

MEDIA RELEASE
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Tasmania nominees announced for 60th anniversary of the Australian of the Year Awards
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The nominees for the 2020 Tasmania Australian of the Year Award include a plastics pollution researcher, an anti-slavery advocate and a 94-year-old film and television pioneer.

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

The 2020 Tasmania award nominees are:

2020 Tasmania Australian of the Year

Associate Professor Dawn Aitken – Osteoarthritis researcher (Hobart)
Dr Britta Denise Hardesty – Researcher in plastics pollution (Hobart)
Dr Jess Melbourne-Thomas – Marine research scientist (Hobart)
Melody Towns – Anti-slavery advocate (Hobart)

2020 Tasmania Senior Australian of the Year

Lola Greeno – Visual artist and designer (Launceston)
Dorothy Hallam – Film and television pioneer (Tasman Peninsula)
Sarah Parry – Sail trainer and youth mentor (Hobart)
Dr Graeme Stevenson – Landcare activist (Somerset)

2020 Tasmania Young Australian of the Year

Matthew Etherington – Soccer coach and mental health advocate (Hobart)
Will Smith – Social justice activist (Launceston)
Madeline Wells – First Nations advocate, protector and defender (North West Tasmania)
Grace Williams – Filmmaker, law student and human rights advocate (Hobart)

2020 Tasmania Local Hero

Betsy Hanson – Community choir leader (Sandford)
Simon Reade – Composer and musical director (Hobart)
Dr Charles Rose – President of UTAS Cricket Club (Hobart)
Thomas Windsor – Advocate for men's health (Hobart)

**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 Tasmania will be announced on Friday 18 October 2019 at Government House, Hobart.

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 Tasmania nominees represented the diversity of great Australians inspiring others through their contributions.

“The 60th anniversary of the Australian of the Year Awards is a particularly special time to be nominated,” said Ms Brand.

“The 2020 Tasmanian nominees are great examples of the many different ways in which people are helping shape our communities to create a better nation.”

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 – nominees, Tasmania 2020 Australian of the Year Awards

Category: Tasmania Australian of the Year

Associate Professor Dawn Aitken

Osteoarthritis researcher

Age: 36

Lives: Hobart

Associate Professor Dawn Aitken is dedicated to helping sufferers of osteoarthritis – a chronic joint condition causing stiffness and pain, which affects one in ten Australians. A researcher at the Menzies Institute for Medical Research, Dawn's work uses MRI to show how osteoarthritis develops and progresses. Osteoarthritis is a complex disease with different treatment approaches, depending on the individual patient. Dawn's research has shifted how osteoarthritis is understood – leading to new ways of treating and managing the disease. Dawn leads or collaborates in clinical trials of drugs to slow or halt the disease's progress. She has had 13 papers accepted or published in the 2017-18 financial year alone. Dawn also led the development of new collaborations between Menzies, the Tasmanian Health Service and the Royal Hobart Hospital, to improve management of osteoarthritis and musculoskeletal conditions in Tasmania. Dawn's outstanding work in the field saw her being named the 2018 Tasmanian Young STEM Researcher of the Year.

Dr Britta Denise Hardesty

Researcher in plastics pollution

Age: 51

Lives: Hobart

Born in the US and having called all seven continents home, Dr Britta Denise Hardesty now lives in Tasmania. She works as a principal research scientist and team leader with CSIRO's Oceans and Atmosphere. She is a pioneer of plastics pollution – understanding its origins, its movement through the environment, and most importantly, how we can curtail it. Denise is part of the women's science leadership initiative, Homeward Bound, a global network of women in STEM working to influence policy and decision-making to help the planet. She also leads a portfolio of marine debris projects, helping put Australia in the forefront of the plastics pollution field. In 2016, Denise led the world's first national survey of plastics pollution, focusing on Australia's coastline. This work won her team the Australian Museum Eureka Prize for Environmental Research. Passionate about making change to sustain the planet, Denise provides her expert opinion on marine debris to the Federal Government, NGOs and industry stakeholders in Australia and overseas.

Dr Jess Melbourne-Thomas

Marine research scientist

Age: 38

Lives: Hobart

Rhodes Scholar, international research scientist and mother, Dr Jess Melbourne-Thomas, grew up exploring Tasmania's spectacular coastline and wilderness. Her love of the environment led her to pursue a career as a research scientist, first with the Australian Antarctic Division, and now with CSIRO Oceans & Atmosphere. Jess uses interdisciplinary research approaches to understand how marine socioecological systems respond to climate change and other human activities, and to inform decision-making for sustainable development. A passionate advocate for female leadership in science, Jess co-founded the Homeward Bound project, which took 78 women working in science on a leadership journey to Antarctica in 2016. Jess also co-founded the Women in Polar Science network, which has more than 4,000 members worldwide. Named Tasmania's Young Tall Poppy of the Year in 2015 for her excellence in research, science communications and policy engagement, Jess also co-presents the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Marine and Antarctic Science that's reached over 17,000 students.

