, 24 – Youth ambassador (*Clearview*)

#### **SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO FINALISTS**

Brad Chilcott – Human rights campaigner (*Brompton*)  
Anna Kemp – Women's advocate (*Croydon*)  
Brenda McCulloch – Community cook (*Hackham*)  
Christopher Roberts-Yates – Work skills instructor (*Bridgewater*)

*The South Australian Awards will be announced in Adelaide on Tuesday 13 November 2012, at the Adelaide Oval.*



#### **TASMANIAN AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Professor Elizabeth Blackburn AC – Molecular scientist (*San Francisco*)  
Andrew Hughes – Adventure teacher (*Woodbridge*)  
Dr Jane Sargison – Engineer (*Leslie Vale*)  
Dr Nitin Verma AM – Ophthalmologist (*Northbridge*)

#### **TASMANIAN SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Josef Chromy OAM – Entrepreneurial businessman (*Launceston*)  
Ivy Chung – Fresh food champion (*Newtown*)  
Anna Crotty – Human rights champion (*West Hobart*)  
Bruce French – Global gardener (*Burnie*)

#### **TASMANIAN YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Holly Barnewall, 27 – Teacher (*Whitemark*)  
Dr Catherine Blizzard, 29 – Neuroscientist (*South Hobart*)  
Cait Clarke, 25 – Youth advocate (*Railton*)  
Laura Sykes, 20 – Social justice campaigner (*Sandy Bay*)

#### **TASMANIAN LOCAL HERO FINALISTS**

Arthur Dobson – Polio campaigner (*Legana*)  
Gwen Egg – Environmentalist (*Dodges Ferry*)  
Diane Hayes – Community campaigner (*Launceston*)  
William Sullivan – Firefighter (*Triabunna*)

*The Tasmanian Awards will be announced at Meadowbank Estate, Hobart on Monday 19 November 2012.*

#### **ACT AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Dr Tom Calma AO – Social justice campaigner (*Chapman*)  
Gordon Gregory OAM – Rural health advocate (*Hughes*)  
Dr Ken Henry AC – Government advisor (*Bungendore*)  
Libby Lloyd AM – Human rights activist (*Griffith*)

#### **ACT SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Garth Mansfield OAM – Musician and mentor (*Campbell*)  
Rhonda Obad OAM – Champion for the homeless (*McKellar*)  
Dr Jim Peacock AC – Agricultural scientist (*Deakin*)  
Milutin Stoilovic – Forensic scientist (*Monash*)

#### **ACT YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Brad Carron-Arthur, 23 – Mental health campaigner (*Duffy*)  
Casey Keed, 19 – Dancer and leader (*Belconnen*)  
Julie McKay, 29 – Women's advocate (*Ainslie*)  
Michael Sollis, 27 – Musician and mentor (*Melba*)

#### **ACT LOCAL HERO FINALISTS**

William Bashford – Indigenous mentor (*Ngunnawal*)  
Peter Cursley – Neonatal care supporter (*Farrer*)  
Patrick McCann – Football mentor (*Kambah*)  
Francis Owusu – Dancer and mentor (*Chisholm*)

*The ACT Awards will be announced in Canberra on Wednesday 21 November 2012, at the Hyatt Hotel Canberra.*



**NORTHERN TERRITORY AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Professor Alex Brown – Indigenous health campaigner (*Alice Springs*)  
Mark Grose and Michael Hohnen – Indigenous talent mentors (*Winnellie*)  
Dr Leonard Notaras AM – Trauma physician (*Brinkin*)  
Paul Taylor – Heritage campaigner (*Wyoming*)

**NORTHERN TERRITORY SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Dr David Gawler – Surgeon and teacher (*Casuarina*)  
Dr Sadhana Mahajani – Community physician (*Parap*)  
Dr Susan Sayers – Paediatrician and researcher (*Nightcliff*)  
Jimmy Shu – Fresh food champion (*Darwin*)

**NORTHERN TERRITORY YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

James Emery, 28 – Equality campaigner (*Darwin*)  
Jessica Mauboy, 23 – Singer and actor  
Evonne Thompson, 28 – Health worker and carer (*Canteen Creek*)  
Matthew Turner, 26 – Nature guide (*Alice Springs*)

**NORTHERN TERRITORY LOCAL HERO FINALISTS**

Peter Fletcher – Youth campaigner (*Katherine*)  
Jeffrey Lee AM – Heritage custodian (*Jabiru*)  
Beverley Shuker – Community stalwart (*Darwin River*)  
Scott and Penny Weily – Foster parents (*Alice Springs*)

*The Northern Territory Awards will be announced in Darwin on Thursday 8 November 2012, at the Holiday Inn Darwin.*

**Ends.**

Finalist bios attached with this media release or downloadable from [www.australianoftheyear.org.au](http://www.australianoftheyear.org.au)  
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## **NSW - FINALISTS - AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Professor Christine Bennett – Health campaigner**

Clinician, researcher, policy maker and planner in the public, private and non-profit health sectors, Professor Christine Bennett is a person of enormous energy with an unwavering sense of right and wrong. Her hard work and determination contributed to saving the Royal Hospital for Women, the relocation of the Camperdown Children's Hospital to Westmead, the establishment of Research Australia and significant reforms and improvements to the national health care system. In 2008 she was appointed to chair the National Health and Reform Commission and conducted a landmark 18-month long review of Australia's health care system in addition to her other full time roles. In 2010 she was appointed to the Federal Government's Diabetes Advisory Group and the Mental Health Expert Working Group. She is also on the Board of Obesity Australia and in 2012 was appointed by the New South Wales Health Minister to chair the Sydney Children's Hospital Network. Her remarkable contribution to health and the quality of life of the Australian people, prompted the NSW Governor Professor Marie Bashir to describe her as the guardian of health services in Australia.

### **Professor John Boyages – Breast cancer specialist**

In a career marked by clinical excellence and unwavering commitment to patient care, oncologist Professor John Boyages has pioneered innovative approaches in the detection and treatment of women with breast cancer. As the inaugural director of the Western Breast Screening Unit, he built the largest breast screening service in Australia treating over 60,000 women annually. As founder of the Westmead Breast Cancer Unit, John was responsible for the establishment of screening clinics in the lingerie departments of Myer stores. He also transformed the capacity of four public hospitals to enable the transmission of digital images to a central diagnostic centre within seconds after a mammogram. Beginning his career at Westmead as a radiation oncologist, his guiding vision has been achieved – to create a multi-disciplinary, specialist team integrating screening, diagnosis, treatment and follow-up all in one location. Extensive support services for patients and their families including counselling, education, gentle exercise and the Mates group for partners are also offered. His work and leadership have contributed in reducing the mortality rate for breast cancer in Western Sydney by 35 per cent.

### **Ita Buttrose AO OBE – Media icon**

Acknowledged for her brilliant and groundbreaking media career, Ita Buttrose now dedicates her considerable energy and skills to championing medical education and health care. Starting her career as a copy girl at the Australian Women's Weekly, she quickly became a cadet journalist at the Daily Telegraph and the Sunday Telegraph. At 23 she was appointed women's editor at The Telegraph and in 1971 was promoted to founding editor of Sir Frank Packer's new women's magazine Cleo. It was an instant hit, becoming the top selling monthly women's magazine and propelling Ita to national celebrity status. Three years later Ita was appointed editor of Women's Weekly and in 1989 became the first woman editor of an Australian metropolitan newspaper – the Murdoch owned Daily Telegraph and later the Sunday Telegraph – and was the first woman appointed to the News Ltd Board. In parallel to her stellar media career, Ita continues to champion social and health issues. Since 2011 she has been National President of Alzheimer's Australia and is also Vice President Emeritus of Arthritis Australia. She uses her national profile to raise awareness of breast cancer, HIV/AIDS and prostate cancer.

### **Gemma Sisia – African educator**

The school set up in Tanzania by Gemma Sisia provides free, high-quality education to over 1,500 of the poorest Tanzanian children while boarding more than 1,000 students. It also boasts one of the best academic records in the country. Always a 'challenge junkie' according to her parents, 22-year-old Gemma first travelled to Africa to teach mathematics and science. Realising there was a real need for a school she decided to build it. With a grant of land from her husband Richard's father she began seeking donations to build the school. Volunteer teams from Australia constructed the first two school blocks and in 2002 St Jude's (named after the patron saint of hopeless causes) opened with an 18-year-old volunteer teacher from Sydney, three sponsored pupils, and Gemma's boundless energy. Today it is a great success story and employs 400 local people. But despite the impressive numbers, this is only the beginning for Gemma. Her vision is to expand so she can educate all the desperately poor children she is forced to turn away at the school gates.





## **NSW - FINALISTS - SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Ron Allum – Submarine designer**

Ron Allum is the designer of the world's most innovative submarine, the *Deepsea Challenger*. This specialised underwater craft was the first to carry a solo submariner 11 kilometres to the floor of the Mariana Trench – the deepest point in the world's oceans. Ron started on the *Deepsea Challenger* project in 2005, gradually assembling a team of engineers and technicians to build his submarine. He created a vessel of radical design that descends vertically with the pilot enclosed in a small metal sphere at the base of the vessel with the engines, lights and camera above in a chassis of hardened foam. When he couldn't locate the required rock-hard flotation foam, he invented it himself using a breadmixer in his Sydney workshop. In March 2012, movie maker James Cameron who directed *Titanic*, climbed inside the Allum-designed submarine and descended to become the first human to tweet from the bottom of the world. Ron, in his own right a record breaker in cave diving deep beneath the Nullarbor, describes it as one of the most satisfying moments in his life.

### **Robyn Nevin AM – Actor and director**

Hailed by many as Australia's greatest living stage actress, Robyn Nevin has spent more than 50 years in front of the footlights. Starting her career as a shy 16-year-old in the first intake of acting students at the National Institute of Dramatic Art, Robyn's many acclaimed roles include Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Mary Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey into Night* and Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar*. She has directed major productions and successfully run two flagship state theatre companies – the Queensland Theatre Company in the late 1990s and Australia's pre-eminent company, the Sydney Theatre Company from 1999 to late 2007. Described as 'the complete actor', Robyn has also mentored hundreds of young performers, directors and writers including Wesley Enoch who was the first Aboriginal director to be given the opportunity to direct a production with a state theatre company. Renowned for her remarkable stamina and described as passionate, complex, loyal and tenacious by colleagues she has a relentless belief in the power and worth of theatre and has no inclination to stop performing.

### **Professor Martin Silink AM – Paediatrician**

Professor Martin Silink is recognised in Australia and internationally for his pioneering work in the treatment of children with diabetes and hormone disorders. He has created two centres of excellence in Sydney to treat children and train doctors and health professionals. Recognising the need for a global approach to what he called the diabetes epidemic, he mobilised international support for a United Nations Resolution on Diabetes calling on governments to develop policies for the prevention and treatment of diabetes. As President of the International Diabetes Federation he drove global recognition of the disease and established the first international centres of diabetes education. In 2001 he established the *Life of a Child* program which now supports over 10,000 children in 39 countries, saving thousands of lives. In Australia, he introduced home glucose testing for type 1 diabetes and advocated for intensive diabetes control to prevent diabetes complications. By any measure Martin has made an extraordinary contribution worldwide to the treatment and care of children with diabetes.

### **Professor Alan Trounson – Scientist**

Professor Alan Trounson made headlines in 1980 with the first IVF birth in Australia, introducing two world-first procedures credited with helping more than 300,000 women worldwide conceive successfully. In 2000, he made international headlines again when he led the team which discovered that nerve stem cells could be derived from embryonic stem cells unleashing the potential of stem cells to cure a range of currently incurable diseases including HIV/AIDS and strokes. Now as the head of California's Institute of Regenerative Medicine, he is responsible for a \$3 billion budget to fund research into cancer, osteoporosis, Huntington's disease, spinal cord injury and motor neurone disease. The research projects have already made promising inroads into diseases such as type 1 diabetes, brain tumours, spinal-cord damage, leukaemia, macular degeneration and heart disease, with some of that research about to go to clinical trials. Describing himself as a 'global scientist', Alan's aim is to connect the world's best scientists to not only work together but to work with health authorities and institutes across the world to make stem-cell research more effective globally.



## **NSW - FINALISTS - YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Ryley Batt, 23 – Paralympian**

Regarded as the world's best in his sport, Ryley Batt capped off a remarkable year of wheelchair rugby leading the Australian team to a Paralympics gold medal in London with a spectacular 37 goals. Born without legs, the 23 year old played his first competition game when he was 15 and hasn't looked back. In Athens he was the youngest ever wheelchair rugby Paralympian (15 years old) and at Beijing four years later competed in Australia's team winning a silver medal. In London he went one better with the team securing Australia's first Paralympics title in wheelchair rugby. Looking ahead he is aiming to be a member of Australia's side for Rio 2016. Described by his coach as a 'freak athlete – unbelievable at what he does', off the field Ryley is an inspirational role model for other young Australians. He regularly visits children in hospital who have suffered spinal injuries offering support, reassurance and hope. He also speaks at schools, motivating young people with his story which demonstrates that, despite facing enormous obstacles, it is possible to aim high and achieve.

### **Dr Genevieve Nelson, 30 – Kokoda campaigner**

Aged only 30, Genevieve Nelson has trekked the Kokoda Track an amazing 19 times reflecting her close connection to Papua New Guinea and demonstrating her commitment to improve the lives of local people through the Kokoda Track Foundation. The Foundation was established to recognise the selfless sacrifice of the 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels' of Papua New Guinea who risked their lives to help Australian troops in World War II. For their descendents, the Foundation is improving local education and health services and developing an eco-friendly trekking and tourism industry to create a sustainable income for 40 communities along the Kokoda Track. As the Foundation's executive director, Genevieve supervises a scholarship program supporting 350 children to go to school. She is also responsible for teacher and health worker training programs, school resources and an ambitious building program including the future construction of a college in Kokoda. As well, the Foundation has equipped women with basic business skills to set up businesses along the Track, generating income from the trekkers. Her overriding goal is to honour the story of Kokoda by supporting the next generation of young PNG leaders.

### **Tshibanda (Gracia) Ngoy, 28 – Writer and mentor**

A commerce and communications degree student at Wollongong University, Gracia Ngoy is also a caseworker for refugee families, a youth motivational speaker and a member of the Illawarra Regional Advisory Council and the NSW Multicultural Youth Network. Gracia, who speaks five languages, arrived in Australia with her family in 2005 after fleeing tribal conflict in the troubled Democratic Republic of Congo. After settling in Wollongong, she took up an offer of free homework tutoring, simultaneously signing up as a mentor for others. An accredited freelance journalist, Gracia recently published her first book entitled *A Little Recipe for Success* which aims to inspire young people to live successful, fulfilled and purposeful lives. She has also written numerous articles aimed at breaking down cultural barriers between her native Congo and Australia. Awarded the prestigious Australian Young People's Human Rights Medal, Gracia was also named 2010 Wollongong Young Citizen of the Year. Drawing on the wisdom of personal experience, Gracia is determined to help the 'many people living shattered lives who have been tied up by their past experiences and challenges.'

