

MEDIA RELEASE
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2020 AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS FINALISTS - 32 GREAT AUSSIES VYING FOR NATIONAL HONOURS

Awards to be announced 25 January 2020
australianoftheyear.org.au

The everyday people in the running for the 60th Anniversary Australian of the Year Awards have now been announced by the National Australia Day Council.

Award recipients in each state and territory have been announced over the past month and are now in consideration for the 2020 Australian of the Year Awards, to be presented at the National Arboretum in Canberra on the evening of Saturday 25 January 2020.

There are 32 people in contention for four award categories:

- 2020 Australian of the Year
- 2020 Senior Australian of the Year
- 2020 Young Australian of the Year
- 2020 Australia's Local Hero

National Australia Day Council CEO, Ms Karlie Brand, said the national finalists represented the diversity of Australia and the many ways in which people were achieving and contributing.

"The national finalists are an extraordinary group of people whose impact ranges from medical and scientific endeavours to volunteering, human rights advocacy, education, sustainability action and more," said Ms Brand.

"Their stories reflect our communities and the world in which we live, inspiring us and reminding us we can all make a difference.

"As this is the 60th anniversary of the Australian of the Year Awards, it is a particularly special year to be a finalist.

"We look forward to welcoming all the national finalists to Canberra in January and celebrating their achievements and the history of the Australian of the Year Awards."

The national finalists for the 2020 Australian of the Year Awards are:

2020 AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

2020 ACT Australian of the Year – Katrina Fanning
2020 NSW Australian of the Year – Professor Munjed Al Muderis
2020 NT Australian of the Year – Dr Geoffrey Thompson
2020 Queensland Australian of the Year – Rachel Downie
2020 SA Australian of the Year – Dr James Muecke AM
2020 Tasmania Australian of the Year – Dr Jess Melbourne-Thomas
2020 Victoria Australian of the Year – Archie Roach AM
2020 WA Australian of the Year – Annie Fogarty AM

2020 SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

2020 ACT Senior Australian of the Year – Sue Salthouse
2020 NSW Senior Australian of the Year – Sue Lennox
2020 NT Senior Australian of the Year – Banduk Marika AO
2020 Queensland Senior Australian of the Year – Peter Dornan AM
2020 SA Senior Australian of the Year – Sylvia McMillan
2020 Tasmania Senior Australian of the Year – Dr Graeme Stevenson
2020 Victoria Senior Australian of the Year – Dr Raymond Shuey APM
2020 WA Senior Australian of the Year – Professor John Newnham AM

2020 YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

2020 ACT Young Australian of the Year – Madeline Diamond
2020 NSW Young Australian of the Year – Corey Tutt
2020 NT Young Australian of the Year – Mitchell Ford
2020 Queensland Young Australian of the Year – Ashleigh Barty
2020 SA Young Australian of the Year – Zibeon Fielding
2020 Tasmania Young Australian of the Year – Will Smith
2020 Victoria Young Australian of the Year – Taya Davies
2020 WA Young Australian of the Year – Yarlalu Thomas

2020 AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO

2020 ACT Local Hero – Julia Rollings
2020 NSW Local Hero – Bernie Shakeshaft
2020 NT Local Hero – Shirleen Campbell
2020 Queensland Local Hero – Adjunct Assistant Professor Nick Marshall
2020 SA Local Hero – Emmah Evans
2020 Tasmania Local Hero – Thomas Windsor
2020 Victoria Local Hero – Josephine Jones
2020 WA Local Hero – Suzy Urbaniak

* Bios on following pages

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

ENDS.

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BIOGRAPHIES – NATIONAL FINALISTS, 2020 AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

AWARD CATEGORY: 2020 AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

2020 ACT Australian of the Year – Katrina Fanning

Women's rugby league pioneer

Age: 46

Lives: Canberra

For over 25 years, Wiradjuri woman Katrina Fanning has lived and breathed rugby league. Following a successful career as a player, she was appointed manager of the Indigenous Women's All Stars team, Chairperson of the Australian Rugby League Indigenous Council, and President of the Canberra and Australian Women's Rugby League Associations. In 2014, she was named Canberra Woman of the Year, and ACT NAIDOC Person of the Year. Then, in 2019, Katrina was the third woman to be appointed to the Canberra Raiders Board of Directors. Katrina brings enormous management capability to the appointment, having worked in senior roles with Centrelink, Aboriginal Hostels, and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, as well as holding positions on various committees and boards. Katrina is also Director of Coolamon Advisors, an Indigenous majority-owned and managed consultancy. She firmly believes that the ACT can lead the way nationally for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people outcomes, in creating and leading their own solutions.