Melody Towns

Anti-slavery advocate

Age: 38

Lives: Hobart

After hearing about the horrors of slavery – the fastest growing criminal industry in the world – Melody Towns knew she had to do something. With no event or fundraising experience, and a newborn baby, Melody founded Be Hers, an awareness-raising social enterprise that educates the developed world about those trapped in slavery. Melody leads a team of volunteers, who use awareness, education, employment and partnership to connect the vulnerable and exploited with those who have freedom. Since its inception in 2011, Be Hers' signature awareness-raising event, Be Her Freedom, has grown exponentially and is now run in multiple locations across Australia. To date, Be Hers has raised over half a million dollars, which is donated to project partners, including the A21 campaign that works on the frontlines of slavery. Through Melody's vision and hard work, Be Hers has funded housing, medical procedures, hotlines and rescue, restoration and prevention programs. Be Hers' extraordinary changemaking efforts have been recognised with several business awards.

Category: Tasmania Senior Australian of the Year

Lola Greeno

Visual artist and designer

Age: 73

Lives: Launceston

Lola Greeno is an Aboriginal necklace maker whose career spans thirty years. She is known for her distinctly patterned, delicate and iridescent strands of shells, collected from the Tasmanian coastlines and surrounding islands. Lola's award-winning talent champions the traditions and culture of the Indigenous women of Tasmania's Cape Barren and Flinders Islands. Her work is represented in numerous collections, including the National Gallery of Australia, Sydney Powerhouse Museum, Queensland Art Gallery, and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. Her 2018 solo exhibition 'Cultural Jewels' showcased over 50 pieces of work in a national tour. Lola is the first Indigenous visual artist to receive the prestigious national award of National Living Treasure at the Indigenous Arts Awards in Sydney. She was also the first Indigenous Arts officer for Arts Tasmania, providing Indigenous Tasmanians with a powerful voice. In addition to her artistic practice, Lola works with school groups, promoting cultural knowledge to future generations.

Dorothy Hallam

Film and television pioneer

Age: 94

Lives: Tasman Peninsula

Now 94 years old, Dorothy Hallam was the first female 'stringer' cinematographer appointed to film for ABC News in Australia. From 1961–1983, Dorothy had 176 films on television, from local newsreels to national TV. A keen photographer from eight years old, Dorothy operated her own 16mm Bolex camera, acted as her own director, and kept an eye out for local events in the community that were worthy of television time on the ABC news. In this way, she lovingly chronicled the changing Tasman Peninsula and the lives of the people who lived there. In one story, she hoisted from a boat 100 feet up a cliff face to 'The Landing' on Tasman Island, to record the lighthouse children receiving their correspondence lessons. Over her two decades in television, she recorded the transformation of the area from a place where access was by boat, and farmers bartered and travelled on slow dirt roads, to the tourism hub of today.

Sarah Parry

Sail trainer and youth mentor

Age: 74

Lives: Hobart

For 20 years, Sarah Parry has helped young Tasmanians develop their leadership skills, and access recreation and employment in marine industries. As Captain and Trustee of the Windeward Bound Trust and Foundation, Sarah draws on her background in the Royal Australian Navy to deliver the Rotary Youth Leadership Challenge for 10 young Tasmanians with leadership potential, and 10 youth from refugee backgrounds. The 10-day voyage combines education on ship life with youth development, equipping young people with the skills and confidence they need to achieve their full potential. Sarah also runs three, eight and ten-day sail training voyages for at-risk youth.

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These voyages help connect them with peers and mentors who can guide them into employment. In 2017, Sarah was named International Sail Trainer of the Year. Her next venture with the Department of Jobs and Tasmanian Department of State Growth will see her training 18 Tasmanian jobseekers to become workplace-ready, by helping them restore a historic sailing vessel.

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.

Category: Tasmania Young Australian of the Year

Matthew Etherington
Soccer coach and mental health advocate

Age: 24

Lives: Hobart

Matthew Etherington knows the potential sport has to create physically and mentally healthier, more inclusive communities. As coach of The Big Issue Street Soccer Program, Matthew helps improve the quality of life of people experiencing disadvantage, homelessness and disability, through participation in a team focused on inclusion. Matthew's desire to help others drives his many achievements – which are even more extraordinary considering he suffers from chronic fatigue. He is a national Youth Health Forum member and has helped promote youth leadership through organisations such as the Red Cross, UN Youth and the Tasmanian Youth Local Government. Matthew spearheaded the organising committee for the youth-led Social Connectedness Summit during Mental Health Week 2018. He also organises a state-wide Mental Health First Aid initiative at UTAS, which has helped prepare more than 600 students to exercise self-care, promote mental health and encourage peer support. Matthew's efforts were recently recognised with the 2019 Tasmanian Premier's Young Achiever Award.