### **Corey Payne, 28 – Footballer and mentor**

Canterbury Bulldogs back rower Corey Payne is a champion athlete on the field and a remarkable role model away from the game. In 2010, he fulfilled his childhood ambition to play for the Canterbury Bulldogs but at the same time realised he needed something more to fall back on. Completing an undergraduate commerce degree, he now juggles his postgraduate studies with top level competition and training. Passionate about encouraging Western Sydney High School students to continue with tertiary education, Corey is on the board of the scholarship committee of Youth Off the Streets. He also established and runs the Future Directions Network to provide financial support, mentoring and careers advice for young people to go on to university. He says he is determined that the kids on the borderline, the children of parents who didn't go to uni and first generation Australians get every chance to continue their studies. In 2012 Corey was awarded a prestigious Churchill Fellowship to research culturally diverse programs that build ambition and aspiration in young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to inspire them to continue their academic studies. Corey will carry out his research in South Africa, Spain, Brazil and the UK.





## **NSW - FINALISTS - AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO**

### **Dr Stephen Flecknoe-Brown – Doctor**

In the far western NSW city of Broken Hill, Dr Stephen Flecknoe-Brown is highly respected for his medical and scientific knowledge and his holistic approach to medicine and life. Part of that holistic approach is evidenced in his avid support and belief in the health benefits of locally grown produce. Stephen helped establish the Broken Hill and Menindee olive oil project and its successful offshoot, Broken Hill Gourmet Products. His enthusiasm for the product has stimulated the planting and proliferation of olive trees around the town, putting the region on the map as a source of premium olive oil. He is a great advocate for the arts and also supports local rugby league to promote healthy living. Stephen is held in high regard by local Aboriginal communities who value his respect and understanding of their cultures. As Chairman of the Local Health District Board, he is a sought after teacher of young doctors and his enthusiasm for rural health has encouraged many of them to practice in rural Australia.

### **Sarah Garnett – Footpath librarian**

Sarah Garnett is the founder of the Benjamin Andrew Footpath Library named after a young friend. It all began nine years ago when Sarah was volunteering with a food van in Woolloomooloo and saw a homeless man reading a novel under a streetlight. She started bringing books for him to read, and before long was setting up books on the pavement for other homeless people. Over time it became the library with a board of six, 15 managers and scores of volunteers. Supported by donations from publishers and business, the library now hands out 2,500 new and second-hand books each month. It also supplies books to women's refuges, homeless hostels, community organisations and prisons. Convinced that homeless people need more than food and shelter, Sarah's wish is to have a Footpath Library in every capital city. Her passion for her cause and empathy for the disadvantaged has changed people's attitudes, creating tolerance and greater understanding. Sarah still finds time to return to the city every Tuesday night to talk and share tea and coffee with the Footpath Library patrons who are now old friends.

### **Dr Anita Heiss – Writer and educator**

Respected author, poet, academic and educator, Dr Anita Heiss is a passionate advocate for Indigenous literacy, Indigenous rights and reconciliation. In 2001, she became the first Aboriginal person to complete a doctorate at the University of Western Sydney and since then has held senior academic posts and recently published a new book, *Am I Black Enough for You*. Her vision is to educate Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians about the complexities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and cultures. A passionate advocate for books and literacy, she regularly runs workshops at schools around the country and has worked closely with the La Perouse community to create books to capture the imagination of all children – Indigenous and non-Indigenous. She believes that while it is important that children understand that we come from diverse nations within one nation, it is also important for them to know we are all human and share the same human emotions. An extraordinary role model, she has also long advocated for the inclusion of a compulsory Indigenous studies unit in the national curriculum.

### **Shane Phillips – Indigenous leader**

Advocate for Aboriginal rights, Shane Phillips is a respected member of the Redfern Aboriginal Community and is regarded as the voice of the community on issues including juvenile justice and Aboriginal deaths in custody. He is the fulltime CEO of the Tribal Warrior Association, a non-profit organisation directed by Aboriginal people and Elders that offers training for employment and helps at the grassroots level with emergency relief for struggling families. He also operates a mentoring program to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The concept is uncomplicated: it's about forming good habits, guiding by example, including everyone and acknowledging achievements. Shane is also credited with improving the relationship between his community and the police. Since the 2009 introduction of the *Clean Slate Without Prejudice* program run in collaboration with the police, the number of robberies committed by young Indigenous people has declined by 80 per cent. Born and raised in Redfern, Shane is an outstanding community leader, respected for his great integrity and capacity to work hard and get things done.



## **VICTORIAN FINALISTS - AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Victoria Anderson – Children’s advocate**

Since the age of 14, Tori Anderson has seen injustice and inequality as personal challenges that must be tackled and overcome. While still at university she joined the national youth leadership organisation Association Internationale des Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales (AISEC) and went on to found and become national president of AISEC in Pakistan. Confronted with oppression and poverty, Tori’s passion for the rights of women and children was ignited. This determination to drive change took her to Afghanistan to support gender diversity, to India where she developed micro-credit schemes for women and to Canada and the United States. Her experiences prompted her to establish Children United – a not for profit organisation that campaigns against the sexual exploitation of children. Moving to Bangkok, Tori began a global awareness campaign which included funding and producing the documentary *Corridors of Children* exposing the rampant child sex-trade industry operating across South East Asia. Now living in Melbourne, Tori continues to operate Children United and also supports families and children receiving treatment in hospital. At only 31 Tori upholds the rights of the most vulnerable and powerless.

### **Dr Ian Holten – Plastic surgeon**

Internationally recognised plastic surgeon Ian Holten devotes his professional skills to transforming the lives of those who would otherwise continue to endure terrible injury and disability. As well as developing innovative surgical techniques he helped establish a plastic surgery program, Interplast, which provides free reconstructive surgery for patients who would otherwise not be able to afford access to such services. For nearly 30 years, Interplast has worked in 25 countries and implemented over 500 surgical and allied health medical program activities across the Asia Pacific region. It has supported over 70 surgeons and nurses to continue part of their training in Australia, sent over 600 volunteers on medical programs, provided over 32,000 consultations and performed over 21,000 life-changing operations. Every year Ian and his colleagues travel to developing countries including the Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, China and Vietnam for three months to operate on local people and train local doctors. With a secure, ongoing funding base, Interplast now has the capacity to fund the travel and equipment needed by Ian and his team for their life-changing work.

### **Harold Mitchell AC – Businessman and philanthropist**

Businessman and philanthropist Harold Mitchell has used his wealth to support many causes close to his heart. The founder of Mitchell & Partners and Executive Chairman of Aegis Media Australia and New Zealand, has seen his company evolve into Australia’s largest media and communications group, with a growing presence in New Zealand and beyond. Harold was not born into money and is no stranger to life’s challenges, overcoming alcoholism and obesity. Since 2000, his Foundation has distributed more than \$7 million to projects related to health and the arts. He is a past Chairman of the National Gallery Australia, past President of the Melbourne International Festival of Arts, and a former Board Member of the Opera Australia Council. Harold’s current Chairmanships include CARE Australia, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, ThoroughVision, the Melbourne Rebels, Art Exhibitions Australia and the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health. He is also Non-Executive Director of Crown Limited, Board Member of New York Philharmonic and Vice President of Tennis Australia. His philanthropy also extends to providing considerable humanitarian aid in Timor-Leste and Indigenous communities.

### **Dr Ahmad Sarmast – Musician for peace**

Dr Ahmad Sarmast, a musician and refugee who fled civil war in Afghanistan to come to Australia, uses music as a unifying force to break down social, political, religious and ethnic barriers in his war-torn homeland. Against the odds and showing tremendous courage, Ahmad has established a national institute of music in Kabul to promote peace and build democracy. Every day he encounters the physical dangers of working in a conflict zone, including being trapped by crossfire, as well as entrenched prejudice. Understanding that the establishment of a civil society in Afghanistan is essential for democracy, Ahmad’s music school empowers Afghan children, regardless of class, ethnicity or gender, through education, literacy and the music itself. It also nurtures inter-cultural connections between Afghan musicians and students and their counterparts in Australia and around the world. A former asylum seeker speaking no English, Ahmad is now an Australian citizen and a potent advocate for peace and human rights. His work through the institute of music makes a significant contribution to Australia’s commitment to peace and democracy in Afghanistan.



## **VICTORIAN - FINALISTS - SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Graham Atkinson – Land justice activist**

Aboriginal elder and passionate activist for his people, Graham Atkinson was the driving force behind groundbreaking legislation aimed at streamlining the process for settlement of native title claims in Victoria. As co-chair of the Victorian Traditional Owner Land Justice Group, Graham spent four years brokering agreement between Traditional Owners and the state government on the new legislation. The historic Act means Traditional Owner groups, if they choose, can now negotiate directly with the state government, bypassing the Commonwealth and significantly reducing costs. It is regarded as leading the nation in its collaborative and consultative approach to settling native title claims in a fair and just way. Graham describes it as a genuinely collaborative approach that helps to address past unfinished business. With the new Act in place, he is currently negotiating with the government for formal recognition and enhanced rights for around 2,500 Traditional Owners of land in Central Victoria. He views the legislation as paving the way for Aboriginal Australians to maintain their spiritual connections to their land at the same time preserving the nation's cultural heritage.

### **Dorothy Hamilton – Music teacher**

Blind since birth 86 years ago, Dorothy Hamilton has brought the wonderful gift of music to hundreds of blind students teaching them to read and write Braille music. She is a gifted music transcriber whose labour of love for the past 35 years has been to translate printed music into Braille. As technology advanced, Dorothy developed her own sound recognition program to enable blind music transcribers to use computers for Braille music notation. She also contributed to the international revision of the Braille music code. Mother of four and grandmother of seven, Dorothy was the first blind woman in the southern hemisphere to graduate with a Bachelor of Music degree. She was the first blind teacher to teach in a sighted school and is an ongoing force in developing the skills of music teachers to help blind children learn the Braille music code. She has also trained two young blind musicians to carry on her work. Not that she has any intention to slow down or relinquish her role as teacher, transcriber and champion of blind musicians any time soon.

### **Marilyn King – Employment activist**

When her husband Howard lost his job through a company re-structure, Marilyn King realised there were hundreds like him – skilled people in their fifties and sixties who wanted to work but couldn't find a job. To support them she established W.O.W! (Willing Older Workers Incorporated) and is now a passionate advocate and activist for mature aged unemployed people in her local area. She runs a weekly free food program to help ease the strain on their budgets, negotiates on their behalf with government agencies, banks and finance companies and organises social events. Recently she successfully lobbied the Federal Government to increase assistance to help older unemployed people find a job. Marilyn understands that many people over 50 struggle with the whole process of looking for work and find the going tough both financially and emotionally. She is always ready with a positive ear and advice in support of unemployed older people, especially the all too common knockbacks and disappointments. Many say that thanks to Marilyn and W.O.W! they feel less isolated and alone.

### **Emeritus Professor T John Martin AO – Medical scientist**

Professor Jack Martin is one of Australia's most esteemed medical scientists and the founder of skeletal research in Australia. Possibly his greatest contribution has been advancing the understanding of calcium regulating hormones and the development of modern concepts of bone cell biology. His research has had a major impact on the understanding and treatment of diseases including osteoporosis and bone tumours and the spread of cancers to the bone. Formerly Director of St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research Jack continues to work in medical research and mentors a new generation of scientists. In an intellectually challenging field he is seen in Australia and around the world as a current leader in the area of bone disease and cancer who continues to give his time and expertise to inspire others with his love of science. Compassionate, generous and with a rigorously inquiring mind Jack continues to make a positive contribution to science by inspiring younger researchers and scientists to fulfil their potential and imbuing them with a sense of purpose and integrity.



## **VICTORIAN - FINALISTS - YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Hayley Bolding, 30 – Anti-poverty campaigner**

Hayley Bolding was just 23 and working as an intern with a non-profit organisation in the Indian city of Mumbai, when she saw an urgent need for capacity building across similar organisations. She founded Atma – which means ‘soul in Hindi’ – to support local groups in their efforts to give children a better chance at life through education. Her work began in a local café where Hayley worked on her laptop, raising funds and establishing partnerships. Since then the foundation’s work has supported thousands of children and young adults through school, health and nutrition programs, education programs for night school students, and a kindergarten and skills centre in Dharavi – the city’s biggest slum. Hayley’s business acumen has expanded Atma which has partnered with 15 organisations that impact the lives of over 11,000 students. With Atma’s support, one such one partner organisation, Mukangan, grew from operating one school to seven. Six years on, Hayley is a well-respected leader in her field in India, while also working tirelessly to mentor others and, at the same time, raise awareness in Australia.

### **Simon Griffiths, 30 – Social philanthropist**

Economist and engineer Simon Griffiths turned down a lucrative corporate job to pursue a new breed of social business which he calls ‘consumer driven philanthropy’. It involves offering consumers the choice of buying goods where the profits are used to improve the lives of people in the developing world. His innovative approach effectively gives consumers the opportunity to put their money where their mouth is. For example his *Who Gives a Crap* venture sells environmentally friendly toilet paper with half the proceeds going to sanitation projects overseas. Simon is now working towards opening a not for profit bar in the Melbourne CBD offering exotic beer and wine sourced from the developing world with profits funding development projects in the particular drink’s country of origin. He uses mainstream and social media to ramp up his campaigns and has enlisted several high profile partners to help him market his products and communicate his philosophy. Simon believes that by offering ethical alternatives to the way Australians traditionally consume, carry out business and engage in charity and philanthropy, they can be enticed to change their buying habits.

### **Kumari Middleton, 27 – Youth campaigner**

Born in Sri Lanka and adopted by an Australian family as a small child, Kumari Middleton understands how important it is to feel welcome, valued and included. Kumari’s original career path was headed towards professional dance but when she contracted Legionnaire’s disease in 2007 that dream was over. Undaunted she co-founded Mayibuye, an organisation which uses performing arts to facilitate educational opportunities for young people who are vulnerable to negative peer pressures and at risk behaviour. Mayibuye runs 20 projects across South Africa, Cambodia and Australia including afterschool programs, youth camps, school workshops, international volunteering tours, holiday programs and conferences. Kumari recently co-founded another organisation Vicdor Living Centres to support people recovering from alcohol and drug abuse. She sits on Women with Disabilities Victoria’s Board of Directors and the Young Social Pioneers Advisory Board. As a lead tenant for the Melbourne City Mission, Kumari lives with vulnerable young people who are moving from care to independent living. To these young people and to everyone who knows her, Kumari is a dedicated mentor and outstanding role model.

### **Dr Linny Phuong, 30 – Community doctor**

As a young doctor training to be a paediatrician, Dr Linny Phuong saw a need for culturally appropriate, health information for refugees and new migrants. She knew that in traditional communities when people collected water at rivers, water pumps and wells, that’s where they would take the time to talk. So adapting that model, Linny set up her Water Well project – a community health program where people could meet and talk informally. Working with other young doctors, the Brotherhood of St Laurence and community groups, Linny’s Water Well hosts interactive health information sessions in places where new arrivals would feel secure and welcome. The sessions are informal and relaxed with the emphasis on supporting people to take responsibility for their own health and the health of their families. The benefits are two-fold. Migrant and refugee communities have improved access to health education and young doctors gain a better understanding of the needs of culturally diverse communities. As well as her voluntary work, Linny is a Neonatal Registrar at the Royal Women’s Hospital and is completing a Masters in Public Health and a Diploma in Child Health.