2020 NSW Australian of the Year – Professor Munjed Al Muderis

Orthopaedic surgeon and human-rights advocate

Age: 47

Lives: Sydney

After fleeing the tyranny of Saddam Hussein's regime in a leaking boat, Professor Munjed Al Muderis was detained on Christmas Island, then in Curtin Detention Centre in Western Australia. He overcame extraordinary obstacles to become an orthopaedic surgeon, specialising in hip, knee and reconstructive surgery and now advocates for the human rights of others. A compassionate ambassador for multiple organisations, including the Red Cross, Munjed has taken a team to his former homeland of Iraq seven times, to help the victims of the conflict he fled and has educated other orthopaedic surgeons in the osseointegration technique and in complex limb reconstruction. His surgical innovations and breakthroughs are helping Australians and people throughout the world. Munjed exemplifies the valuable and positive contribution that refugees can make – leading by example what it means to be Australian.

2020 NT Australian of the Year – Dr Geoffrey Thompson

Sports physician and ex-RAAF flying doctor

Age: 74

Lives: Darwin

Dr Geoffrey Thompson is one of the Northern Territory's quiet achievers, with a distinguished career as a flying doctor and history of service to sports medicine and the community. Born in rural South Australia in 1945, Geoffrey graduated in medicine before joining the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) as a flight surgeon and medical officer. In 1974, when Cyclone Tracy devastated Darwin, he was responsible for overseeing the RAAF effort to evacuate the city. During the days that followed, and with many sleepless nights, he helped assess, treat and evacuate severely injured citizens of Darwin – despite having lost his own home and possessions. After leaving the RAAF, he dedicated considerable time to performing general medical clinics in remote Indigenous communities, often using his own plane for transport. As a sports medicine specialist, he was the first president and founding member of Sports Medicine Australia (Northern Territory) and has been the chief medical officer for the Australian Paralympic Committee since 2008.

2020 Queensland Australian of the Year – Rachel Downie

Educator and social entrepreneur

Age: 48

Lives: Buderim

Twenty-five years ago, Rachel Downie became an educator to help young people flourish. After losing a Year 9 student to suicide, Rachel decided she needed to find a way to support young people to say something when things aren't right. She discovered students often felt too frightened to come forward with possible life-saving information, because of peer expectations. This led Rachel to developing and self-funding Stymie – an old-fashioned word for stop – to allow students to anonymously report harm without fear. Rachel developed Stymie with extensive consultation and help from students and educators. Since 2014 she has presented Stymie to more than 300,000 students nationally. Implemented nationally and internationally, students are using Stymie to report family violence, bullying, cyber-bullying, depression, illegal activity, harassment, self-harm, and harm to their communities. In 2018, Stymie schools received more than 40,000 notifications from concerned students, empowering them to use their empathy and conscience to report harm, and further a culture of care in their schools.

2020 SA Australian of the Year – Dr James Muecke AM

Eye surgeon and blindness prevention pioneer

Age: 56

Lives: Norwood

Since starting his medical career in Kenya, Dr James Muecke AM has been passionate about fighting blindness. In 2000, he co-founded Vision Myanmar at the South Australian Institute of Ophthalmology. The \$1 million program has developed and operated eye health and blindness initiatives in Myanmar. Inspired by this program's success, James also co-founded Sight For All, a social impact organisation aiming to create a world where everyone can see. With 80% of world blindness avoidable – and almost 90% in poor countries – James treats blindness as a human rights issue. James creates low-cost programs to fight blindness through research, education and infrastructure, including the comprehensive training of colleagues in Sight For All's partner countries. James donates 40 hours of personal time weekly to Sight For All, and is intimately involved in projects in Ethiopia, nine Asian countries, and mainstream and Aboriginal communities of Australia. His leadership, determination and passion has improved eye health and helped alleviate poverty and disadvantage.

