



*Westfield*

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*Local Heroes*

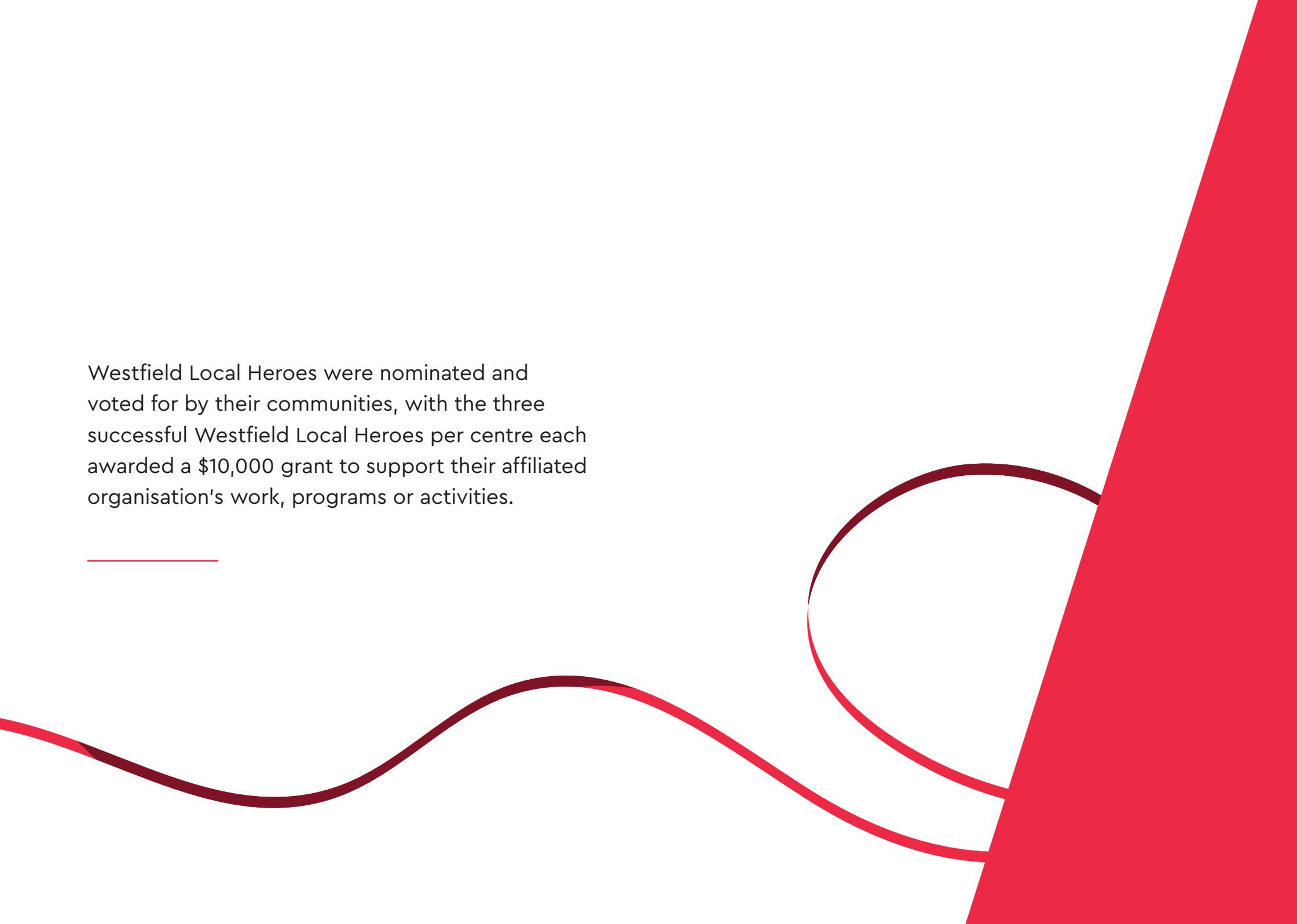
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2018





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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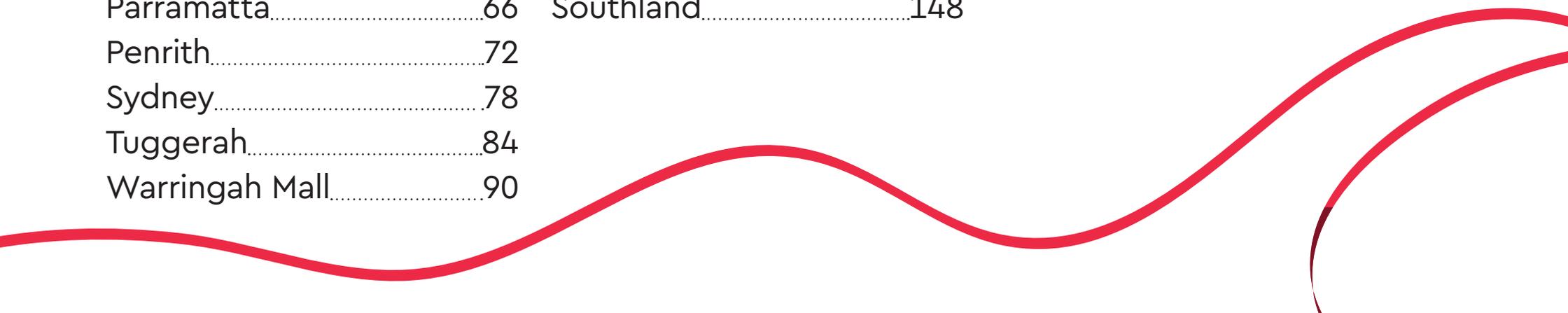
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# New South Wales

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Bondi Junction

Miranda

Burwood

Mt Druitt

Chatswood

Parramatta

Eastgardens

Penrith

Hornsby

Sydney

Hurstville

Tuggerah

Kotara

Warringah Mall

Liverpool



*Westfield*

**BONDI JUNCTION**

NSW



## Erika Gleeson Autism Swim

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*Passionate, Effervescent, Driven*

### Warm-hearted Erika makes it safe for children to cool off in water

There are few things better on a hot day than cooling off at the beach or the pool, but many children with autism never get near water because it's too risky. In fact, children with autism are 160 times more likely to drown than other kids.

That's why Sydney autism specialist Erika Gleeson created Autism Swim, a social enterprise specialising in swimming and water-safety for those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other disabilities.

"Our mission is to change those statistics by tackling the issue from every angle we can," says Erika.

"We believe everyone has the right to thrive and survive in the water."

Autism Swim works with swimming instructors, therapists, surfing organisations and schools to offer lessons tailored to the needs of each child, allowing them to learn at their own pace.

The organisation also provides training and support to parents on drowning prevention and how to prevent their children from wandering towards water.

"Our lessons are quite specialised compared with mainstream swimming lessons as they are inclusive of water therapy and

education about water safety as much as learning to swim," Erika says.

As founder and clinical director of the social enterprise, Erika works over 60 hours a week developing training material and resources, organising events and coordinating staff, volunteers and participants.

But she says it's worth it for the smiles on the faces of the children as they develop confidence and skills in the water.

"It is amazing when you see them supersede all expectations and do things like go surfing, which their parents may have thought was never possible," she says.

Erika says she is chuffed to have been voted by her community as a Westfield Local Hero.

Autism Swim will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to fund a video to educate the public about the dangers of wandering and drowning among those with ASD. Funds will also go towards an online training program and wandering and drowning-prevention toolkits for 30 families.



## **Kara Holmes** B Miles Women's Foundation

*Industrious, Big-Hearted, Dedicated*

### **Kara's psychological embrace helps women in need rebuild their lives**

After 12 years of working with Sydney's homeless community, clinical psychologist Kara Holmes has developed a wealth of knowledge and expertise on how to support women in distress.

She puts it to good use with the help of the B Miles Women's Foundation, a specialist service for women living with homelessness and mental illness across inner-Sydney.

As a contractor for the foundation, Kara provides free individual psychological therapy and group programs for women in need who otherwise would be unable to afford to see a therapist.

"We help women with complex needs that aren't getting support from public mental health services due to under-resourcing, but who still really need psychological treatment," she says.

Kara also runs a weekly Wellbeing Group for women who are finding housing and stability in their lives after periods of homelessness, but who need support to develop skills and strategies for coping with everyday living.

The therapy Kara provides is especially important because, despite the fact that many women experiencing homelessness are also recovering from trauma or mental illness, severe financial hardship usually puts psychological therapy out of reach.

"There are lots of barriers to accessing psychological therapy and while a big issue is affordability, people also get confused navigating the complex health system when they are really vulnerable," Kara says.

Many of Kara's clients find her sessions life-changing.

"I feel included. I have somewhere safe to go where people know me," says one woman who attends group sessions.

"I felt respected, trustworthy and included in the group sessions," says another.

"This support has helped me to bring about transformation and positive change in my life in a multitude of ways," says another.

Despite this, Kara is surprised to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero by her community. But she says she is also delighted by the recognition of the service she provides.

The Wellbeing Group will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to fund interventions for 40 women. This could include the required clinical psychology assessments, medical assessments, documentation and advocacy to ensure they are approved for accommodation, income support and NDIS packages.



## George Karounis Our Big Kitchen

*Enthusiastic, Loyal, Caring*

### George's warmth nourishes bodies and souls across a state

With his infectious enthusiasm and can-do attitude, George Karounis is the heart and soul of an iconic Bondi institution that delivers 80,000 meals a year to people in need across NSW.

George is the manager of Our Big Kitchen, a community run, industrial-sized kitchen. He is the man responsible for ensuring volunteers are rostered, ingredients and donations are sourced and meals are prepared, packed and passed-on to people who need them.

"It is about coordinating high school groups, university groups, charities and individuals and getting them to cook a lot of meals. It really is a huge organisational challenge," George says.

The kitchen is non-denominational and all meals are both kosher and halal. Anybody can come in to ask for food, but most are distributed via organisations such as The Salvation Army, St Vincent's De Paul, Lou's Place, Wayside Chapel, Jewish House and The Greek Orthodox Church.

An aim of the kitchen is to connect and empower people to have them all working together to make a difference. George puts his heart into providing meaningful volunteering opportunities that are especially popular with young people seeking experience for Duke of Edinburgh awards.

There are also opportunities for corporate team building and the kitchen staff delight in hosting children's birthday parties at which the host and their guests bake and decorate delicious party food that is then packaged up for all guests to take home.

In line with the spirit of giving, each child leaves with two of everything, one for them and one to make someone else happy.

Known for his focus on helping people "in the now", George centres his attention every day on support and education for volunteers and recipients alike.

"We aren't thinking about long-term solutions. They're important, but if you're hungry and living in a park you need a meal today," George says.

"The meals are one way of telling people we care."

George says he is proud to have been recognised by his community as a Westfield Local Hero.

Our Big Kitchen will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant on much-needed upgrades to the cooking and serving equipment, including a new oven that should allow the centre to cook even more meals for people in need.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Rachel Draper** | Responsible Cafes

*Passionate, Resilient, Enthusiastic*

As a volunteer at Responsible Cafes, Rachel has established Responsible Runners, a community group that engages local schools, children and community members to meet weekly for beach clean-ups in Rose Bay. Single use plastic pollution is a growing problem on the pristine beaches of Australia, and Rachel has worked tirelessly to educate and engage local members of the community, with the hope they will rethink how they use plastic in their lives.

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## **Saxon Graham** | Holdsworth Community

*Inspirational, Generous, Loving*

Saxon's journey with Holdsworth started when he joined their afterschool programs as a child living with an intellectual disability. Holdsworth Community supports individuals and families in need throughout Sydney and the Eastern Suburbs, including children and adults living with disabilities, families with young children, and the elderly. As Saxon grew into adulthood, his amazing community spirit shone through, and he began volunteering with the Holdsworth Community.

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## **Karen Hamilton** | REELise Incorporated

*Committed, Innovative, Empowering*

Karen is the Founder of REELise, an innovative approach to cyberbullying that aims to empower young people to address the risk and the opportunity of their online environment. When Karen established REELise in 2013, Australia was ranked the worst country in the world for cyberbullying. With programs that are interactive and hold individuals accountable for both their actions online and their roles as bystanders, Karen has helped to empower and protect thousands of children.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Nadene ALHADEFF**  
Mum For Mum NCJWA

**Tara CLARK**  
WITS - Women in Theatre &  
Screen

**Jessica DAVIDSON**  
BaptistCare HopeStreet

**Rachel DRAPER**  
Responsible Cafes

**Jen DUGARD**  
Body Beyond Baby

**Robert ENEMARK**  
Waverley Woollahra Art School

**Rob FERGUSON**  
1st Clovelly Scout Group

**Erika GLEESON**  
Autism Swim

**Saxon GRAHAM**  
Holdsworth Community

**Karen HAMILTON**  
REELise Incorporated

**Kara HOLMES**  
B Miles Women's Foundation

**George KAROUNIS**  
Our Big Kitchen

**Mendel KASTEL OAM**  
Jewish House

**Russell KING**  
WAYS Youth & Family

**Bronwyn LOWE**  
Goodstart Early Learning -  
Bondi Junction Oxford Street West

**Hamid MOBARREZ**  
KRB Aquatics Swim Club

**Brett PATTINSON**  
Clean Oceans

**Shannai PEARCE**  
Black Dog Institute

**Daliah SZWARC**  
Maccabi NSW All Abilities

**Sam WEBB**  
Top LIVIN

**Dean WHITE**  
Kit Bag for Kids



*Westfield*

**BURWOOD**

NSW



**James Collins**  
St Paul's Anglican Church  
Parish Pantry

*Selfless, Inspirational, Effective*

### For James, giving is largely about the dignity of the recipient

When people say James Collins is always there for those in need, they're not exaggerating.

He's available 24 hours a day to provide counselling and support, often working 20 hours across a range of charitable projects run out of St Paul's Anglican Church.

A renowned part of this is Parish Pantry, which provides free food to those who need it.

It began out of an office, but as more people came to the church for help, an expansion was necessary.

"We could no longer fit, so we got a shed," says James.

"We fitted it out like a minimart to give people autonomy. Now it's gone from a little supermarket to more like a café. We're about to branch out to coffee and soups."

The project is not just about providing food but giving people a sense of dignity and belonging.

"People have to swallow their pride coming to this. We treat them with love and respect," says James.

"I've made it very clear with donations of food and clothing: don't give anything you wouldn't eat or wear, or I'll throw it out."

James also helped set up the Lifejacket program to secure donations of winter clothing for those sleeping rough, which has now expanded to source torches, sleeping bags and toiletries.

His other endeavours include visits to residents of aged care homes who may be socially isolated, organising a free toddler-care program with a focus on helping single mothers and running a free musical concert program at the church that is open to all.

James is grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. It is "truly wonderful," he says.

The Parish Pantry will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to increase its stock. By purchasing additional storage, for example a large refrigerator, they can expand the service by offering a greater range of fresh vegetables and dairy products. The number of people requesting help is steadily increasing. Over the last month the total has reached 100 per week. "The need keeps growing and we won't turn people away if there is any way to help them."

"We run on what God and people provide, so I'm very grateful for this gift. It will help us expand in quantity and in style," says James.

"We give away twice our income to help the poor, which is not good economics. This grant is a godsend."



## Roman Deguchi Inner West Neighbour Aid

*Compassionate, Persevering,  
Visionary*

### Roman uses plants and pets to make the world a better place

Roman Deguchi lives by a statement he once heard from a young father living with paraplegia: "Society determines my disability, not my disability."

He tries to soften society's role in the equation by designing, renovating and maintaining gardens for people with disabilities and elderly people.

He leads two staff and over 70 volunteers at Inner West Neighbour Aid (IWNA) and they have transformed 271 gardens in the last year.

"My passions are plants and the community so I couldn't ask for more," says Roman.

Having worked in horticulture all his life, Roman was running his own business when he was offered contract work for Neighbour Aid. This turned into a permanent job as Home Maintenance Coordinator.

Roman was also the driving force behind a successful Neighbour Aid Pets Program through which older people can adopt an older pet from the RSPCA and have access to a volunteer dog walker if needed. This is one of INWA's flagship programs and provides happiness and companionship for many people each year.

Now Roman is spearheading the 5 Senses Garden at Rhodes Park in Concord, which is scheduled to open in 2018. It is a joint project

between Neighbour Aid and the Canada Bay Council, where Roman sits on the Access and Advisory Committee.

"Looking around, I noticed there were parks for specific groups, sports fields for playing footy, playgrounds for kids, golf courses for those who play golf," Roman says.

