

MEDIA RELEASE - TUESDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2018

**NOMINEES ANNOUNCED FOR
2019 QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

A farmer, a young model, a paediatrician, a special swimming coach and a medical inventor are among nominees for the 2019 Queensland Australian of the Year Awards.

The nominees announced today are in the running to be named Queensland Australian of the Year, Queensland Senior Australian of the Year, Queensland Young Australian of the Year and Queensland Local Hero.

The 2019 Queensland Award nominees are:

2019 QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

Lorraine Hatton - Veteran and community leader (Paradise Point)
Jon Rouse - Detective Inspector and children's champion (Ashgrove)
Tony Sharp - Social entrepreneur (Bethania)
Dr Harry Stalewski - Founding father of paediatric surgery in North Queensland (Townsville)

2019 QUEENSLAND SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

Lillian Burke - Community elder and volunteer (Gympie)
Professor James Dale AO – Scientist (Moggill)
Professor John Grant-Thomson AM RFD - Medical engineer and inventor (New Farm)
Sandra Richards - Farmer, environmentalist and volunteer (Townsville)

2019 QUEENSLAND YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

Angel Dixon - Model and activist (Gold Coast)
Kristen Larsen - Activist and volunteer (Upper Kedron)
Chaz Prezident – Entrepreneur (Bundall)
Mikhara Ramsing - Social enterprise CEO, youth suicide activist (Anstead)

2019 QUEENSLAND LOCAL HERO

Joan Beacroft - Social justice advocate (Bloomfield)
Elijah Buol – Advocate (Regents Park)
Elisabeth Ewen - Swimming coach volunteer (Stafford Heights)
Barbara Kienast – Volunteer (Samford)

**see bios on following pages*

The Queensland Australian of the Year, Senior Australian of the Year, Young Australian of the Year and Local Hero Award recipients will be announced on the evening of Friday 9 November 2018 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The Queensland Award recipients will join other State and Territory recipients from around Australia in the national awards, which will be held in Canberra on 25 January 2019.

National Australia Day Council CEO, Ms Karlie Brand, said the Queensland nominees are among more than 120 people being recognised in all States and Territories as part of the 2019 Australian of the Year Awards.

"The Queensland nominees are extraordinary people doing what they see needs doing most," said Ms Brand.

"Through their experiences, skills and contributions, they are all making a difference and making their mark."

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

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Nominee bios attached with this media release or can be viewed from australianoftheyear.org.au
Nominee photos can be downloaded from australianoftheyear.org.au

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BIOGRAPHIES

QUEENSLAND - NOMINEES - AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

Lorraine Hatton

Veteran and community leader

A proud Quandamooka woman and elder from the Nunukul tribe, Lorraine Hatton distinguished herself in service to her country in the Australian Regular Army for 20 years. Retiring as warrant officer class two, her career spanned peacekeeping and humanitarian missions, peace-monitoring, and war operations in various theatres and campaigns. She achieved many firsts for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous servicewomen, including service in Afghanistan. Lorraine now plays a significant role in community leadership, serving with multiple community organisations. She is a female mentor with the Titans 4 Tomorrow and Brisbane Broncos Indigenous Girls' Academy program, the Preston Campbell Foundation, and a spokesperson for Indigenous Council Committees. Lorraine is Chair of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Dedicated Memorial Committee; established to acknowledge the military service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and make the necessary steps toward reconciliation. Through her generosity and dedication, Lorraine is an inspiration for all Australians.

Jon Rouse

Detective Inspector and children's champion

Detective Inspector Rouse has 34 years' service with Queensland Police. In 1996 Jon commenced investigating crimes against children and in 2001 commenced at Task Force Argos where he implemented Australia's first operation proactively targeting internet child sex offenders. Jon gained national support for the development of the ANVIL project (Australian National Victim Image Library) to assist police officers to identify the child victims depicted in images seized from sex offenders. Jon has dedicated significant time to global awareness, delivering training and presentations on online child exploitation investigations to law enforcement officers across Australian and internationally. Currently Sub Group Chair of the INTERPOL Covert Internet Investigators Group and a Director with The Society for the Policing of Cyberspace (POLCYB), Jon is recipient of four Commissioners Certificates for operational leadership, two Excellence awards for Child Protection Prevention, the Queensland Police Medal, the National Service Medal, the Exemplary Conduct medal, the National Police Medal and in May 2018 the 'Champion for Children Award' in New York from the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children.