2020 Tasmania Australian of the Year – Dr Jess Melbourne-Thomas

Marine, Antarctic and climate scientist

Age: 38

Lives: Hobart

International research scientist, mother, and former Rhodes scholar, Dr Jess Melbourne-Thomas grew up exploring Tasmania's spectacular coastline and wilderness and has gone on to work in the marine environment from the tropics to the poles. With a background in mathematical modelling and Antarctic climate change science, Jess is now a Knowledge Broker for CSIRO, helping to bridge the gap between complex scientific research and decision-making for sustainability. A passionate advocate for diversity and gender equality in science, Jess co-founded the Homeward Bound project, which took the largest ever all female expedition on a leadership journey to Antarctica in 2016. Jess was one of Australia's first 30 Superstars of STEM and was named Tasmania's Young Tall Poppy of the Year in 2015 for her excellence in research, science communication and policy engagement. She was also one of 12 female scientists globally to have her portrait featured as a constellation on the ceiling of New York's Grand Central Station as part of GE's Balance the Equation campaign.

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2020 Victoria Australian of the Year – Archie Roach AM

Musical storyteller

Age: 63

Lives: South West Victoria

Archie Roach AM is a singer, songwriter, musician and campaigner for the rights of First Nations Australians. After being forcibly removed from his family at age two, he has overcome teenage alcoholism and homelessness – and the 2010 death of his beloved wife, Ruby – to become an Australian music legend. In 1992, Archie won two ARIA Awards for his 1990 debut album *Charcoal Lane*. He also received a Human Rights Achievement Award for his iconic *Stolen Generations* song, *Took the Children Away* – a first for any songwriter. He has since released eleven more albums and embarked on nationwide and global tours, exploring issues that affect First Nations people in modern Australia. He is a Member of the Order of Australia for his lifetime contribution to Indigenous arts and culture. Today, Archie runs the Archie Roach Foundation, which looks to improve opportunities for young First Nations people through art and culture. Through his work, Archie spreads a powerful message of love, reconciliation and healing.

2020 WA Australian of the Year – Annie Fogarty AM

Education social venturer

Age: 59

Lives: Peppermint Grove

With her husband Brett, Annie Fogarty AM founded the Fogarty Foundation in 2000 to help advance education, support young people to reach their full potential and to build stronger communities. Under Annie's leadership, the foundation identifies areas of need, supports partner organisations with philanthropic funds, connections and knowledge, and develops initiatives that deliver educational opportunities, inspire community leadership and enrich lives. The foundation enhances excellence and high-quality instruction in schools by investing in education programs, teachers and school leaders. Through the foundation, Annie has developed the Fogarty EDvance program, which improves the educational outcomes of children who attend schools in lower socio-economic communities. The foundation's scholarship program for tertiary students provides financial support, a leadership program, enrichment opportunities, and supportive networks to help develop future leaders. Annie is also involved with several boards and committees to help foster innovation and creativity in young people, and is committed to ensuring excellent education and learning for all.

AWARD CATEGORY: 2020 SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

2020 ACT Senior Australian of the Year – Sue Salthouse

Leader and disability advocate

Age: 70

Lives: Kingston

A horse-riding accident at age 45 led Sue Salthouse into a new life in a wheelchair – where she experienced first-hand the systemic inequality facing people with disabilities. Having been committed to social justice all her life, Sue was determined to bring about positive change. First invited to work for Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA), she began advocating for the right of people with disabilities to accessible housing, economic security and the chance to contribute to society. Sue now runs a consultancy company specialising in disability rights advocacy and works in the disability sector. She has also worked extensively with a number of organisations to develop leadership training projects for women, and actions to combat domestic violence. Sue holds positions on a number of Boards including the Independent Advisory Council of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Expert Panel in the ACT. In 2015, Sue was Canberra Citizen of the Year, recognising her outstanding commitment and contribution as a disability advocate.

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2020 NSW Senior Australian of the Year – Sue Lennox
Environmental educator and social enterprise founder

Age: 67

Lives: Bellingen

As a teacher, Sue Lennox was concerned about young people's anxiety and despair about the future of the planet. So, with her late husband Colin, she founded the award-winning social enterprise OzGREEN (Global Rivers Environmental Education Network Australia Inc). It teaches young people how to take positive environmental action through education, participatory leadership and community development. Sue's initiatives with OzGREEN include the Youth Leading the World program, a learning and leadership course that creates sustainable communities. She teaches people to become 'citizen scientists' and to take action to improve the health of their waterways. Under Sue's leadership, OzGREEN has developed sustainability programs in 1,600 locations across Australia, India, Papua New Guinea, East Timor and Pakistan. After stepping down as CEO this year, Sue is now focused on sharing OzGREEN's multi-award-winning approach by training others as facilitators and citizen scientists. She remains on the board of OzGREEN. Her extraordinary work continues to empower individuals and communities by replacing despair with hope.