## **VICTORIAN - FINALISTS - AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO**

### **Pam Adams – Community volunteer**

Pam Adams volunteers eight hours a day, five days a week at the Albury Wodonga Foodshare Centre. The Centre collects food from local supermarkets and producers before sorting and distributing to emergency relief agencies. Pam coordinates the volunteers and supervises the sorting, repackaging and storage and then spends her evenings making preserves, jams and sauces so that nothing is wasted. Not one to let a plot of land lie idle, she has started a community vegetable garden in the grounds of St Stephens Uniting Church which now spills on to the nature strip. As well, Pam is a convenor with the Red Cross Telecross service which each week involves talking to elderly people who live around the district from Talangatta to Tocumwal. After 12 years with the service, Pam still looks forward to these conversations, knowing she is helping people maintain their independence and continue to live in their own homes. Pam's dedication is well known and, in talking about her, a colleague claims that 'everybody needs a Pam.' After 33 years of loyal service to her community Pam Adams keeps giving cheerfully and unassumingly.

### **Christine Reade – Community volunteer**

Chris Reade started the Lasting Memories Mosaic group after the Black Saturday bushfires had torn through the small Victorian community of St Andrews on 7 February 2009. From the terrible loss of life and the wreckage of devastated homes, she has established a place where women can gather to create something beautiful from the broken and burnt remnants of cherished possessions. One woman who had lost everything described how Chris helped her create a mosaic using pieces of broken china from her husband's great aunt and her wedding china. Now, she says, she has something to pass down to her own children. After completing their individual mosaics, the group created a mosaic for the community that tells their story of Black Saturday and celebrates the strength and resilience of people and nature. Even as they strive to rebuild their lives the 'mosaic ladies' continue to meet and are planning other community projects. They are inspired by Chris's generosity and kindness and say she embodies the true Australian spirit of fair go – 'someone who was a complete stranger who lifted us up when we had been knocked down.'

### **Dr Rita Seethaler – Musician**

After Dr Rita Seethaler lived through the Black Saturday bushfires she witnessed a devastated community 'in a pitch black pit'. She wanted to help and her response was certainly unorthodox. A long-time performer of Caribbean tin drum music, she believed the drums could bring people together. She began by offering Trinidadian steel band workshops to communities around Marysville. They were so popular and therapeutic that the band, Pans on Fire, was formed. Soon after two more bands emerged – a band for beginners called Hot Pans – and Jammin, a band for mums and kids. Rita, who played in steel bands across Switzerland for 20 years, now runs the bands voluntarily and makes most of the instruments for the group using 44-gallon drums. Each week the band members practice in her garage playing everything from Caribbean music to pop and classics. They are now in constant demand and play all around Victoria. Rita is elated that in a small way the music they make is helping to ease the hurt of the fires.

### **Andrew Taylor – Scout leader**

Andrew Taylor has been involved in leadership roles in the Scouting movement for more than 40 years including six years as District Commissioner. After moving to Fitzroy three years ago, he established the 1<sup>st</sup> Fitzroy Scout Group, with a youth-based leadership group, after consulting with schools, police and other local organisations. Drawing on his four decades with Scouts Australia Andrew encourages the local Scouts to dream big, establishing strong links across the local community. Andrew has also directed and produced Camberwell Showtime for nearly 30 years. This annual theatrical production, written, produced and performed by Scouts and Guides is the largest youth and performing arts activity in the City of Boroondara. Andrew says that scouting teaches important life skills and values and believes that by nurturing a sense of independence and purpose in young people, their lives can be improved immeasurably. Over the years he has mentored and supported more than 2,000 young people and has fostered a number of teenagers. Those who know him say his dedication has set many young people on a better path in life.





## **QLD - FINALISTS - AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Lisa Gasteen AO – Opera singer**

Lisa Gasteen is renowned for the glorious dramatic-soprano roles that have seen her perform at the Royal Opera House in London, the Vienna State Opera and the Metropolitan in New York as well as in Australia. But after an accident interrupted her stellar career four years ago, she has used the enforced sabbatical to channel the tenacity that saw her reach international heights into working with young singers. Professor of Opera at the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, Lisa runs the Lisa Gasteen National Opera School in Brisbane providing aspiring professional singers with a bridge between their formal studies and the opera stage. As the only Australian ever to win the Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, Lisa is admired not only for her wonderful voice and exemplary diction but also for her integrity as a performer and colleague. She is making a return to the stage appearing with the Queensland Conservatorium, the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and the Brisbane Festival.

### **Professor Adèle Green AC – Cancer researcher**

Professor Adèle Green has been at the frontline of melanoma research for 20 years, long enough to see students she has inspired and mentored join the campaign against the disease which is diagnosed in 9,000 Australians every year. As head of cancer and population studies at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, Adèle's research focuses on assessing the impact of environmental factors in the cause and prognosis of melanoma as well as the effect of genes on the development of melanoma. Her research establishing that daily sunscreen use can halve the risk of melanoma set the benchmark for prevention. More recently she was lead author on a study of more than 26,000 Queenslanders diagnosed early with thin melanomas which revealed a heartening 20-year survival rate for 96 per cent of patients. The study received international acclaim and has been described as a blueprint for assessing thin melanomas with a risk of metastatic disease. A brilliant mentor, Adèle has also been recognised for her contribution to public health including Indigenous health and her leadership in the wider scientific community.

### **Anna Meares OAM – Olympic cyclist**

Anna Meares became a household name when she won the gold medal in the 500m time trial and the bronze in the sprint at her first Olympics appearance in Athens in 2004. But it was her remarkable return to the track after she broke her neck in a race crash that captured the imagination and the hearts of a nation. Just seven months after the severe injury threatened to end her career, Anna won silver at her second Olympic appearance in Beijing in the sprint. In the 2012 London Olympics Anna scored arguably the biggest win of her career when she outrode great rival Victoria Pendleton in the women's sprint final to win the gold medal. It has been a remarkable ride for Anna who started competitive cycling at the age of 11 in the small Queensland mining town of Middlemount. As well as excelling on the track, she is also an inspiration to those who find themselves battling adversity. She speaks openly about her struggle to regain the physical capabilities required to ride at the pinnacle of her sport.

### **Graeme Wood – Conservationist and philanthropist**

Graeme Wood created the concept for, and co-founded, Wotif.com revolutionising the travel industry in Australia. The Global Mail's sole founding philanthropist, Graeme is heavily involved in a range of philanthropic endeavours in the arts, the environment, youth development and medical science. A passionate environmentalist, in 2008 he founded Wild Mob, a not-for-profit, non-political environmental charity. Wild Mob provides student volunteers with the opportunity to undertake scientist-led conservation projects in spectacular wilderness destinations. Graeme's donation helped establish the Global Change Institute at the University of Queensland, which tackles some of the world's toughest challenges, including population growth, climate change and resource depletion. Equally passionate about the transformative power of the arts, Graeme founded the not-for-profit Artolgy. Its flagship program, WotOpera, enables high school students to work with industry professionals to create their own mini-operas. The program unlocks the teenagers' innate creativity, boosts their school performance, and builds pathways to higher education. Describing himself as a working class kid from Rockhampton, Graeme has also given \$6 million to the University of Queensland to fund research into teenage drug and alcohol abuse.



## **QLD - FINALISTS - SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **John Curro AM MBE – Musical maestro**

John Curro is both the founder and Director of Music for Queensland Youth Orchestras. Since its inception in 1966, he has conducted the Queensland Youth Symphony. Under his continuing artistic leadership it is regarded as one of the top youth orchestras in Australia and has toured internationally for several decades. Today the Queensland Youth Orchestras consists of three symphony orchestras, two concert bands, a junior string orchestra, a chamber orchestra and a big band comprising more than 500 musicians who perform more than 60 concerts throughout Queensland each year. Its enduring success and the quality of its students is due in large part to John's skills as a musician, leader and entrepreneur and his personal philanthropy. He has also conducted Australia's leading professional orchestras as well as many opera and ballet seasons in Australia. His guest conducting appearances include the London Virtuosi, the Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra, the Australian and Bavarian Youth Orchestra and the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra. Now in his eighth decade, John's commitment to young musicians who he teaches and mentors remains undiminished.

### **Aunty Joan Hendriks – Reconciliation advocate**

Aunty Joan Hendriks, a descendant of the Ngugi people of Moreton Bay Queensland, is an inspiring community leader, an outstanding adult educator and passionate advocate for reconciliation achieved through the understanding of cultural differences. She believes sharing cultures, spiritualities and ways of living with the land can be the stepping stones to a united Australia where justice and equity prevails. Since the 1980s she has worked in Aboriginal education in primary and secondary schools, local church and community organisations, in government and internationally at the United Nations Indigenous Peoples Forum. A former student at Brisbane's Lourdes Hill College where she is now honoured as Elder in Residence, Aunty Joan was awarded the Australian Catholic University's highest honour, Doctor of the University in 2012. She is also an Elder in the Murri Court at Cleveland where her wisdom and experience contributes to a greater cultural understanding. A consistent advocate for the rights of Indigenous people, Aunty Joan was actively involved in the campaign which saw traditional owners win native title recognition over their lands on North Stradbroke Island.

### **Laurie Lawrence – Swimming coach**

Swimming coach Laurie Lawrence is known nationally for his spirited personality, his zest for life and for coaching champions but arguably his greatest achievement is reducing the risk of small children drowning. His passion for baby swimming began with the birth of his first daughter Jane in 1975. In 1988, troubled by the fact that drowning is the most common cause of death in children under five, Laurie created the *Kids Alive - Do the Five* water safety program to reduce the risk of preschool drowning. Starting with the smallest babies, Laurie's widely acclaimed program teaches children the skills to save themselves from drowning. Aiming to reduce child drowning rates to zero, Laurie demonstrates the same conviction that saw him coach the Australian Olympic swimming team at Los Angeles in 1984, Seoul in 1988 and Barcelona in 1992. His best known protégés include Steve Holland, Tracey Wickham, Jon Sieben and Duncan Armstrong. His Olympic coaching achievements include 10 gold, 11 silver and 12 bronze medals from swimmers he has directly assisted. Swimmers he has coached boast 23 world records.

### **Paul Stanley – Anti-violence campaigner**

In 2006 Paul Stanley's son Matthew was a popular 15-year-old when he was killed by a single punch at a party in suburban Brisbane. Despite their terrible grief, Paul and his wife Kay established the Matthew Stanley Foundation to make young people aware of the dangers of youth violence and equipping them to deal with it. The Foundation works with the police and ambulance services, schools, churches and community to groups to spread the message about violence which include the *Party Safe* initiative and the *One Punch Can Kill* campaign. Police cars and ambulances vehicles now carry the stickers urging young people in potentially violent situations to Walk Away Chill Out. In the years since Matthew's death Paul has spoken to thousands of students using his own tragic loss to emphasise that bad things can happen to good people and that one punch can kill. He also mentors young leaders and has released a documentary telling Matthew's story called *One Punch Did Kill*. Paul's philosophy is if one life is saved it is all worthwhile.



## **QLD - FINALISTS - YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Nicole Buttner, 23 – Humanitarian**

Nicole Buttner is a medical student at Townsville's James Cook University whose post-graduate plan is to alleviate the impact of poverty in developing countries. Already she is changing lives in Africa, having volunteered at a hospital and school in Ghana after leaving school. In a country where more than nine million people do not have access to safe drinking water, Nicole established *Water for Ghana*. The organisation trains local people to build tanks. These tank builders are hired by villages to construct much-needed water storage with *Water for Ghana* covering the costs of materials. Many of the trainees make tank-building their trade, creating a stable income for their families while providing villages and schools with safe, clean water. *Water for Ghana* has now provided more than 20 rainwater tanks to rural villages and schools across Ghana. Nicole is driven by the principle that it is only through empowering people to make change that real progress can be achieved. Closer to home, Nicole also works as a boarding supervisor at the Cathedral School, supervising and mentoring more than 80 students.

### **Joshua Lang, 17 – Gift giver**

Every Christmas Eve since the age of three, 17 year old Josh Lang returns to the hospital where he was born delivering presents and hampers to the parents of premature babies being cared for in the Special Care Nursery. His connection with Logan Hospital stems from his own premature birth at 28 weeks when, weighing just 1,420 grams and only 40 centimetres long, he was given only a 30 per cent chance of survival. But thanks to the specialist care at the newly opened Special Care Nursery, Josh defied the odds and has thrived and grown into a young man determined to give back to the hospital and the people who cared for him. Understanding the worry and strain that parents of premature babies endure, he delivers his Christmas gifts as a symbol of hope and survival. He wants them to know there is a light at the end of the tunnel. With his Christmas Eve tradition now firmly established in the Logan area, Josh also receives donations of gifts from local businesses and clubs to boost his Christmas hampers.

### **Sally Pearson, 26 – Olympic champion**

Olympic champion Sally Pearson was a promising young athlete of 14 when she saw Cathy Freeman storm home to win gold at the Sydney Olympics. At that moment her dream of gold was born and in 2012 it came true when she held off the opposition to win gold in the women's 100 metres hurdles at the London Olympics. She had previously won the 2010 Commonwealth Games gold medal in the 100 metres hurdles and again at the World Championships and the World Indoor Championships in 2011. Coming into the London Olympics she had won 32 of her past 34 races and carried the added weight of Australia's expectations. In a race that was anticipated almost as much as Freeman's race 12 years earlier, those expectations were fulfilled before a crowd of 80,000 when she edged out America's defending Olympic champion Dawn Harper. Two hundredths of a second separated them with Sally clocking 12.35 seconds to break the Olympic record. In 2011 Sally was named Female Athlete of the Year by the International Association of Athletics Federations – the first Australian to receive the award.

### **Charles Thomas, 21 – Anti-bullying campaigner**

Charles Thomas' indie-rock band The Medics is riding a wave of popularity but away from their convention-defying tunes and energetic performances, Charles took time out to cycle through North Queensland to raise awareness about the crippling impact of bullying. Bullying is now estimated to affect as many as three in 10 high school students and Charles aimed to help equip young people to counter it by encouraging them to build their confidence, self image and well-being. In a trip dubbed *Called To the North*, bass player Charles cycled 400 kilometres from Townsville to Cairns calling in at schools along the way to spread the anti-bullying message. The self-effacing member of The Medics – who recently completed a sell-out headline tour and released their first album – Charles explains that while he may not be the 'coolest dude in the world every kid needs a role model and I am passionate for change'. He wants to see an end to bullying in schools so students can realise their potential as the next generation of leaders.



## **QLD - FINALISTS - AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO**

### **Sergeant Dimitrios Bellos – Community champion**

Sergeant Jim Bellos is the Queensland Police Service's cross-cultural liaison officer for southern Brisbane, an area home to 200 communities speaking 150 languages and practising more than 130 religions. Over the years, Jim has built a relationship of trust, respect and understanding between these communities and the police. With endless energy and enthusiasm he establishes community consultative groups, organises multi-faith dinners, supports people through personal and family tragedy and best known of all, runs the *For the Love of the Game* program. Through the shared enjoyment of sport, particularly soccer, the program brings together more than 8,000 young people from diverse backgrounds and is a real catalyst in breaking down barriers, and has resulted in a substantial decline in youth crime. When the 2011 floods devastated a local sporting store Jim returned from holidays and gathered together 400 volunteers to clean up. On call 24 hours a day, seven days a week Jim's voluntary work extends far beyond his core work responsibilities.