Tony Sharp

Social entrepreneur

Tony Sharp is a social entrepreneur turning e-trash into e-treasure. His innovation, Substation33, recycles electronic waste, resulting in only 8% going into landfill – with steel, plastic, copper and electronics components resold and repurposed for new uses. Tony established a specialist team to develop products from recycled materials; such as electric bikes powered by recycled laptop batteries, and flood warning signs which won an Engineers Australia award for innovation. In addition, Substation33 has provided over 150 first-time jobs and vital skills to unemployed members of the community. Tony is keen to encourage other entrepreneurs and runs two hackathons each year; one for social start-ups and the other for Engineers Without Borders. He also offers an incubator space for young engineers to work on their ideas for free. Tony has solved an environmental problem and provided meaningful work and skills for the Logan community. Generous, positive and incredibly hard-working, Tony is selfless in his commitment to his community.

Dr Harry Stalewski

Founding father of paediatric surgery in North Queensland

When Dr Harry Stalewski arrived in Townsville from the UK in 1987, he became solely responsible for all paediatric surgery north of Brisbane. This meant being on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year – for 25 years. He has saved countless lives, and supported thousands of families through some of their toughest times. Harry believes that children shouldn't have to travel to receive first-class care, and it was his drive that has enabled specialist paediatric surgery to be provided to North Queensland's children. Harry established clinics in Cairns and Mackay, and every few months, time on Thursday Island consulting and operating. Having a broad training base Harry initially looked after all aspects of paediatric surgery but as new specialists have arrived, his main focus now is on neonatal surgery, genitourinary surgery and paediatric plastics & burns. Harry mentored medical, nursing and occupational therapy students and lectures at the James Cook University. Harry is honoured for his dedication and his impeccable, selfless and tireless efforts.

QUEENSLAND - NOMINEES - SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

Lillian Burke

Community elder and volunteer

Lillian Burke is a tireless and inspirational champion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. She's participated in 100 boards, committees and consultancy groups, devoting up to five-hours-a-day, six-days-a-week, to volunteering. Lillian is President of Cooloola Aboriginal Services, Gympie State High School's adopted elder and mentor, and runs the annual NAIDOC celebrations, Sorry Day and other significant days in Gympie. With Fraser Island's Indigenous Advisory Committee, she helped Aboriginal rangers create a cultural heritage database, was involved with a leadership camp for Indigenous high-school girls, a healthy-eating program for young mums, and a program for foster carers of Aboriginal children. Her outstanding efforts were recognised with Volunteering Queensland's Lifetime Contribution to Volunteering Award in 2016. Lillian has also been named an Honorary Senior Fellow of the University of the Sunshine Coast. A Butchulla woman with a Kabi connection, Lillian was forcibly removed from her family as a child and forced to live in a girls' institution. Despite these traumatic events, she has devoted much of her life to serving her community.

Professor James Dale AO

Scientist

Scientist, researcher and humanitarian Professor James Dale has led significant research programs in agricultural biotechnology. He was the inaugural Director of the Centre for Tropical Crops and Bio-commodities (CTCB) at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), and founded Australia's first molecular farming company, Farmacule Bioindustries. His ground-breaking work includes seeking a solution to Vitamin A deficiency, which leads to death of an estimated 670,000 children in developing countries, and blindness in another 400,000. James led a project to genetically modify bananas – the staple diet in many poor countries – to boost their pro-vitamin A levels. The release of these lifesaving bananas is planned for East Africa in four years. James also placed disease-resistant genes into local Cavendish bananas, to protect them from a virus and fungi that destroy crops and cause significant economic damage in Queensland. He has also led developments including medical technology that enables rapid testing for genetic diseases, and molecular farming technology that aims to produce edible, plant-based vaccines.

Professor John Grant-Thomson AM RFD

Medical engineer and inventor

Emeritus Professor John Grant-Thomson has dedicated his life to serving Australia through outstanding military, industry and academic careers. His most significant invention, the Neocot, transports approximately 300 premature or critically-ill Australian babies to specialist hospitals each month, and helps save countless critically ill babies in European countries. Produced in Toowoomba through BAC Technologies, the Neocot contributes significantly to the local economy. John served in the Royal Australian Air Force and Royal Australian Army Medical Corps and was a reservist for three decades, receiving Military Awards. His medical Mobile Intensive Care Rescue Facility, developed with an Australian Army doctor, was initially used for ADF troops in the Rwandan civil war. He was a member of the NASA team which established a tracking station in Toowoomba to research satellite communication systems culminating in man walking on the moon. John enjoyed a long and fulfilling academic career at the University of Southern Queensland, obtaining graduate and postgraduate qualifications. He pioneered developments in biomedical engineering, inspired scores of research students, and built links between the military, community and local industry.