2020 NT Senior Australian of the Year – Banduk Marika AO
Artist, cultural activist and environmental adviser

Age: 65

Lives: North East Arnhem Land

Banduk Marika AO is known for her exquisite prints of ancestral creation stories on lino, her original media of choice. Born in Yirrkala in north-east Arnhem Land, Marika and her sisters are among the first Yolngu women whose male relatives have encouraged them to paint ancestral creation stories. As well as an artist, Marika is also a passionate cultural activist and environmental adviser, who has appeared as a speaker at national and international conferences. In 1994, she and seven other artists won a court case against a company that illegally reproduced their work in Vietnam. Her story featured in the 1997 documentary *Copyrights*, which explored Aboriginal concept of ownership as it relates to art. Marika has been the artist-in-residence at both the Canberra School of Art and Flinders University in South Australia. She is a traditional landowner in charge of looking after country at Yirrkala.

2020 Queensland Senior Australian of the Year – Peter Dornan AM
Men's health activist

Age: 76

Lives: Toowong

Following a prostate cancer diagnosis and treatment, and after experiencing depression, incontinence and other side effects, sports medicine physiotherapist Peter Dornan AM put an ad in the newspaper, inviting fellow patients to meet. Since then, he has supported men diagnosed with prostate cancer. Peter's commitment to helping men share experiences and seek support has helped create a culture change in the treatment management for men with prostate cancer. Receiving a grant to research incontinence – a common consequence in men after prostate cancer treatment – he designed a successful program to treat the condition, and published a book used across Australian prostate cancer support groups. He also developed a nationally and internationally recognised program for managing patients with pelvic pain. Peter is a director of the Board of the Cancer Council of Queensland, for which he has helped raised significant funds. A successful writer and sculptor, he took up mountain climbing after prostate cancer recovery, successfully scaling Mount Kilimanjaro at age 60.

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2020 SA Senior Australian of the Year – Sylvia McMillan

Volunteer

Age: 90

Lives: West Hindmarsh

Sylvia McMillan has dedicated her life to being of service to her community. The 90-year-old woman has been a force of good to everyone around her – and shows no signs of stopping. She is still the Chair for her local Legacy, the organisation that provides services to families of deceased defence force members. Sylvia also runs a Seniors club, a Sunnysiders club, and card group, and is a member of Friends of the Parks. In between her volunteer activities she regularly attends the gym and meets with her school chums and her water aerobics group, at the local Parks Community Centre. As the Enfield volunteer bus driver for many years, Sylvia dressed up as Santa Claus at Christmas, revealing the joy volunteer work brings her. She was also on the board of the local branch of the Health Centre and the Housing Trust. Sylvia has received many community awards, including a Legends Award for her contributions to the community.

2020 Tasmania Senior Australian of the Year – Dr Graeme Stevenson

Landcare activist

Age: 74

Lives: Somerset

Dr Graeme Stevenson has been promoting healthy soils in Tasmania for over 30 years, in particular the role of dung beetles and earthworms in soil management. Since 1993, he has been a passionate advocate and volunteer for Landcare Tasmania, a movement that brings individuals and groups together to improve the health of natural and working landscapes. Using his knowledge about conservation, Graeme has initiated and managed 27 projects along the coastline, including willow removal, riverside fencing, and managing soil slippage. He also helps write funding applications for new projects, and has attracted almost \$1.5 million in grants, predominantly for on-ground works. With 20 years of applied research into organic agriculture and sustainable farming, Graeme works with farmers as a soil assessor and agronomy consultant, and has written a number of books showcasing his expertise. As well as his volunteer work, he presents his soil knowledge to school children as alter ego Dr Spluttergrunt.