"But there were not enough community spaces. So, we've got this huge project to make a garden inclusive. Some people can't enjoy all aspects of a garden, if they're vision-impaired for example, so we make ways for everybody to engage with nature, with smelling plants, tactile plants, plants that engage all senses."

The 5 Senses Garden will host interactive sessions with health experts, horticulturists, cooks, art therapists and others whose work can benefit people who are elderly, marginalised or have a disability.

Roman says he's incredibly flattered to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"Being recognised by the community is not something I take for granted," he says.

Neighbour Aid will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund 50 interactive sessions at the 5 Senses Garden, covering speaker fees and equipment.



## **Rose Cox** Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation

*Brave, Tireless, Advocate*

### **Rose gives back to charity that helped her as a child**

Rose isn't just a volunteer at the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation. She's a living testament to its success.

The foundation runs programs for children whose families are affected by mental illness.

When Rose was eight, her mother was diagnosed with Transverse Myelitis and spent a year in hospital unable to walk because of the rare neurological condition.

Her father had a breakdown, affected by depression, anxiety and drug addiction.

"We were a dandy inner-westie family and with a click of your fingers everything changed," says Rose.

The young girl was thrust into a parental role. She was only in Year 4 and took on responsibility for looking after her little sister and her father. "I had to motivate my dad to shower, shave and clean his teeth, which he wouldn't want to do for weeks on end."

At Kookaburra Kids programs, children learn about mental illness, resilience and looking after their own wellbeing.

There are also fun activities, which the kids may not have time for in their home lives.

"You aren't alone, but as a small child you don't know that," says Rose.

"Knowing other kids took a weight off my shoulders. I learned so much about dad's mental illness. I learned it wasn't my fault or my mum's."

Fast-forward 10 years and Rose is now a volunteer and youth ambassador for the foundation, supporting the programs she attended as a child.

"I realised I could dwell on my life, whinge and maybe repeat the cycle, or I could turn a negative into a positive."

In 2014, she became a youth ambassador, doing lunch talks. She also became an advocate and sits on a government advisory council for carers, where she has an influence on legislation and policy.

Rose says it's nice to be voted a Westfield Local Hero, but her priority is ensuring more children receive support. "I do this regardless of any pats on the back."

The charity will use the \$10,000 Westfield grant to fund 15 more children to attend the Kookaburra Kids programs.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Wendi Etherington** | School as Community Centre, Lakemba

*Committed, Energetic, Welcoming*

Wendi coordinates the Lakemba School as Community Centre (SaCC), where she has worked for more than 15 years. Through her countless hours of dedication, she has helped support many families with young children, creating a welcoming space where they feel connected to the local community. Many of the families are new migrants to Australia, and the SaCC provides programs such as playgroups, English lessons, multicultural cooking classes and work readiness courses.

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## **Dianne King** | The Exodus Foundation

*Inspirational, Kind-hearted, Invaluable*

Dianne has dedicated over 60 years and 2,000 hours volunteering her time to those less fortunate. She is described as the backbone of The Exodus Foundation volunteer base, where she assists at the Loaves & Fishes Restaurant in Ashfield to prepare free meals that nourish the poor and homeless. Dianne also volunteers her time at the foundation's music and art workshops, providing much-appreciated social connection and recreation.

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## **Jacque Weaver** | Communities for Communities

*Dedicated, Passionate, Committed*

Jacque is a volunteer with Communities for Communities, where she improves the lives of high support needs students, their families and teachers at Lucas Gardens School. Lucas Gardens provides educational programs for students with a range of conditions, including intellectual and physical disabilities, sensory impairments and complex medical conditions. Since 2007, Jacque has organised numerous fundraising events, such as an annual Ladies Lunch, an annual ball and other community events that raise funds and support the school.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Patricia ABRAHAM**

Eurella

**Ann BARNETT**

Integricare Preschool Strathfield

**Bernadette BRIDLE**

St Anne's Catholic Primary School  
Strathfield South

**Donna BURLAND**

Dorothy Cowie School of Dancing

**Cathryn CARBOON**

The Carevan Foundation Limited

**James COLLINS**

St Paul's Anglican Church  
Parish Pantry

**Rose COX**

Australian Kookaburra Kids  
Foundation

**Roman DEGUCHI**

Inner West Neighbour Aid

**Wendi ETHERINGTON**

Lakemba School as  
Community Centre

**Sage GODREI**

On the Cusp Productions

**Sam HELOU**

Rotary Club of Burwood

**Maree KARADAGHIAN**

Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre

**Dianne KING**

The Exodus Foundation

**Fiona LAMBROU**

The Infants' Home Child & Family  
Services

**Bev LANGE**

Stepping Out Program

**Judy LOVE**

Concord Community Food  
Services Inc (Concord-Drummoyne  
Meals on Wheels)

**Damien MORAN**

Ashfield Public School Parents and  
Citizens Association

**Hala RAMADAN**

Belmore Boys High School

**Wendy SCHMID**

The Embroiderers' Guild NSW Inc

**Shelley SHA**

Pei Lei Wushu Association

**Vivian STAVIS**

Lillians Howell Project  
Incorporated

**Kristine STEPHENSON**

Women's Housing Company Ltd

**Katie THOMPSON**

Good Shepherd Anglican Church,  
Greenacre

**Jackie WALTERS**

Inner West Neighbour Aid

**Jacque WEAVER**

Communities for Communities

**Morgan WILSON**

St Anthony's Family Care

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*



*Westfield*

**CHATSWOOD**

NSW



## **Pam Timmins** Dance Chance Incorporated

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*Committed, Caring, Humble*

### **Dancing queen brings joy to her community**

Pam Timmins has long recognised that anyone can find joy and creativity in dance, yet mainstream classes do not necessarily cater to those with different needs.

So, 10 years ago she started Dance Chance, a weekly dance group designed for people with disability.

At that stage she had five dancers and five volunteers, but no experience running a charity.

It was a steep learning curve, but she quickly gained the skills she needed to build a grass-roots community organisation.

It was a TV show that inspired Pam to get the ball rolling.

She was watching Andrew Denton's *Enough Rope*, and the *Merrymakers*, a dance group with mostly disabled members, put out a call for people wanting to learn how to help in their community.

"I asked my daughters and they were keen." So, they attended a *Merrymakers* master class for people wanting to hold their own dance classes.

Dance Chance now has 35 dancers, aged between five and seventy-five, with a range of physical and intellectual disabilities. They are supported by a team of over 20 volunteers.

Pam is the organisation's lifeblood, coordinating venues, organising equipment and communicating with the dancers, their families and the volunteers.

She attends every class to ensure things run smoothly and she makes time to get to know each of the dancers and volunteers individually.

Apart from the dancing, the group has a positive impact on the families and support networks of the dancers by providing opportunities for new connections.

Pam is deeply appreciative of being voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"It's wonderful that so many people support what we are doing and that the community appreciates what the volunteers do and what it means to the carers," she says.

Dance Chance will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund venue hire, new equipment and the production of an annual concert.

"The money will have a hugely beneficial impact on the program's future sustainability," Pam says.



## **Dina Koncepolski** **Cremorne Synagogue**

*Strong, Caring, Inspirational*

### **A welcoming hand from kind, calm and generous Dina**

Dina Koncepolski has been passionate about helping people for as long as she can remember.

"I was brought up in an environment where I was encouraged to help and include people as much as possible from a very early age," she says.

She became a birth coach at 22 and has helped women through childbirth. She has also helped to set up two friendship circles, providing support for families of children with special needs.

"I've always had a very strong sense of community," says Dina, whose husband, Chaim, is the Rabbi at Cremorne Synagogue.

As a mother of four children, people are amazed at the time and energy she has for others. And, she is famous for welcoming people into her home to share in her legendary cooking.

In 2017, she ran in the City to Surf and raised funds to support couples with fertility issues.

Dina is respected for her strength, kindness and calm manner. But she is also known for commanding attention when she talks.

She is an important catalyst for social inclusion and for providing material and emotional support to people facing hardship. One of her passions is the empowerment of women and she organises discussion groups and educational activities specifically designed for women.

Dina says she is inspired by the acknowledgement of being voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I wasn't overly keen on being in the public eye, but... it makes me want to continue to do more and to become a better person."

The synagogue will use the Westfield \$10,000 Local Heroes grant to fund food for new mothers or people who are sick or elderly and unable to cook for themselves. It will also go towards educational programs and cultural celebrations aimed at women and young families.



## **Carmen Platt** The Generous and the Grateful

*Kind, Determined,  
Connector*

### **Carmen's soft touch helps people sleeping rough at home**

Carmen Platt came up with her novel way of helping vulnerable people get back on their feet when she noticed a gap in the good work done by traditional agencies.

"I was helping refugees set up new lives. Caseworkers got them a property, but traditional agencies were taking up to eight weeks to provide basic living essentials. That's around 50 nights sleeping on the floor," she says.

"Everyone's passionate about homelessness, but what about those sleeping rough in their own homes?"

Carmen's response was to start her own agency, The Generous and the Grateful, to source and deliver high-quality preloved furniture and white goods to people in need.

"Life is like a big game of snakes and ladders. Agencies help with food, clothing, putting kids in school. There's a pivotal point when people are feeling hopeful about their future when they need the big, heavy, expensive things to help make an empty rental into a home," she says.

"We know what home means to us, and we are attempting to re-create that with those who have lost their homes and are now looking to the future."

Carmen's charity, which has been operating since June 2017, supports survivors of domestic violence, youth at risk, the previously homeless and people seeking asylum. She works full-time on a volunteer basis, spending her days raising funds, recruiting volunteers and working on branding and social media.

She is glad to say she no longer drives a truck and has a hydraulic lift to move fridges and beds up and down stairs.

Carmen is grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero and to have received so much community support over the months. But she's adamant: "It's not about me. It's about the people we help."

The Generous and the Grateful will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund delivery costs for five months. More importantly, Carmen says, "it means approximately 100 families will receive essential furniture."

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Sarah Ashton** | KYDS Youth Development Service Incorporated

*Selfless, Remarkable, Inspiring*

Sarah is a Youth Ambassador and volunteer for KYDS, an organisation that provides easy access to mental health and wellbeing support to young people, within the community. Sarah uses her own experiences to benefit others, encouraging other young people to seek help, reduce stigma amongst the broader community as well as raise awareness and funds for the organisation.

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## **Marion Chaffe** | Make-A-Wish Australia

*Quiet Achiever, Selfless, Committed*

Marion is a volunteer for Make-A-Wish and has worked tirelessly to grant over 368 wishes to seriously ill children with life threatening illnesses in the North Sydney region over the past 11 years. The wishes have helped the children and their families find happiness and hope during a difficult time as well as strength to keep fighting.

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## **Kaila Van Dam** | Job Centre Australia

*Hardworking, Committed, Innovative*

Kaila is the Manager of the Choice and Control Supports at the Job Centre Australia Chatswood and Dee Why offices, where she supports the 63 young people with disabilities registered within the area to achieve their employment goals. Each day, Kaila commutes from the Central Coast to support disabled youth, and works tirelessly within schools and the community to provide workshops and one-on-one tailored support, assistance and advice.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Sarah ASHTON**

KYDS Youth Development Service  
Incorporated

**Jumana AZEEM**

Willoughby City Council

**Lindy BATTERHAM**

Castlecrag Progress Association

**Lachlan BILLING**

Assisted Community Living  
ACL Disability Services &  
Gig Buddies Sydney

**Julie BURGESS**

Chatswood Chamber of  
Commerce

**Marion CHAFFE**

Make-A-Wish Australia

**Sharlene DADD**

The Shepherd Centre for Deaf  
Children

**Thomas DENT**

StreetWork Australia

**Margaret-Anne HAYES**

Can Too Foundation Ltd

**Sophia HOLLAND**

Loud Theatre Company

**Bianca HORWITZ &**

**Naomi SHERIFF**

The Living Collective-Willoughby  
Living

**Megan JONES**

Willoughby Park Anglican Church

**Dina KONCEPOLSKI**

Cremorne Synagogue

**Cathryn McELROY**

Coral Tree Family Service

**Carmen PLATT**

The Generous and the Grateful, Inc

**Pam TIMMINS**

Dance Chance Incorporated

**Kaila VAN DAM**

Job Centre Australia Limited

**Neville WARNER**

Willoughby Community Men's  
Shed Inc

**William WHYTE**

Legacy NSW Associated Clubs

**Wayne WIGHAM**

Black Dog Institute

**Ann WILLY**

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT

**Sue WONG**

Nan Tien Buddhist Temple  
Chatswood

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*



*Westfield*

**EASTGARDENS**

NSW



## Lara Galea The Shack Youth Services

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*Caring, Giving, Dedicated*

### How a struggling student became a straight-A achiever

The young student was struggling with maths and needed help.

On her first day at the Shack Tutoring Program she was highly anxious and didn't want to leave her mum's side.

But thanks to the safe and welcoming environment created by Lara Galea she has blossomed into a confident straight-A student.

She is an example of the difference Shack Youth Services makes in the lives of year 6-to-12 students in the Randwick and Botany areas.

The program is a partnership with the University of NSW, which handpicks tutors from its student body.

Thanks to Lara's tireless efforts to enrol young people in the program, 120 kids are improving at school this year.

"Their grades are just getting better and better," says Lara, who has worked for the Shack for three years and also coordinates its school holiday program.

The students' strong relationship with their tutors, who are not much older than them, is encouraging many to think about going to university.

Lara is delighted to be a Westfield Local Hero, mostly because it will make more young people aware of the Shack.

The \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant will allow the program to continue and fund a refurbishment of the Shack's drop-in centre.

"The school holiday program and drop-in centre are entry points where kids come in and meet the staff," says Lara.



## Sophie Panigirakis Bayside Women's Shelter

*Upbeat, Positive, Hardworking*

### Marketing executive Sophie finds most rewarding role of her life

Sophie Panigirakis had a high-flying marketing job, but she always got the biggest buzz out of the philanthropy work she did for her company.

Now, between setting up her own consultancy and taking care of her family, she has volunteered to help establish a new women's shelter in Bayside.

The shelter, which is expected to open in October 2018, will offer emergency accommodation for up to three months to women escaping domestic violence.

Sophie and her passionate board colleagues have been busy on the project for more than a year. She says supporting women and children who are left homeless by domestic violence has become "a way of life, of sorts."

That might be an understatement. As chair of the marketing committee, she has been working until all hours, engaging with council, the media and the local community. She is also responsible for all marketing material and the Shelter's website.

Many see Sophie as the glue that holds the project team together and her willingness to devote time and energy to the Shelter has gone way beyond what is expected of her.

But Sophie's loving her role.

"This is the most rewarding thing in my life, other than my family of course. I am passionate about working to empower women and promote harmony in our multicultural community," she says.

As part of her philanthropy work, Sophie has been particularly touched by a mother-of-two who survived family violence but lost her home.

Like Sophie, the woman had been in a corporate job but escaping the violence meant she had to sleep in her car.

She asks: "How many thousands of women have feared for their lives, changed jobs and taken their kids from the place they call home in the middle of the night to find safety?"

Sophie says she is honoured to be a Westfield Local Hero as it will increase awareness of domestic violence. But she is grateful to have the support of her family so she can devote her time to community work, which she plans to continue for the rest of her life.

The \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant will be used to add finishing touches to the Shelter.

"It is mostly in perfect condition," says Sophie. "But it needs furniture, a security system and playground equipment for children."



## Kylie Ostle Mum Society

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*Honest, Passionate, Dedicated*

### Kylie turns her job loss into an inspiration for mums

Sales and marketing manager, Kylie Ostle was on maternity leave when her office delivered the bad news. She had been made redundant four weeks before her scheduled return to work.

"My confidence was completely shattered," says Kylie, a mother of three girls aged one to six years. But Kylie sprang quickly into action, founding the Mum Society and connecting with other mums via Facebook. I thought, what if I bring women together to do something lovely and try to champion change in the workplace."

Nearly six years later, Kylie is helping thousands of mums feel less isolated through her special networking events and Facebook page. Many have transformed their careers with her help.

Kylie organises a brunch with a well-known guest speaker every month. Past speakers include Jessica Rowe, Sally Obermeder and Mary Coustos. So far, Mum Society has hosted just over 4,000 mums at the brunches.

"It's a family friendly environment, but it really is very much about these women being the best version of themselves. We have had women struggling with postnatal depression and it gives them a purpose to get out and shake things up a little bit," says Kylie.

Kylie recently received a thank you email from a mum who was inspired to set up her own business after attending an event.

"She said it transformed her life. It's a really lovely endorsement of what we do."

The Mum Society has also helped 450 mums into more flexible jobs through its networking capability.

"We've had lots of businesses come along searching for help and we've managed to share those opportunities among our community."