### **Elizabeth Handley – Teacher**

As a special education teacher in the isolated western Queensland town of Charleville, 24 year old Elizabeth (Biz) Handley is accustomed to a challenge. After floods destroyed her home and the special education centre at the Charleville State School, she carried on undeterred driving a range of programs to help the children get the best start in life through education. She established the *Top Up Breakfast* program to provide the students with healthy breakfasts and the *Perceptual Motor Program* designed to help them better concentrate on their studies. She is also developing a careers education program to assist students in making the best career choices. Biz works hard to ensure children with a disability are included in sporting activities, including competing in the annual Disability Games. An energetic fundraiser and a tireless supporter of the Charleville Show, she is working to establish a community garden. To improve her skills with children with disability, Biz has applied to study a Graduate Degree in Autism Studies. Parents describe her as an extraordinary young woman with endless patience and empathy.

### **Clinton Stanley – Swimming champion**

Clinton Stanley juggles his swimming training for the Down Syndrome World Swimming Champions with his job at a local soft drink manufacturer and his voluntary lifeguard role at the Noosa Aquatic Centre. As world champion across a range of events including his favourite event the 1500 metres freestyle, Clinton is both an exceptional athlete and an outstanding ambassador for Down Syndrome swimmers. Nicknamed the 'super fish' from Cooroy, Clinton is described by his coach as a truly professional and dedicated competitor, Clinton's infectious enthusiasm has inspired many other athletes from Masters competitors, to tri-athletes and casual swimmers at the Noosa Aquatic Centre. He is also a qualified volunteer patrol member with the Sunshine Beach Surf Life Saving Club and considered a great asset to the Club. To his employer of 16 years, Clinton is an outstanding employee doing everything that's asked of him with joy, determination and commitment. His colleagues take enormous pride every time Clinton competes and wins gold for Australia. Clinton's optimistic will to succeed makes him not only a role model for others with Down Syndrome, but for all Australians.

### **Scott Stidston OAM – Disability campaigner**

Scott Stidston has never allowed the motorcycle injury that left him a quadriplegic to stop him contributing to his community and campaigning for people with a disability. Determined to improve the quality of life of people with a disability in the Townsville and Burdekin regions, Scott has been a stalwart of the Spinal Injuries Association for many years. A tireless advocate, he has told his story to thousands of school children, sharing simple but effective injury prevention messages to help them stay safe. His advocacy has increased spinal injury awareness and has seen significant improvements in infrastructure and services including the installation of upper torso restraints on all Virgin domestic flights. He lobbied for many years for an acute spinal injury unit at Townsville Hospital, was a founding member of the Burdekin Disability Advisory group and has worked with councils and local businesses to improve access and transport for people with disability. As well as achieving practical benefits, Scott is an inspiration and an example to all Australians of the power of the human spirit to overcome even the most challenging obstacles.





## **WA FINALISTS - AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Dr David Joske – Haematologist**

Dr David Joske has been Head of Haematology at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital (SCGH) since 1994. His clinical and research interests include the treatment of lymphomas, palliative care in haematology, and supportive care in cancer. In 2001, he launched the community-based healthcare organisation SolarisCare Foundation (originally the Peters & Brownes Cancer Support Centre) and is currently its Chairman. The Foundation has administered over 35,000 complementary therapy treatments offering support, information, education and complementary therapies to cancer patients and their carers. Each year the Foundation treats 7,000 Western Australians with cancer in Perth and regional WA. Dr Joske has held two National Health and Medical Research Council grants, one examining models of palliative care in haematology and a randomised controlled trial of his own shared cancer models. He is the University of Western Australia's Clinical Professor of Medicine and was awarded the John Curtin medal in 2005. Away from the hospital he plays guitar in a blues band and in 1999 won a WA music industry award for his song writing.

### **Professor Kim Scott – Writer**

Kim Scott is one of Australia's greatest writers. A member of the Noongar community, Kim's novels, poetry and short stories have positioned Noongar culture before the wider Australian and international communities. In 1999, he won Australia's most prestigious literary award, the Miles Franklin, for his novel *Benang: From the Heart* – the first Indigenous writer to take out the award. He again won the Miles Franklin in 2011 for *That Deadman Dance*. In 2012 Kim was awarded his PhD with distinction from the University of Western Australia. He was also presented with the Indigenous award. Kim is deeply involved in language recovery projects helping to return oral histories and archival language material to their home communities. In particular, he is involved with the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories initiative, revitalising traditional stories from the community. As a Professor of Writing at Curtin University, Kim willingly shares his skills, experience and gift for writing with students, staff and outlying communities. Kim also mentors Indigenous students at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University..

### **Professor Kadambot Siddique AM FTSE– Scientist and mentor**

Professor Kadambot Siddique is an outstanding agricultural scientist and academic whose mission is to feed the world through improved yields and crop management. Director of the Institute of Agriculture at the University of Western Australia (UWA), he is regarded worldwide as a leader in crop science and agriculture. Since migrating to Australia in 1981 he has made an outstanding contribution to Australian and international agriculture. He has led innovative research in production agronomy, crop physiology, germplasm development and breeding of grain legumes (pulses) and cereal crops of benefit to the grains industry in Australia and overseas. Through his efforts, the Life Sciences research team at UWA is among the top 30 university research teams in the world – a unique distinction for Australia. He promotes international collaboration by providing an extensive network of research connections to help farmers improve the quality and output of their crops. Throughout his distinguished career, Kadambot has mentored and supervised many PhD, Masters' and Honours' students. Kadambot is an inspiration to his colleagues and students at the UWA, and the wider Australian academic community.

### **Kerry Stokes AC – Entrepreneur and philanthropist**

One of Australia's leading business identities, Kerry Stokes is the Chairman of Seven West Media, which includes the Seven TV network and The West Australian newspaper. He is Chairman of Seven Group Holdings which includes WesTrac, one of the world's biggest Caterpillar dealerships across Western Australia, NSW and North-East China. He also has interests in a diverse range of Australian and international enterprises including mining, property and construction. Born in Melbourne, he moved to Perth and in the 1960s and 1970s became involved in WA property development. He made his first foray into the media with the regional television network Golden West based in Bunbury. Over time he acquired more television stations before taking a significant stake in the Seven Network in 1995. Kerry has been pre-eminent in preserving ownership of Australia's military heritage including the purchase of several Victoria Cross medals which he donated to the Australian War Memorial. Kerry's many board memberships include the International Council for Museum & Television and the Council for the Australian War Memorial. He has received multiple awards for his philanthropy including the 2011 Charles Court Inspiring Leadership Award.





## **WA - FINALISTS - SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Beverley and John Lowe OAM – Community welfare leaders**

Beverley and John Lowe's community work began in earnest in the 1980s after they moved to Perth with their young family to be closer to services for their hearing-impaired child. They soon became involved in the disability sector and helped set up a deaf signing choir. In 1996, Beverley and John started cooking meals for homeless people but there was far more they wanted to do. Using their retirement savings, Beverly and John established a voluntary charity organisation called Manna Industries, with the aim of alleviating poverty. In 2001, Manna Industries diversified, delivering school breakfast programs as well as a winter school uniform program which now supplies over 3,000 uniforms to students in 28 schools. Today Manna provides nutritious meals for 140 people, six days a week and also prepares meals for students and their families at Maddington Primary School. Many of the 155 students at Maddington Primary are newly arrived refugees who speak little or no English. Known for their determination to make a difference, Beverley and John continue to make a remarkable contribution to community welfare leadership.

### **Anne Moore – Anti-violence campaigner**

For more than two decades Anne Moore has worked to protect women and children in Rockingham who are escaping domestic violence. As executive officer of the Lucy Saw Centre she offers a safe haven for more than 1,500 women and children a year. Working up to 12 hours a day, Anne is always on call for the women who need help and protection. They include girls as young as 16 and elderly women from across diverse cultures. In addition to offering temporary shelter, the Centre provides practical support with clothing, blankets, transport, court assistance and emergency relief. The Centre also offers a Safe at Home program to enable victims of domestic violence to stay in their homes. In her role as chair of the WA Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services Anne continues to press for reform including a trial of electronic monitoring of people on violence restraining orders. Anne believes the only sustainable solution to domestic violence is through early intervention, education and community action. She's convinced that stopping entrenched violent behaviour demands community driven leadership.

### **Professor Jennifer Searcy – Teacher**

Inspired by her love of mathematics and science, Professor Jennifer Searcy has spent most of her life cultivating in young people the passion to study mathematics, physics and chemistry. As a full time teacher, Jennifer volunteered many extra hours a week at home to inspire children to fulfil their ambitions until, in the mid-1980s, she became a full-time volunteer. Jennifer focuses on children and young people aged 10 to 17, including the less advantaged. Concerned that fewer children were studying mathematics and science, Jennifer designed, wrote, and established an ongoing program of after-school and holiday tuition at Murdoch University. Appointed an adjunct professor, in 2001 Murdoch University awarded Jennifer a Senate Medal for excellence beyond the call of duty and to recognise Jennifer's voluntary service for over half the lifetime of the University. A Vice-Chancellor's citation for excellence came six years later. In 2004, she was admitted to the rank of Fellow by Australian College of Educators. Jennifer has also sponsored numerous academic awards for outstanding secondary and tertiary students.

### **Lorraine and Barry Young – Meningococcal campaigners**

Lorraine and Barry Young have dedicated the past 15 years raising awareness of, and finding an effective treatment for, the deadly meningococcal septicaemia bacteria. Tragically, in 1997 the disease took the life of their only child, 18 year old Amanda, just 24 hours after she started showing symptoms of the disease. Lorraine and Barry decided to establish the Amanda Young Foundation, which has created Australia-wide community education programs about meningococcal disease and funded medical research into the development of vaccines to target the elusive meningococcal B. In 2011, the Foundation reached thousands of families through an education campaign in more than 150 child care centres in WA. Fundraising by Lorraine and Barry and dozens of volunteers allows the Foundation to support survivors of the disease and their carers in the most practical ways. Funding is provided for special computer and bedding equipment, for education, specialist counselling and advanced prosthetic limbs. In addition, the Foundation helps to fund the development of young people into Western Australia's future leaders through scholarships, bursaries, workshops and camps.



## **WA - FINALISTS - YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Akram Azimi, 25 – Mentor**

Akram Azimi is a dedicated mentor to young Indigenous people. Arriving in Australia 13 years ago from Afghanistan he went from being 'an ostracised refugee kid with no prospects' to becoming his school's head boy. An outstanding student, he topped the tertiary entrance exam scores among his classmates. He's now studying a triple major – law, science and arts – at the University of Western Australia. Intent on giving back to his adopted country, Akram uses his leadership and pastoral skills to help young people in remote and rural Western Australia. In 2011 he co-founded a student-run initiative *I am the other* set up to raise awareness about Indigenous issues in universities. His philanthropic roles have included working with True Blue Dreaming, which helps disadvantaged remote Indigenous communities. For three years, Akram mentored young Indigenous people in the Looma community in the Kimberley region, and he has mentored primary school students in the small farming community of Wyalkatchem, in WA's wheat belt. Akram is also mentoring a Special Olympics athlete to help raise community awareness of disability issues.

### **Holly Ransom, 22 – Social entrepreneur**

Holly Ransom is a dynamic social entrepreneur with passion for, and a track record of, driving innovative change in both the corporate and not-for-profit arena. A full-time economics-law student, Holly Ransom runs a public speaking consultancy and a company set up to develop leadership skills in young people. She is a University of Western Australia International Excellence Ambassador and serves as non-executive director of a number of not for profit organisations. In 2009, Holly launched 'Women Who Lead', an initiative that links women with inspirational female role models and mentors. Within a year, she was chair of Young United Nations Women in Perth, in which she oversaw 22 events around the country. In 2011, Holly was one of three guest speakers invited to address the Governor-General's International Women's Day 100th anniversary celebrations in Canberra. The same year, Holly travelled to Kenya where she worked on a micro-financing project to train 22 Kenyan women to run their own businesses. In July 2012, Holly became the world's youngest President of a Rotary Club as President of Western Australia's biggest club, Crawley.

### **Lachlan Ritchie, 26 –Social change leader**

Lachlan Ritchie has taken his passion for cycling and transformed it into a vehicle for social change by helping young people overcome adversity. Lachlan leads a young team at Dismantle, a community bicycle workshop that he established in Fremantle to empower and engage disadvantaged young people. At-risk and disengaged young people are trained by Dismantle to repair the old bikes for re-use. The program encourages participants to engage positively in the community, teaches tangible employment skills and promotes healthy lifestyle choices. Lachlan has secured private and corporate sponsors to support Dismantle's work. Community bike workshops have been delivered in other parts of Perth, and a strategy is in place to make Dismantle a statewide project by 2015. Lachlan regularly gives presentations about Dismantle to inspire and motivate people to contribute to their communities. He also runs workshops that promote and encourage people to follow their passions and contribute positively to the community. Lachlan was the only Australian selected this year for an International Youth Foundation Fellowship and represented Australia at a leadership program in Turkey for young social change leaders.

### **Michael Sheldrick, 24 –Polio campaigner**

Michael Sheldrick is a community activist, social justice campaigner and law student, who manages an international campaign against polio. A long term justice fighter against global poverty, Michael first joined the Global Poverty Project (GPP), an education and advocacy organisation, to co-produce The End of Polio Concert at Perth's Belvoir Amphitheatre. After writing to Prime Minister Julia Gillard about GPP's *End of Polio* campaign she agreed to meet him which led to polio eradication ultimately being included on the agenda of the 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. The outcome was a \$50 million contribution from the Australian Government and nearly \$70 million from other world leaders. Since then, Michael has supported the roll out of polio advocacy campaigns in North America, the United Kingdom and Pakistan. The campaign has the support of philanthropist Bill Gates and former Australian of the Year, Simon McKeon. Michael has won numerous academic awards, and regularly visits high schools to encourage students to volunteer for charitable causes. A proud Rotarian, Michael is passionate about Rotary International's unique role in spearheading polio eradication efforts.



## **WA - FINALISTS - AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO**

### **Glenn Baker – Children's champion**

Glenn Baker knows from experience how important it is for families with seriously ill children to have somewhere to stay while their children are in hospital. In 1985, Glenn's son, Adam, was diagnosed with leukaemia and was receiving intense chemotherapy at Perth's Princess Margaret Hospital. He recognised the pressing need for somewhere for families to stay – especially those from the country – so they could be near their children during their often difficult treatment. Glenn became a foundation member of 'The House of Life Group' made up of parents whose children were receiving treatment in the hospital's cancer ward. With community support from Lions Clubs, Rotary and private businesses, the group raised enough funds to start building on a site donated by the hospital. Ronald McDonald House of Life Perth opened in 1991. (now known as Ronald McDonald House). It was a bitter-sweet moment for Glenn and his family as by then Adam had sadly lost his battle with cancer. Since the outset, Glenn has volunteered his time and expertise to the Ronald McDonald House Committee of Management, where he is currently chairman.