2020 Victoria Senior Australian of the Year – Dr Raymond Shuey APM

Road safety champion

Age: 74

Lives: Melbourne

Dr Raymond Shuey is a former Victorian police officer and Assistant Commissioner for Traffic and Operations. His signature achievement was Project Beacon, which trains police in operational safety when responding to mental health and critical incidents. With road safety partners, Ray developed initiatives to increase enforcement and education programs – resulting in a massive reduction in the Victorian Road Toll. Following his retirement in 2003, Ray conducted reviews for Vicroads and Victoria Police, as well as co-ordinating the police response to the Bushfires Royal Commission. Since completing a PhD in international road safety in 2012, Ray has contributed to WHO Good Practice Publications and authored many Road Safety Publications providing knowledge and inspiration for others. He regularly consults on road safety and operational safety in Australia and worldwide. Despite suffering ill health, Ray is President of the International Safety Foundation, which facilitates the international transfer of road safety and medical equipment, to save lives in lower income countries.

2020 WA Senior Australian of the Year – Professor John Newnham AM

Leader of modern obstetrics

Age: 67

Lives: Perth

John Newnham is recognised as one of the world's leading authorities in the prevention of pre-term birth – the single greatest cause of death and disability in children up to five years of age. A Professor of Obstetrics, John has been instrumental in making Western Australia an international hotspot for research and clinical excellence in pregnancy and life before birth. In 1989, he founded and led the pioneering Raine Study, the world's first and most enduring pregnancy-focused lifetime cohort project. John developed a program for preventing preterm birth – a pioneering initiative which resulted in an 8% reduction in premature births across WA. After a successful national rollout in 2018, he founded the Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance – the world's first ever national program of its kind. John has been described by the world's leading scientific journal as 'an intellectual leader of modern obstetrics who has changed the practice of medicine and the lives of women and infants'.

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AWARD CATEGORY: 2020 YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

2020 ACT Young Australian of the Year – Madeline Diamond Sustainability advocate

Age: 22

Lives: Canberra

Madeline Diamond is the founder of Trash Mob, a youth-led community group that meets every month to pick up rubbish in public areas in Canberra – as well as advocating for waste free solutions. Under Madeline's leadership, young people are working together to take control of the future they would like to see. A 100% volunteer-powered organisation, Trash Mob has established sister groups in Yass and Canberra, and is working to establish groups in other towns and cities. Madeline is also the Executive Officer of SEE-Change, a community organisation encouraging Canberrans to live more sustainably, and supporting grassroots environmental action around the ACT. Her role is to engage young people and provide greater opportunities for them in the sustainability space. Her achievements include initiating the Young Changemakers Workshop and overseeing the annual Parliament of Youth on Sustainability event. She also recently received an ACT Government Community Zero Emissions Grant, to host a film festival and competition on the theme of sustainability.

2020 NSW Young Australian of the Year – Corey Tutt Indigenous mentor and fundraiser

Age: 27

Lives: Gordon

Through his organisation, Deadly Science, proud Kamilaroi man Corey Tutt gathers donations of science resources, and sends them to remote schools around Australia. As well as receiving book donations from high-profile scientists such as Professor Brian Cox and Doctor Karl Kruszelnicki, Corey has raised more than \$33,000 to purchase books and equipment, and distributed more than 4,300 books and 70 telescopes. He is engaged with more than 90 schools around Australia. In a recent survey, these schools showed a 25% increase in engagement in STEM-related subjects. Deadly Science has given 28 Deadly Junior Scientist Awards, encouraging young Indigenous kids to follow their dreams. Corey particularly wants to ensure that every remote Australian school has a copy of Bruce Pascoe's book Dark Emu – a history of Indigenous science and agriculture – to help educate them about the real story of Australia's past. Corey's actions inspire Indigenous children to believe in themselves and understand their environment – for the benefit of Australia and all its people.

2020 NT Young Australian of the Year – Mitchell Ford Mental health ambassador

Age: 19

Lives: Katherine

Mitchell Ford is the founder of PRVT Apparel, a clothing brand which aims to spread awareness and provide support for youth with mental health issues. With suicide the leading cause of death for youth in the NT and Australia, Mitchell is committed to tackling the stigma attached to talking about mental health. After losing his best friend to suicide at a young age, he decided to create a community and platform that lets young people know they don't need to suffer alone. PRVT is an acronym for 'prevention', a name which is designed to start a conversation around suicide prevention. Additionally, for each T-shirt sold, 20 per cent of the profits are donated to headspace, the national youth mental health foundation. Mitchell also dedicates his free time volunteering with disadvantaged youth. In 2019, he was named Young Citizen of the Year and is very active as a social media influencer around kindness, mental health and self-love.