Kylie says it is humbling to be voted a Westfield Local Hero, but feels it acknowledges all of her hard hard work.

The Mum Society will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund an online maternity leave program to help women make the most of their family time while keeping in touch with their work and on top of opportunities for promotion. It will also be used to support disadvantaged Mums with free access to the events and a legal fund.

"A legal fund will also be established to help women who suffer workplace discrimination while on leave," says Kylie.

"Establishing this fund will better support women to know exactly where they can turn."

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Peter Cooley** | First Hand Solutions Aboriginal Corp

*Passionate, Dedicated, Unselfish*

Peter is the CEO of First Hand Solutions Aboriginal Corp and has been working with Aboriginal youth for the last 15 years to help them reconnect to culture and build them into strong community leaders. Peter facilitates youth leadership camps, road trips and cultural exchange trips. Peter has recently created a new social enterprise called IndigiGrow, which is a native bushfood and plant production project located in La Perouse public school including development of a unit of work for students.

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## **Randa Habelrih** | Emrich MATES

*Passionate, Inspiring, Leader*

Randa is passionate about shifting the focus from autism awareness, to autism acceptance and inclusion. Through her work at Emrich Mates, Randa helps to provide opportunities and events which celebrate the strength of the individual and reset the standards of inclusion. Randa organises initiatives such as Leaders2MATES, ModelMATES events, Autism and ME conferences as well as online support groups for parents.

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## **Samantha Payne** | The Pink Elephants Support Network

*Beautiful, Supportive, Tenacious*

One in four pregnancies in Australia end in miscarriage, so through The Pink Elephants, Samantha has created a network for others experiencing the same grief, as well as producing support literature and online resources to help guide couples through the emotional turmoil of loss and infertility. Sam is the co-founder and drives the success of the charity from writing content to contacting press for reach and also networking with hospitals and GP's to distribute the care kits.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Tracey AYTON**

Little Heroes Swim Academy  
Limited

**Peter COOLEY**

First Hand Solutions Aboriginal  
Corporation

**Julia ELIOPOULOS**

Begin Bright, Maroubra

**Ben FITZGERALD**

New South Wales Police Force

**Lara GALEA**

The Shack Youth Services

**Randa HABELRIH**

EMRICH MATES

**Maria HEATON**

Sydney Children's Hospital

**Michelle HONAN**

Sydney Children's Hospital

**Vicki JOHNSTON**

**Andrew LAZARIS**

City of Sydney Basketball  
Association

**Sherri LONGBOTTOM**

La Perouse United Junior Rugby  
League Football Club

**Sandra NEWELL**

Maroubra Bay Public School

**Kylie OSTLE**

Mum Society

**Sophie PANIGIRAKIS**

Bayside Women's Shelter

**Samantha PAYNE**

The Pink Elephants Support  
Network

**Pam SMITH**

Sydney Children's Hospital

**Ben STAMMER**

Can Too Foundation Ltd

**Darren TAHU**

Father Chris Riley's Youth Off  
The Streets

**Dr Elysia THORNTON-BENKO**

Wellac Lifestyle (Wellness After,  
And During Cancer. Wellness And  
Contented Living)



*Westfield*

**HORNSBY**

NSW



**Catherine Treay**  
Clarke Road School

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*Selfless, Inspirational, Effective*

### **Children bring joy to this teacher's heart**

There's nothing that makes Cathy Treay quite as happy as seeing one of her students achieve a goal they have been working towards – big or small.

As the Assistant Principal at a school for students with intellectual disabilities, she is dedicated to helping her children reach their full potential and engage with their community.

"Seeing a student in a wheelchair playing tennis with his peers or them sharing a look with you when they succeed at something brings me so much joy," says Cathy.

In her seven years at Clarke Road School, she has also given much joy and inspiration. One of her most popular contributions is a delightful golden retriever therapy dog named Minty.

Cathy is a tireless advocate for the children, who range from Kindy to Year 12. She strongly believes in their right to be fully engaged with their community, and she puts a lot of energy into outreach projects and into attracting visitors to the school.

The dedicated teacher has many educational responsibilities, but one of her key objectives is to prepare the students for life after school by extending the vocational skills program.

The \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant will be used to renovate an existing shed at the school to teach barista and other skills. This will be achieved with the help of the local Rotary club.

The area around the shed will be used for a garden, vegetable plot and chicken coop to give the students an opportunity to learn hands-on how to care for animals and grow vegetables.

Being voted a Westfield Local Hero is a dream come true for Cathy, who says she feels dazed and extremely grateful to be recognised by her community.

"I can't stop smiling. The dream of providing a work and learning space for our learners will now happen so much sooner," she says.



## **Bruce Campbell** Hornsby Woodworking Men's Shed

*Inspirational, Committed, Generous*

### **Bruce's wooden toy venture is anything but child's play**

Bruce Campbell's most memorable experience in his many years at the local men's woodworking Shed was being asked by the Children's Hospital in Westmead to make special furniture for disabled children to use.

"It was challenging and involved some of our best woodworkers. The feedback we had from the hospital staff and their little patients was certainly a highlight for us," he says.

Bruce has had an interest in woodwork and repairing things since his early school days. But it wasn't until he retired that he took on the hobby in a more serious way.

He has had a leading role at the Hornsby Woodworking Men's Shed from its beginning nearly 17 years ago when it was the Triton Woodworking Group.

Bruce is best known for his work with the toymaking team, which produces about 400 toys for distribution to charities every Christmas.

The toymaking started as a way to hone his woodworking skills, but he and his dedicated band of men have taken it to an expert level.

Bruce is known as a friendly mentor for new members of the shed. Many have had little woodworking experience, and he patiently shows them how it's done, boosting their confidence as they develop new skills.

Together, the 150 men turn their skills to whatever is needed.

It could be possum boxes, toys or street library boxes for the local council.

Bruce is pleased to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero. But he says there are 30 or so active members of the Shed who work just as hard as him.

"It's a humbling experience really. After all, I am only doing stuff that I enjoy," he says.

The Shed will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to buy much-needed tools, machinery and hardware for upcoming projects.



## Sallianne McClelland Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter

*Passionate, Determined,  
Inspiring*

### Sallianne brings community together to keep women safe

Sometimes Sallianne McClelland needs to act fast to help women and their children escape domestic abuse.

She and her team once furnished a house right down to the potato peeler in 12 hours after she posted a callout video to the community in her pyjamas.

"It was an overwhelming moment when I realised how invested our community truly is in the welfare of others," she says.

Sallianne has been volunteering with the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter since it was launched nearly four years ago and is now president of its all-volunteer board.

So far, the shelter has provided temporary accommodation to more than 250 women, most of whom have fled domestic abuse. But it aims for sustainable solutions and also connects the women with longer-term outreach services.

The shelter's success rate is impressive. Almost all its women have a case plan with 72 hours and nine out of ten move on to safe long-term accommodation.

Sallianne is 2018 Hornsby Woman of the Year and is known in the community for her ability to bring people from business,

government, charities and other support services together to help families.

"Effecting change in the lives of women when they are at their most vulnerable and empowering them to create a better future is powerful, energising – and in part makes me get up in the morning," she says.

Sallianne feels honoured and privileged to be voted a Westfield Local Hero and sees it as recognition that the local community acknowledges the need to support women and their families.

"I feel the community walking beside us in the same way our staff walk alongside these women," she says.

The shelter will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund a key program known as the empowerment pathway fund. This helps women with emergency medical and legal expenses, transport, education and language programs.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Steve Hopwood** | Hornsby Connect

*Enthusiastic, Vibrant, Dedicated*

Steve is the driving force behind Hornsby Connect, which provides a 'hand up' to community members in need, through subsidised food and fellowship. The 77-year-old is the founding member and president of Hornsby Connect, driving the initiative to help support over 370 people gain access to food.

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## **Mark Rushton** | BlowFly Cricket

*Dedicated, Selfless, Inspirational*

Mark is the founder of BlowFly Cricket, a not-for-profit organisation that provides access to non-competitive inclusive sport for children and young adults with special needs or intellectual disabilities. Mark founded the club 10 years ago, with the vision of breaking down barriers for children and young adults with disabilities including autism, Asperger's, Down Syndrome and cerebral palsy.

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## **Rodney James** | Studio ARTES

*Patient, Hardworking, Passionate*

Rodney is a creative and passionate volunteer at Studio ARTES, assisting artists with disabilities to create beautiful artwork. Rodney goes above and beyond to help participants in a variety of ways, including helping to mix paints, setting up and cleaning work spaces, physically assisting them to paint and draw as well as providing any additional support where needed. An active member of the Studio ARTES initiative, Rodney also helps with exhibitions and field trips, where he always offers his positivity, friendship and emotional support.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Steve ANDERSON**  
Rangers Baseball Club

**William BRADLEY**  
Hornsby Connect Inc

**Janet CAMPBELL**  
Cherrybrook Community  
Pre-school Inc

**Bruce CAMPBELL**  
Hornsby Woodworking Men's Shed

**Vicki CASSIDY**  
Dancing With The Stars of  
Parramatta Cancer Council

**Tim ENGLAND**  
Rotary Club of St Ives

**Steve HOPWOOD**  
Hornsby Connect Inc

**James HUMPHERSON**  
Humanitix

**David KERR**  
Hornsby Connect Inc

**John LOCKYER**  
Lions Club of Hornsby Inc

**Lisa McADAMS**  
Lisa McAdams Pty Ltd

**Sallianne McCLELLAND**  
Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Womens  
Shelter

**Marcela ORDONEZ**  
St Lucy's School

**Roslyn RAJASINGAM**  
Couples for Christ (Australia)  
Global Mission Inc

**Mark RUSHTON**  
Blowfly Cricket

**Rodney JAMES**  
Studio ARTES

**David TAYLOR**  
KYDS Youth Development  
Service Inc

**Alexandra TORRENS**  
Hornsby Heights Pharmacy

**Michael TOZER**  
Xceptional

**Catherine TREAY**  
Clarke Road Special School

**Michelle WHYE**  
NSW State Emergency Service  
Hornsby

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*



*Westfield*

**HURSTVILLE**

NSW



## **Natalia Esdaile-Watts** Moving Forward

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*Smart, Active, Vibrant*

### **Natalia finds her voice to help free women from family violence**

It took 10 years, but Natalia Esdaile-Watts finally found her voice and the courage to tell her story of family violence to help others in the same situation.

Speaking out about her ordeal has not only raised awareness of the impact of domestic violence on families, and but also helped her live without fear.

"The more I talk about it, the more I find my own strength and become free of the fear," she says.

"In doing so I'm helping others and raising awareness as well."

Natalia has given talks about her experience at numerous public events, as well as presentations to police and psychologists who work with perpetrators.

Her aim is to inspire all women to never give up, to stand tall and to believe in themselves.

Educating the community about the effects of domestic violence promotes respectful and strong relationships, which will hopefully create a safer community for all, she says.

As well as promoting awareness, Natalia has raised money for charities including White Ribbon and the Moving Forward organisation.

She also supports women through her Facebook page, Natalia's Warriors, which provides information and advice on domestic violence.

"Being voted a Westfield Local Hero has been surreal and is absolutely amazing, as I can now give back in some way, other than just words," Natalia says.

"To be able to contribute financially, knowing it will make a difference and create change that is so much bigger than me, is such a privilege."

Moving Forward will use half its \$10,000 Westfield grant to directly fund women in need and the other half will help set up a refuge in the St George area.

"It's hard work, and they are very sad issues, but there is hope because I think society is slowly changing," Natalia says.



## Steve Drakoulis Autism Community Network

*Passionate, Committed, Inspiring*

### When Steve felt isolated, he formed a network for 1300 families

Doting dad Steve Drakoulis knows all too well the isolation faced by families coming to terms with a diagnosis of autism.

This was his biggest burden when his son was diagnosed as being on the spectrum.

"It was overwhelming. At the time you imagine all the worst-case scenarios because you can't see what the future holds," Steve says.

While he found easy access to information, there was little to connect him with other parents going through the same experience.

So, he volunteered to set up a group of parents and carers to meet regularly to support each other.

Since then, he's left his corporate position to make spreading the network his full-time job. And over the past eight years, he and his team have established 30 more parent groups across Sydney catering for 1300 families.

As a founder and general manager of the Autism Community Network, Steve manages most aspects of the organisation, from washing the dishes to training and supporting a team of 30 volunteers.

The network has also set up groups where children with autism can meet, learn to socialise, and participate in art and drama classes, music, fitness groups and playgroups.

"It's important to surround yourself with people who understand, who are not going to judge you and who can offer acceptance," says Steve. The groups are also a way to escape isolation.

He works more than a full week, but there is enough money to pay only for a portion of his hours. "It's worth it," he says, "to see the transformation in people's lives."

Steve says being voted a Westfield Local Hero is special.

"It means a hell of a lot. I've been recognised before and it's always nice, but it's never meant as much as this does. This is my local community. I'm blown away by the support."

The network relies entirely on donations and Steve's founding principle was that parents would never be charged, so it will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to help ensure its long-term sustainability.



## Ray Sun headspace Hurstville

*Insightful, Inspiring, Dedicated*

### Ray spread a big dose of sunshine and an important message

Raymond Sun was in his final year of high school when he first started volunteering at his local headspace, a national youth mental health organisation.

Even though he was in the middle of his HSC, he jumped at the chance to help out because he wanted to inspire others going through tough times.

"My parents named me Ray Sun, perhaps as a way to remind me to stay positive and be a ray of sunshine to myself and others," he says.

"But life is not all smooth sailing, and I've had my ups and downs, yet I've gotten through them. With each challenge, I've realised the power of your mindset and the power of your resilience, in conquering life's hurdles, and I wanted to share that experience."

That was four years ago, and the law student still devotes his time to the organisation which supports people aged 12 to 25 with mental health, physical health, work and study and substance issues.

As a member of the Youth Reference Group, Ray attends meetings, events and school presentations to advocate for youth mental health and support his peers. At these events, Ray shares stories of his life experience and offers self-care advice and tips.

Ray says headspace spreads the message that mental health is not just about depression and anxiety.

"We want to expand the community's knowledge and awareness of mental health beyond those two things," he says.

"Mental health also encapsulates spirituality, meditation, a positive mindset and resilience. These positive things are also part of mental health and changing even one person's perspective or understanding of that is what makes the headspace journey so meaningful."

He says he was surprised and grateful to be voted as a Westfield Local Hero.

Headspace will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant for a yoga and art group as well as staging community events, redecorating its centre and buying resources.

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

*Lifeline: 13 11 14*

*Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467*

*Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800*

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Syed Ahmad** | Top Blokes Foundation

*Hilarious, Humble, Relatable*

The purpose of the Top Blokes Foundation is to improve young men's mental health and well-being. In the last 12-months, Syed has personally mentored over 65 young men aged 14-24 where each of them have completed a 6-month mentoring program. His mentoring ensures boys discuss: anger management, healthy masculinities, mental health, respectful relationships, peer pressure and risk taking, reducing homophobia and improving connection to education.

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## **Kellie Checkley** | Project Youth Inc

*Committed, Focused, Driven*

Working as the executive officer for Project Youth, Kellie's work is tireless in ensuring the social justice, inclusion, and rights of young people in the community. Kellie is a strong advocate for the rights of young people and lobbies at a local, state and federal level, ensuring resources remain available to service and support them. Additionally, Kellie works directly with the community through drop in and case management.

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## **Amal Madani** | 3Bridges Community Limited

*Modest, Inspirational, Passionate*

Amal is a community leader who supports and enriches the lives of vulnerable people in our local community providing services including case management, crisis intervention & counselling. Amal is leading many local dementia friendly initiatives to make places that are inclusive and supportive of people living with dementia.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Syed AHMAD**

Top Blokes Foundation

**Joseph ALAM**

Bankstown Canterbury Community  
Transport

**Madani AMAL**

3Bridges Community Limited

**Chris BAILEY**

Riverwood Hornets- Australian  
Air League

**Aphrodite COX**

GRC Hurstville Boys Campus

**Steve DRAKOULIS**

Autism Community Network

**Natalia ESDAILE-WATTS**

Moving Forward

**Louise FARROWAY**

Project Youth Inc

**Tin Man FONG**

Australia Rouli Ball Cultural  
Association Inc

**Rachel GREENWOOD**

St Mark's Anglican Church,  
South Hurstville

**Vimla HAYMAN**

Rotary Club of St George Next Gen

**Sharlene McKENZIE**

3Bridges Community Ltd

**Nicola POULOS**

National Breast Cancer Foundation

**Natalie ROSE**

Shopfront Arts Co-op

**Ray SUN**

headspace Hurstville

**Jennifer THACKER**

WIRES South Branch



*Westfield*

**KOTARA**

NSW



## Catharina Howman Firstchance Inc

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*Committed, Caring, Selfless*

### Catharina offers a guiding hand when families are at their most vulnerable

When families across Newcastle, NSW, find out their child may be living with a disability, Catharina Howman is there to help.

