

**MEDIA RELEASE
8 NOVEMBER 2012**

EMBARGOED UNTIL 8:00PM DARWIN TIME OR AS ANNOUNCED AT EVENT

NORTHERN TERRITORY AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS 2013 ANNOUNCED

Northern Territory Australian of the Year 2013 - Mark Grose and Michael Hohnen
Northern Territory Senior Australian of the Year 2013 - Dr Sadhana Mahajani
Northern Territory Young Australian of the Year 2013 - Jessica Mauboy
Northern Territory Local Hero 2013 - Peter Fletcher

Indigenous talent mentors **Mark Grose and Michael Hohnen** have been named joint **Northern Territory Australian of the Year 2013** in recognition of their commitment to nurturing Indigenous talent.

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 Rurrambu, 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 Sadhana Mahajani was awarded **Northern Territory Senior Australian of the Year 2013** for her work as a 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.

The Northern Territory Young Australian of the Year 2013 is 23 year old singer and actor **Jessica Mauboy** for her creative success and her commitment to promoting reconciliation, multiculturalism and healthy living.

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.

The Northern Territory Local Hero 2013 is youth campaigner **Peter Fletcher** recognised for his work in improving the lives of those living in remote areas of the Top End.

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.

The Northern Territory award recipients will join recipients from the other States and Territories as finalists for the national awards announced on 25 January 2013 in Canberra.

Program Director for the National Australia Day Council, Tam Johnston, said the Northern Territory award recipients demonstrate the amazing work being done in the Top End.

"The Northern Territory award recipients are all fantastic examples of the diverse skills that people have in the Top End - all making remarkable changes to the lives of Australians," said Ms Johnston.

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 Northern Territory award recipients.

"The Commonwealth Bank is proud to acknowledge the Northern 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.

For more information on the Australian of the Year Awards visit www.australianoftheyear.org.au.

Ends.

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EMBARGO NOTE: Media attending the Awards event may of course report award recipients as they are announced on stage OR follow Australian of the Year Awards on Facebook for the awards announcements as they happen - once each award is announced, it can be reported.

