MEDIA RELEASE
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Northern Territory nominees announced for 60th anniversary of the Australian of the Year Awards
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The nominees for the 2020 Northern Territory Australian of the Year Awards include young Indigenous filmmakers, an optometrist working to prevent blindness, a community activist working to improve remote housing and an artist protecting the Yirrkala environment.

They are among 16 Territorians in the running to be named the territory’s Local Hero, Young Australian, Senior Australian or Australian of the Year as the nation celebrates the 60th anniversary of the awards.

The 2020 Northern Territory award nominees are:

**2020 Northern Territory Australian of the Year**
Jasmine Cavanagh – Community activist (Alice Springs)
Dianne Gipey – CEO Women’s Safety Services of Central Australia (Alice Springs)
Professor Leonard Notaras – Founder, National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre (Darwin)
Dr Geoffrey Thompson – Sports physician and ex-RAAF flying doctor (Darwin)

**2020 Northern Territory Senior Australian of the Year**
Emeritus Professor MaryAnn Bin-Sallik AO – Academic (Darwin)
Norman Cramp – Historian and volunteer (Darwin)
Sydney Kinsman – Veteran, ex-prisoner of war and local show member (Alice Springs)
Banduk Marika AO – Artist, cultural activist and environmental adviser (North East Arnhem Land)

**2020 Northern Territory Young Australian of the Year**
Rikki Bruce – Engineer (Darwin)
Mitchell Ford – Mental health ambassador (Katherine)
Dylan River – Aboriginal filmmaker (Alice Springs)
Gutingarra Yunupingu – Aboriginal filmmaker (Yirrkala)

**2020 Northern Territory Local Hero**
Shirleen Campbell – Family and domestic violence activist (Alice Springs)
Timmy Duggan – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men’s health advocate (Darwin)
Helen Summers – Blindness prevention advocate (Darwin)
Lesley Taylor – Child protection advocate (Yulara)

*see bios on following pages

The nominees are among 128 people being recognised across all states and territories as part of the program, which began in 1960.

The four award recipients from the Northern Territory will be announced on Thursday 31 October 2019 at the Alice Springs Convention Centre in Alice Springs.
They will then join the other state and territory recipients for the national awards ceremony at the National Arboretum in Canberra on 25 January 2020.

National Australia Day Council CEO Karlie Brand said the Northern Territory nominees were all using their skills and experiences to educate, inspire or bring about change.

“This is a particularly special time to be nominated as we’re celebrating six decades of the awards,” said Ms Brand.

“The 2020 Northern Territory nominees are all taking leadership roles – in community, in culture, or sharing stories which foster understanding.”

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.

Media contact: Nicole Browne 0414 673 762 or nicole@mediaopps.com.au
Biographies – nominees, 2020 Northern Territory Australian of the Year Awards

Category: Northern Territory Australian of the Year

Jasmine Cavanagh
Community activist
Age: 37
Lives: Alice Springs

Jasmine Cavanagh is a tenacious and effective campaigner for one of our country’s most pressing social justice issues – the abominable state of remote housing for Aboriginal Australians. In February 2019, she was lead claimant in a landmark court decision that awarded compensation to Eastern Arrernte residents, in remote Santa Teresa, for the shocking neglect of their homes. Despite considerable personal and financial risk involved in taking on the case, Jasmine courageously fought to make sure her community received the legal protections they were entitled to. Over her three years as lead claimant, she acted on behalf of her community, becoming the public spokesperson for the cause. Her understated courage and resolve transformed the legal landscape and the way public housing is administered across the Territory. Jasmine hopes that her win will lead to better housing for the next generation of remote Aboriginal tenants.

Dianne Gipey
CEO Women’s Safety Services of Central Australia
Age: 56
Lives: Alice Springs

Under the capable leadership of CEO Dianne Gipey, Womens Safety Service of Central Australia provides life-saving assistance to women and children escaping domestic violence. In a state where the rates of domestic violence are three times higher than any other Australian jurisdiction, the shelter gives refuge to more than 1,100 women and children each year – most of them Indigenous – supporting thousands more through its outreach programs. A survivor of a chaotic and tragic childhood and a violent 17-year relationship, Dianne once sought refuge in a shelter herself. This experience, combined with her strong Christian faith, has made Dianne sensitive to the complex issues facing women and children trying to escape domestic violence, and able to respond with understanding and compassion. Dianne is also an advocate for working for change within the domestic violence sector and has just overseen a $6 million new purpose-built facility that has already changed the way the service supports women and children to break the cycle.