As a family worker at disability support service Firstchance, she is often the first point of contact for parents who discover the development of their child or baby is not typical.

They may be feeling extremely isolated and struggling with a sense of grief and loss as they attempt to adjust to what is the start of a big change in their lives.

But at the point when many are completely overwhelmed, Catharina steps in to provide comfort and information about the support services they can access for their child.

"At first we just listen to the family and let them know that what they are experiencing is real and that we are there to help them work through some of the issues they are facing," she says.

Catharina sticks with the families all the way as they learn to navigate the system and how to access the support that is available to them.

Through her group for families with young children, she also helps parents in similar situations to develop networks and make friends, which gives both parents and children a sense of connection.

"There is no pressure for them to be at their best and there is no judgment. We have a shared understanding and take the time to get to know individual children, not just their disabilities," she says.

Catharina says she is "overwhelmed but very honoured" to be recognised by her local community and voted a Westfield Local Hero.

Firstchance will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to cover some of the costs of its Little Ones – Resilient Families group for families with a child with a disability such as Down Syndrome and Autism Spectrum Disorder.



## **Melissa (Mel) Histon-Browning** Got Your Back Sista

*Compassionate, Inspiring, Inclusive*

### **How a trip to Nepal inspired Melissa to help women at home**

Melissa Histon-Browning is fighting back against domestic violence and empowering women and girls to build confidence and wellbeing.

Inspired to take action after witnessing the horrors of sex trafficking while on a trip to Nepal, Mel founded Got Your Back Sista in 2016 to help local women experiencing domestic violence.

Two years on, the charity assists women and children all the way from Taree to Lake Macquarie and the Upper Hunter to thrive and live independently after escaping abuse.

"I came back from Nepal really wanting to do something positive, and I realised I could do the most good by helping the women who are being abused in our own backyard," Mel says.

Mel and the team work in tandem with service providers from across the region to deliver household items and furniture, counselling and mentoring to help women who have escaped a violent relationship and who are trying to set up a new life for themselves.

As volunteer CEO, Mel is involved with everything from telephone triage, fundraising, liaising with other providers and speaking at public events to raise awareness in the community.

She is also responsible for organising Got Your Back Sista's self-defence classes, which have helped more than 100 women gain self-confidence and new skills.

"The classes are all about giving women a sense of empowerment. When I see someone come out with a smile on her face, walking a little bit taller with her load lightened, that is wonderful."

Mel says she is happy to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero by the Newcastle community, but "it takes a village to make a charity and it wouldn't be possible without all the volunteers who have supported us."

Got Your Back Sista will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to fund workshops on self-defence and resilience, reaching 200 people across the Hunter region over the next 12 months.



## Lianne Dean Respectus

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*Indefatigable, Motivated,  
Inspiring*

### Tireless Lianne helps take women and their families off the street

It's been three years since a community meeting about homelessness and domestic violence prompted the formation of Respectus, a charity that provides safe and affordable housing to women and children when they need it most.

For the Newcastle charity's first project, tradesmen donated their time, businesses gave goods, locals pledged money and materials, and about 200 volunteers worked to transform an unrenovated old convent into a refuge called Trisha House.

That's where Lianne Dean stepped in. "My passion really is for women's issues, domestic violence and homelessness, and helping women get back on their feet when they've hit rock bottom," she says.

Lianne has spent about 10 hours each week over the past 18 months driving the Trisha House renovation in her spare time.

"I had to make sure all the materials and tools we used were there and took care of all the logistics to make it easy for the people who volunteered," she says. "I was on the phone the moment I stepped out of my car on the way to work. When I left work, I was back on the phone."

"It was all worth it," she says. "We could take 13 women with children off the streets and out of living in their cars."

Lianne says one of the main reasons women experience homelessness is gender inequality. "Women tend not to have highly paid jobs or access to large superannuation payouts so when there's a family breakdown, they don't have the same financial fallback as men."

It's a "great honour to be voted a Westfield Local Hero," she says, and the support her nomination received in the local community will kick-start another plan to help women in need.

Respectus will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund a pilot project for teenage mothers.

"It will be supported transitional accommodation for young mothers who don't have a really good network. Hopefully we can reduce the risk of these women having their children taken away from them and improve the children's future."

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Akazee Eguevoi** | Aboriginal Employment Strategy

*Humble, Compassionate, Leader*

Akazee is a young Indigenous woman who has put her heart and soul into supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into sustainable employment and young Indigenous people into traineeships and apprenticeships. Akazee meets with local employers to identify their recruitment needs and works with the local Aboriginal community to source Aboriginal candidates for these roles.

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## **Lyn Thurnham** | Hunter Life Education

*Supportive, Innovative, Creative*

Lyn is a volunteer Chairperson for the Board of Directors of Hunter Life Education (HLE), a community-based organisation working in partnership with schools and community organisations to raise funds for Life Education delivery – encouraging children to make safer and healthier choices. Through Lyn's expert guidance, she has overseen more than 900,000 lessons take place in schools across the region.

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## **Lloyd Valentine** | Healthy Change Challenge

*Courageous, Insightful, Egalitarian*

Lloyd is the founder of Healthy Change Challenge, a fun, empowering, social and community-integrating holistic health program for marginalised people including people with a disability and/or mental illness. Also known as Challengers, members learn to direct exercise, shopping, cooking and mindfulness/meditation sessions in collaborative and supportive groups.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Gina ASCOTT-EVANS**

Thou Walla Family Centre and  
Irrawang Public School P&C  
Association

**Jarrold BURNS**

Hunter Care Group

**Lindy CONNETT**

Waratah Girls Choir

**Boyd CONRICK**

Redhead Surf Life Saving Club

**Lianne DEAN**

Respectus Limited

**Kim DOWDING**

Super Parents of Unique  
Non-neurotypical Kids Support  
(SPUNKS) Group

**Akazee EGUEVOI**

Aboriginal Employment Strategy

**Tracy ELLEM**

Creative Cooks Kitchen  
Cooking School

**Gary FALLON**

1st New Lambton Scout Group

**Tamara GAZZARD**

Tantrum Theatre Cooperative  
Limited

**Jane HARRIS**

Hunter Breast Cancer Foundation

**Melissa (Mel) HISTON-BROWNING**

Got Your Back Sista

**Catharina HOWMAN**

Firstchance Inc

**Dianne JACKSON**

Westpac Rescue Helicopter  
Service

**Wendy JENKINS**

Angel Gowns For Australian  
Angel Babies Inc

**Toby KABLE**

All Ability Sports Coaching

**Toby KABLE**

Community Activities Lake  
Macquarie

**Terrey MAHONEY**

Riding for the Disabled NSW  
Raymond Terrace and Lower  
Hunter

**Kupakwashe MATANGIRA**

Save The Children

**Danielle MAYER**

Job Centre Australia Limited

**Howard MOLE**

Bikers for Kids Inc

**Katy MOONEY**

The Nappy Collective Inc

**Paula MUDD**

Hunter Domestic Violence Support  
and Advisory Service – Jodie's  
Place Refuge

**Adam NICHOLAS**

Raymond Terrace RLFC

**Kim OAKHILL**

Helpful Love

**Jennifer O'SULLIVAN**

Path 2 Change

**Theresa PANTALONE**

Alesco Senior College

**Theresa PANTALONE**

WEA Hunter –  
Alesco Senior College

**Dana PICHALOFF**

Samaritans

**Martin RADCLIFFE**

Gleam Support Services

**Coralie REEVE**

Mental Health Carers  
ARAFMI Hunter

**Carolyn RIMINGTON**

Make-A-Wish Australia

**Monica SKEHAN**

Young People's Theatre  
Newcastle Inc

**Sue STACKMAN**

Friends With Dignity

**Margaret STANDEN**

Our Community Place Inc

**Benita TAIT**

Good Frief

**Michael THOROUGHGOOD**

Cerebral Palsy Alliance

**Lyn THURNHAM**

Hunter Care Limited  
(trading as Hunter Life Education)

**Lloyd VALENTINE**

Healthy Change Challenge

**Karina WOODHOUSE**

Charles O'Neill Hostel

**Susan YOUNG**

Freedom4u Supported Holidays



*Westfield*

LIVERPOOL

NSW



## Jackie Lee Make-A-Wish Australia

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*Spirited, Humble, Committed*

### How Jackie helps make children's wishes come true

When Jackie Lee went looking for a good cause to support, she found the perfect fit with Make-A-Wish Australia, a charity that brings joy to seriously ill children.

No wish is too bizarre or outrageous for Jackie and her colleagues and they always do their best to make it come true.

"I love that mindset," says Jackie.

She says the story of a teenager who wanted to take his family on holiday illustrates how the process gives the kids a boost.

When Jackie and another volunteer first met the boy, he was shy and subdued. But the next time they met, he was talkative and excited about the trip.

"In only a few months the difference was incredible and he hadn't even had his wish granted," says Jackie.

In her one year with the newly formed South West Sydney branch, Jackie has devoted countless hours to help grant wishes to seriously ill children.

She has also stepped up to take on the role of branch president, which includes responsibility for fundraising activities.

Jackie says big-ticket wishes like trips to Movie Land capture public attention. But it was a simple wish that captured her heart.

The child just wanted to escape the hospital long enough to see a movie with his friends.

There were screams of excitement when a stuntman dressed as Spiderman came to pick the children up and performed a few tricks.

"It was my favourite one so far — they were so happy," says Jackie, who also volunteers for an organisation that supports homeless and at-risk women.

Jackie says it feels absolutely incredible to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

The \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant awarded to Make-A-Wish will be used to help fund four wishes in the local area.

"Our goal is to grant wishes to every child diagnosed with a life-threatening illness," says Jackie.



## **Pat Hall** Liverpool Neighbourhood Connections

*Passionate, Committed, Tireless*

### **Entrepreneurial Pat launches a chain of businesses to break cycle of unemployment**

Pat Hall might have been a famous entrepreneur with a chain of shops bearing her name.

Instead, she invests all her significant entrepreneurial and networking talent into her quest to end a multigenerational cycle of unemployment among some families in Warwick Farm in southwestern Sydney.

Pat is the CEO of Liverpool Neighbourhood Connections, a charity that provides education and mentoring to 22,000 disadvantaged women and families a year.

As if facilitating 65 social and vocational groups a week and a TAFE hospitality program is not enough, Pat's new passion is to provide women with paid employment and work experience.

To do this she and her team launched several small businesses: a canteen concession at a school, a coffee kiosk at a library, a second-hand clothing business, a lawnmower cleaning service and a mobile coffee business.

The businesses are turning over \$128,000 a year and providing 3,800 hours of paid work, says Pat, who is grateful to the Sydney Community Foundation, which introduced her to philanthropists who provide subsidies.

The first enterprise, Pepper's Place, grew from an informal coffee break at which people gave a dollar donation for raisin toast. "We didn't even realise it was an enterprise when it started," says Pat.

Five years later she has it all mapped out. Marginalised women are attracted to the centre through a variety of soft entry points and the most engaged among them make it into an enterprise, via a TAFE course.

From there, the idea is that they get a job on the open market, says Pat, who is pleased to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "We are changing the women's lives and their children's lives. It feels great to be recognised. Everyone wants to be recognised for their hard work."

Liverpool Neighbourhood Connections plans to use its Westfield \$10,000 Local Heroes grant to sponsor three women for three hours of paid employment a week for a year.



## Grace Fava Autism Advisory and Support Service

*Passionate, Determined,  
Empathetic*

### Love for her sons inspires Grace to help thousands of others

Grace Fava's two sons are doing very well in high school. But she still becomes emotional when she speaks about her initial struggle to find support for their autism spectrum disorder.

"I thought that if I'm having this much difficulty and frustration, imagine those who don't have English as their first language, who don't have the amount of education that I did," she says.

So, Grace gathered up seven like-minded parents and around her kitchen table they hatched a plan for a modest information service.

That was 2007. Since then Autism Advisory and Support Service has moved out of Grace's spare room into a purpose-designed cottage in Liverpool, NSW. It is NDIS-accredited and has 25 employees and volunteers.

About 500 people from across Australia and overseas contact the service each month by email, in person or by contacting its 24-hour Autism hotline – the only one in the southern hemisphere. There is also a steady stream of requests for help and referrals from community organisations, health services, doctors, schools and politicians.

"We have helped thousands of people over the years," says Grace, who is CEO of the non-profit organisation.

"I'm proud to say that almost 12 years later we also offer allied health interventions, professional development and network families with the support they need. It's all about the best possible outcomes for children and adults on the spectrum."

"We take a step back and say let's bring in the correct support and make sure we have the right outcome. We try to get an overall view instead of focusing on one issue," she says.

"We have the lived experience that other organisations don't have."

Grace says it is "very exciting" and an honour to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I am honoured because what I do is out of love, first of all for my children, but that goes out to other children and families in need."

The service will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to provide subsidised therapy services to people with autism who do not attract funding through the NDIS or are on a waiting list for funding. This will include speech, occupational, behaviour and music therapy as well as psychology, physiotherapy and social skills groups.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Danielle Begg** | The Yoga Impact Charity

*Dedicated, Selfless, Vibrant*

The Yoga Impact Charity, an organisation that partners with not-for-profits, schools and government to provide trauma sensitive yoga classes to groups healing from torture and trauma. As the Co-Founder and CEO of The Yoga Impact Charity, Danielle is responsible for the establishment, delivery and evaluation of trauma sensitive yoga programs within schools, not-for-profits and government.

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## **Rick Herrera** | SWAG Family Sydney

*Humble, Reliable, Honest*

SWAG Family Sydney is a not-for-profit, grass roots operation that feeds the homeless and struggling families in Liverpool. Rick Herrera drives the SWAG Family van and brings tables, a gas stove and utensils to the dinners. Rick cooks and organises for food to be cooked or donated and delivers it. Rick organises nights off the street for homeless people and organises donations and the packing of food hampers and toiletries bags.

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## **Linda Margie** | South West Community Transport Ltd

*Dedicated, Caring, Involved*

South West Community Transport's purpose is to provide advice and assistance to people so they can utilise the transport networks within their local area. Linda provides the necessary training, coaching and then accompanies participants to help them with planning their travel, determining the most suitable travel type for their ability, obtaining and understanding timetables, acquiring the necessary Opal cards and the discounts available, preparing for and utilising access points that are suitable to their ability.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Danielle BEGG**

The Yoga Impact Charity

**Ethan BELL**

AI ME Mentoring

**Elaine BLACK**

Legacy NSW Associated Clubs

**Lauren COTTERILL**

Women's Housing Company Ltd

**Chris DARCY**

Search Dogs Sydney

**Grace FAVA**

Autism Advisory and Support  
Service

**Rebecca GAULD**

Australian Breastfeeding  
Organisation South Western  
Sydney

**Andrea GIUNTA**

Paint Liverpool REaD

**Pat HALL**

Liverpool Neighbourhood  
Connections

**Rick HERRERA**

SWAG Family Sydney

**Stephanie INGRAM**

The Shepherd Centre for  
Deaf Children

**Jackie LEE**

Make-A-Wish Australia

**Derick LUONG**

South Western Area Health  
Liverpool Hospital

**Linda MARGRIE**

South West Community  
Transport Ltd

**Alison MAYNARD**

Chipping Norton Scout Group

**Jacki McFARLANE**

Partners In Recovery/  
Flourish Australia

**Jolene MOKBEL**

Salvation Army Youthlink

**Helen NAHAS**

McGrath Foundation

**Maria QUARTIERIO**

Diamond Women's Support

**Amy ROPITINI**

The Movement

**Adam WASHBOURNE**

Fighters Against Child Abuse  
Australia



*Westfield*

**MIRANDA**

NSW



## **Brook Stewart** Kingsway Community Care Inc

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*Tenacious, Selfless, Passionate*

### **Helping others gives Brook a deep sense of meaning**

Helping people rebuild their lives after being left homeless gives Brook Stewart a deep sense of meaning in his life.

The Community Outreach Manager at Kingsway Community Care says he got involved in the organisation because he has a passion for people on the fringe, those who have been marginalised by society.

The best part of his work is giving people a sense of family and hope when they have none.

"I think that things like clothes, food and shelter are basic needs that everyone deserves to have."

Kingsway's main mission is to help homeless people rebuild their lives. It provides crisis accommodation for homeless people and families escaping domestic violence. It also provides medium-term accommodation for young people in need.