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2020 Queensland Young Australian of the Year – Ashleigh Barty

Professional tennis player

Age: 23

Lives: Springfield

Ipswich-born professional tennis player Ashleigh (Ash) Barty inspires legions of fans with her dynamic tennis game, formidable serve and down-to-earth attitude. The former cricketer and teen tennis champion is ranked the world's number one singles tennis player by the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) – only the second Australian WTA singles number one after Evonne Goolagong Cawley. As an adult, Ash has won six singles titles on the WTA Tour, including one Grand Slam singles title at the 2019 French Open. She also sits in the top 20 of doubles players, and was a doubles runner up for the Australian Open at the age of just 16. She achieved one Grand Slam doubles title at the 2018 US Open with partner CoCo Vandeweghe. Ash also delighted fans around the world with her calm good-humoured acceptance of just missing out on reaching the 2019 Wimbledon quarter-finals. A First Nations woman, Ash serves as the National Indigenous Tennis Ambassador for Tennis Australia.

2020 SA Young Australian of the Year – Zibeon Fielding

Runner, cyclist and fundraiser

Age: 25

Lives: Mimili Community, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands

Zibeon Fielding is dedicated to raising vital funds to help close the gap in Indigenous health. In 2016, he was selected for the Indigenous Marathon Project, training and competing in the New York, Boston and Tokyo Marathons. But these achievements were only preparation for Zibeon's ultimate goal: to run an ultra-marathon through his homelands on the APY lands. He successfully raised \$50,000 for Purple House, an organisation that provides dialysis to some of Australia's most remote communities. This will enable Aboriginal people with diabetes to return from the cities to visit their homes. In 2019, Zibeon cycled 700 kilometres across the rough corrugated roads and extreme heat of the Australian outback, to bring about awareness for improvement of Aboriginal health, and raise \$40,000 for a new gym in his community. As a health worker, he has conducted health checks on children, educated communities about healthy living and eating, and run bike workshops along the way.

2020 Tasmania Young Australian of the Year – Will Smith

Social justice activist

Age: 26

Lives: Launceston

Police officer Will Smith's desire to help disadvantaged young people has taken him from local football clubs in Launceston to the Lebanese and Syrian border. From age 15, Will has been involved with the Edmund Rice camps, which provide holiday camps and other activities for disadvantaged students. As a police officer in training, he organised the now ongoing partnership between the Police Academy and the Eddy Rice program, where cadets and disadvantaged young people share camps, breaking down barriers on both sides. Joining Deloraine Football Club, Will organised a successful camping experience with the club and young refugees, to help create mutual understanding. He then set up the JCP Empowering Youth program, enabling successful leaders to help improve the lives of young people, through school, leadership and community programs. An extraordinary man with a burning passion for social justice and empowering young people, Will also travelled to Lebanon to help isolated young Syrian refugees by setting up soccer competitions.

2020 Victoria Young Australian of the Year – Taya Davies

Youth worker and youth volunteer

Age: 29

Lives: Barwon Heads

After a very challenging childhood, Taya Davies decided to use her personal experience to help others. In her late teens, she began a career in youth work, providing much-needed love and guidance to troubled youth in residential care. Progressing to management in her early 20s, she has run numerous programs through Geelong City Council, with young people from low socio-economic backgrounds, including asylum seekers. Now employed with the Department of Education, Taya coordinates high-school programs in the Geelong region to support disengaged youth. She spends much of her spare time volunteering on community projects, like coordinating a six-week surfing and community immersion program with young asylum seekers. She's also passionate about helping young people with disabilities and is a close and caring friend to many. Taya is an exceptional young woman who inspires those around her with her positivity, hard-working attitude and generosity. Her friendly, caring personality inspires everyone around her to give back and make a difference.