Professor Leonard Notaras
Founder, National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre
Age: 68
Lives: Darwin

As founder and executive director of the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre in Darwin, Professor Leonard Notaras has helped build health security and emergency capability across the Asia-Pacific region. During his 15 years as Medical Superintendent and then General Manager at Royal Darwin Hospital, the centre had to respond to a range of significant crises, including the 1999 evacuation of East Timor, the 2002 and 2005 Bali bombings, and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. After the Bali bombings, Len set up and led the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre to help developing nations respond to trauma and support Australian clinical teams working overseas. Under Len’s leadership, the centre leads the world in emergency and disaster response, and has developed new emergency innovations, methods and programs. Len has also developed the Australian Medical Assistance Team, which has provided help in emergencies such as the 2010 Pakistan floods and the 2018 tsunami in Sulawesi, Indonesia.

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.

Category: Northern Territory Senior Australian of the Year

Emeritus Professor MaryAnn Bin-Sallik AO
Academic
Age: 78
Lives: Darwin
Proud Djaru elder Emeritus Professor MaryAnn Bin-Sallik AO has paved the way for Aboriginal people, having experienced many firsts in her lifetime. In the early 1960s, when Aboriginal women were expected to be domestics, MaryAnn trained at Darwin Hospital, becoming their first Aboriginal nursing graduate. After nursing in various remote communities for 17 years, MaryAnn moved to South Australia and completed tertiary studies to become the first Aboriginal person working in higher education in Australia. After that, she was the first Aboriginal person to gain a doctorate from Harvard. In 2001, she returned to Darwin, taking up the position of Dean of the Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies at the Northern Territory University (NTU). Here she advocated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in higher education, helping increase the numbers of First Nation students and programs. Retiring in 2008, she was made an Emeritus Professor of Charles Darwin University – the first Indigenous woman to receive the title.

Norman Cramp
Historian and volunteer
Age: 70
Lives: Darwin
Seventy-year-old volunteer, restorer, collector, writer, historian and promoter Norman ‘Hawk’ Cramp is a passionate custodian of the Northern Territory’s military heritage for future generations. Arriving in Darwin in 1974 with wife Christine, the couple survived Cyclone Tracy and made Darwin their home. During his 38-year career in the Commonwealth and NT public service, he completed two master’s degrees, and is currently finishing a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) on the impact of the Great War on the NT. Norm has written, co-authored or edited 16 books, articles, papers and reports on the territory’s rich history, focusing on military and sport. His research has revealed lost facts, such as identifying a forgotten Aboriginal Territorian who served in the Great War. Without seeking recognition, Norm gives freely to others – from assisting at the Royal Darwin Hospital, to joining a UN power restoration work group in East Timor, or being involved in rugby league, rugby union and touch football clubs.

Sydney Kinsman
Veteran, ex-prisoner of war and local show member
Age: 98
Lives: Alice Springs
Every year, 98-year-old Alice Springs local Sydney Kinsman decks out his home in a dazzling display of award-winning Christmas lights, bringing joy to the locals of Alice Springs. This is only one example of the veteran and ex-prisoner-of-war’s services to his beloved Alice Springs community. At a young age, Sydney moved to The Alice and helped build it into the vibrant community it is today. His efforts are proudly documented across the walls of his home and pool room. One of the courageous and honoured Rats of Tobruk – the soldiers who held the Libyan port against the Germans in the Siege of Tobruk in World War II – Sydney attends the annual ANZAC march, remember his mates and those who fought bravely for us all. Sydney has continued to serve Alice Springs, donating to local schools and sponsoring art and other awards for the local show, of which he is a life member.
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.

Category: Northern Territory Young Australian of the Year

Rikki Bruce
Engineer
Age: 29
Lives: Darwin
Rikki Bruce is a talented engineer and the Northern Territory Indigenous Representative for Young Engineers Australia. She is committed to using her position to help engage Aboriginal people to consider engineering as a career path for their future. After being told that she didn’t have the maths skills to pursue engineering, Rikki was motivated to work even harder to follow her dream – receiving eight scholarships to complete her Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering. Upon graduating, she was nominated by her lecturers as a valedictorian for her outstanding personal achievements and academic record. Rikki has also been involved with CareerTrackers Indigenous Internship Program, as well as the Department of Health and Education’s Young Mothers are Strong Mothers project, which supports mothers under the age of 25 to create a bright future through education and skills development. A former Aboriginal Student Ambassador, Rikki aspires to be a role model for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth.

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.