### **Wilma Bruce – Community volunteer**

Wilma Bruce volunteered with the St Vincent de Paul Society in and around Perth for nearly 40 years until ill health forced her retirement. Even looking after her large family of six children and a foster daughter didn't dent Wilma's enthusiasm to help those in need. The Bruce home always offered a place to stay for those needing a hand, and Wilma's daughter SueAnne recalls their house was never empty. Wilma and her husband Arthur began by recruiting volunteers for Vinnies and then before long Wilma was running stores for the charity. Wilma kept the books and managed the staff of fellow volunteers, including young people directed to do community work and people with mental health issues. In Wilma's words, they needed 'a lot of tender loving care and understanding', which she was able to give them. Wilma also became expert at re-covering old chairs and making curtains for wardrobes with no doors – nothing was wasted. Wilma is someone who has always put herself out for people in need, treating everyone with courtesy and respect.

### **Caroline de Mori – Indigenous health advocate**

Caroline de Mori established a not-for-profit foundation in 2005 to overcome chronic health issues in Indigenous communities in the most practical way – by helping them grow and prepare fresh fruit and vegetables. She recognised that the simplest way to provide fresh food particularly to remote communities was to grow it locally. Since then, Caroline's Edge of Nowhere Foundation, or EON as it's known, has been invited into 12 remote communities in Western Australia. The program, called Thriving Communities, helps Indigenous people understand the importance of fresh fruit, vegetables and bush tucker to a healthy diet and disease prevention. Over five years, the communities learn how to grow, harvest, prepare and cook their food, and learn a range of skills to support a healthy lifestyle. A big focus of the program is children, who learn about preparing simple, healthy meals. The communities are strongly encouraged to take responsibility for the program as Caroline believes ownership is an important part of education. Caroline and her team have raised more than \$4 million for Thriving Communities from governments, Indigenous land corporations and the private sector.

### **Linda Watson – Women's advocate**

Linda Watson knows from experience how difficult it can be for women to leave prostitution. A former prostitute herself, Linda was determined to help other women get out of prostitution, and escape the cycle of exploitation, drugs and abuse that she had witnessed over a 20-year career in the sex industry. With the support of the Catholic Archbishop of Perth, Barry Hickey, Linda founded the House of Hope in 1997 to help women leave prostitution. There, women have a secure home, are provided with meals and receive the support needed to change their lives. No time limits are set, they can stay for as long as they need to. In its first year, around 200 women were helped through Linda's House of Hope and demand is so great that Linda is now looking for larger premises. By bravely speaking out to expose the dangers of prostitution, Linda herself has been subjected to abuse and attack. At times the refuge too has been shot at, fire bombed and vandalised. Undeterred, Linda continues to provide a safe haven for vulnerable women, helping them heal and restore their dignity and honour.



## **SA - FINALISTS - AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Ray Creen – Ambulance chief**

In a career that began as a rescue paramedic progressing to Chief Executive of the SA Ambulance Service, Ray Creen has been determined to deliver world-class, frontline medical treatment and care. Under his leadership South Australia's once conservative ambulance service has been transformed into a modern, innovative model of service delivery. Recognising that the service is integral to the health system and patient management, Ray has introduced a range of new, non-traditional approaches to care. These include out of hospital programs where paramedics treat patients in their own home or care facility sparing them a trip to hospital emergency departments. He has also fostered beneficial partnerships across the disciplines of pharmacy, physiotherapy and exercise physiology to improve patient care. With responsibility for 6,000 staff, 354 buildings and a total operating budget of \$650 million Ray is a tenacious and dynamic leader who has fostered a new era of competent, accountable and effective service delivery. As a dedicated mentor, he instils his own values of honesty, integrity and hard work in the next generation of leaders.

### **Scott Neeson – Humanitarian**

South Australian Scott Neeson is a former Hollywood mogul who turned his back on a life of luxury to save hundreds of the poorest children in one of the world's poorest countries – Cambodia. He says he has happily exchanged his Porsche, his yacht and the Academy Awards for head lice and the 11 hectare Steung Meanchey toxic dump where thousands of Cambodians live in appalling squalor. Risking their health, children sort through the garbage and jostle through the scraps for recyclables to sell in order to earn a dollar a day. Through his Cambodian Children's Fund, Scott pays for the education of more than 1,000 children, maintains four residential homes for neglected and abused children and operates after-school programs and vocational training centres. He's built day care centres and each day provides three meals for around 500 children. He also runs a bakery where young people work and learn new skills. Scott sees the ongoing challenge to overcome the suffering caused by decades of civil war and genocide as his life's imperative: 'One person's self-indulgence versus the needs of hundreds of children – that's the moral equation.'

### **Dr Gerry O'Callaghan – Medical campaigner**

It is no coincidence that under Dr Gerry O'Callaghan's watch as the inaugural national medical director of the Australian Organ and Tissue Authority, the number of organ donors and transplant recipients in 2011 was the highest since national records began. Through these donations, 337 organ donors gave 1,001 Australians a new chance at life. Dr O'Callaghan's colleagues say the improved donor rate is testament to his outstanding clinical skills, his empathy towards donors' families and a lifetime dedicated to improving organ donation rates. As well as bringing national leadership to the challenge, Dr O'Callaghan mentors and teaches the next wave of clinicians to foster and manage organ and tissue donation and transplantation. Although Australia is a world leader for successful transplant outcomes, it has one of the lowest donation rates in the developed world with around 1,600 people on organ transplant waiting lists. On average, people on the transplant list can wait between six months and four years. Respected and admired by patients and staff, Dr O'Callaghan's drive and commitment has established the foundations for Australia to become a world leader in organ and tissue donation.

### **Sonya Ryan – Cyber safety campaigner**

For the past five years, Sonya Ryan has dedicated herself to the promotion of internet safety through the Carly Ryan Foundation established in memory of her daughter Carly. Befriended by an internet predator posing as a teenage boy Carly was groomed by the middle-aged man who convinced her to meet him. Tragically that meeting in February 2007 resulted in her brutal murder. Filled with grief and despair, Sonya did not turn inwards, instead reaching out to others to ensure that similar tragedies could be avoided. Sonya is now a frequent visitor to schools where she tells Carly's story to warn of the potential dangers inherent through internet interaction. She alerts children and their parents to the multiple identities used by cyber paedophiles to groom children and win their confidence and trust. Sonya says she will continue her campaign to have online safety made a compulsory component of the national education curriculum. Through the Carly Ryan Foundation, Sonya also provides counselling for victims of internet crime and provides police with information to help prevent crimes against children.





## **SA - FINALISTS - SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Michael Angelakis AM – Entrepreneurial businessman**

Each week TV personality and businessman Michael Angelakis entertains his fans with his larrikin approach to cooking but behind the scenes he is also a stalwart of many charities and community organisations. A cancer survivor himself, Michael is an ambassador for the Cancer Council of Australia, a supporter of Royal Adelaide Hospital, the Salvation Army and the Mary Potter Hospice. He is also patron of *Ecocean* – a scientific, not for profit organisation dedicated to protecting Australia's marine environment and saving the whale shark. As Managing Director of the third-generation family-owned business Angelakis Brothers, he can trace the business back to very humble beginnings – his grandfather fishing the waters of the Great Australian Bight in a borrowed dinghy. Michael is credited with extending the market reach of the company to Europe, Asia and the US thereby creating employment opportunities in South Australia. His love of Australia and his pride in the product he sells is reflected in his involvement on a range of industry and advisory boards including the South Australian Tourism Commission, the Premier's Food Council and the Federal Australian Fisheries and Seafood Forum.

### **Emeritus Professor Ian Maddocks AM – Palliative care specialist**

Emeritus Professor Ian Maddocks is one of Australia's pre-eminent palliative care specialists and a passionate advocate for the cause of peace. He has been a key leader for many years in both the Medical Association for the Prevention of War and the International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War – an organisation which was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its work in 1985. After promoting the development of palliative care in southern Adelaide for some years, Professor Maddocks was appointed Professor of Palliative Care at Flinders University in 1988, pursuing a rigorous teaching and research program as well as caring for his patients. He was elected first President of the Australian Association for Hospice and Palliative Care and first President of the Australian and New Zealand Society for Palliative Medicine. Recognised internationally for his work in palliative care, tropical and preventative medicine, Professor Maddocks' texts are used world-wide. His awards over the years include the inaugural Bethlehem Griffiths Medal for research in palliative care. Now Emeritus Professor at Flinders University, he continues to supervise postgraduate students and care for the terminally ill.

### **Ernest (Keith) Skillicorn AM – Medical missionary**

At 89 years of age Keith Skillicorn is still working tirelessly to improve the lives of others in India. He regularly travels to India to take a hands-on lead in projects such as the establishment of clean water wells. Keith embraces social media as a way of garnering support for his work which follows a lifetime devoted to the health of those less fortunate. After wartime service with the RAAF, Keith set sail for India accompanied by his wife, Ruth, and two small sons. So began six decades treating the people of India and Bangladesh. His medical training was limited but when confronted by the ravages of disease in the poverty-stricken tribal villages of central India he taught himself. For the poorest of the poor, he was surgeon, midwife, nutritionist and general practitioner rolled into one. He was one of those rare doctors who treated people suffering from leprosy and established a leprosy clinic in Nawadih and a mobile clinic for his team to treat around 60 patients a day, seven days a week for 20 years. Today, in this region, the disease is rare.

### **Jock Statton OAM – Veterans' campaigner**

Jock Statton's military service with 9 Battalion RAR from late 1968 to mid 1969 drives his determination to improve the lives of returned servicemen and women. He has been a long term RSL State President and Member of the RSL National Executive, roles in which he successfully lobbied the state government for increased support. Jock was pivotal in the establishment of the ANZAC Premier's study tour which takes school students to the battlefields of the Western Front in Europe to understand the sacrifice of Australians killed in battle. During his time leading the RSL, Jock tackled significant issues faced by the organisation, including branch amalgamations, maintaining the organisation's funding and improving the quality of liaison between the Department of Veterans Affairs and those they support. In retirement he continues his advocacy for veterans including the construction of a memorial to honour the Indigenous Australians who, although denied the right to vote, fought and died defending their country.





## **SA - FINALISTS - YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Rima Chahoud, 28 – Mental health activist**

With an undergraduate degree in psychology and a Masters degree in social work, Rima Chahoud has the significant responsibility for providing respite for more than 400 carers of people living with mental illness. Leading a team of 35, she also manages recovery and rehabilitation services. Since joining the Mental Illness Fellowship South Australia Respite Program, Rima has developed specialist resources in suicide awareness training for mental health workers and those working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and refugees. She also continues to care for those family members and friends with medical and mental health problems. The eldest child of Syrian parents who migrated to Australia, Rima Chahoud is used to taking responsibility for the welfare of others both in her family and professional life. Assertive, capable, empathetic and compassionate, Rima brings her passion for social justice in all that she does, winning the respect and admiration of all who know her. Next year she will take leave to travel to Kenya to volunteer for a month in a children's orphanage.

### **Rachel Dreyer, 27 – Cardiac researcher**

Rachel Dreyer is a remarkable young scientist and PhD student who is playing a key role in vital research to improve the cardiac health of women in Australia and around the world. An early career medical researcher, she is considered a leader in her field of gender differences in cardiovascular medicine. She is the Australian project coordinator for two major international studies as well as two local studies investigating why women under the age of 55 who experience a heart attack are three times more likely to die in hospital than their male counterparts. Rachel is the recent recipient of the prestigious American Australian Association Fellowship, which will support her postdoctoral term at Yale University beginning in 2013. Her doctoral supervisor believes she is well on the way to making significant clinical, practice-changing contributions to the quality of care in Australia and worldwide. Apart from her scientific achievements, Rachel campaigns and raises funds to improve the treatment of women with cardiovascular disease. She volunteers for the Heart Foundation, is a Lifeline Australia telephone counsellor, an award-winning musician and composer and cycles more than 150 kilometres a week.

### **Vanessa Picker, 21 – Social campaigner**

Young entrepreneur and university student Vanessa Picker, already has many innovative social and not for profit projects to her name. In March 2012 she led her team to victory in Harvard University Alumni's 2012 Social Venture Challenge with a project called *Play It Forward*. The project harnesses sport to build confidence and self esteem in young people and also encourages people to donate pre-loved sporting gear to support local communities. As well, Vanessa's idea for a website to make gyms more accessible and affordable was commended at a national business competition. She is also working on a social enterprise called Blue Kangaroo to help people find and do business with ethical and socially responsible businesses. Vanessa was recently selected to facilitate the 23<sup>rd</sup> International Youth Leadership Conference in Prague which brought together young leaders from nine countries. In July 2012 she was one of 50 students selected from around the world to participate in an international summit on global issues. Vanessa also excels in cricket at a state level and is training with the South Australian Women's team with the aim of winning a place on the National Cricket League team.

### **Daniel Ryan, 24 – Youth ambassador**

As 2012 United Nations Youth Representative for Australia, Dan Ryan recently completed a national listening tour that took him across the country – from cities and towns to the bush – to hear from young Australians and take their views directly to the United Nations General Assembly. Armed with the feedback received from his speech to the UN, Dan will set off on another tour – this time to report back. In his high profile role, Dan is excited about the opportunity he has been given to reach out to young people and to convert optimistic views into positive action. He is the first South Australian UN Youth Representative for Australia and brings a broad range of skills and experience including his ability to connect with young people and contribute to positive social change. Dan is no stranger to advocacy and working with communities having spent two years coordinating regional activities for AusAID and AusTraining. He was also chosen to represent Australia at the One Young World Conference in Switzerland in 2011.



## **SA - FINALISTS - AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO**

### **Brad Chilcott – Human rights campaigner**

Brad Chilcott has gathered together like-minded people and organisations to introduce what he describes as a positive voice in the national conversation on asylum seekers, refugees and multiculturalism. Apolitical, he called his idea *Welcome Australia* and it began as a way of connecting people through regular meetings. Now *Welcome Australia* is a national movement of people, communities and organisations committed to the vision of a welcoming, inclusive Australia known for its compassion and celebration of diversity. It exists to give new arrivals a warm, dignified and positive welcome to their new home while at the same time offering Australians the opportunity to be involved in practical acts of welcome. A pastor at Activate church, Brad's dream of a national Walk Together campaign was realised in 2012 when events were held in 11 cities around Australia attracting thousands of participants. Brad's contribution was recognised when he was named a People of Australia Ambassador in 2012. Described as a 'voice for the voiceless' Brad is a dedicated campaigner for human rights and social justice.

### **Anna Kemp – Women's advocate**

Anna Kemp has worked for 33 years to improve the lives of women in prison and through her persistence and vision has developed new approaches to bridge the gulf between prison and returning to society. In 2006 she established the *Seeds of Affinity* project bringing together a core group of women who have had direct experience with the South Australian criminal justice system. The approach is simple but effective – it offers women leaving prison a safe place to accomplish small tasks to rebuild self esteem and confidence. Under Anna's guidance, small achievements like making soap and jam have become money making enterprises. And a vegetable garden has been established to supply the group's weekly shared lunches. So far *Seeds of Affinity* has helped more than 100 women adjust to returning to community life. Some move on after a few weeks, others stay for years and two are now mentors and aspiring role models to new members. Anna's contribution is reflected in the words of those she helps: 'Anna's compassion and unconditional support has inspired me to be a better person in my life.'

