



**MEDIA RELEASE  
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**FINALISTS FOR THE AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2013 NOW ANNOUNCED**

The roll call of inspiring Australians in the running for the Australian of the Year Awards 2013 is now finalised, with all State & Territory award recipients announced at a series of events around Australia over the past four weeks.

State & Territory award recipients in the four award categories - Australian of the Year, Senior Australian of the Year, Young Australian of the Year and Australia's Local Hero - are now finalists for the national awards which will be announced in Canberra on 25 January 2013.

Those now in consideration for the national awards are:

**AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR 2013 - FINALISTS**

Australian Capital Territory - Dr Tom Calma AO  
New South Wales - Ita Buttrose AO OBE  
Northern Territory - Mark Grose and Michael Hohnen  
Queensland - Professor Adèle Green AC  
South Australia - Sonya Ryan  
Tasmania - Andrew Hughes  
Victoria - Harold Mitchell AC  
Western Australia - Kerry Stokes AC

**SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR 2013 - FINALISTS**

Australian Capital Territory - Dr Jim Peacock AC  
New South Wales - Ron Allum  
Northern Territory - Dr Sadhana Mahajani  
Queensland - Laurie Lawrence  
South Australia – Emeritus Professor Ian Maddocks AM  
Tasmania - Anna Crotty  
Victoria - Emeritus Professor T John Martin AO  
Western Australia - Lorraine and Barry Young

**YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR 2013 - FINALISTS**

Australian Capital Territory - Julie McKay  
New South Wales - Corey Payne  
Northern Territory - Jessica Mauboy  
Queensland - Sally Pearson  
South Australia - Vanessa Picker  
Tasmania - Holly Barnewall  
Victoria - Hayley Bolding  
Western Australia - Akram Azimi

**AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO 2013 - FINALISTS**

Australian Capital Territory - Francis Owusu  
New South Wales – Shane Phillips  
Northern Territory - Peter Fletcher  
Queensland - Sergeant Dimitrios Bellos  
South Australia - Anna Kemp  
Tasmania – Gwen Egg  
Victoria - Pam Adams  
Western Australia - Caroline de Mori

Tam Johnston, Program Director for the National Australia Day Council, said the finalists for the 2013 national awards had all been nominated for their achievements or contributions.

"The State and Territory award recipients are extraordinary people following their passions and making the world a better place for it," said Ms Johnston.

"These remarkable Australians have made an impact on many levels – some working tirelessly in the local communities, others at an international level - but they are all Australians we can be very proud of."

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 award recipients.

"The Commonwealth Bank is proud to acknowledge the State and Territory award recipients. You are now national finalists in the Australian of the Year Awards and should be very proud of your achievement.

"While you have each been inspiring in your own way, you all share one common quality – you continue to selflessly improve the lives of others. Congratulations to you all and enjoy your time in Canberra in January" said Mr Narev.

The announcement of the Australian of the Year Awards 2013 will be held on the lawns outside Parliament House, Canberra from 6pm on Friday 25 January 2012.

For more information on the Australian of the Year Awards visit [ww.australianoftheyear.org.au](http://ww.australianoftheyear.org.au).

**Ends.**

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Bios of State & Territory Award recipients attached and also downloadable from [www.australianoftheyear.org.au](http://www.australianoftheyear.org.au)

## AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2013 FINALIST BIOS BY AWARD CATEGORY

### AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR 2013 - FINALISTS

#### **ACT - Dr Tom Calma AO**

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.

#### **New South Wales - Ita Buttrose AO OBE**

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.

#### **Northern Territory - Mark Grose and Michael Hohnen**

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 Rurrumbu, 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.

#### **Queensland - Professor Adèle Green AC**

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.

#### **South Australia - Sonya Ryan**

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.

### **Tasmania - Andrew Hughes**

Adventure teacher Andrew Hughes has combined his two great passions: inspiring students from diverse backgrounds, and building awareness of the importance of our natural world. Seven years ago, Andrew developed the innovative teaching program *Expedition Class*, where primary students follow him into the wilderness by satellite link and interact live as he tackles challenging landscapes and situations Andrew has also developed the high school expedition program *Skullbone* in which students are re-engaged, linking curriculum to their own real adventures on expeditions. Andrew began in 2006 by kayaking 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. 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. Andrew is the 2012 *Power of One Awardee*, and is a key part of the award-winning Bookend team recognised by the Tasmanian Government, the United Nations Association of Australia, the Banksia Environmental Foundation, and named Australian Geographic's *Conservationist of the Year*.

### **Victoria - Harold Mitchell AC**

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.

### **Western Australia - Kerry Stokes AC**

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.

## **SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR 2013 – FINALISTS**

### **ACT - Dr Jim Peacock AC**

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.

### **New South Wales - Ron Allum**

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.

### **Northern Territory - Dr Sadhana Mahajani**

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.

### **Queensland - Laurie Lawrence**

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.

### **South Australia - Emeritus Professor Ian Maddocks AM**

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.

**Tasmania - Anna Crotty**

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.

**Victoria - Emeritus Professor T John Martin AO**

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.

**Western Australia - Lorraine and Barry Young**

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.

## **YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR 2013 – FINALISTS**

### **ACT - Julie McKay, 29**

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.

### **New South Wales - Corey Payne, 28**

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.

### **Northern Territory - Jessica Mauboy, 23**

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.

### **Queensland - Sally Pearson, 26**

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.

### **South Australia - Vanessa Picker, 21**

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.

**Tasmania - Holly Barnewall, 27**

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.

**Victoria - Hayley Bolding, 30**

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, Muktangan, 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.

**Western Australia - Akram Azimi, 25**

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.

## **AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO 2013 - FINALISTS**

### **ACT - Francis Owusu**

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.

### **New South Wales - Shane Phillips**

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.

### **Northern Territory - Peter Fletcher**

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.

### **Queensland - Sergeant Dimitrios Bellos**

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.

### **South Australia - Anna Kemp**

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.'

### **Tasmania - Gwen Egg**

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.

#### **Victoria - Pam Adams**

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.

#### **Western Australia - Caroline de Mori**

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.