So far it has a 97% success rate in having 300 clients transferred into longer-term accommodation.

But its scope keeps expanding and Brook has pioneered the opening of an op-shop, the profits of which are used to fund a

monthly dinner for 80 guests. This helps isolated people build connections in the community.

Many stories touch Brook's heart. But one that stands out is a man who attended a Christmas dinner and told him it was the first time he had sat down for a meal with other people.

He's also helped a woman who lost everything in her 70s and found herself homeless.

"I've seen 19-year-old girls come in who are pregnant as well."

Brook also oversees Southern Cross Kids Camp, which brings together 20-30 local children who have been identified as at risk.

Brook says it feels good to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I'm very proud of what we do, so it's good to get the recognition."

Kingsway will use the \$10,000 grant to fund an employee to assist staff and guests with immediate needs, including pastoral care, mentoring and resourcing items.



## **Paulo De Nobrega** Sutherland Titans Football Club

*Passionate, Caring, Committed*

### **There's a different kind of football magic when the Titans take the field**

Something magical happens when the Sutherland Titans Football Club teams play another local club.

It's no ordinary match. It shines a different light on the competitive game of soccer, says Paulo De Nobrega, coach and manager of the club, which caters for people with special needs.

The players love getting out on the field for the club, which was started in 2005 by a group of parents with the support of the Sutherland Shire Football Association.

Their opponents every Saturday of the season are association teams that have a bye that weekend.

Players of all ages and varying ability are welcome. Some rely on a volunteer buddy to help them navigate the field. It's a unique system, says Paulo. "Buddies have special dispensation as they are the only people allowed on the field other than officials and players."

And it's not only the Titans players who benefit, says Paulo. It can be a humbling experience for the members of the other teams.

"Their players benefit by understanding that the game can be much more than winning and more about bringing a smile to a child that scores a goal or is able to feel good about being part of a team.

"It's about giving kids all round a go," says Paulo, two of whose sons are on the autism spectrum and play for the club.

To him, some of the most heart-warming moments come from seeing the senior Titans players mentor the juniors.

"The pivotal moment is when I see the seniors arrive early, before their game, to help the junior kids. They do this without being asked. That just says so much about the heart of the players who play for the Titans."

Paulo says it feels awesome to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "Not for me, more for our club."

The Titans will use \$10,000 Westfield grant to buy equipment.

Paulo has helped bring in sponsorship to cover uniforms and water bottles. But, he says: "We've got so many equipment gaps. Little things that other clubs take for granted."



## **Kirsty Mason** Dandelion Support Network Inc

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*Motivated, Caring,  
Committed*

### **Kirsty bounces back from cancer to support families in need**

When Kirsty Mason was told her breast cancer was in remission, she had a strong desire to give back.

"I just got this sense of wanting to be involved in the community," she says.

That's how she became involved in the Dandelion Foundation, a charity that distributes pre-owned babies and children's clothes, toys, cots, prams, car seats and other items to families in need.

Kirsty volunteers for 15 hours a week as the toys and linen manager, leading a team who sort through mountains of items to check for quality and suitability. They also clean the toys and make up packs for distribution via social workers.

Every year the organisation diverts at least 40 tonnes from landfill through rehoming, or recycling of goods that are not suitable to give away.

Kirsty says the recipients might be refugee families, people with physical disabilities or mental illness or be homeless or starting from scratch after leaving an abusive relationship.

One of the main aims is to ease the financial burden of these families, which in turn is likely to reduce stress and help parents feel more confident in raising their children.

Another focus is to ensure children are sleeping safely.

"We've had babies sleeping in boxes and on the floor on a pile of towels because they haven't had a bed," says Kirsty.

During her time at Dandelion, Kirsty had her second son. She took only a brief break from volunteering and, with her baby on her hip, continued her work.

Kirsty often brings both her children with her as she feels it is important that they understand the importance of helping those less fortunate than themselves.

One heart-warming experience for the volunteers was when a woman who they had helped four years previously returned to make a donation of her own.

Kirsty is delighted to be voted a Westfield Local Hero and to be recognised by her community.

The cost of each support pack is about \$130, so Dandelion will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to help more than 75 disadvantaged families. It will also allow the network to include a few unused items.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Callum Franciskovic** | Top Blokes Foundation

*Purposeful, Relatable, Empathic*

Callum dedicates his time to improving local young men's mental health and well-being by supporting them to make healthier and safer life choices. As part of the Top Blokes Foundation, Callum runs workshops to help young males to build important life skills including conflict resolution, help-seeking and critical thinking.

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## **Danielle Lucas** | Care 4 Kids

*Courageous, Inspiring, Dedicated*

Danielle dedicates her time to creating care packs for local charity Care 4 Kids. These packs are delivered to police stations and provided to children who are victims of domestic violence.

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## **Elizabeth O'Sullivan** | Elouera Surf Life Saving Club

*Caring, Committed, Selfless*

Elizabeth is a founding member of Elouera's Yellow Fin Nipper Program, and dedicates her time to the set up and running of the program. Elouera Yellow Fins is an inclusive Nippers Program that supports children on the autism spectrum and with other disabilities to learn about and benefit from important surf lifesaving lessons and skills.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Pamela BROWN**  
Australian Kookaburra Kids  
Foundation

**Paulo DE NOBREGA**  
Sutherland Titans Football Club

**Denise DOLAN**  
The Beauty Bank Australia Inc

**Pauline DUNCAN**  
WIRES South Branch

**Callum FRANCISKOVIC**  
Top Blokes Foundation

**Lee HESLEHURST**  
Sydney 2 CAMberra

**Bernadette HOY**  
Orana NSW Inc

**Karlyn JOHNS**  
Southern Community Welfare

**Ruth LEWIS-JONES**  
Esteem Designz + ChooseREAL  
Campaign

**Rob LINDSAY**  
Gymea Community Aid &  
Information Service

**Danielle LUCAS**  
Care 4 Kids Sutherland Shire

**Ken MARSLEW**  
Enough is Enough Anti Violence  
Movement Inc

**Kirsty MASON**  
Dandelion Support Network Inc

**Jennifer McDONALD**  
Project Youth Inc Menai

**Anyes McLEAN**  
Taren Point Public School

**Abraham MIKHAIL**  
Fone King

**Karen MOUNTFORD**  
Crossroads Community Care  
Centre Inc

**Jay NATALY**  
Sylvania Heights Football Club

**Elizabeth O'SULLIVAN**  
Elouera Surf Life Saving Club Inc

**Patricia SCHEETZ**  
The Sweetest Gift

**Tyrah-Jade SHADOW**  
Eastcoast Playgroup  
(Eastcoast Church)

**Vicki SHERRY**  
Southern Community Welfare Inc

**Vanessa SMITH**  
Gymea Netball Club

**Russell SMITH**  
Make-A-Wish Australia

**Janelle SOUTHWELL**  
Give and Take Families  
Sutherland Shire

**Jason STANTON**  
Skillz4me

**Sarah STANTON**  
Skillz4me

**Brook STEWART**  
Kingsway Community Care Inc

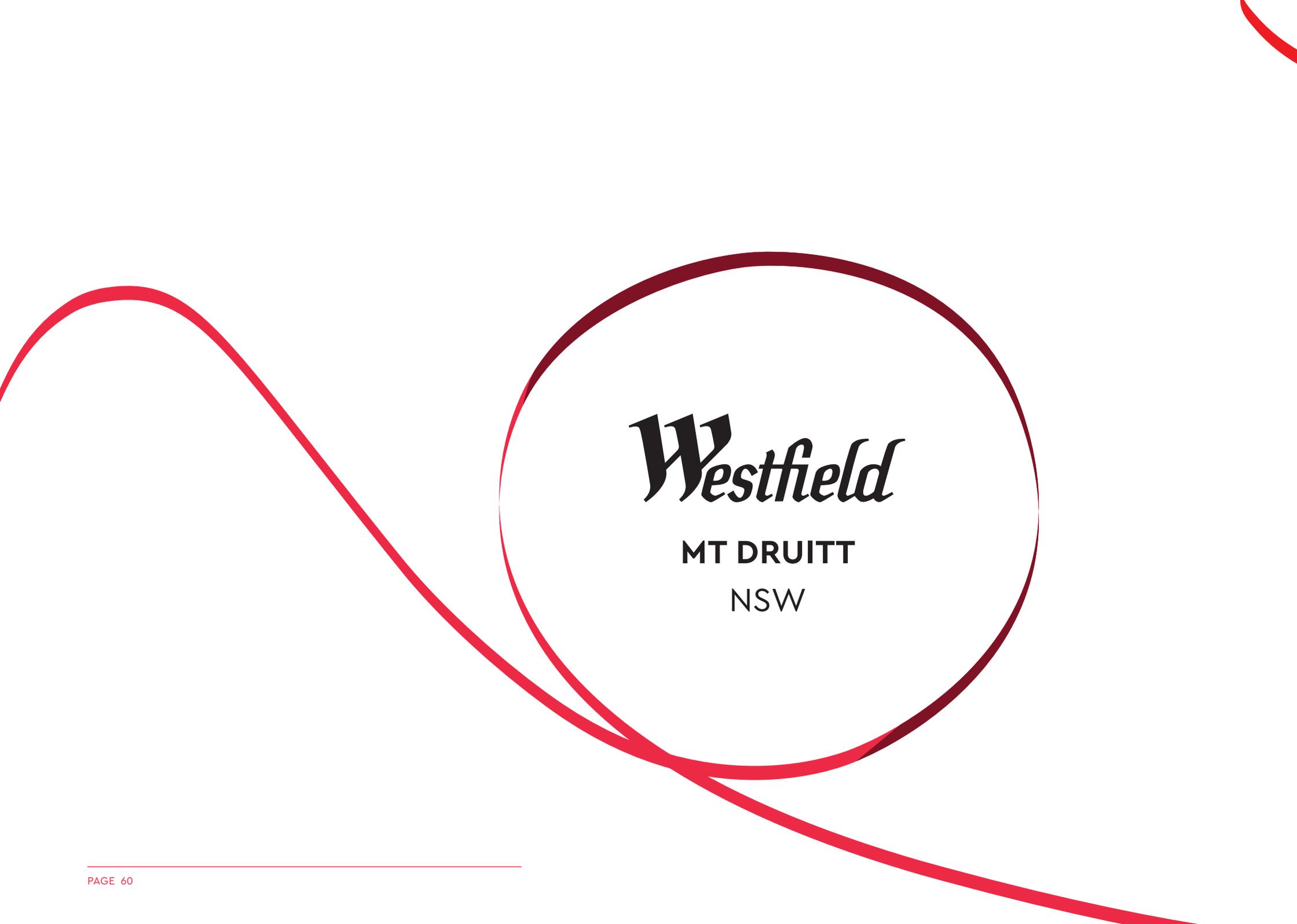
**Michael STODDART**  
Wesley Community Services  
Limited, Lifeline Sydney &  
Sutherland

**Sam THOMPSON**  
National Breast Cancer Foundation

**Elly UNICOMB**  
The Shepherd Centre for  
Deaf Children

**Blarsha WALMSLEY**  
HammondCare

**Bronwyn WILLIAMS**  
Green Connect Illawarra



*Westfield*

**MT DRUITT**

NSW



## **Simone Selby** AGFAABI

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*Creative, Sympathetic,  
Compassionate*

### **Simone shines a ray of light in a time of grief**

Simone Selby was looking for a way to help her local community when she came across Angel Gowns for Australian Angel Babies, a charity that provides comfort to parents who have lost a baby.

The Angel Gowns volunteers create funeral gowns from donated wedding dresses and they crochet and knit blankets and other items for the babies' final journey.

"I'm lucky enough to have three children and five grandchildren and I just wanted to give something back to those not as fortunate as me," Simone says.

According to the charity, parents who suffer pregnancy loss through miscarriage and stillbirth are distressed and find it difficult to find suitable outfits for funerals.

Simone assists in handcrafting Angel Packs consisting of a gown, beanie, booties, blanket and a special keepsake for parents.

These are supplied to hospitals and funeral homes and are also available through the organisation's website and Facebook page at no charge.

Simone says that putting together the Angel Packs helps her to keep active. "I need to be constantly doing something. I can sit and watch TV and still knit the beanies, booties and blankets, or just spend quality time with my family."

The organisation has gifted thousands of Angel Packs in the four years it has been in existence, touching many families throughout Australia.

Simone is grateful for the recognition that comes with being voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"It's nice to be thought of because we're not a charity that a lot of people know about."

The charity will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund sewing supplies, stationery, printing and freight for the Angel Gowns.



## **Maria Greenwood** Supportive and Palliative Care Unit, Mount Drutt Hospital

*Generous, Compassionate, Kind*

### **Dying mum sends Maria on an uplifting path**

It was Maria Greenwood's terminally ill mum who suggested she become a palliative care volunteer.

Maria was nursing her through her last days of cancer at a UK hospice when she turned to her and said she should volunteer when she returned to Australia.

A few months later Maria chanced upon a newspaper ad calling for help at Mount Drutt Hospital's palliative care ward. And soon she was one among the first intake of volunteers.

After working for many years as a medical receptionist, communicating with patients and their families is a natural talent for Maria. Her colleagues say she has a gift for connecting with palliative patients and their loved ones and is always ready to lend a sympathetic ear.

Maria's volunteer activities include interacting with patients, sitting at their bedside and assisting with music therapy and gardening activities.

She has completed training to provide hand massage to relieve physical discomfort and to relax patients and has also learned how to help people write a biography to leave as a legacy for their families.

Maria sees it as a privilege to be allowed into someone's life when they are at their most vulnerable and to be able to help them and their family.

She's stunned and "over the moon" to be recognised as a Westfield Local Hero, saying it was an unexpected honour to even be nominated.

Volunteering has been the most uplifting and humbling experience," says Maria, who has participated in every ward activity and event – from selling raffle tickets to giving up her wine for Dry July. She even visits the hospital over the Christmas break to ensure the gardens are cared for.

The hospital will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to help train a much-needed intake of volunteers and to up-skill the existing team.



## Jesica Varela Blacktown City Council

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*Determined, Creative,  
Passionate*

### When working with young people, the sky's the limit

The good Jessica does for young people is clear from the number of them who say hello when she's walking down the street.

Her determination and commitment to her job as Children and Youth Development Officer at Blacktown City Council has made her a popular and well-known local in Mount Druitt.

Her fingerprints are on a long list of projects including the council's youth advisory committee, Willmot school holiday programs and Mount Druitt's Youth Week celebrations.

"I find working with children and young people a rewarding experience because it's a wonderful stage of people's lives," she says.

"They're still discovering things about themselves and the sky's the limit. That creative mentality resonates with my personality and I love having these opportunities."

Highlights of Jessica's work include two special programs: a free music festival, The Burbs, and twice-weekly social events of the Collab Movement, which include sport, barbeques and more music.

She says she's grateful for every opportunity to get out among the people that benefit from her work.

"My role means working directly with the community we serve. I'm outside every day in Mount Druitt, working with kids, schools and services."

She says it's humbling to be recognised by the community as a Westfield Local Hero.

"It's ultimately about giving back and I'm very grateful that Westfield's contributing \$10,000 back to the community and to young people through the Westfield Local Hero grant."

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Robert Bateup** | Spinal Cord Injuries Australia (SCIA)

*Generous, Helpful, Motivated*

Robert has worked tirelessly over 17 years as a volunteer and collector, creating awareness and raising funds for Spinal Cord Injuries Australia. Robert showcases a great amount of selflessness despite being visually impaired, choosing to spend most of his week raising funds to provide a society without barriers for people with Spinal Cord Injury and similar conditions.

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## **Lance Chaloner** | Police Citizens Youth Club NSW Ltd (PCYC Mt Druitt)

*Resilient, Approachable, Committed*

Lance is the Club Manager at PCYC Mt Druitt, a community facility which provides no cost/low cost activities and programs to the community. His role is far reaching, contributing essential services to a high need community to improve youth development, family cohesion and community engagement.