### **Brenda McCulloch – Community cook**

In July 2011 Brenda McCulloch prepared and served her one millionth meal for the homeless and vulnerable people at the Hutt Street Centre in Adelaide. Brenda has managed the Centre's kitchen for the past 18 years bringing to her work an attitude of acceptance, compassion and understanding. Six days a week she carefully plans and selects nutritious and hearty meals to serve for breakfast and lunch. Over the years she has built strong relationships with food providers, restaurants, schools and community organisations to ensure the long term sustainability of the Hutt Street Centre. She is regularly called on to speak about her work to community groups and other organisations, explaining the everyday challenges facing homeless people. In her role as kitchen manager she is considered a source of wise advice, encouragement and support for other staff, volunteers and clients alike. She is also admired for her sense of humour and the outstanding contribution she has made over the years and continues to make to those in need in Adelaide.

### **Christopher Roberts-Yates – Work skills instructor**

Chris Roberts-Yates works in the Murray Bridge High School's Disability Unit where his contribution has been extraordinary. He takes a practical approach, determined to give his students with disabilities every opportunity to learn the skills they need. Under Chris's guidance they have developed their own market garden from scratch and use the produce in catering training. They have entertained overseas dignitaries, catered lunch for a visiting education delegation from Indonesia and cooked up a storm at a careers expo at the Murray Bridge Race Course. Following the careers expo, Chris was asked if they could cater for the Just Deadly awards at the Town Hall. No one was disappointed: the senior students from the Disability Unit excelled themselves producing 1,750 restaurant quality treats including chilli prawns, crocodile spring rolls and quail and salmon tartlets. The highlight for these aspiring young chefs was an invitation to cook breakfast and dinner at a restaurant in Chambéry in France – a dream that came true after Chris raised \$14,000 from the corporate sector and sponsorship from the South Australian Government.



## **TASMANIAN FINALISTS - AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Professor Elizabeth Blackburn AC – Molecular scientist**

Coming from a family of physicians and scientists, Professor Elizabeth Blackburn knew at an early age that her life's path lay in the biological sciences. Her work in molecular research has been punctuated by astonishing successes and prestigious awards. The pinnacle of her achievements came in 2009 when she was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, shared with Carol Greider and Jack Szostak, for their research into the chromosomal enzyme, telomerase. Her work has implications for a vast range of diseases including some cancers, some inherited diseases and a number of age-related illnesses. Elizabeth, whose career has taken her to the United States to live, always stands up for what she believes in. She fought long and hard to advance embryonic stem cell research, and was appointed to the President's Council on Bioethics in 2001. In 2007 Elizabeth was named one of TIME Magazine's 100 Most influential People. She also serves on the Science Advisory Board of the Genetics Policy Institute. As Australia's first female Nobel Laureate, Elizabeth is a true inspiration to women and to all Australians.

### **Andrew Hughes – Adventure teacher**

Adventure teacher Andrew Hughes has combined his two great passions in life –inspiring disengaged students to learn and building awareness of the importance of our natural world. Using two innovative teaching programs which he began developing seven years ago, *Expedition Class* and *Project Skullbone*, students follow Andrew into the wilderness by satellite link. They can ask him questions live online as he tackles challenging landscapes and situations. Students help plan the trips and teachers make sure curriculum elements are covered. His first trip in 2006 was to kayak 5,000 km through rough seas and crocodile-infested waters from Hobart to Cape York. Since then he has undertaken more extraordinary adventures, including surviving on a desert island, and exploring coastal and internal Papua New Guinea. In *Project Skullbone* students at risk of completely disengaging from the education system join him on his adventures. Having started the programs at significant personal and financial expense, he has built support through the Bookend Trust and several patrons, including author Bryce Courtenay. In 2012 Andrew was named *Conservationist of the Year*.

### **Dr Jane Sargison – Engineer**

Dr Jane Sargison is an engineer who developed cutting edge technologies used in Rolls Royce aero engines. She is currently working on a project aimed at generating energy from biomass resulting in low cost carbon sequestration. Executive director of Project Rainbow Bee Eater, Jane is responsible for developing straw to energy and biochar plants across the West Australian wheatbelt. This project is providing Australia's first bulk biochar production, a market for stranded straw and mallee biomass, electricity supply to the regions and job opportunities in regional Australia. In 2011 Jane was named National Professional Engineer of the Year in recognition of her contribution to the profession, her innovative approach to engineering projects, communication and work in supporting young people to study engineering. She has been appointed to the Board of the Australian Renewable Energy Agency, a government agency established to consolidate \$3.2 billion in funding to support the research, development and deployment of renewable energy technology in Australia. She is also a Director on the boards of the Australian Institute of Energy, National Mechanical College of Engineers Australia and Southern Water Tasmania.

### **Dr Nitin Verma AM – Ophthalmologist**

Dr Nitin Verma estimates that he has performed sight-restoring surgery on 55,000 people from India to Tasmania – including Papua New Guinea, the Northern Territory, Western Samoa and East Timor. Following his grandmother's dictum that he should always remember to give, Nitin has more than fulfilled her wish. He has made remarkable inroads in East Timor, which he first visited for a week many years ago as the sole ophthalmologist. It was the start of the East Timor Eye Program which now includes more than 54 voluntary participants from all over Australia, as well as a fully trained East Timorese specialist in Dili. His close connection to the fledgling country has resulted in a wider role as Honorary Consul for the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste in Tasmania. This has inspired him to kick start other initiatives, including a scholarship program with the University of Tasmania and 'Strings for Timor' which provides strings for East Timorese musicians. Nitin and his colleagues and friends have now set their sights on assisting the Pacific islands, most recently Western Samoa.



## **TASMANIAN - FINALISTS - SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Josef Chromy OAM – Entrepreneurial businessman**

Penniless and speaking no English, 20-year-old refugee Joe Chromy arrived in Tasmania from Czechoslovakia in 1951. His remarkable story is the classic rags to riches tale. Like his father, Joe became a master butcher and two years after his arrival in Australia set up his first butcher's shop. Over time, that single shop evolved into Blue Ribbon Meat Products with 530 employees and a \$75 million annual turnover. The company is the largest private employer in Tasmania and was floated in 1993, the following year winning an Australian Exports Award. Always searching for new challenges, Joe was 63 when he entered the Tasmanian wine industry through his firm, The JAC Group. Thanks to his trademark determination and business acumen the venture has been a huge success. Queen Elizabeth and former President Bill Clinton have both enjoyed his wines. Joe's forays into property development have been similarly successful. As he says, 'I came here with nothing but hope and ambition...Tasmanians welcomed me and, with their help, I have been rewarded for the challenges and risks I have taken.'

### **Ivy Chung – Fresh food champion**

For most of Ivy Chung's working life, she sourced and distributed fresh produce for the family company, Chung Sing, major food suppliers of the catering industry in Tasmania. Since retiring in 2011, just short of her 85<sup>th</sup> birthday, Ivy still needed to keep busy and so investigated volunteering options. The food-rescue service, SecondBite, seemed a natural fit and now, two days a week, Ivy can be found in a glassed-in office overlooking SecondBite's receiving and dispatch area at Glenorchy. Her primary role is to chase down fruit and vegetables from all around the state and make sure that they are sent on time to the people who need them – struggling single parents, homeless people and others who need a helping hand. 'The feedback been wonderful,' she says. 'People are so appreciative; they say it will get them through without having to stop using the car or not pay the electricity bill.'

She was recently honoured in the Tasmanian Hospitality Association Awards for her contribution to the fresh produce sector with the Bertie Tuccheri Award, which celebrated her 60-year-long working life and her volunteer work.

### **Anna Crotty – Human rights champion**

A true champion of human rights, Anna Crotty leads by example. As a human rights lawyer and trade unionist, she has sought tirelessly to redress the discrimination and inequity that she encountered during the course of her working life. After she retired, and still appalled by the plight of 21 million homeless people in north-west Afghanistan and Pakistan, Anna set up Tents4Peace. A grassroots community group, Tents4Peace can quickly mobilise resources to supply emergency life-saving shelter in response to critical situations anywhere in the world. Tents4Peace has no political or religious affiliations and is sensitive to the need to honour the cultural integrity of those who it assists. The organisation has achieved international recognition and support due to its practical and immediate method of providing basic emergency aid. Since Anna established the organisation in 2005, it is estimated to have saved more than 11,000 lives. Anna has served on many boards and committees related to conflict resolution, environmental issues and discrimination – for which she was awarded a Tasmanian Human Rights award by the Governor-General Quentin Bryce in 2011.

### **Bruce French – Global gardener**

Burnie scientist Bruce French believes the solution to world hunger is for people to grow their own food, using plants already adapted to their climatic conditions. In the course of his working life as an agricultural scientist, Bruce has seen unsuitable grains grown in areas where local foods thrive much better. For more than 40 years he has compiled the world's largest database of edible plants, complete with information about their food values and suitability to different climates. The database, Food Plants International, contains details of more than 24,000 plants and is available free of charge. To spread the message around the world, Bruce formed a partnership with the Rotary Club of Devonport North. Now LearnGrow is a dynamic international project that helps tackle malnutrition on all continents. Bruce has never made money out of the database – his only goal is to 'get the hungry kids fed'. Since retiring, Bruce has been working on it full time, and it is now near completion. Given the spectre of future global food shortages, it is a timely achievement, providing valuable information to people and organisations in developing countries.





## **TASMANIAN - FINALISTS - YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Holly Barnewall, 27 – Teacher**

Growing up on Flinders Island, Holly Barnewall knows first-hand the difficulties students face as they must move away to complete their final two years of high school. Holly finished her schooling off the island, and then trained interstate as a teacher before returning to teach at Flinders Island District High School. She was determined to help students bridge the gap more successfully and has worked tirelessly to make a difference to young people's lives on the island. Her list of achievements is extraordinary – not only has she rewritten the English, SOSE and arts programs to be more relevant and exciting, she has developed a transition subject to help young people live alone. Holly is also very active in extracurricular projects, such as providing 'drug-free' after-school and weekend activities, and connecting students to support services. To give young people a taste of the outside world, Holly has organised an international exchange program with the school. At the age of just 27, Holly has already achieved much, and was recognised with a University of Tasmania's Faculty of Education Teaching Excellence Award for 2012.

### **Dr Catherine Blizzard, 29 – Neuroscientist**

Dr Catherine Blizzard, a PhD student and neuroscientist at the University of Tasmania's Menzies Research Institute, has been in the vanguard of a new way of thinking on how to treat brain injuries. Catherine and her colleagues have discovered that nerve cells in the brain can change their shape and processes to respond to an injury. Previously, it was assumed that people with a brain injury were largely incurable but this new research provides insight into the potential for the brain to compensate for injury. Catherine believes that rather than trying to repair damaged parts of the brain, doctors should focus on the surrounding, non-damaged areas that are capable of rewiring. This ground-breaking work led to Catherine winning the Southern Cross Young Achievers Award in the science and technology category in 2012. The discovery will revolutionise the treatment of people with an acquired brain injury, most of whom are under the age of 25. With one in 45 Australians having such an injury, the ramifications of Catherine's research are far-reaching and will provide hope for thousands of people in Australia and around the world.

### **Cait Clarke, 25 – Youth advocate**

Cait is the youngest person ever elected to the Kentish Council, near Hobart. As chair of the Kentish Youth Council and Council representative on the Social Inclusion Action Group, Cait believes that improving the lot of young people is where the future lies, and has put an immense amount of care and effort into supporting local youth. To encourage more young women to become future leaders, Cait was instrumental in developing the Dreamcasters program for 11 to 15 year-olds and has re-established the Sheffield Girl Guides. She also works with the social inclusion action group and is a Road Educator Volunteer mentor. Trained in suicide intervention and youth leadership, she also set up the Walkers and Talkers program for young mothers, giving them the support and vision to turn their lives around. As the winner of the 2012 Premier's Young Achiever of the Year award, Cait was recognised for her contribution to youth and community projects around Tasmania, as well as her efforts as a councillor in her hometown of Kentish, near Hobart.

### **Laura Sykes, 20 – Social justice campaigner**

Already a committed and effective campaigner for social justice at the age of 20, Laura Sykes' first foray into community service was in Year 9 coordinating the World Vision 40-hour Famine for Riverside High School. After attending the World Vision Leadership Convention, she began to understand the desperation and horror of child labour and trafficking. The direct result was a young life dedicated to making a difference. She has campaigned for both Launceston and Hobart City Councils to turn around their procurement policies – and both are now registered as Fair Trade communities. Although still studying full-time at the University of Tasmania, Laura is the Tasmanian State Director of Vision Generation, World Vision's youth movement, and is a member of the Management Committee of the Tasmanian Centre for Global Learning. In her spare time she has established Go Fair which encourages businesses and schools to source products from companies that don't use child labour. Her achievements have already been noticed, winning the Southern Cross Young Achievers Mat Goggin Foundation Entrepreneurship Award and the inaugural Sandy Duncanson Social Justice Bursary.





## **TASMANIAN - FINALISTS - AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO**

### **Arthur Dobson – Polio campaigner**

Arthur Dobson is a living example of how a debilitating illness can become an impetus rather than a barrier. Arthur was just six years old when he contracted polio, one of an estimated 40,000 Australians affected between the 1930s and the 1960s. Once diagnosed, Arthur was relocated to the St Giles School for Crippled Children to learn how to cope with his illness later returning to his local school to complete his education. In 1972, after a car accident, Arthur had to learn to walk for the third time. However, he was not going to let that stop him, and became a busy and capable dairy farmer, retiring after 15 years only when his first symptoms of Post Polio Syndrome appeared. Realising that Tasmania lacked a network to provide information for polio sufferers and their families, he assisted in creating the Post Polio Network Inc. He has served on its management committee, and also as a director of St Giles for over 30 years. Arthur was involved in the formation of the national body, Polio Australia in 2008 and was elected its inaugural Vice President.

### **Gwen Egg – Environmentalist**

Gwen Egg established Southern Beaches Landcare/Coastcare to try to minimise the impact of encroaching residential development. A passionate and practical environmentalist, Gwen has been a Landcare force in Tasmania for more than 20 years. Thanks to Gwen, joint management plans are now in place for more than a dozen council reserves, 23 kilometres of coastal reserves and two small offshore islands, testament to her foresight and persistence. She was the group's convenor for its first 15 years and now, as its secretary, is still a guiding force in its work which she encourages to be strategic, informed and collaborative. Her approach has led to strong partnerships with government, natural resource management bodies, community groups, schools and the public. A well-known fibre artist and teacher, she understands that the future of the environment lies with the young. Gwen uses her art to raise environmental awareness, sharing the Landcare ethic in local schools through artist residencies, workshops, festivals and exhibitions. Her achievements and commitment were recognised recently when the Australian Government awarded her the 2012 Individual Landcarer Award.