Dylan River
Aboriginal filmmaker
Age: 27
Lives: Alice Springs
Dylan River is a talented filmmaker whose stories resonate deeply with the land, people and cultures of the Northern Territory. An early love of photography moved him to overcome the barriers he faced in a career as a film director, including no access to a film school or the technical equipment required for filmmaking. Dylan has travelled extensively to advance his skills, attending workshops and engaging in mentorships – while bringing back his learnings to share with his peers. His web series, short films and documentaries have given Aboriginal people and communities in the NT a chance to record the way of life they wish to preserve. Dylan’s works have been screened in film festivals both in Australia and overseas, including the Darwin International Film Festival and Berlin International Film Festival. They have also earned Dylan nominations in the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) Awards and Screen Producers Awards.
Gutingarra Yunupingu
Aboriginal filmmaker
Age: 21
Lives: Yirrkala, North East Arnhem Land

Twenty-one-year-old Gutingarra Yunupingu is profoundly deaf. But this hasn’t stopped the young Arnhem Land filmmaker from achieving remarkable success. Gutingarra, whose first language is Yolngu signing, is thought to be the first Aboriginal person with profound deafness in the Northern Territory to graduate Year 12. The budding filmmaker was a winner in this year’s National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (NATSIAAs), for his film Gurrutu’mi Mala (My Connections) about family connections. Gutingarra was also one of the first students to be part of the culturally relevant Learning on Country program, graduating with a Certificate Level II in Conservation and Land Management. After high school, Gutingarra secured work at north-east Arnhem Land’s Buku Larrnggay Mulka Centre, a First Nations community art centre, where he’d spent a few years doing work experience. Beginning his film experience by shooting cultural events and ceremonies, he has since moved into making more stylised, self-portrait films, inspired by Yolngu culture.

Category: Northern Territory 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 Artwe – or Hoppy’s Camp. She’s also the co-ordinator of The Tangentyere Women’s Family Safety Group (TWFG), which gives women in the camp a voice and action against family and domestic violence. TWFG 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 TWFG led a 300-strong, anti-violence march through the streets of Alice Springs. Shirleen and other members of TWFG 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.

Timmy Duggan
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men’s health advocate
Age: 42
Lives: Darwin

The first Northern Territorian to play in the National Basketball League, Timmy Duggan has always been passionate about improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) health. In 2002, he founded the Hoops 4 Health Aboriginal Corporation, with two aims: to help ATSI men keep physically and mentally active through basketball, and to provide community leaders who are positive role models of health and wellbeing. He has spent every weekend of the past three years in Don Dale conducting the program. An inspirational coach, mentor and guest speaker and ATSI advocate, Timmy was nominated in the Bulletin Magazine’s Smart 100 in 2005. Then in 2011, he received the Steve Abala Role Model Award for services to basketball. In 2012, he won the Top End NAIDOC Person of the Year and a NAPCAN Play Your Part Award. Timmy competed in the first of the Northern Territory’s biennial Arafura Games in 1991 and was an ambassador for the games in 2019.

Helen Summers
Blindness prevention advocate
Age: 58
Lives: Darwin

For more than 25 years, optometrist Helen Summers has been devoted to caring for the vision of Top End communities and helping to prevent blindness through education and employment. Running a private practice for almost two decades serving urban and Aboriginal communities, Helen also lectures and volunteers in not-for-profit and charities for people with vision loss and learning and neuro-developmental delays. Helen is an advocate for the goals of Vision 2020 and Close the Gap for Vision – to reduce preventable blindness and provide vision services to regional and remote Australia. As well as active involvement in vision-related national and internal organisations,
Helen has served as a non-executive director and committee member on Australian boards across health, social, indigenous and sporting sectors. Helen’s passion for life has also seen her join a team to complete a 64km group trek on the Sunshine Coast, raising money for charity. She inspires many with her motivation, commitment and dynamic personality.

Lesley Taylor  
Child protection advocate  
Age: 59  
Lives: Yulara  
Lesley Taylor has dedicated her life to protecting children. After working in the frontline of Northern Territory’s child protection for more than 10 years, in 2000 she founded NT’s first sole child abuse prevention agency – the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN). She is also NAPCAN’s National Manager, Prevention Strategies. Lesley’s work has been instrumental in moving the focus from simply dealing with child abuse after it’s occurred, to helping prevent it in the first place. She does this by helping communities engage with children’s wellbeing, helping create child-friendly and child-safe communities. Lesley’s simple, powerful message is that each of us can play a role in preventing child abuse. Based in Yulara, Lesley frequently travels throughout the NT, delivering training and developing resources. A sought-after speaker at conferences here and overseas, her inspiring 2012 TED Talk *What does being nice have to do with child abuse prevention?* has been downloaded thousands of times.