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## **Monique Perusco** | Jesuit Social Services

*Loving, Dedicated, Honorable*

Monique is the Manager for Jesuit Social Services in Mount Druitt and plays a lead role in the 'Together in Willmot' collective. Monique is a great role model in the community who has developed strong and meaningful relationships with her peers, colleagues and community members. She supports Family, Children and Youth Programs, Children's Holiday Hubs, Skate-4-Change Program, Parkour Program, Girl's Empowerment Program, Film and Photography Programs, to name a few.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Robert BATEUP**

Spinal Cord Injuries Australia  
(SCIA)

**Lance CHANDELOR**

Police Citizens Youth Club  
NSW Ltd (PCYC Mt Druitt)

**Shane CONLON**

New Horizons Community  
Church Inc

**Ian ESCANDOR**

Noffs Foundation

**Maria GREENWOOD**

Supportive and Palliative  
Care Unit, Mount Druitt Hospital

**Fiona McCALLUM**

Good grief

**Gladys PANONCILLO**

Luke Priddis Foundation

**Krissy PEREIRA**

Make-A-Wish Australia

**Monique PERUSCO**

Jesuit Social Services

**Simone SELBY**

AGFAABI

**Jesica VARELA**

Blacktown City Council



*Westfield*

**PARRAMATTA**

NSW



## **Emina Kovac** Immigrant Women's Speakout Association NSW Inc

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*Generous, Community-minded,  
Gender equality advocate*

### **Emina teaches women computer skills and reboots their self-confidence**

Life can be tough for refugee and migrant women seeking work.

Many are fleeing domestic violence and don't have the skills to land a job. But with the help of Emina Kovac from Immigrant Women's Speakout Association NSW, they learn to use a computer and reclaim their self-confidence in the process.

"A significant number of the learners are able to get paid employment," says Emina, who arrived in Australia from Bosnia in 1997 on a humanitarian visa.

Most of the refugee women who attend Emina's computer-literacy program are from Afghanistan. Many balance caring for their grandchildren with their computer classes.

The women attend a two-hour lesson once a week for 44 weeks and learn how to use email, create documents and protect their computer from viruses.

Emina also teaches the women how to write resumés and use the internet to search for jobs.

Her calm manner and non-judgmental approach make her ideally suited to teach women from a wide range of cultural backgrounds with varying computer and English ability.

Emina carefully considers the needs of each learner and recognises their achievements to encourage them to feel more positive.

Her teaching approach also encourages the women to interact with each other, which helps them to make friends and feel less isolated.

One of Emina's success stories is Darlena, who finally started to land job interviews after a year of lessons.

"In the following year, Darlena was offered a paid job in a clothing store and she felt she reclaimed her self-esteem and partly recovered from the trauma of domestic and family violence."

Emina says being voted a Westfield Local Hero is a "challenge and an inspiration" for more community engagement.

Speakout will use its Westfield \$10,000 Local Heroes grant to help fund its Multicultural Women's Shelter, which opened in 2017.

"The funds mean the shelter can support 10 women with no income for 12 weeks," Emina says.

"Of the 25 migrant and refugee women that Speakout has provided temporary accommodation and support to, 98 per cent are victims of domestic and family violence."



## **Bilal Hafda** Sydney Story Factory

*Visionary, Creative, Empathic*

### **Bilal gives young people a safe place in which to find their voice**

Community worker Bilal Hafda doesn't believe there is a need to give marginalised young people a voice. "That's because they already have their own amazing voices," he says. "They simply need a platform to use them."

As chief storyteller at the downtown Parramatta branch of the Sydney Story Factory, Bilal is providing that opportunity to children aged seven to seventeen, many of whom are from culturally diverse and lower socioeconomic backgrounds and struggling academically and socially.

It is impossible not to be moved by the sheer joy and energy he radiates as he and his team give their young charges a safe place in which to open up and tell their stories, either in writing, video or theatre.

Bilal, who is employed by the Story Factory, runs workshops at local schools, where he and volunteers work with a class of students for six to eight weeks, sometimes longer. They also work with young offenders and community organisations.

"Giving young people the ability to tell a story, any story, helps them express themselves. But it also helps them take charge of stories that are told about them. And that's incredibly important

for young people growing up anywhere, but especially in Western Sydney."

He says his brightest moments are when a child switches from someone who doubts their ability to tell a story to someone who sees their ability.

In his own time, Bilal helps to run one of the largest performance poetry events in Australia – Bankstown Poetry Slam, and he has facilitated performances by young slam members at the Sydney Writers' Festival.

Bilal feels extremely humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I keep wondering if I am deserving of the honour. I am one person who has been placed in the spotlight, but I have a whole organisation of fantastic people who help me do the work that I do."

The Story Factory will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund two eight-week creative writing programs for as many as 60 participants. This includes payment of the workshop leader, volunteer tutor training, workshop materials and publishing of the student stories.



## Wilson Giles Black Dog Institute

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*Giving, Motivated, Optimistic*

### Wilson opens up about mental illness to protect teenagers from suffering in silence

Wilson Giles is doing all he can to protect teenagers from going through the anguish he experienced when he was younger. Only a few years out of high school, he regularly tells teenagers about his lived experience with mental illness.

He does this as a volunteer for the Black Dog Institute, visiting several high schools a year where he presents an approved program to students in Year 10 and above.

"A lot of kids will be struggling and might not realise that what they are feeling isn't the norm and it is worth talking about," he says.

"Once they see me speak about it, it makes it real for them and often they can speak about it."

If he has one message, it is this: "It is okay to not be okay. There are people who can help you. If you have a problem, it's best to acknowledge it and ask for help."

Wilson tells the students that his own lack of acceptance delayed his treatment for bipolar disorder.

"I didn't want to believe I had anything wrong with me. I was very good at school and was doing well with my grades. Then, all of a sudden, I was struggling to pay attention, I was anxious about going to class."

He says his parents were onto it quickly and encouraged him to speak to someone, but he wouldn't. "The hardest part was for me to acknowledge what was going on." Since then he has received the correct treatment and says he is living a happy and healthy life.

Wilson was named Youth Citizen of the Year by Parramatta council, due to his tireless effort and work as a volunteer, not only for the institute but a variety of community groups.

He says it feels surreal to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It is very humbling. The presentations are extremely cathartic. I get this amazing opportunity to do something I love, which is public speaking and I get to open up about my struggle. The more I talk the easier it gets. It helps me greatly."

The Black Dog Institute will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to expand its program to 20 high schools in the Parramatta area, reaching 1,600 more young people and their families.

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

*Lifeline: 13 11 14*

*Lifeline New Zealand: 0800 543 354*

*Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800*

*Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636*

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Salwa Al Baz** | Cumberland Women's Health Centre

*Committed, Dynamic, Determined*

Salwa works tirelessly to assist women affected by domestic and family violence to receive the help they need to survive, recover and thrive. Salwa is a migrant from a war torn country who has overcome great challenges and adversity to make a life for herself in Australia. It is this personal history that makes her such a determined advocate for the women she works with and ensures that she never gives up the fight for justice and equality.

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## **Candice Graham** | Fitted For Work

*Caring, Joyful, Meaningful*

Candice Graham is the Sydney Operations Coordinator of Fitted for Work in Parramatta. Candice manages a large team of volunteers who deliver Outfitting and Interview Preparation Services, as well as services through Multicultural Women's Job Preparation Hub. Candice was originally referred to the Fitted for Work service as a client to receive assistance in finding work. She took it upon herself to offer her time while she wasn't working as a volunteer to give back to the organisation.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Salwa AL BAZ**

Cumberland Women's  
Health Centre

**Julie AMARI**

Australian Youth For Amar

**Richard AYOUB**

Parramatta Mission

**Peta BANKS**

APPI Ghost Hunts

**Jocelyn BREWER**

Digital Nutrition

**Greg BROWN**

Sports 4 All trading as 4titude

**Tracey BRYDON**

Toongabbie District Girl Guides

**John CAFFERATTA**

Darcy Street Project

**Diana CARMODY**

The Children's Hospital at  
Westmead

**Nikole EGAN**

Diamond Womens Support

**Karina EZEKIEL**

Wyatt's Walk for Cystic Fibrosis

**Wilson GILES**

Black Dog Institute

**Emma GILLHAM**

Make-A-Wish Australia

**Patrick GLEESON**

Glenwood High School

**Candice GRAHAM**

Fitted for Work

**Catherine GREGORY**

Hilltop Road Public School

**Bilal HAFDA**

Sydney Story Factory

**Jennifer HARRIS**

The Hills School

**Tristan HORNSTRA**

The Scout Association of Australia  
New South Wales Branch  
Cumberland Gang Show

**Peter HORVATH**

Parramatta District Men's  
Shed Incorporated

**Ben HURA**

Young Life Australia

**Usman IFTIKHAR**

Catalysr Foundation Ltd

**Said JAFARI**

Sadat Welfare and Sports  
Association

**David JEFFREY**

Public Interest Advocacy Centre

**Shaz JONES**

Parramatter

**Emina KOVAC**

Immigrant Women's Speakout  
Association NSW Inc

**Tsvetoslav KRASTEV**

Goodlife Health Clubs

**Neslihan KURTONAL**

United Against Domestic Violence

**Kylie LINDSAY**

Women's Housing Company Ltd

**Mechel PIKOULAS**

The Helmsman Project

**Billel RABABI**

Top Blokes Foundation

**Suzanne ROBINSON**

Legacy NSW Associated Clubs

**Elizabeth ROMBOUGH**

Life Without Barriers

**Aykut SAYAN**

Circa Espresso

**David SEXTON**

Variety the Children's Charity  
NSW/ACT

**Gokhan SINGEC**

Auburn Youth Centre

**Patrick SOOSAY**

Harris Park Community Centre

**Natalie TAHA**

Life Without Barriers

**Christa TATE**

Studio Dance NSW

**Stephanie VELIANIS**

Compeer Friendship Program

**Gabrielle WHITBREAD**

Cumberland Council

**Michelle WONG**

The Children's Hospital at  
Westmead



*Westfield*

**PENRITH**

NSW



## **Amanda Barnes** Top Blokes Foundation

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*Optimistic, Ambitious, Impactful*

### **Amanda plans to reach out to blokes across Australia**

Amanda Barnes has already helped many young men cope with difficult feelings through her mentoring work at the Top Blokes Foundation. But she has big plans to reach out to thousands more by developing an online version of the foundation's social education and mentoring program.

Amanda is a part-time youth worker with the foundation and facilitates mentoring sessions in schools and the community to help disconnected and vulnerable young men, providing guidance and a safe space that encourages communication.

She says the male suicide rate is much higher than for females, so these sorts of education programs are truly needed.

"At the moment we are in three regions around Sydney, but if we had an online program, we could reach young men who can't physically attend the mentoring program face-to-face," Amanda says.

"So long as they have access to a smartphone or computer, they can log in and take part in interactive webinars each week."

Amanda also works at Platform Youth Services, which helps children aged 12 to 14 who are homeless or at risk.

In addition, she does hours of volunteer work with Rotary International each week.

"It's humbling to be named as a Westfield Local Hero, but recognition is not why we do this work," she says.

"We do it to give these young men someone to talk to, to connect with and to feel supported by. It's also such a privilege to work with these young people who have been through so much yet still have an amazing attitude and determination."

The Top Blokes Foundation plans to use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to further investigate options for providing the courses online as well as creating additional face-to-face programs.



## **Graeme Banks** Mama Lana's Community Foundation

*Reliable, Devoted, Honourable*

### **Graeme's five days a week are 'just the Australian way'**

When Graeme Banks' granddaughter started school, his childminding duties reduced considerably, leaving him with free time on his hands.

"I wasn't going to sit back and watch Days of Our Lives, so I went online to look up local charities that I could volunteer for," says Graeme, 73.

By chance, he came upon Mama Lana's Community Foundation, a Penrith-based charity that provides hot meals, bedding, toiletries, care and assistance to the homeless and disadvantaged six nights a week at a facility known as the White House.

He started by serving meals one night a week. But over the past two years, his commitment has grown to be on hand five days a week for anything from deliveries to collecting food and writing grant applications.

"It's such a great charity – it helps so many people. We are all volunteers, so every cent raised for the charity goes to those who need it most," he says.

One of his proudest achievements has been finding ways to source food and groceries for free from supermarkets involved in food recycling campaigns.

And his most touching experience came after helping a man who had been living in his car for two years move into a flat, with the assistance of Mama Lana's Community Foundation.

"I'd helped him move all his goods into the apartment and when we were finished, it started raining," Graeme recalls. "He turned to me and said": 'Thanks so much. I'll be dry tonight.'

"That was one of the most moving moments of my time volunteering."

Graeme feels humbled to be a Westfield Local Hero.

The charity will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to pay for utilities for more than a year and for ongoing vehicle running costs.

"I feel so grateful for this support but I really hope that I represent all the volunteers around the place, all of those people who give their utmost because that is the Australian way. It's what we do," says Graeme.



## John Boccanfuso House with No Steps

*Selfless, Passionate,  
Cherished*

### Much-loved John brightens people's day with a story and a laugh

You could call John Boccanfuso the one-million-pen man.

Often dressed in bright Hawaiian shirts, the much-loved pen seller has been raising money for disabled people since 1974, volunteering seven days a week from 10am until 2pm.

John, who damaged his cerebellum in an accident at the age of 12, is always ready to share a story and a laugh with any one of his loyal customers at Westfield Penrith, some of whom buy a pen from him every day.

People cherish his positive attitude and warmth and he is quickly missed on his rare absences from the centre. On those days, several concerned shoppers are sure to stop at the concierge desk to ask where he is.

The money John raises goes to the House with No Steps, a charity that supports people with a disability.

But John's contribution goes way beyond the tens of thousands of dollars he has raised. He leads by example and his presence in the community promotes the social inclusion of people living with a disability.

John, who has been looked after by the House with No Steps for several years, also feels strongly about ensuring others learn about the services the charity provides.

He is proud to have sold more than one million pens during his 44-year career and he has received many accolades, including a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2011. He has also received a Penrith Council Citizens Award and his picture graces the Penrith Council wall of acknowledgement. But John says he is most proud of the fact that former PM John Howard bought a pen when he visited his table in 2016 for a chat.

John says it "feels really good" to be a Westfield Local Hero and he is happy that the House With No Steps will benefit.

The charity will put its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant towards buying a wheelchair-accessible vehicle.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Maree Cairns** | Zonta Club of Nepean Valley Inc

*Committed, Driven, Selfless*

Maree is a retired teacher and active member of the community, who applies her expertise working with The Zonta Club of Nepean Valley to empower local women and young girls. As a Chair of the club's major event 'WomenAlive!', Maree leads a team of volunteers to provide local women with opportunities to participate in a range of activities to inspire and improve their quality of life.

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## **Kevin Finlayson** | No Boundaries Art Group

*Passionate, Committed, Inclusive*

Kevin is well-known member of the community and the volunteer co-ordinator of No Boundaries Art Group, a collective of artists with a disability from Penrith and the surrounding areas. The mission of the group is to help people find an identity and purpose as a practicing artist, rather than being defined by their disability. Kevin is described as committed to his values and passionate about inclusion.

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## **Colleen Vassallo** | Blue Datto Foundation

*Humble, Devoted, Courageous*

Colleen is the co-founder of Blue Datto, a road safety education foundation that aims to protect the lives of young Australians. Following the tragic death of Colleen's 17-year-old son Philip in 2015, Colleen and her family established Blue Datto and the award winning 'Keeping Safe' program that is delivered to thousands of adolescents across NSW. The program's mission is to empower young people to make better choices on the roads as drivers and passengers.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**David ACHESON**

Galari-Lachlan Reconciliation Group, Forbes Aboriginal and Community Working Party, Forbes Wiradjuri Language Group

**Natalia ATCHA**

Cancer Council

**Graeme BANKS**

Mama Lana's Community Foundation

**Amanda BARNES**

Top Blokes Foundation

**Amy BASMAN**

Mama Lana's Community Foundation

**Martin BECKETT**

Christ Mission Possible

**Justine BLACKLEY**

Mulgoa Public School

**John BOCCANFUSO**

House with No Steps

**Maree CAIRNS**

Zonta Club of Nepean Valley Inc

**Sarah CUZNER**

Christmas Smiles

**Alysha DAVIDSON**

Hands & Feet Inc

**Jim DEVINE**

Lions Club of Emu Plains Inc

**Eric EASTERBROOK**

Legacy NSW Associated Clubs

**Kevin FINLAYSON**

No Boundaries Art Group

**Jane GOLD**

Penrith Women's Health Centre Inc

**Charmaine GOODWIN**

West Connect Domestic Violence Services

**Heather GWILLIAM**

Gateway Family Services

**Christy HARTLAGE**

Connect Child and Family Services

**Louise MAHER-BALE**

Australian Dysphonia Network Inc

**Greg McMANUS**

Resilience 2018

**Ann MURRAY**

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT

**Michelle NEW**

Australian Resource Centre For PTSD Limited

**Debbie O'CONNOR**

The Creative Fringe

**Emily PETTIT**

Street Art Murals Australia (SAMA)

**Samantha SKINNER**

Make-A-Wish Australia

**Jennifer THOMAS**

Bears of Hope Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support

**Tamara VAN ANTWERPEN**

Luke Priddis Foundation

**Colleen VASSALLO**

Blue Datto Foundation Ltd

**Peggy WILLCOX**

Mooney Real Estate

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*



*Westfield*

**SYDNEY**

NSW



## Adam Thompson PCYC NSW – City of Sydney

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*Dedication, Commitment,  
Integrity*

### Adam knocks down invisible barriers to get at-risk teens off to a good start

Adam Thompson believes the way young people start their day can set them up for success.