### **Diane Hayes – Community campaigner**

Diane's vivid memories of the difficulties she experienced as a young woman suffering anorexia, prompted her to set up the Tasmanian Eating Disorders Support Service. It provides counselling to families and sufferers, and raises awareness through schools, medical practices, conferences and campaigns. Believing that the universal language of music can reach people in ways other messages can't, Diane established a free drumming circle for therapeutic purposes. She also ran drumming groups through Adult Education for seniors, those with physical disabilities, and the visually impaired. Bringing up four children ranging in age from two to 14 has certainly not impeded Diane's commitment or enthusiasm. She works as a volunteer on the Mental Health Tribunal Council in Tasmania, as a volunteer guide at the Cataract Gorge in Launceston, and as a committee member with the Time Out project supporting youth at risk. Never one to rest on her laurels, Diane continually demonstrates her unflagging belief that a connected community is a happy community. Diane is presently studying Japanese, horticulture and a diploma in community services.

### **William Sullivan – Firefighter**

Bill Sullivan is a proud volunteer firefighter and a pillar of his community having fought fires not only in Tasmania but all over Australia. This year Bill celebrated his 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the Triabunna Fire Brigade. It is a commitment he has managed to pass on to his whole family, many of whom are also members of the local brigade. The Triabunna brigade responds to and provides crews for local and interstate incidents, and conducts fire hazard reduction. As brigade chief, Bill mentors the junior members, as well as raising funds for the brigade. Because most of Tasmania is classified as 'bushfire prone', the role of the local brigade is critical. Bill rarely misses an opportunity to showcase the work of the brigade, appearing at community events and in the local schools. Acknowledging his long-term dedication and experience, Bill was awarded the Australian Government's National Medal and the Tasmanian Fire Service Volunteer Medal in 2012. But there is no greater reward than that which comes from his friends, neighbours and colleagues who all recognise his immeasurable achievement in saving their lives and their properties from destruction.



## **ACT - FINALISTS - AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Dr Tom Calma AO – Social justice campaigner**

Respected for his inspirational and inclusive advocacy for human rights and social justice, Dr Tom Calma has dedicated his life to improving the lives of Indigenous Australians. For more than four decades he has championed the importance of empowerment – a passion which runs through his work in education, training, employment, health, justice reinvestment and development. Tom was formerly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and Race Discrimination Commissioner. He works to create opportunities for Indigenous voices to be heard and to build partnerships to improve their health, well-being and economic independence. His landmark report calling for the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to be closed within a generation laid the groundwork for the Close the Gap campaign. As Race Discrimination Commissioner and today, Tom works to advance Australia as an inclusive society including many roles in the community relating to social inclusion, reconciliation, mental health and higher education.

### **Gordon Gregory OAM – Rural health advocate**

As the inaugural Executive Director of the National Rural Health Alliance, Gordon Gregory started with no staff and ran the organisation from his garage. Today the Alliance is regarded as the peak body for rural health in Australia with 33 member organisations representing doctors, nurses, dentists, health professionals, students, consumers and researchers. Drawing on his previous experience as a senior ministerial adviser, Gordon knew that turning around health inequities in rural Australia required a new approach that encompassed social, economic, health and education issues. Through the Alliance he has achieved this, working patiently and creatively to include other less powerful voices in the health debate including rural and remote area nurses, Indigenous Australians, allied health professionals and community groups. Through his national leadership, these people now help shape the way services are provided and delivered. Driven by his sense of a 'fair go' for the bush, Gordon has succeeded across a range of complex and often difficult rural health issues demonstrating his trademark characteristics of insight, dedication, persistence and a deep understanding of the lives of rural Australians.

### **Dr Ken Henry AC – Government advisor**

Highly regarded as a consummate and influential senior public servant, Dr Ken Henry is also a committed conservationist, a fervent critic of wildlife slaughter, including Japanese whaling and the commercial kangaroo harvest, and a champion of endangered species. A respected source of fearless advice during the Hawke, Keating, Howard and Rudd governments, Dr Henry is now special adviser to the Prime Minister with responsibility for advising the government on Australia in the Asian Century. As Secretary of Treasury for 10 years, Dr Henry built his reputation on the complex issue of tax reform, including guiding the GST and business tax reforms from policy development to implementation. He also led the development of the intergenerational report which examined the budgetary implications of an ageing population over the next 40 years. In 2008 he headed the reform of federal-state relations, was appointed to chair a broad-ranging review of the tax system at the same time managing the government's response to the global financial crisis. Since leaving Treasury, Dr Henry continues to campaign to save endangered species such as the northern hairy-nosed wombat.

### **Libby Lloyd AM – Human rights activist**

Libby Lloyd plays a pivotal role in the development of the Australian Government's national plan to reduce violence against women. Dating back to her work with Indo-Chinese boat people in the late 70s Libby has always worked to advance human rights. Since 2003, she has devoted her time and energy to protecting the fundamental human right – for women to live free of violence and abuse. In 2007, she founded the White Ribbon Foundation which every year hosts *White Ribbon Day* supporting men to 'never excuse, commit or remain silent' about violence against women. As the Chair of the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, she was responsible for the *Time for Action* report which formed the basis of Australia's 12-year strategy to reduce violence against women and children. Adopted by all states and territories, the Plan is now being implemented across the country. In 1992 her work with the United Nations was recognised when she was made a Member of the Order of Australia for her contribution to refugees and to the international community in Iraq and Kuwait.



## **ACT - FINALISTS - SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Garth Mansfield OAM – Musician and mentor**

Garth Mansfield's musical interests began with studying the organ at age 11 with a professor at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. In addition to careers in teaching, public service and private enterprise, he was successively organist and choir director at Canberra's St Andrew's Presbyterian Church and Wesley Uniting Church for five decades. In 2002, his dream of establishing a centre for fine musical performance for the Canberra community was realised. As the inaugural Director of the Wesley Music Centre in a volunteer capacity, Garth has seen the Centre's music room's reputation cemented as a superb acoustic space and a place where aspiring young musicians are nurtured and supported. His commitment to supporting emerging musicians has also contributed to the Wesley Music Scholarships since 1994. These scholarships have helped 94 skilled young musicians at both secondary and tertiary levels. The Centre's 100 concerts a year, featuring Wesley Scholars, talented students from the ANU School of Music, secondary schools and private music studios, community and professional musicians, artists in musical shows and visiting internationals, show how influential Garth's leadership has been.

### **Rhonda Obad OAM - Champion for the homeless**

Following the tragedy of her son Tony's death from a heroin overdose, Rhonda Obad has dedicated her life to helping young men who other people have given up on. She established the Bridge Back to Life Foundation in a north Canberra suburb to help young homeless men. In 2011, supported by local business and community donations, Tony's Place opened its doors. For its young residents Tony's Place is much more than a roof over their heads. Through its living skills programs and access to health and counselling services they are offered a new start and the stability necessary for further study, finding a job and living independently. Rhonda's approach is straightforward: it's not a house it's a home, a place where people feel they belong and where they are respected. She has helped change many lives and, with the help of 20 workers from local businesses, is expanding the Foundation's accommodation options. A two bedroom unit has been built in the backyard of Tony's Place to give the young men some independent living experience before they move into their own homes.

### **Dr Jim Peacock AC – Agricultural scientist**

As the head of the CSIRO Plant Industry division for 26 years, Dr Jim Peacock has been at the frontline of food and agricultural breakthroughs including the development of insect resistant cotton in Australia. He has long championed the great benefits of industry partnered science, establishing the CSIRO as one of the leading plant research institutes in the world. His achievements in gene technology include the development of a low GI, high fibre variety of barley and, more recently, advances in plant hybrid vigour with significant implications for global food security. Australia's Chief Scientist from 2006 to 2008, Jim is regarded as a committed, energetic and inspirational leader in the science world. He is also dedicated to instilling the excitement and the potential of science in young Australians. One novel approach was to pair more than 1,500 of Australia's leading scientists with primary and high school teachers. Jim was also a driving force behind the establishment of the Discovery Centre in Canberra to showcase CSIRO research, connect industry and science and to give thousands of children the opportunity to have a 'hands-on' science experience.

### **Milutin Stoilovic – Forensic scientist**

Regarded internationally as a leading fingerprint expert and famous for his invention of a device used in 98 per cent of crime investigations, Milutin Stoilovic now spends much of his time inspiring young people to study science. A physicist by training, Milutin settled in Canberra in 1980 and was soon employed as a researcher at the Australian National University. There he developed the revolutionary Polilight – a high intensity light source which allows detectives to search crime scenes for previously undetected evidence like fingerprints and blood. Named as one of Australia's top 100 inventions, Polilight is now being used in skin treatment and in recycling processes. After joining the Australian Federal Police, Milutin was part of the team that developed a new fingerprint reagent that is now used worldwide. His skills took him to Thailand, Malaysia, China, Japan, Korea and the United States to train their forensic investigators. Over the years Milutin has mentored many students and even in retirement he is involved in workshops and demonstrations promoting his lifelong passion – forensic science.



## **ACT - FINALISTS - YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Brad Carron-Arthur, 23 – Mental health campaigner**

In January this year, Brad Carron-Arthur set off to run from Canberra to Cape York – a journey of almost 5,000 kilometres that took four months – to raise awareness and funds for mental health research. The 22-year-old psychology honours graduate from the Australian National University had witnessed his father struggle and eventually overcome depression which inspired Brad to become an advocate for mental health. The day after being awarded the prize for the best honours thesis in psychology, Brad started his run. Day after day he ran marathon after marathon through extreme weather and across harsh terrain without a support crew or support vehicle. Along the way people responded generously, offering a meal, a bed for the night and sometimes jogging along beside him. He stopped to speak at schools, talking to young Australians in the towns and the bush about mental illness. He raised over \$30,000 for the Australian Foundation for Mental Health Research but more importantly he raised awareness and challenged prejudice. He now speaks regularly at schools and workplaces sharing his experiences and helping break down the stigma attached to mental illness.

### **Casey Keed, 19 – Dancer and leader**

Young Wiradjuri woman Casey Keed was only sixteen years old when she started her own dance school, *Dance Beyond Barriers*. At first it was simply a group of friends who shared a love of dancing but now, through Casey's leadership, it has extended its reach to help young people who have lost their way. Tackling challenging issues including suicide, bullying, depression and homelessness, the group raises awareness and offers new perspectives and solutions. A singer and songwriter as well as a dancer, Casey recently choreographed and led a community dance project *Hidden Sorrows* which explored the experiences of the Stolen Generations. Her involvement in Indigenous issues extends beyond dance. She was selected to represent the ACT at the Inaugural National Indigenous Parliament where 50 young leaders of the future met to debate issues affecting their communities including recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution. In 2010 Casey's leadership and her advocacy for reconciliation and equality were recognised when she was named the ACT NAIDOC Young Person of the Year. She is also the Indigenous Ambassador for National Youth Week.

### **Julie McKay, 29 – Women's advocate**

From a small office in Canberra, Julie McKay is part of a global United Nations campaign to improve the lives of the millions of women who every day struggle against poverty, violence and discrimination. As Executive Director of UN Women Australia, Julie combines her passion for social justice with her leadership and management skills to expand the organisation's reach and strengthen its links with government and business. In 2010 she was the Australian Institute of Management's Young Manager of the Year and the following year she was the Telstra Young Business Woman of the Year in the ACT. She recently completed a Global Executive MBA at the University of Sydney. A remarkable role model for young women, Julie takes on the critical challenges for women today including improving their economic independence, encouraging more women to be role models and leaders and reducing violence against women both in Australia and the world. Her experience in the corporate and not for profit sectors and her postgraduate studies in management and public policy make her an outstanding advocate for women.

### **Michael Sollis, 27 – Musician and mentor**

An innovative musician, published researcher in anthropology, and much-performed composer Michael Sollis still finds time to educate and inspire children with his love of composition and performance. Growing up in Canberra, he studied at the ANU School of Music receiving a University Medal for his research on the relationship between speech and song, a link which has greatly influenced his work. As artistic director and composer of The Griffyn Ensemble, he has built a national reputation for innovative programming and outstanding performance. He is a regularly performed and commissioned composer who writes extensively for professional, amateur, and youth musicians and ensembles. Michael founded and directed the SoundACT program, where over 1,000 Canberra school children premiered new works. As well as directing the Canberra Mandolin Orchestra, Michael also directs the YMS Boys Choir where, from the age of five, children explore music ranging from Australian bush songs to musical theatre and rock. Nationally, Michael is an ambassador and advocate for young musicians in his role as Chair of the Australian Youth Music Council, Chair of International Music Council Youth, and ACT Manager for Musica Viva Australia.





## **ACT - FINALISTS - AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO**

### **William Bashford – Indigenous mentor**

Described as a 'big man with a big heart', Bill Bashford leads by example to foster independence and cultural pride in Aboriginal communities and mutual respect and trust between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Four years ago he established the *Solid Young Fellas* program to reconnect young Aboriginal boys with their culture, to help them continue their education or training, find employment and become the leaders of the future. From this came a twin program for girls, *Solid Young Sistas*, with plans now for a women's program to strengthen families and establish support networks, particularly for single mothers. For Bill, community work is a family affair; his three sons are following in his footsteps to one day become mentors themselves. In his professional life Bill has worked extensively with community organisations and government agencies and is now part of the Reconciliation Australia team. In 2012 Bill was honoured with the ACT NAIDOC Community Spirit Award for his work with the *Solid Young Fellas* program and his contribution to the ACT community.

### **Peter Cursley – Neonatal care supporter**

When Peter Cursley suffered the tragic loss of his baby daughter and later his wife, he responded to personal tragedy by helping others. In 1995, he established the Newborn Intensive Care Foundation which has now raised more than \$3 million for Canberra Hospital's Centre for Newborn Care. Former advertising executive and now marketing director, Peter initially wanted to make a donation to the Centre but when he discovered there was a wish-list of urgently required equipment he took on the role of honorary ambassador and fundraiser. Through Peter's hard work and dedication vital equipment has been purchased including an intensive care transport cot to safely retrieve babies born outside the ACT. Around 700 babies are cared for annually by the Centre with 40 per cent from surrounding New South Wales. As well, the Foundation funds ongoing education and training for nursing staff. Combining his fulltime job with his voluntary work as chairman and driving force behind the Foundation, Peter's compassion and generosity are exemplified by the Foundation's motto: Life should not be a struggle when you are just a few hours old.

### **Patrick McCann – Football mentor**

Pat McCann's mission is to make the 'world game' accessible to everyone including people with disability. Driven by a sense of fairness, he strives for a culture of inclusion in the game by encouraging participation at all levels from playing to coaching and refereeing. As game development manager for Capital Football, Pat is responsible for the development of football and futsal. In 2011, in collaboration with local clubs, he launched a football league specifically for athletes of all abilities. The season started with just three teams and 15 players but by the last five rounds there were 45 players in five teams. In 2012 the league expanded to include a pre-season training program and, thanks to Pat's persistence and hard work, for the very first time the 2012 Kanga Cup featured a division for athletes with disabilities. Pat also runs five-a-side programs designed to encourage children to play, and Street Soccer which uses sport to reach out to homeless and disadvantaged people. He has also been a driving force behind Capital Football's multicultural scholarships to help children of newly arrived families make friends through football.