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.

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Madeline Wells

First Nations advocate, protector and defender

Age: 23

Lives: North West Tasmania

Growing up in Tasmania, Madeline Wells was confronted with negative stereotypes about what it means to be Aboriginal. She was inspired to confront these by the influential male and female elders in her community, who created transforming social movements. Madeline is a passionate human-rights advocate – especially for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in smaller local communities. She has been actively involved in campaigns addressing domestic violence, climate justice and incarceration. Named 2013's Tasmanian Aboriginal Student of the Year, she was chosen to represent Australia in China at the 2014 APEC Youth Skills Summer Camp. She currently works at Seed Indigenous Youth Climate Network, where she has volunteered for the past five years, and has been a community producer with social change organisation, Bighart. She was chosen to attend the 2019 Amnesty International Australia UN Youth Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and Rule of Law, in Geneva. Despite health issues, she is an active and inspirational leader.

Grace Williams

Filmmaker, law student and human rights advocate

Age: 22

Lives: Hobart

University of Tasmania Law, Economics, Politics and Philosophy student and filmmaker, Grace Williams, understands the power of storytelling in educating people about human rights. An emigrant to Tasmania from Ghana, Grace is passionate about human rights law and practice. In 2018, with fellow UTAS students Alex Rylah and Tim Cooper, Grace documented the human rights experiences of 10 Tasmanians, creating the powerful documentary *Citizen*. The documentary helps people understand the impact that human rights violation has on individuals. Grace was an active member of Launceston's Migrant Resource Centre Youth Advisory Group and has developed workshops to help newly arrived migrants integrate into Australian communities. She was awarded a junior fellowship to attend the 6degrees conference in Toronto, an event which explores inclusion and citizenship. She also used a \$2,000 associate grant to help deliver animal-assisted therapy to Tasmanian communities. Grace's insight, motivation and passion are infectious. She inspires the community to take a more compassionate and courageous response to others.

Category: Tasmania Local Hero

Betsy Hanson

Community choir leader

Age: 50

Lives: Sandford

Betsy Hanson leads the Nourish Women's Choir and two local community choirs. With a belief that anyone can sing, Betsy fosters an atmosphere of inclusiveness and encouragement. Her aim is to inspire choir members with a love of music, helping them feel uplifted and rejuvenated after each meeting. Driven by Betsy's passion for social justice, the choir has performed at the Candlelight Vigil, in support of victims of domestic violence. Drawing on years of experience as a youth worker, Betsy also volunteers with vulnerable young people at Endzone, an education reengagement program. She has developed a support group of older women to mentor teenage girls, reaching them through her compassion and love for music. She provides friendship, support and musical opportunities for people seeking asylum in Hobart. In addition, each year, Betsy organises the Nourish You Women's Retreat to help women connect with themselves and each other.

Simon Reade

Composer and musical director

Age: 42

Lives: Hobart

Simon Reade has been Musical Director of the Hobart City Band for over two decades, each year supporting more than a hundred musicians across a number of ensembles. These include the Hobart Wind Symphony, which Simon has led to win four Australian National Championship Titles. His exceptional skills and dedication have contributed enormously to the band's calibre and success. A champion of modern music and composer himself, Simon mentors emerging Australian composers through his Annual Composers Workshop. Simon's passion for inspiring young musicians manifests in his role as conductor with the Tasmania Youth Orchestra, and his chosen career as a

school instrumental music teacher and band director. Simon's reputation in the Australian band community has enabled him to forge successful partnerships with world-class musicians, singers and international musical directors. His passion and drive are directly responsible for hundreds of Tasmanians experiencing community music, and the development of new musical artists.

Dr Charles Rose
President of UTAS Cricket Club

Age: 27

Lives: Hobart

As President of the University of Tasmania Cricket Club, Dr Charles Rose has worked tirelessly to create a culture of inclusion, both in the club and the greater community. He opened the Club to culturally diverse and migrant communities, and has increased female participation and all-girl teams. In 2019, Charles and the club hosted the Final and Closing Ceremony of the 'Don't Give Up, Give Back' Cup – a unique cricket tournament for people seeking asylum, refugees and international students from south Asia, including India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal. The event was held in partnership with Tasmania's Intercultural Sports League, a local community organisation that encourages cross-cultural participation through sports. During the four-day tour, visitors played cricket matches with three local Tasmanian teams on cricket grounds in the Hobart region. In 2019, Charles took out the coveted Cricket Australia Volunteer of the Year Award, in recognition of his efforts to foster community engagement and integration.

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.

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