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2020 WA Young Australian of the Year – Yarlalu Thomas

Medical student and Precision Public Health Fellow in Genetic and Rare Diseases

Age: 21

Lives: Pilbara

Yarlalu Thomas is a Nyangumarta Pitjikirli man, originally from Warralong, southeast of Port Hedland. The first in his community to complete a high-school certificate, he enrolled in a Bachelor of Medical Science and Doctor of Medicine (MD) at the University of Sydney. Between his bachelor's degree and MD, Yarlalu was awarded the inaugural Roy Hill Community Foundation Fellowship. He now works with the WA Register of Developmental Anomalies, Genetic Services WA and Cliniface, to transform genetic health care services for remote Indigenous people. Yarlalu also works with Pilbara Faces, which aims to understand 3D facial variation of ATSI peoples to provide more accessible, quicker and non-invasive diagnosis for children with rare and genetic diseases. Yarlalu also launched the UNESCO-endorsed Life Languages project to translate medical terminology into ATSI languages, and indigenous languages internationally. He combines the newest scientific and medical knowledge with old and ancient wisdom. Yarlalu mentors and tutors Aboriginal boarding students, helping them adjust to their new lifestyle.

AWARD CATEGORY: 2020 AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL HERO

2020 ACT Local Hero – Julia Rollings

Julia Rollings

Foster carer

Age: 58

Lives: Canberra

Julia Rollings has been a foster carer for over two decades – supporting 50 babies, children and young people through difficult periods of their lives. As a volunteer crisis carer, she often looks after infants who are medically fragile, withdrawing from drugs, or who have experienced significant trauma. Julia's dedication and relentless passion for Canberra's most vulnerable children sees her spend up to months in hospital – caring for babies who may transition home to their birth families or to long term care. In 2009, she was awarded Barnardos ACT Mother of the Year Award for her work as a champion for children's rights. Drawing on past experience in the out of home care sector, Julia supports other carers through her role on the Carer Wellbeing Sub-Committee. She has also held various volunteer positions within adoption support groups, including President of the Adoptive Families Association (ACT). An adoptive mother to seven children, Julia recorded her story in her book *Love Our Way*.

2020 NSW Local Hero – Bernie Shakeshaft

Founder of BackTrack Youth Works Program

Age: 52

Lives: Armidale

After seeing the plight of disadvantaged youth in his community, Bernie Shakeshaft decided to take action. Starting in 2006 with a shed and an idea, Bernie founded the BackTrack Youth Works Program, turning around the lives of some of Australia's most vulnerable kids. Using the skills he developed growing up and as a jackaroo in the Northern Territory learning from the Aboriginal trackers, Bernie developed an award-winning program that uses animal-assisted learning, agricultural skills and a residential facility. He and his extraordinary team have helped more than 1,000 children reconnect with their education, training, families and community, offering them love and support to live out their hopes and dreams. The BackTrack program, now the subject of a documentary, *Backtrack Boys*, has the support of magistrates, police and mayors. It has helped decrease Armidale's youth crime rate by more than 38 per cent, saving millions of dollars and keeping children out of correctional systems. Bernie's kind, effective approach is life changing and inspiring.

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2020 NT Local Hero – Shirleen Campbell

Family and domestic violence activist

Age: 38

Lives: Alice Springs

Proud Warlpiri and Arrernte woman Shirleen Campbell is a third-generation resident of Alice Springs Town Camp, Lhenpe Artnwe – or Hoppy's Camp. She's also the co-ordinator of The Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group (TWFSG), which gives women in the camp a voice and action against family and domestic violence. TWFSG takes a strengths-based approach to addressing domestic violence, training women to recognise its early signs and support each other. Together they acknowledge and celebrate the women residents' skills, knowledge, history, assets, connections and relationships. After a violent attack on an Aboriginal woman at the Todd River was ignored by local press, Shirleen and TWFSG led a 300-strong, anti-violence march through the streets of Alice Springs. Shirleen and other members of TWFSG were then invited to Canberra. With care and humility, Shirleen drew attention to the women her community loved and mourned who'd been impacted by violence – and showed that women are a large part of the solution.