That's why he volunteered at the City of Sydney branch of the Police Citizens Youth Club NSW (PCYC) to give gym sessions and breakfast to at-risk youth before school.

Seven years later, he has taken a full-time position as manager of the club, which has 1300 members, eight staff and a team of volunteers.

He describes his role as helping to "knock down some of the invisible walls" faced by children in Woolloomooloo, Darlinghurst and Surry Hills.

"We try to empower our young people by building their confidence, teaching them discipline and resilience and getting them working in a team," he says.

If children have fallen out of the traditional school system, one of the aims is to use an alternative learning model to help them gain their Year 10 equivalency.

Adam is known for his inclusive approach. And the club boasts activities such as art, women's groups and cooking, alongside their traditional male-orientated activities.

On top of his role as manager, Adam also mentors groups of young people twice a week and often spends one-on-one time with them.

He has set up a Junior Boxing Squad at the club for the first time in 20 years. As coach, much of the training is done in his own time. And, of course, the focus is on personal development as well as boxing.

He says being a Westfield Local Hero shows him that people understand that the PCYC is making a real difference.

"It's a real honour, you don't do this kind of work for the accolades. You do it because you genuinely want to help people. It is really humbling."

The PCYC will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to boost a program very close to his heart – the morning gym program.

The money will enable teenagers to participate in an early morning training session, facilitated by a trainer and a youth worker with the assistance of volunteers.

"Afterwards, they will receive a nutritious breakfast and a lift to school, as truancy is still an issue," says Adam.



## Andrew Everingham Sydney Homeless Connect

*Charismatic, Dedicated,  
Compassionate*

### Chance meeting inspires Andrew to launch homeless mega event

Nine years ago, Andrew Everingham was on a work trip in San Francisco when he had a chance encounter with a young man named Matthew that changed his life forever.

Andrew had volunteered at an annual event that connects homeless people with people who can help them when he met Matthew.

He realised homelessness is something that happens to people and not who they are. "Matthew could have been him," he says. He could have been looking in the mirror.

So, he decided to launch a similar program in Australia, and that's where Sydney Homeless Connect came from. It's a completely not-for-profit, volunteer-driven organisation with a simple but ambitious goal: to pull together an amazing event where people experiencing homelessness can access all manner of services in one location.

"One of the biggest challenges for people experiencing homelessness is knowing where to turn to for help," Andrew says.

"What we try to do is bring them all the services on one day in one place and remove all the red tape and barriers."

That ranges from a free consultation with a podiatrist to touching base with housing service providers.

Nine years later, more than 80 service and care providers gather in Sydney's Town Hall for the event with the help of more than 300 volunteers.

Andrew is humbled and thrilled to be a Westfield Local Hero. But the real heroes, he says, are the volunteers and organisers, as well as the 2,500 guests who come along each year.

"I am merely the captain of an amazing crew of dedicated individuals who believe that sometimes it is good just to do something good."

Sydney Homeless Connect will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund the next few Homeless Connect events.



## Antoinette Uwera Asylum Seekers Centre

*Inclusive, Caring,  
Understanding*

### Antoinette gives back to the community that supported her

Antoinette Uwera knows first-hand that the right support at the right time can be life-changing for refugees seeking asylum in Australia.

"This can help families rebuild their lives and make a lasting contribution to society," says Antoinette, who sought asylum in Australia after fleeing her home country in 2008.

As a family engagement worker at the Asylum Seekers Centre (ASC), she connects families to education and community services, helping them navigate unfamiliar and complex systems.

"When families come to the centre for the first time, they are often in a critical situation and some are distressed," she says.

But things can be turned around quickly when Antoinette takes the time to listen to their concerns and connect them with the correct local community services.

"Finding the right connections acts like a magic touch, it restores people's hope so life can go on."

While Antoinette finds it uncomfortable to think of herself as a "celebrity" and prefers to keep a low profile, she says it is a privilege to be a Westfield Local Hero.

"It is a sign to me that my community supports the significant work we do at the Asylum Seekers Centre and the important part I play as an individual," she says.

The centre will use half its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund multilingual carers to look after children while their parents attend job, legal and health appointments and English classes.

"This is especially important," says Antoinette, "because many of the children experience separation anxiety, often the result of past traumas."

The other half will help fund a school readiness program for these children, which provides financial relief for families who find it hard to pay for school fees, uniforms and stationery.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Melissa Abu-Gazaleh** | Top Blokes Foundation

*Fearless, Audacious, Purposeful*

Melissa established the Top Blokes Foundation at the age of 19, to empower young men to change a youth culture that was harmful to them. She spends a considerable amount of time speaking to parents and community members on how they can take a proactive approach to improving young men's health within their communities.

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## **Fiona Forrest** | Women's Housing Company

*Passionate, Committed, Tireless*

The Women's Housing Company is a registered not-for-profit community housing provider that provides social and affordable housing for women on limited incomes across Sydney. Fiona facilitates consultations, workshops and forums including dedicated sessions for non-English speakers whilst coordinating bimonthly meetings across Sydney to gather views on service delivery and develop a deeper understanding of the issues facing social housing tenants.

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## **Stephen Lunny** | Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre

*Connector, Educator, Leader*

Stephen is the Community Programs Coordinator at Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre and works to empower the disadvantaged by designing, coordinating and running community programs for vulnerable individuals who might have struggled with chronic disadvantage, stigma or ill health. Stephen designs and runs wellness programs that teach the principles of good nutrition, healthy eating and cooking.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Melissa ABU-GAZALEH**

Top Blokes Foundation

**Helen APPLETON**

Giant Steps Australia

**Carolyn BENN**

Sydney Symphony Orchestra

**Jett BLACK**

107

**Marina BRIZAR**

Aspire Motivate Believe Foundation

**Deb BURDETT**

Chris O'Brien Lifehouse

**Maurice CABRERA**

Alfalfa House Community Food  
Cooperative

**Helen CALLANAN**

Preparing the Way

**Terry CORNICK**

Mr Perfect (Incorporated)

**Peter DEVOY**

Pymont Cares Inc

**Andrew EVERINGHAM**

Sydney Homeless Connect

**Kylie FITZMAURICE**

Weave Youth and Community  
Services

**Fiona FORREST**

Women's Housing Company Ltd

**Vicki GUTIERREZ**

Sydney Latin American Film  
Festival Inc

**Perri HAYES**

Woolloomooloo Police Community  
Scholarship Foundation

**Marcus HUGHES**

Museum of Applied Arts and  
Sciences

**Ellis JANKS**

Achilles Running Club Sydney

**Arran KEITH**

Cerebral Palsy Alliance

**Maureen KENNEDY**

Legacy NSW Associated Clubs

**Emma LEVETT**

Make-A-Wish Australia

**Lazarus LORDI**

Street Mobility

**Stephen LUNNY**

Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre

**Leanne MacCALLUM**

Giant Steps Australia

**Mandy MAILEY**

MustardSeed Ultimo Uniting  
Church

**John MARTIN**

Spanish Community Care  
Association

**Alexandra MELDRUM**

Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland

**Dominic MONCKTON**

batyr

**Graeme MOORE**

Stepping Stone House (Sydney  
Stepping Stone Incorporated)

**Mary MORTIMER**

Christmas in Pymont Incorporated

**Jackie RUDDOCK**

The Social Outfit Incorporated

**Shane STURGISS**

Mission Australia

**Adam THOMPSON**

PCYC NSW – City of Sydney

**Gearoid TOWEY**

Crossing the Line Sport Ltd

**Melissa TRICKEY**

The Shepherd Centre

**Antoinette UWERA**

Asylum Seekers Centre

**Melissa WINNELL**

The Salvation Army –  
Sydney Streetlevel Mission

**Mun Khiew (Bill) YAN**

Counterpoint Community  
Services Inc



*Westfield*

**TUGGERAH**

NSW



## Kevin Hulls Top Blokes Foundation

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*Energising, Dignifying, Persistent*

### Top Bloke Kevin exchanges footy field for the classroom

After being a volunteer footy coach on NSW's Woy Woy peninsula for 15 years, former motor industry worker Kevin Hulls was at a crossroad.

Based on how much he had enjoyed working with kids over the years, Kevin decided to become a youth worker and joined the Top Blokes Foundation as a mentor.

Since then, he has notched up thousands of mentoring hours helping boys and men aged 10–24 years who experience family breakdown, school or work issues, socio-economic challenges or mental health issues.

They attend six months of workshops at which Kevin and others offer a safe space to open up and discuss the struggles they face while learning how to build the skills for conflict resolution, help-seeking and critical thinking.

Kevin is also deeply involved in a foundation pilot program called Stepping Up that's designed specifically for boys in Year 6 at the request of local school principals.

"I'm using my life experience to communicate with young people during what can be an uneasy or unsettled period of their life," Kevin says.

Stepping Up aims to address many of the emerging social issues for boys and helps them develop decision-making skills.

There are 11 workshop variations available and Kevin works with each school to decide the topics that will be delivered over the eight-week program, including issues such as healthy relationships, drugs and alcohol, anger management and transitioning to high school.

So far, the feedback from parents and teachers has been incredible.

"One boy got a special award from his school for anti-bullying as a result of doing the program. And teachers report that the kids are more engaged and positive and are asking more questions," Kevin says. He is proud of the program but humble about being voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"Being a hero doesn't sit well with me," he says.

"But certainly, the program is a hero. The foundation has only been on the NSW Central Coast for the last six months so it's good to be recognised already."

The Top Blokes Foundation will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to roll out the Stepping Up program into more primary schools.



## Joyce Toms Camp Breakaway Inc

*Giving, Patient, Tireless*

### Joyce, 83, dotes over kids in the bush as their carers take a much-needed break

If you want to spend time with Joyce Toms, you'd better get in early. Even her own family have to book ahead for weekend get-togethers or babysitting, for Joyce is usually too busy volunteering at Camp Breakaway.

For the last 15 years, the 83-year-old has spent a significant amount of time as a companion carer for children and adults with disabilities and young carers at camps on the NSW Central Coast – even after she was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma.

"A friend who worked there suggested I go and do the training. Once I started working at the first camp, that was it," Joyce says.

Camp Breakaway gives people with disabilities a much-valued break from their usual routine and it also provides respite to the parents and carers who dedicate their lives to looking after them.

"With some parents of children with disabilities, the mother sleeps tonight and the father sleeps another night. Everyone needs time out to recuperate so you can be there again when the children come home," says Joyce.

Located on 25 acres, the purpose-built camp includes accommodation, meals, activities and entertainment against a backdrop of natural bushland.

Joyce has an admirable ability to look beyond a person's physical self. "I don't see their bodies and I don't see anything wrong with them. You're looking into their eyes and you see their soul."

Joyce doesn't like the limelight, but she is thrilled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I can't believe that something like this has happened to me. It's an honour," she says. "I love it at Camp Breakaway. The people are beautiful and to think that they think I'm worthy of the nomination is wonderful."

Camp Breakaway will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to support children with autism to attend programs and camps.

That's something that delights Joyce as it gives the children a chance to socialise and their siblings some time alone with their parents. "The parents know their children are safe at Camp Breakaway," she says.



## James Mulligan Aspect Central Coast School

*Determined, Passionate, Brave*

### James emerges from challenging childhood willing and able to give back

James Mulligan says his childhood was like wearing a fishbowl over his head – social situations were confusing, the communication was difficult and navigating the school environment was almost impossible.

"Not understanding social cues and not having the ability to really talk to other people comes with a lot of social anxiety because you can't express how you feel," James says.

It wasn't until he was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder in Year 8 and transferred to Aspect Central Coast School that James' world started to make sense, although it took some time to accept his diagnosis.

After leaving school, the then 20-year-old adventure seeker went travelling for a few years – including a trek through Nepal that raised \$5500 for Aspect. Along the way, he gained self-confidence by learning how to interact in social situations through "trial and error."

James is now determined to give back to the autism community and volunteers his time to raise awareness and educate teachers on how best to work with students on the autism spectrum.

"In a way, autism is my gift now. I can see both points of view; I can see the view from a person with autism and I can see a mainstream point of view, so I can relate to students in a way they'll understand."

When he speaks to young people he tells them what they have doesn't define them. "It's the choices you make and the things you do that define you."

James says he was "blown away" at being voted a Westfield Local Hero.

Aspect Central Coast School will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to completely renovate its playground with sensory equipment and special areas to aid self-regulation.

"Some people with autism can't talk, but they express themselves through sound and touch," James says. "There are a lot of new learning techniques that the school is implementing now. I'm really looking forward to seeing how it all works out."

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Nicole Harvey** | Coast Shelter

*Professional, Caring, Empathic*

Nicole manages Coast Shelter's Rondeley Domestic Violence Response Program which aims to restore hope and dignity to the lives of the women and children who have escaped violence and abuse, so that they can move forward confidently in their lives and regain independence. Nicole has worked tirelessly in developing the pilot program, personally providing energetic and empathic support to each woman and child in the program.

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## **Racquel Hassett** | Police Citizens Youth Club NSW Ltd (PCYC Bateau Bay)

*Supportive, Committed, Fun*

Senior Constable Racquel Hassett is a pro-active NSW Police Officer who has dedicated the last 17 years of service to youth crime prevention by supporting and empowering 'youth at risk'. Racquel's role is multifaceted involving case managing young offenders, designing and conducting innovative crime prevention programs, mentoring young people, delivering crime prevention presentations, coaching sporting teams, volunteering at PCYC Club activities/events, fundraising and networking in the community.

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## **Garry Kirkby** | Riding for the Disabled

*Dedicated, Passionate, Capable*

Garry provides most disabled children the opportunity to enjoy horse riding with the movement of the horse promoting improved coordination, balance, muscular development and fitness whilst restoring personal confidence, self-esteem, communication skills, leadership and trust. Garry spends his time with the riders and their parents and carers conducting riding classes, looking after the horses and guiding riders through their goals.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Leah ABER**  
Diamond Women's Support

