



*Westfield*

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*Local Heroes*

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2018

Westfield Local Heroes were nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three successful Westfield Local Heroes per centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant to support their affiliated organisation's work, programs or activities.



*Westfield*  

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*Local Heroes*  

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In the first year of the Westfield Local Heroes program, we received an overwhelming response and many heart-warming stories after asking the local community to nominate individuals who promote wellbeing and harmony in their communities.

We congratulate every one of our nominees and recognise the important contribution they make to their local community.

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*Westfield*

WARRINGAH MALL

NSW



## Daniel Peterson Community Northern Beaches

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*Compassionate, Persistent,  
Creative*

### Daniel shares one of life's most valuable resources with rough sleepers

Along with the coffees, fresh food, Opal cards and financial assistance, outreach worker Daniel Peterson tries to provide something even more important to those facing homelessness.

The most valuable thing he can offer is his time, he says. To actively listen to people speak about their circumstances in a non-judgmental, respectful manner.

Daniel, who works at Community Northern Beaches, says he does whatever he can to ensure people feel validated by the time they leave the charity's drop-in centre.

"To do the job well and to be effective, you really have to invest quality time with people to truly get to know what's going on in their lives and how you can help."

Daniel divides his time between the centre and being out and about to find people sleeping rough.

He is also the first-response person the local council and police call upon to assist and assess the needs of rough sleepers in public spaces.

It is confronting and challenging and sometimes frustrating work but Daniel ensures he treats his clients with compassion and respect.

Apart from dealing with immediate needs such as food, shelter, clothing and transport, Daniel also helps with more complex issues.

He has achieved many positive outcomes for clients, including finding long-term housing, arranging for flights to New Zealand so a client could reconnect with family, setting up family reunions, setting up referrals for mental health treatment and finding employment opportunities.

"It's very much about being an advocate for, and a voice for, people who are going through great difficulties and struggle," he says.

He's touched to be voted a Westfield Local Hero and appreciates the connection members of the community have made to the charity.

Community Northern Beaches will use most of its \$10,000 Westfield grant to fund immediate and practical needs of rough sleepers in the area, such as food, transport, phone facilities and pharmacy vouchers.

But the charity is also planning on setting up a voucher system with a local laundromat so people can wash and dry their clothes regularly.



## **Warren Welsh** The Burdekin Association

*Caring, Altruistic, Committed*

### **Warren helps young people, one success story at a time**

Warren Welsh's mission in life is to help young homeless and at-risk people become the best versions of themselves they can be.

For the past 20 years, he has been running the Burdekin Association's youth housing program, which provides supported accommodation to people aged 16 to 24 years.

The program on Sydney's northern beaches has been turning young lives around by not only offering a much-needed roof but also guidance and support.

"A lot of the kids we work with have come from a background of trauma, so they are very much behind the eight ball," says Warren.

"For us it's about evening up that playing field a little."

The organisation takes a holistic approach with the more than 200 children and young adults it helps every year.

A typical case involves empathetically helping a client through a crisis and then giving direct support and referrals to help them find safe, secure and affordable housing. Following this, Warren and his team work closely with the client and help them develop the skills and knowledge they need to get back on track with their life.

"We've got so many great stories and successes," Warren says.

"We've had kids come through these doors who have gone on to have careers as teachers, managers, nurses, dental technologists, recognised chefs and real estate agents."

Warren says he's deeply humbled and grateful to be a Westfield Local Hero, which marks more than 25 years of supporting young people on the northern beaches.

Burdekin Association will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to teach young people life skills such as budgeting, food preparation and emotional resilience.

The money will also be used to train staff, teach people how to be good tenants and buy white goods to help them set up their home.



## Mitchell Wallis Heart On My Sleeve Movement

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*Passionate, Authentic,  
Inspiring*

### How Mitch got people around the world wearing their heart on their sleeve

When Mitchell Wallis shared his personal story about his mental health struggles, little did he know his YouTube video would go viral with over a million views around the world in a single week.

That was in May 2017. After his experience touched so many, he set up the Heart on My Sleeve social media campaign and website to encourage people with mental health issues to tell their stories for their own healing and to help others feel less alone.

"I wanted to go beyond awareness campaigns," says Mitch.

His Heart on My Sleeve movement encourages people who have been affected by mental illness to draw a heart on their forearm, take a photo, and write about their experience. They then upload the picture and words to the Heart on My Sleeve website or social media pages.

His mission is "humanise mental health, one heartfelt story at a time" by facilitating three million conversations in the next three years.

After a lifelong battle with anxiety, panic attacks and depression, Mitch was in his mid-20s and living in Seattle, when he reached his lowest ebb.

