

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**TUESDAY 23 OCTOBER 2018**

## **2019 VICTORIAN AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED**

**2019 Victorian Australian of the Year – Mark Sullivan**  
**2019 Victorian Senior Australian of the Year – Alison Harcourt**  
**2019 Victorian Young Australian of the Year – Dr Skye Kinder**  
**2019 Victoria's Local Hero – Carol Matthews**

The 2019 Victorian Australian of the Year Award recipients have been announced this evening at a ceremony hosted by Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria, and Mr Anthony Howard QC at Government House in Melbourne.

The Victorian Award recipients will become part of 32 State and Territory recipients from around the country. These recipients will represent their state at the national Awards on 25 January 2019 in Canberra, where the four Australians of the Year will be announced.

**The 2019 Victorian Australian of the Year is Medicines Development of Global Health Founder, Mark Sullivan of Camberwell.** From his tiny Southbank office, Mark's work ensures millions of disadvantaged people get the medicines they need. Founder and managing director of not-for-profit Medicines Development for Global Health (MDGH), Mark and his 11-person team develop medicines based on public health needs, rather than commercial opportunity. After years of fundraising, research and development, MDGH was the first Australian biopharmaceutical company to receive FDA approval for a new drug, moxidectin. The medicine treats river blindness, a debilitating illness affecting 20 million people in sub-Saharan Africa. The company has a self-sustained model to manufacture and distribute moxidectin. They are also planning clinical trials to assess moxidectin as a new treatment for the scabies parasite that up to 70% of Aboriginal babies have suffered by the age of 1. The drug may also be an option for the 1.5 billion people affected with other neglected tropical diseases. Just as importantly, Mark has developed a highly effective new business model for developing much-needed new medicines.

**The 2019 Victorian Senior Australian of the Year is 89 year old STEM pioneer Alison Harcourt of Kew.** As a woman in mathematics and statistics, Alison's seminal work from the 1950s onwards was often overlooked. She is now best known for developing integer linear programming, the basis of efficient computer processing. The 1960 paper written with Ailsa Land on the topic has been cited in 3000 academic journal articles. Alison has written numerous papers and is the co-author of three books. She was also one of the first users of CSIRAC, Australia's first digital computer. As a statistician, she worked with social scientist Ronald Henderson and economist R. J. Harper on what became known as the Melbourne Poverty Survey, Australia's first systematic, quantitative measure of poverty. Their work formed the basis of the 1972 Royal Commission into poverty. Alison's other outstanding work, with fellow statistician Malcolm Clark, on the randomisation of electoral ballot papers led to a change in the Commonwealth Electoral Act in 1984.

**The 2019 Victorian Young Australian of the Year is 27 year old Doctor Skye Kinder of Bendigo.** Skye has dedicated her medical career to improving the health of marginalised patients throughout Australia. After witnessing her father travel to Melbourne for specialist appointments, she became committed to easing the travel burden and financial impact of healthcare on rural populations. While studying, Skye became a passionate advocate for rural health, representing the Australian Medical Students' Association (AMSA) as Rural Health Officer. Through AMSA, she co-founded and chaired the first Rural Health Committee and set up a national Rural Health Summit, creating new opportunities for students in regional areas to participate in advocacy and policy. Now a doctor, and board member of Rural Doctors Association of Victoria, Skye continues to highlight rural health issues to local, national and international audiences, through her research, ongoing speaking engagements, press appearances, workshops, and articles. Skye was named Victoria's Junior Doctor of the Year in 2017 and Bendigo's Young Citizen of the Year in 2014.

**The 2019 Victoria's Local Hero is bushfire survivor and activist, Carol Matthews of Brunswick.**

On 7 February 2009 Carol, Dave and Ellie Matthews experienced an unimaginable tragedy – the death of their 22-year-old son Sam, and the destruction of their home in the Black Saturday bushfires. Despite her considerable pain, Carol put her grief on 'hold' to advocate for emotional preparedness to be included in bushfire planning and preparation. She has been pivotal in developing a 'multi-sensory bus' to help people understand the effect that high arousal during the chaos of a fire will have on decision making. Carol has attended many meetings with Victorian Government representatives and supported other community members recovering from the trauma of the bushfire. Carol was also the lead litigant in the class action against the electricity distributor that caused the fire, securing \$500 million for survivors – the largest class action settlement in Australian history. In the face of her own personal loss, she displayed enormous courage to secure a better outcome for bushfire victims.

The Governor of Victoria congratulated all the nominees and recipients, praising their contributions.

“The Australian of the Year Awards are an important way of recognising the Australians – and Victorians – who contribute so much to every aspect of life in our community,” said Her Excellency

“The nominees we celebrate tonight have been chosen from among so many other outstanding Victorians. They all contribute in a unique way, yet they share various qualities: from creativity and kindness to entrepreneurialism and innovation.”

State Member for Broadmeadows, Mr Frank McGuire MP represented the Premier for the 2019 Victorian Australian of the Year Awards event and added his congratulations.

“The men and women we're celebrating today embody the very best values of our state,” said Mr McGuire

“Whether breaking new ground in the sciences and arts, setting new standards for community service, or speaking up for Victorians who don't have a voice, they have made extraordinary contributions. And they have each set an example to be followed.”

National Australia Day Council CEO, Ms Karlie Brand noted this was the first of eight State and Territory Awards announcements which will take place over coming weeks.

“Victoria kicks off an exciting time of year when we recognise more than 120 nominees around the country and find out who the State and Territory Award recipients are – the people who will be in the running for the national Australian of the Year Awards,” said Ms Brand.

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

**ENDS.**

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**PHOTOS:** from the Awards announcement event can be downloaded as available from [australianoftheyear.org.au](http://australianoftheyear.org.au)

**For more information** on the Australian of the Year Awards visit <https://www.australianoftheyear.org.au/nominate/frequently-asked-questions/>