Sandra Richards

Farmer, environmentalist and volunteer

Sandra Richards is passionate about the land and her community. While running cattle farms in outback Queensland and bringing up five children, she ran a remote school for children, and held pottery classes for isolated neighbours. In 2003, Sandra hand-planted 10,000 African mahogany trees, and helped found the Mahogany Processors Co-Op. A committed environmentalist, she's now using mahogany and recycled plastic waste to create an innovative wood plastic product, providing more jobs to the Townsville region. Sandra has survived five major surgeries, breast cancer, a major quad bike accident and a life-threatening blood-clotting condition. Despite these challenges, she's devoted significant time to her community, including as Chairperson of the United Graziers Association's Chairperson, Matilda Merino Association's founder and chairperson; the Richard Horse Racing Club's cook, and the Girl Guides and Brownies' District Commissioner. As President of Townsville's Inner Wheel, she established a thrift shop for the Red Cross; fundraises for the cord blood bank and makes pillows for heart patients.

QUEENSLAND - NOMINEES - YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

Angel Dixon

Model and activist

The first agency signed model with a physical impairment to feature in a national television campaign Angel Dixon's mission is to challenge societies perception of disability. The two-time Mercedes Benz Fashion Week model is a passionate activist for disability inclusion and human rights. Aware of the power that the media has in forming perceptions, Angel is advocacy manager for not-for-profit organisation, Starting With Julius, and CEO of the Attitude Foundation. Both organisations seek to accelerate the inclusion of people with disability through the creation of authentic media and education on inclusive principals. Angel is also a member of the steering committee for NOW Australia, a not-for-profit that provides support for people who have experienced workplace sexual harassment. A remarkable public speaker and blogger, Angel's other passion is design. She's currently working on a line of walking canes that will be marketed as a fashion accessory – making buying a mobility tool a more positive experience and helping change attitudes towards disability.

Kristen Larsen

Activist and volunteer

Just 21 years old when she was diagnosed with Stage 3C ovarian cancer in 2013, Kristen Larsen is using her experience to educate others – and raise funds for cancer research. Despite enduring multiple operations, rounds of chemotherapy, radiation, hormone therapy and clinical trials, Kristen has selflessly volunteered for charities in Australia, the UK, Canada and USA, to help build awareness of the disease. Her efforts have helped raise more than \$1 million for cancer charities, providing much-needed funds for research and clinical trials. Kristen has recently stepped into the volunteer role of Brisbane Regional Coordinator of ANZGOG's new program, Survivors Teaching Students. Keen to spread the word about ovarian cancer, its symptoms, and the stories of fellow survivors, she entered into and won the nationwide competition Podquest, which will allow her to launch her own podcast series Ovarshare. She supports fellow cancer survivors and their families through a tight-knit, social media community, and through her engaging public speaking and media interviews.

Chaz Prezident

Entrepreneur

Thirty-year-old Chaz Prezident brings enthusiasm, passion and significant contributions to the Australian business community. A Chartered Accountant and registered Tax Agent, he founded the equity sourced crowdfunding platform Crowdfunding.com.au. The platform raises up to \$5 million for Australian businesses, by combining micro investments from retail investors. Crowdfunding.com.au fosters innovation by giving Australian companies and start-ups access to capital – and Australians a stake in an enterprise for a small financial investment. Chaz's efforts as Founder were recognised when he was named the 2018 Australian Fintech Leader of the Year at the Young Leaders in Finance Awards. Chaz is well respected in the Gold Coast business community. As volunteer President of the Gold Coast Junior Chamber of Commerce (GCJCC), he has grown the not-for-profit organisation dramatically in the past 18 months. He was also a guest speaker at the 2018 high-profile event Myriad, for influential thinkers and entrepreneurs.