He stumbled across a YouTube video of a young man talking about his experiences with mental health problems and it helped Mitch so much that he returned home to recover.

"I moved back in with my parents, borrowed my nan's car, and had nothing but my story and the people around me who were keeping me afloat," he says.

Now Mitch is the Heart on My Sleeve CEO and has one employee. He runs day-to-day operations such as marketing, social media, public speaking and fundraising. And he has big plans to grow the movement into a fully-fledged online resource.

He is delighted to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's meant so much to me to be recognised by my local community – my Mosman home has been a strong element in all of this."

Heart on My Sleeve will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to build digital infrastructure for new programs, including an eLearning platform and an online counselling service.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Caroline Ghatt** | Play For All Australia

*Visionary, Vibrant, Inspiring*

Caroline is a Co-Founder of PFAA and their driving purpose is for every child of any ability to be able to visit their local community play space and can equally participate and enjoy the social, cognitive and emotional benefits that play brings. Caroline planted the seed by engaging the community and then vigorously campaigned the council to make inclusive design the starting point for all their playgrounds.

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## **Louise Hall** | NBI

*Compassionate, Tenacious, Committed*

NBI is an organisation supporting people with disabilities and their carers on the Northern Beaches and in Northern Sydney. Louise is a coordinator, whose role includes running the carer support program. This program includes the 'Carers Cafe' which started almost 3 years ago and brings together 15 mums each month to have morning tea, a chat and a wellbeing activity.

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## **Rosy Sullivan** | Northern Beaches Women's Shelter

*Irrepressible, Authentic, Impressive*

Rosy Sullivan works tirelessly in a voluntary capacity as a longstanding Board Member and current Acting President of the NBWS. Rosy's passionate involvement at the governance, fundraising and process levels embeds her personal values of community support, outstanding professional standards and operational due diligence to every aspect of the critical work of NBWS.



# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Janine ALLMAN**

Bear Cottage

**Mathieu BERTRAND**

Home Care Heroes

**Michael CALLOWAY**

Volunteer Marine Rescue NSW

**Maria CHIDZEY**

Community Northern Beaches

**Rosa CHIRILLO**

Make-A-Wish Australia

**Vicki CLARE-GELUK**

Plie, Groove'n'Shuffle –  
School of Performing Arts

**Elliot CONNOR**

Sydney Naturalists Group

**David COWELL**

North Steyne Surf Lifesaving  
Club Inc

**Cassandra DAVIDSON HAYNES**

Dee Why Public School Parents  
and Citizens Association

**Fiona DIGNAN**

Vern Barnett School –  
Autism Spectrum Australia

**Megan DONNELL**

Sanfilippo Children's Foundation

**Emma DRAKE**

StreetWork Australia

**Laurel FISHER**

Forest Netball Club

**Caroline GHATT**

Play For All Australia

**Vered GORDON**

Black Dog Institute

**Lisa GRAHAM**

Taldumande Youth Services

**Lynleigh GRIEG**

Sydney Metropolitan Wildlife  
Services

**Louise HALL**

NBI

**Sarah HERRIOT**

Raise

**Rhys LLEWELLYN**

Narrabeen Lakes Sailing Club

**Katrina MEEK**

Mums for Mums

**Sue OLSEN**

Cerebral Palsy Alliance

**Laura O'REILLY**

Fighting Chance Australia

**Daniel PETERSON**

Community Northern Beaches

**Eleni PSILLAKIS**

Brazengrowth

**Ralph RANGER**

1st /2nd Harbord Scout Group

**Sue RANGER**

1st /2nd Harbord Scout Group

**Bruce ROBERTSON**

Bilgola SLSC

**Roxana ROGAN**

Wild Education

**Rosy SULLIVAN**

Northern Beaches Women's  
Shelter

**Mel THOMAS**

KYUP! Project

**Mitchell WALLIS**

Heart On My Sleeve Movement

**Warren WELSH**

The Burdekin Association

**Graham WHITTAKER**

Raise Foundation

**Ben WOODS**

Black Dog Institute

A decorative red ribbon graphic that starts as a thick, straight line on the left and then curves and loops into a thinner, wavy line on the right.

**If you or anyone you know would like more information on what support is available:**

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**AUSTRALIA**

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800

MensLine: 1300 78 99 78

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732

**NEW ZEALAND**

Lifeline: 0800 543 354

Suicide Crisis Helpline: 0508 828 865

Kidsline: 0800 54 37 54

Depression Helpline: 0800 111 757

Samaritans: 0800 726 666

Family Violence Information Line: 0800 456 450





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