2020 Queensland Local Hero – Adjunct Assistant Professor Nick Marshall

Founder, Albatross Nippers

Age: 42

Lives: Mermaid Waters

Sports and musculoskeletal physiotherapist, Adjunct Assistant Professor Nick Marshall, has a passion for ensuring those with special needs and disability are included in the community. An advocate for increased participation in surf lifesaving activities for many years, in 2015 Nick created the Albatross Nippers – an all-inclusive Nipper program at Nobbys Beach, helping children with special needs experience nippers with other children of similar ages. The program has expanded to multiple Gold Coast beaches. In 2019, Nick's Albatross Nippers became the first group of special needs children in history to participate in a surf lifesaving carnival and competition. Nick has also liaised with his local city council to install beach matting and free beach wheelchair access, and was instrumental in designing the online Surf Lifesaving Australia special needs module, teaching clubs across Australia to better interact, engage and develop programs at their beach. Motivated solely by the desire to create a better, more engaged community, Nick's volunteer work inspires the Gold Coast community.

2020 SA Local Hero – Emmah Evans

Cystic fibrosis advocate

Age: 32

Lives: Trott Park

Cystic fibrosis (CF) is the most common life-threatening hereditary illness in Australia, affecting the lungs and digestive system – and limiting average life expectancy to 37 years. Diagnosed with CF as a newborn, Emmah Evans was given up for adoption, after doctors believed she wouldn't survive. Just before her 17th birthday, Emmah found her biological family by chance, who believed she had passed away. Now in her thirties and mother-of-two, Emmah has a list of credible achievements to her name. As an ambassador for the Cure4CF Foundation, Emmah raises awareness and funds for cystic fibrosis, and won a three-year battle with the Australian Government to put the life-changing drug, Orkambi, on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. Through her social media platform, CF Mummy, Emmah has raised more than \$50,000 to support research into a cure. Emmah regularly speaks in schools across Australia, inspiring students with her powerful account about overcoming obstacles, including bullying and depression, and living with an invisible disability.

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2020 Tasmania Local Hero – Thomas Windsor

Advocate for men's health

Age: 38

Lives: Hobart

Thomas Windsor is dedicated to raising awareness and funds for major health issues affecting men, including depression and prostate cancer. He has spent over a decade fundraising for men's health organisations, by getting his friends together to compete in running events, including a gruelling half-marathon 1,300 metres up Mt Wellington. After losing his father to suicide when he was 23, Tom turned a family tragedy into a commitment to help other men. He founded Mobart Mo Bros, which has grown every year to become Australia's top Movember fundraising team for the past four years. Started as a way for his friends to show support after the loss of his father, the team of men and women are on a mission to stop so many men from dying too young. The Mobart Mo Bros hold a range of events to engage the community – successfully attracting more than 600 registered participants and raising over \$750,000 for Movember in the past 13 years.

2020 Victoria Local Hero – Josephine Jones

Environmental and litter prevention advocate

Age: 46

Lives: Mornington Peninsula

Each morning, Josephine (Josie) Jones starts by collecting rubbish on the beach. A single mum, since 2006 she has volunteered over 10,000 hours and countless dollars to improve the water quality in Mornington Peninsula's bays – personally collecting over 5.3 tonnes of rubbish from its shorelines. Josie devotes every spare moment to stopping litter entering Mornington's waterways, and engaging her community to inspire change. Through personal commitment, public speaking, social media, and consulting with local government, community groups, corporations, schools and businesses, she has educated stakeholders and inspired others to take care of the environment. A graphic designer, she has used her skills successfully to dramatically decrease cigarette butts on local streets through her 'The Only Butt' campaign. Josie's outstanding work has received recognition through awards including the Dame Phyllis Frost Award in 2016, and 2017 Litter Prevention prize from Keep Victoria Beautiful. Currently the Mornington Peninsula Australia Day Citizen of the Year 2019, she is a much-admired local role model.

2020 WA Local Hero – Suzy Urbaniak

Science educator

Age: 53

Lives: Perth

Suzy Urbaniak wants young people to understand how to apply science to the real world. The former Newcrest geoscientist, WA science teacher and mentor developed and leads her own earth sciences program, the Centre of Resources Excellence (CoRE). An innovative science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) program, CoRE brings together education, industry, community and government to create meaningful careers in the resources industry. The CoRE program builds on Suzy's years of practical geology and education experience, which includes more than 74 national and international field trips. Suzy contributes to the ongoing development of the national earth sciences curriculum and supports the Young Persons' Plan for the Planet Program, a joint initiative of Questacon UN Information Centre and other organisations, to promote sustainable development. Her work as an educator was recognised with the Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Secondary Schools in 2016. She was inducted into the WA Women's Hall of Fame in 2018.

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