Mikhara Ramsing

Social enterprise CEO, youth suicide activist

As a queer South African Indian Australian woman, Mikhara Ramsing understands what it's like to feel invisible – and has used this experience to create social change. She has founded two social enterprises – Ground Chai, which sells chai to fund skills workshops for rural and regional high school students, and Ethnic LGBT+, Australia's first national website providing resources, support and a safe place for culturally and linguistically diverse LGBT+ people to share their stories. A courageous trailblazer who believes in the life-saving power of storytelling, Mikhara left her secure corporate job with the vision of reducing youth suicide. Using her own funds, she travelled 40,000 km around Australia in a tiny home built on the back of trailer to hear the stories and challenges of 72 rural communities. In 2018 alone, she worked personally with 190 young women from refugee and migrant backgrounds, giving them tools to become self-sufficient. An empathetic leader, she is one of 2018's ten Westpac Social Change Fellows.

QUEENSLAND - NOMINEES - AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO

Joan Beacroft

Social justice advocate

As Coordinator of the Wujal Wujal Justice Group in Bloomfield, Eastern Cape York, Joan's tireless efforts to support, train and empower the community goes way beyond helping individuals deal with the justice system.

Joan has mediated family and community conflicts and domestic violence, and sourced counselling and rehabilitation of offenders and victims. Before Bloomfield had a local police station, she would help stop fights by standing in the street between opposing sides. A strong advocate for Indigenous people's right to live safely and peacefully, she lobbied government with community elders for years, eventually leading to the establishment of a police station and community alcohol management plan. As well as building the Wujal Wujal Justice Group into a highly respected independent corporation and not-for-profit, Joan serves as a JP, worked at the Bloomfield Primary school for eight years, and managed the local post office for eight years. The high level of trust placed in Joan is testament to her commitment to the community.

Elijah Buol

Advocate

Since arriving as an unaccompanied minor from South Sudan, Elijah Buol – a Criminologist, former refugee, father of four and Director of Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland – spends much of his time helping young and disadvantaged community members integrate successfully into Australian society. With qualifications including a Master of Law, Master of Justice in Intelligence, a Bachelor of Human Services and currently studying Juris Doctor at the Australian National University, Elijah has held senior and volunteer positions in community and not-for-profit sectors. Elijah's advocacy work was instrumental in helping remove children under 18 from adult prisons in Queensland. He has held numerous volunteer positions and is recipient of multiple awards for advocacy and community services. Through motivational speaking and leadership training, Elijah has inspired many disadvantaged Indigenous, refugee and migrant young people. He established the African Australian Women's Network now the African Australian Women's Association to improve the wellbeing of African women living in Australia. He has mentored through the prestigious Young African Australian Star Awards, celebrating high performing young African Australian Queenslanders, as President of Queensland African Communities Council.

Elisabeth Ewen

Swimming coach volunteer

For more than 23 years, Elisabeth (Liz) Ewen has been a volunteer coach for Special Olympics Queensland. With enthusiasm, commitment and patience, Liz supports athletes with intellectual disabilities to succeed in the pool – and in life. Her ongoing roles include Special Olympics QLD Aquatics Coach, Michael Phelps (IM Program) Learn to Swim Coordinator, Technical Delegate and State Aquatics Coordinator. Apprehensive families bringing young children with disabilities to the pool for the first time are quickly put at ease, and often amazed at what they can achieve under her expert and encouraging guidance. An advocate for her swimmers, Liz ensures they are treated with fairness and are given opportunities to achieve their best. As Head Coach, Liz has led many swimming teams to compete within Australia and internationally, including in the Special Olympics. Liz also encourages older athletes to become leaders and teachers themselves, giving much of her time to mentor and support them.

Barbara Kienast

Volunteer

As founder, co-ordinator and driving force behind the Samford Support Network (SSN), Barbara Kienast provides valuable support to people in her community who are ill, elderly, living with a disability or simply struggling. With Barbara's leadership, the network of local volunteers has provided, transport, gardening, handyman, social, in-home and emergency support to hundreds of isolated people in Samford, in the Moreton Bay region. A migrant and mother of three with a career in medical research at Clinical Network Services, an Australian owned company, Barbara led the process to turn the SSN into a registered charity. She manages and motivates over 50 volunteers while running multiple major programs. The keeping people in their homes program is a new approach to age and disability care. The program includes free medic alert system and key safes along with community and professional support and a delivery of weekly free food boxes. The SSN is fully funded by the community and their services are predominantly free.