### **Francis Owusu – Dancer and mentor**

Francis Owusu has used his love of dance to stimulate others to build their confidence and self-belief, as it did for him. A child of Ghanaian parents, Francis grew up in Victoria where he endured racism born of ignorance which almost propelled him towards a life of crime. Moving to Canberra he turned his life around through dance, going on to study finance banking at university by day and exploding on stage by night as a member of the band 925. During his career he has worked with major recording artists Marcia Hines, Jon Stevens and Guy Sebastian. Driven by a determination to share his good fortune, he organised after-school dance classes for children. And so began Kulture Break, its name reflecting Francis' passion to transform a culture of negativity into a culture of pride and achievement. Over the past decade Francis and Kulture Break have performed with thousands of children in schools, community centres and jails, inspiring and motivating them. For Francis, Kulture Break is a reflection of his belief that life is not characterised by what you have received but what you can give.





## **NT - FINALISTS - AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Professor Alex Brown – Indigenous health campaigner**

Professor Alex Brown is an Indigenous doctor who believes improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is a moral, ethical and cultural obligation. A world recognised leader in Indigenous health, Alex has spent the last six years developing a research program focusing on chronic conditions which contribute to the 17-year life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. He recently completed his doctorate on chronic disease and depression in Aboriginal men in central Australia. As head of the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute's Centre for Indigenous Vascular and Diabetes Research in Alice Springs, he sees first-hand what he describes as 'the evolving tragedy' caused by chronic diseases such as diabetes. Warning this crisis is now one of the greatest threats to public and economic health, Alex campaigns tirelessly for a greater emphasis on prevention and rehabilitation. He also believes that Australia as a prosperous and well-resourced country has the potential to develop systems of care which could help ease the burden of chronic disease in the developing world.

### **Mark Grose and Michael Hohnen – Indigenous talent mentors**

As co-founders and co-directors of the Darwin based record label *Skinnyfish Music*, the extraordinary partnership of Mark Grose and Michael Hohnen has nurtured Indigenous performers from Tasmania, the Tiwi Islands and Timor Leste. For 14 years they have mentored bands through business development, connected the most remote communities with mainstream music markets and made an outstanding contribution to the preservation of Indigenous language and culture. Their work with artists including Nabarlek, Saltwater Band, George Rrurrumbu, Tom E Lewis and Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu has brought a new generation and genre of performers to the world's attention. For Mark and Michael, music is the key to unlocking potential. It has the power to motivate a new generation to pursue careers that offer economic independence, benefitting individuals, their families and the communities of remote Northern Australia. Their business is established on a platform of training and community development, harnessing music, sport and festivals to promote healthy lifestyle messages to young people. Determined but unassuming, Mark and Michael are a quiet force behind the vast, Indigenous talent they present to the world.

### **Dr Leonard Notaras AM – Trauma physician**

Dr Len Notaras is the Executive Director of the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre in the Northern Territory. The Centre is responsible for the care of seriously ill or injured patients in Australia's far north, including the Top End of the Northern Territory, coastal waters and nearby parts of the Indonesian archipelago, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea. When 62 casualties of the Bali bombing were airlifted to Darwin, Len was the Medical Superintendent at Royal Darwin Hospital. For the medical staff caring for the victims, he said the sheer magnitude of the carnage was 'their own 11<sup>th</sup> of September'. Other patients have included casualties of the second Bali bombing and President Jose Ramos Horta who was treated after being seriously wounded in an assassination attempt. Throughout his life, Len has focused on leading change. With degrees in Medicine, Law and Arts, Commerce, History and Hospital Management, his professional life has been committed to improving the capacity and efficiency of the hospital system in caring for its patients and the clinical teaching and training for the next generation of doctors.

### **Paul Taylor – Heritage campaigner**

With an interest in Indigenous culture sparked when he was social worker in the 1980s, Paul Taylor is passionate about preserving the language, law and culture of the Wardaman people. He is also an Indigenous ambassador showcasing their culture by staging performances of song, dance, painting and didgeridoo each year to thousands of children in the United States where he spends much of his time. When he returns to the vast Victoria and Flora River region of the Northern Territory each year his passion is guided by Wardaman elder Yidumduma Bill Harney whose extraordinary cultural knowledge was at risk until the inception of the Yubulywan Dreaming Project. Every dry season for the last decade, the pair has gone bush, travelling to sacred sites to record and preserve the art and songs of the Wardaman culture, an integral part of Australia's history. Paul is confident that in 2013 his work will culminate with the transfer and safe storage of the records in the archives of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies in Canberra.



## **NT - FINALISTS - SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **Dr David Gawler – Surgeon and teacher**

As an experienced vascular surgeon with a well established practice, Dr David Gawler could have happily remained in the leafy suburbs of Melbourne. Instead he moved to Darwin Hospital to devote his skills, experience and leadership to the people of the Top End. As the only vascular surgeon in the Territory, he is called upon day and night to help with complex cases. Many lives have been saved through Dr Gawler's skilled intervention, and for many others their quality of life has been immeasurably improved. David was on duty when the first of the Bali bombing survivors arrived and he performed surgery almost non-stop for 37 hours. As Director of General Surgery he has supported surgical outreach services for remote communities including Lake Evella, Elcho Island, Lajamanu, Port Keats, Nhulunbuy and Groote Eylandt. Appalled at the suffering of Aboriginal people in the town camps around Darwin, Dr Gawler works tirelessly with the Bagot community to improve people's lives. With his wife Isobel, he supports them through bereavements, domestic problems, substance addiction, family breakdowns and financial difficulties. A skilled surgeon, teacher and mentor, David Gawler certainly leads by example.

### **Dr Sadhana Mahajani – Community physician**

For the past 40 years, Indian-born Dr Sadhana Mahajani has made Darwin her home and the health and wellbeing of Territorians her greatest priority. In 1974 she helped establish Darwin's first community health centre only to see it destroyed by Cyclone Tracey. Undeterred, she continued to provide medical services from a demountable building, before later opening another six health centres. She also started making bush visits to the communities of La Belle Station, Annaburroo and Daly River winning the respect and trust of the Aboriginal people and providing Pap smears to women living in the most remote parts of the Territory. Selfless and never judgmental, Dr Mahajani's career includes working in drug and rehabilitation services, women's cancer prevention, breast screening and sexual assault services. Colleagues and patients alike speak of her calming presence, her wealth of knowledge and her practical approach in a crisis. Over the past 25 years, she has devoted her considerable energy and time to the care of the elderly particularly in the diagnosis and treatment of dementia.

### **Dr Susan Sayers – Paediatrician and researcher**

Twenty-five years ago, through the foresight of paediatrician Dr Susan Sayers, the world's largest and longest study of Indigenous health – the Aboriginal Birth Cohort study – began in Darwin. It is based on the principle that susceptibility to adult disease is a dynamic process that begins in utero. In 1987, Dr Sayers examined 686 babies within four days of their birth and interviewed their mothers about their health and lifestyle. Since then, she has monitored the group through adolescence and into adulthood and is now monitoring a second generation – the children of the original cohort. Her study has allowed her to investigate her long held concerns about the consequences of foetal growth restriction including the later development of chronic heart disease, diabetes and renal disease. Her research confirms that the risk of chronic disease in growth-retarded children greatly increases if they become obese adults. Dr Sayers says this provides a window of opportunity in childhood to prevent the development of chronic disease. Working as an honorary clinical researcher with the Menzies School of Health Research, Dr Sayers' study continues to attract international recognition.

### **Jimmy Shu – Fresh food champion**

It only took one trip to Darwin, in search of fresh barramundi for his customers in Melbourne, to convince Jimmy Shu to sell up his restaurant empire and move north. His imagination had been captured by the delicious array of south-east Asian fruits, herbs and vegetables flourishing in the tropical climate. Since then Jimmy has championed the development of local Asian market gardens, showcasing them in his Northern Territory and Cairns restaurants including the now famous Hanuman restaurant in Darwin which opened in 1992. A childhood spent in his family's restaurant in Sri Lanka imbued Jimmy with a passion for the colour, variety and taste of Asian food. He now fosters this same passion in others, supporting local growers of exotic produce to find markets. He also sponsors master chefs from India, Thailand and Malaysia to work in his restaurants. When not travelling to find new inspiration, Jimmy can be found on Sunday mornings at Darwin's Rapid Creek markets, prodding, sniffing, tasting and chatting with the stallholders. Hardworking, generous and successful, Jimmy constantly helps others find their talents and fly.



## **NT - FINALISTS - YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

### **James Emery, 28 – Equality campaigner**

James Emery is determined to make sure all people in Darwin are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their sexuality. Through his voluntary work, Darwin now has a dedicated club that offers a safe and supportive environment where gay men can meet and support each other. He also provides social support for Darwin's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex community. In 2011, James chaired the very successful Darwin Pride Festival. Passionate about celebrating diversity and promoting equality, James understands how social networks are important for people who may otherwise feel marginalised and shut out. He also harnesses social media to build those networks and provide support and information to Darwin's gay community, linking people together so they don't feel alone. By day James spends his time reaching out with these connections supported by his fulltime evening job as the manager of a local nightclub. Greatly respected by the local community for his commitment to diversity and equality, James provides a vital service to the gay community in Darwin.

### **Jessica Mauboy, 23 – Singer and actor**

Raised on a diet of country music singers like Charlie Pride and Patsy Cline, Jessica Mauboy's stellar singing career has certainly blossomed since she leapt into the limelight as runner-up in Australian Idol in 2006. Growing up in a multicultural family – her father Ferdi is of Indonesian descent and her mother Therese is an Indigenous Australian – Jessica started singing early with her grandmother in the church choir. Since her Idol days, she has released three acclaimed albums and also had a No 1 hit with *Burn*. She has also starred in two films, *Bran Nue Dae* and most recently *The Sapphires* – a true story about four Aboriginal women who performed for the troops in Vietnam – which saw her treading the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival at the age of just 23. Away from the microphone, Jessica uses her high public profile to support community organisations and promote reconciliation, multiculturalism and healthy living. She works closely with young people in regional and remote communities, harnessing the power of music to connect and inspire.

### **Evonne Thompson, 28 – Health worker and carer**

Young mother, health worker and student, Evonne Thompson is a role model for all young women, especially those in the remote community of Canteen Creek, 300 kilometres east of Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory, where she lives on traditional land called Owairtilla. Although only 27 years old, Evonne has a maturity and sense of responsibility well beyond her years and is dedicated to her work at the local health clinic. She understands that education is essential for success in life and is currently studying to improve her own skills and qualifications. As well as caring for her own children, Evonne is also the main carer for another three children. She is determined to build a strong future for all the children in her care and makes sure that they are healthy and attend school regularly. Her drive and commitment are an example to others who live in the small community; she is proof of what can be achieved through education, effort and commitment.

### **Matthew Turner, 26 – Nature guide**

When Matthew Turner was born with a severe heart condition and spina bifida doctors advised his mother, Catherine, that it was unlikely her tiny son would live until his first birthday. Twenty-six birthdays later, Matt is a fulltime guide at the Alice Springs Desert Park and is passionate about the flora, fauna and culture of Central Australia. Through his childhood, Matt underwent many major heart operations but has not let this get in the way of realising his dreams. His supervisor describes him as an instant hit with visitors and colleagues thanks to his bright and lively personality. He is an integral team member at Desert Park which attracts around 75,000 visitors each year. In 2007 Matt's achievements were recognised with a Brolga Young Achiever Award and in 2009 he was acknowledged as a person making a difference in the Alice Springs community. Proof that his mother is right when she says: "Matthew can do anything. He may just have to do it differently from other people."



## **NT - FINALISTS - AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO**

### **Peter Fletcher – Youth campaigner**

Born and raised in the small community of Ngukurr, 330 kilometres south-east of Katherine, Peter Fletcher is forging a career aimed at improving the lives of the people who live in this remote part of Australia. Only 24 years old, Peter has already completed a double degree in criminology and psychology. Using this knowledge, he works with local police to help build more positive relationships with young people and in particular to curb binge drinking. It is no surprise that Peter has chosen to settle in the Northern Territory as his mother has been involved in remote area health for more than 30 years. Peter is dedicated to empowering Aboriginal people to make positive change in their lives. He doesn't underestimate the challenges faced in remote communities but takes a 'one day at a time' approach. While he understands that huge generational and attitudinal shifts are required to deliver positive change, he is heartened by the small improvements he sees every day.

### **Jeffrey Lee AM – Heritage custodian**

Jeffrey Lee could have become one of Australia's richest men. But as the last of the Djok clan and senior custodian of his land, he gave up what would have been billions of dollars in mining royalties in order to secure the inclusion of his land in the Kakadu World Heritage Area. With the support of the Bininj clans of Kakadu and neighbouring clans including the Mirarr people, Jeffrey travelled to Paris to ask the UNESCO World Heritage Committee to inscribe Koongarra country on the World Heritage List. He told the committee that he wanted to ensure that the traditional laws, customs, sites, bush tucker, trees, plants and water at Koongarra remained as they were when passed on to him by his father and great-grandfather. The area also has rock art dating back thousands of years. Jeffrey says the Committee's decision to list Koongarra as World Heritage was an important step in making the protection lasting and real. 'I'm not interested in money. I've got a job. I can buy tucker; I can go fishing and hunting. That's all that matters to me,' Jeffrey says.

### **Beverley Shuker – Community stalwart**

Beverly Shuker, with the support of her husband Hek, has devoted her life to her community in the outer suburb of Darwin River. For 30 years they have been stalwarts of the Rural Fire Service where Bev is bookkeeper and occasional fire fighter. After raising a family of four sons, they are still connected with Berry Springs School where Bev works in the canteen. For the last 10 years, Bev has also cared for injured wildlife. Visitors to her home often find kangaroos and wallabies convalescing in makeshift pouches hanging from the kitchen chairs. No stranger to the four-hourly feeding regime, Bev also cares for orphaned marsupials before releasing them into the bush once they are independent. Bev has devoted her life to her community in the outer suburb of Darwin River where she lives. Neighbours and friends describe Bev as a true local hero; someone who is always willing to give back to her community without any expectation of recognition or reward.

### **Scott and Penny Weily – Foster parents**

With three young children and two fulltime jobs, Alice Springs couple Scott and Penny Weily already have busy lives. But soon after they arrived in Alice Springs they decided to foster a two year old Aboriginal child – a little boy with hearing and behaviour problems. Soon after their family expanded to embrace Christianna who had undergone surgery in the hospital where Scott worked and who needed specialised care. Later, the Weilys became foster parents to two more siblings bringing the number of foster children in their care to four. Scott and Penny are raising their extended family in a supportive and loving environment along with their own children. Penny who continues to work as a teacher says 'Our own children simply regard their extra siblings as just that – their brothers and sisters.' Scott works in a program aimed to encourage young Aboriginal people to complete their education. He coaches an Aboriginal football team and is also assistant coach to the Northern Territory under-18 side. Friends and colleagues describe the Weilys as an extraordinary and inspirational couple who are making a remarkable contribution to their community.