**Jenny ABOURIZK**  
Job Centre Australia

**Angela ALLEN**  
Guide Dogs NSW/ACT

**Graeme ANDERSON**  
Westpac Rescue Helicopter  
Service

**Brenda BOOTH**  
Stroke Foundation

**Wendy BROWN**  
Wallarah Point Physical  
Culture Club

**Jennifer CAMERON**  
Central Coast Riding for the  
Disabled

**Brad and Bianca CARDIS**  
Fixx Events and Marketing Pty Ltd

**Russell (William) CLARK**  
Lions Club of Wyong Inc

**Jolleen COTTERILL**  
Lee Academy Pty Ltd

**Jeanine DE DIANA**  
Shoebox Revolution

**Nicole HARVEY**  
Coast Shelter

**Racquel HASSETT**  
Police Citizens Youth Club  
NSW Ltd (PCYC Bateau Bay)

**Stuart HAYWARD**  
Toukley District Athletics  
Centre Inc

**Kevin HULLS**  
Top Blokes Foundation

**Garry KIRKBY**  
Riding for the Disabled Association  
(NSW) Central Coast Branch

**Rebecca LAW**  
Shoebox Revolution

**Evan LAWRIE**  
Musicians Making A Difference

**Ken LAWRY**  
Volunteer Marine Rescue NSW

**Robert MILLER**  
Erina Community Mens Shed

**Michelle MULCAHY**  
Make-A-Wish Australia

**James MULLIGAN**  
Aspect Central Coast School

**Rachel PETERS**  
Roundabout Circus Inc

**Robyn REX**  
Zonta Club of Central Coast Inc

**Ian ROBILLIARD**  
Central Coast Academy of  
Sport Ltd

**Louise SAWILEJSKIJ**  
The Rhythm Hut

**Joyce TOMS**  
Camp Breakaway Inc

**Virginia WALSHAW**  
Regional Youth Support Services

**Janice WILKINSON**  
Good Grief

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*



*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

*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

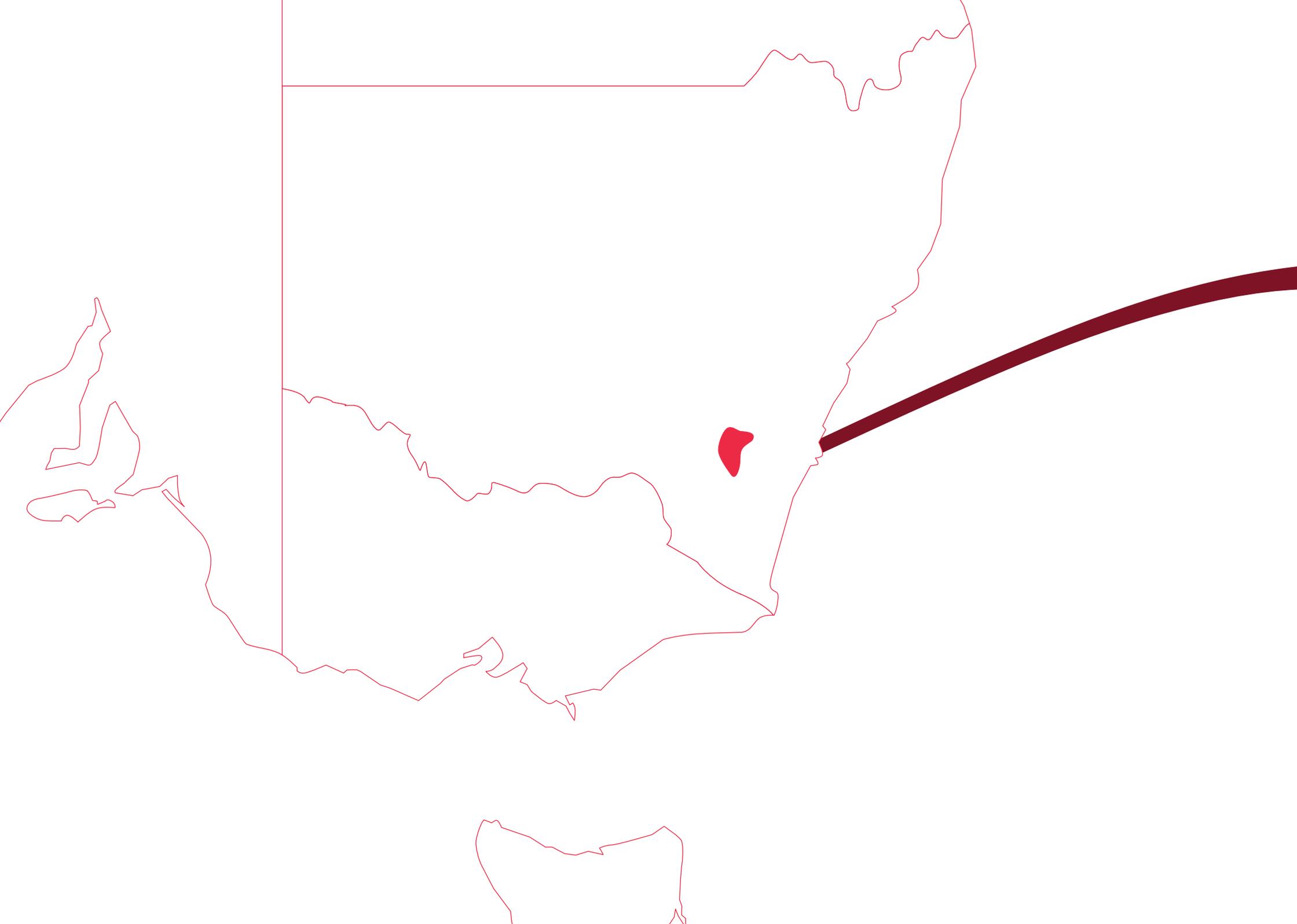
**Graham WHITTAKER**

Raise Foundation

**Ben WOODS**

Black Dog Institute

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*





# Australian Capital Territory

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Belconnen

Woden



*Westfield*

**BELCONNEN**

ACT



## **Karen Keunen** Make-A-Wish Australia

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*Caring, Positive, Empathetic*

### **Karen's wonderful world of making wishes come true**

Karen Keunen has helped make 131 wishes come true.

For 17 years she has volunteered for the Make-A-Wish Canberra branch, which brings joy to children with life-threatening illnesses.

"It's just wonderful to do something nice for them," she says.

"The prospect of a wish often helps them get through their treatment and at the end it's like a reward for all of the hardship."

Karen spends countless hours getting to know each child to help them plan their wish.

Her dedication also involves working on fundraising events and volunteer recruitment.

Thanks to the community spirit she helps ignite, dozens of people helped a young girl fulfil her dream to be a princess — complete with a carriage ride to a special afternoon tea.

While every child has touched Karen's heart, a recent wish stands out.

For six months a little girl had lots of ideas for a wish but couldn't pin it down.

She finally called Karen and asked her to come over as she'd decided her wish was to have a puppy of her own.

Make-A-Wish sourced the exact breed and colour she wanted and had the dog flown to Canberra.

"It was just an absolute delight," says Karen.

"We went to the front door and the love of this little girl for her puppy was something I will never forget. I don't think there was a dry eye — it was love at first sight."

Karen says she is proud to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's really good to see that people are aware of who we are and that they support us."

The foundation will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to fund 14 wishes for Canberra children.



**James Martin**  
YMCA Canberra

*Positive, Principled, Generous*

## Problem-solving James finds a way to give students a head start

James Martin is the kind of person who finds solutions if he sees a problem.

The YMCA executive decided to act when he found out that students with an intellectual disability struggle to get work experience, which means they struggle to find employment as adults.

So, he has set up a special 10-week work experience program for children at Canberra's Black Mountain School for students with an intellectual disability.

Called Y WEX, it puts the students to work at the YMCA's Bush Capital Lodge, which provides accommodation to school groups.

People with intellectual disabilities are often enthusiastic workers, says James, who is head of hospitality services at YMCA Canberra.

His next challenge is to find other employers to follow his lead.

"While what we are doing now might be noble, in a few years it might be normal. Work experience can make the difference between a person finding a job or facing long-term unemployment," he says.

"It increases their confidence. It increases their independence."

So far, one student from the school has been given a school-based apprenticeship at the YMCA.

The 16-year-old is paid to work two days a week at the lodge while completing his studies.

Although James says he is simply doing what the YMCA does, inspiring young people, it is well recognised among his peers that his benevolent efforts go well beyond his expected duties.

In addition to Y WEX, he has organised a Christmas party for young people in out-of-home care.

He is also a key driver of the YMCA Canberra Space Squad, which inspires high school students to study science, technology and engineering.

James says he is humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero but feels the accolades should go to his team, who embrace and nurture the students.

The YMCA will use its \$10,000 grant to offer two more students with an intellectual disability a school-based apprenticeship.

"This gives me a lot of satisfaction. It gives me a lot of pride and it makes me think we might be able to make a difference," James says.



**Emma Sckrabei**  
Riverview Projects (ACT) Pty Ltd

*Visionary, Diligent, Committed*

## Innovative Emma opens the way to employment

Thanks to Emma Sckrabei, 175 people now have work.

As manager of the SPARK Training and Employment initiative, it's her job to organise education, training and jobs for unemployed people in industries such as construction, retail and early childhood education.

But she went a step further by sourcing extra funds to pay for some of the necessities of becoming work-ready after finishing training or study.

"What training doesn't include is all the different tickets and licences that they actually need to be able to step into a job. The more people that are educated and employed in a community, the better a community is going to be," she says.

A diverse range of people benefit from Emma's work, including young people, women returning to the workforce, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people with disabilities.

The ACT government subsidises the cost of training, which is also offered in hospitality, aged care, horticulture, conservation and land management and business administration.

But many people would not be able to complete their qualifications without Emma's determination to remove roadblocks such as having no money for transport, needing help with reading and writing or just having someone believe in them.

"We access funds to buy bus tickets, petrol vouchers, uniforms and food vouchers," says Emma, who checks up on participants regularly. We have a really strong completion rate on our programs because we really do care about people."

Emma says it's humbling to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

The organisation will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to help up to 65 people access training free of charge to obtain the tickets and licences needed to secure a job. It will also use some of the money to pay for emergency childcare for people who are at risk of not being able to complete their training due to childcare constraints.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Ruth Boddy | Ozharvest**

*Passionate, Professional, Caring*

Ruth has been a volunteer at Ozharvest for the last 5 years, where she leads the community cooking sessions at Canberra College, preparing, cooking, packing and delivering highly nutritious meals to local charities including Ronald McDonald House and John James Village. The cooking sessions help to teach members of the community about nutrition and how to eat a healthy, low-cost diet.

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## **Amy Kelley | Belconnen Community Service**

*Optimistic, Empowering, Respectful*

Amy is responsible for the Belconnen Community Service Youth Employment Pathways Hub, offering one-on-one tailored employment support to vulnerable young adults aged 17–25 and in 2017, 77 young people gained a positive outcome from the program. The program empowers young people to overcome barriers to change and develop a plan through a strength-based approach. The goal is to see them gain meaningful employment and have a positive relationship with education.

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## **Nathalie Maconachie | Cerebral Palsy Alliance**

*Compassionate, Enthusiastic, Devoted*

Nathalie helps those living with neurological and physical disabilities to lead the most comfortable, independent and inclusive lives possible. Through various initiatives and programs, Nathalie and the team assist individuals and families to maximise their participation in the community, and identify ways in which CPA can help to raise awareness. Her new educational program called 'Just Like You' seeks to improve community attitudes and acceptance of disability by educating upper primary school aged students.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Natalie BALE**

Softball ACT/ Canberra  
Eclipse Softball Program

**Ruth BODDY**

OzHarvest Canberra

**Tim DALY**

This Is My Brave Australia Inc

**Amy KELLEY**

Belconnen Community Service

**Karen KEUNEN**

Make-A-Wish Australia

**Nathalie MACONACHIE**

Cerebral Palsy Alliance

**James MARTIN**

YMCA Canberra

**Sarah REID**

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

**Melissa RICKETTS**

Hurricanes Softball Club

**Emma SCKRABEI**

Riverview Projects (ACT) Pty Ltd

The page features a large, flowing red line that starts from the left, curves upwards, then downwards, and finally loops back to the right. A dark red circle is centered on the page, overlapping the red line. The text is centered within this circle.

*Westfield*

WODEN

ACT



## **Nathan Costigan** Tara Costigan Foundation

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*Committed, Motivated, Noble*

### **Family tragedy puts Nathan on a path to help others**

Nathan Costigan is a man on a mission sparked by a family tragedy.

Until his cousin Tara Costigan was murdered by her partner in 2015, domestic violence was not part of his world.

Three years on Nathan is digging deep to help other families escape violence and avoid the same grief.

He does this as a volunteer for the Tara Costigan Foundation, established by his uncle.

"My motivator is to give families the opportunity that they deserve, particularly the children," says the devoted father and husband.

Dedicated social workers known as Tara's Angels are currently helping 17 families, who have escaped violence, move on to normal lives.

Nathan volunteers his time as an ambassador to raise funds. He is a well-known and respected Canberra resident and people listen when he talks about the cost and devastation of family violence.

"Our catchphrase is respectful relationships," says Nathan.

"That's across every single thing we do in life. We have to be respectful and kind and it will make the world a better place."

Sometimes it's the simple things Nathan does that helps keep survivors safe.

He recalls one woman who was so overwhelmed by her huge, overgrown yard that she almost called her former abuser for help, 12 months after she escaped. Nathan, who has a fencing business, popped over with three of his workers in their lunch-break. They had the garden tip-top in 45 minutes.

"The stress relief for her was massive," says Nathan.

Nathan is proud to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"I am almost speechless to be recognised in Canberra with so many good people out there."

The \$10,000 grant to the Tara Costigan Foundation is invaluable and will help fund another Tara's Angel.

Tara's Angels are qualified, experienced and devoted social workers/caseworkers, who are provided free of charge to people who have escaped a violent relationship. Tara's Angels provide up to 2 years of support to help navigate a complex web of services and overcome personal barriers.

"It costs over \$160,000 to keep an Angel," says Nathan.



## **Suzanne Tunks** Stella Bella Little Stars Foundation

*Dedicated, Caring, Inspired*

### **Suzanne turns her grief into positive action**

Baby Stella has left an amazing legacy.

Her mum, Suzanne Tunks, has set up a foundation in honour of the beautiful girl who battled chronic illness all of her short life.

Turning her grief into action, Suzanne founded the Stella Bella Little Stars Foundation in 2012.

The foundation aims to brighten the lives of children battling serious and long-term illness.

It also offers practical support to families, through food and petrol vouchers, emergency accommodation and respite care.

Suzanne is the manager and main driver for the foundation and she is always looking for new ways to support parents.

One of the newest initiatives is the Stella Bella Children's Centre, which opened in 2017 and has a section for chronically ill children.

The foundation helps fund a specialist nurse and a qualified childcare team who look after the children while their parents take a much-needed break.

Families often lose at least one income as parents become fulltime carers for their child. This can cause a financial burden that adds to their worries about a sick child.

"A lot of those families don't have any money because they have children in hospital all of the time," says Suzanne.

The children are given a boost through events such as a camp and movie nights, or the Little Star Beads program where they receive a special bead as a reward each time they undergo a medical procedure.

The beads are then strung together as a symbol of their courage.

Suzanne feels humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero but says her team members deserve all of the accolades.

The foundation will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to fund stress-relieving yoga classes for parents and childcare by a paediatric nurse for their children.

"I have really seen a need for the parents to have some more support and I've been trying to get this program off the ground for a while," says Suzanne.



## Malakai Reinhard ACT Young Carer

*Selfless, Hardworking, Fighter*

### Brave Malakai balances school with caring for his mum and sister

Malakai Reinhard is not your average teen.

The 15-year-old balances school with caring for his mum, Lenna, and five-year-old sister, Kataya, both of whom have significant health issues.

"It's just something I do for my family," says Malakai. "We support and love each other unconditionally."

Malakai manages the housework, the shopping, pays the bills and makes sure Lenna and Kataya get to all of their medical appointments.

Thanks to his determination his mother and sister are also able to keep in regular contact with their friends.

Malakai regularly messages his mum during the day to make sure they are okay, have had their lunch and taken their medication.

But the inspirational teen still manages to fit in his studies and hobbies of metal forging and training for WWE (wrestling).

There have been times when Malakai has been the only person in the house able to make a decision.

"I've had to call an ambulance or other family members for help," says Malakai, who receives support from Carers ACT.

"Other proud moments are when I see my baby sister do things I've taught her, like cooking, drawing and writing."

Despite the demands at home, Malakai always finds time to talk things out with friends who are struggling with bullying and other teenage issues.

"Being a carer so young, I instinctively want to help people. I've been in tough times and know what it's like to be with supportive friends."

Malakai says it feels amazing to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

A \$10,000 Westfield grant will be awarded in Malakai's honour to Carers ACT. It will be used to help fund a drop-in centre.

"It will be a safe place for young carers to get know each other and go get support," Malakai says.

Carers will also be taught life-skills such as budgeting, cooking and navigating NDIS applications and plans.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Tom Campbell** | UN Youth ACT

*Dedicated, Inspiring, Incredible*

Tom dedicates his time to the operations of UN Youth ACT, a national youth-led organisation that aims to educate and empower young Australians on global issues, equipping them with the skills and inspiration to make meaningful change in the community. As the President of the ACT branch, Tom leads a team of 40 young, passionate members aged 18 to 25. He ensures the ongoing success of the programs that the team deliver and runs sessions himself on leadership, negotiation and public speaking.

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## **Danielle Dal Cortivo** | Raize the Roof

*Empowering, Smart, Inspirational*

Danielle is the CEO and driving force of Raize the Roof, an initiative developed to support children who are disadvantaged due to illness and poverty. Danielle's invaluable commitment to the organisation sees her coordinating activities such as fundraising events, as well as leading the operations of Raize the Roof, to ensure that it can continue to support children in need.

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## **Joshua Schwartz** | Make-A-Wish Australia

*Caring, Positive, Empathetic*

Joshua is an integral part of the Make-A-Wish team, bringing to life the wishes of sick children throughout the Canberra region. Joshua – who is a former wish child himself – passionately strives to ensure that each wish is achieved, volunteering his time to personally meet with the children and their families throughout the process. He has also shown an ongoing dedication to raising awareness of Make-A-Wish in the local community through fundraising, managing events and recruiting new volunteers.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Tom CAMPBELL**

UN Youth ACT

**Nathan COSTIGAN**

Tara Costigan Foundation

**Danielle DAL CORTIVO**

raize the roof

**Deborah EVANS**

Tjillari Justice Aboriginal  
Corporation

**Marg PEACHEY**

ACT Wildlife

**Malakai REINHARD**

ACT young carer

**Joshua SCHWARTZ**

Make-A-Wish Australia

**Rebecca TREGURTHA**

Trove Canberra

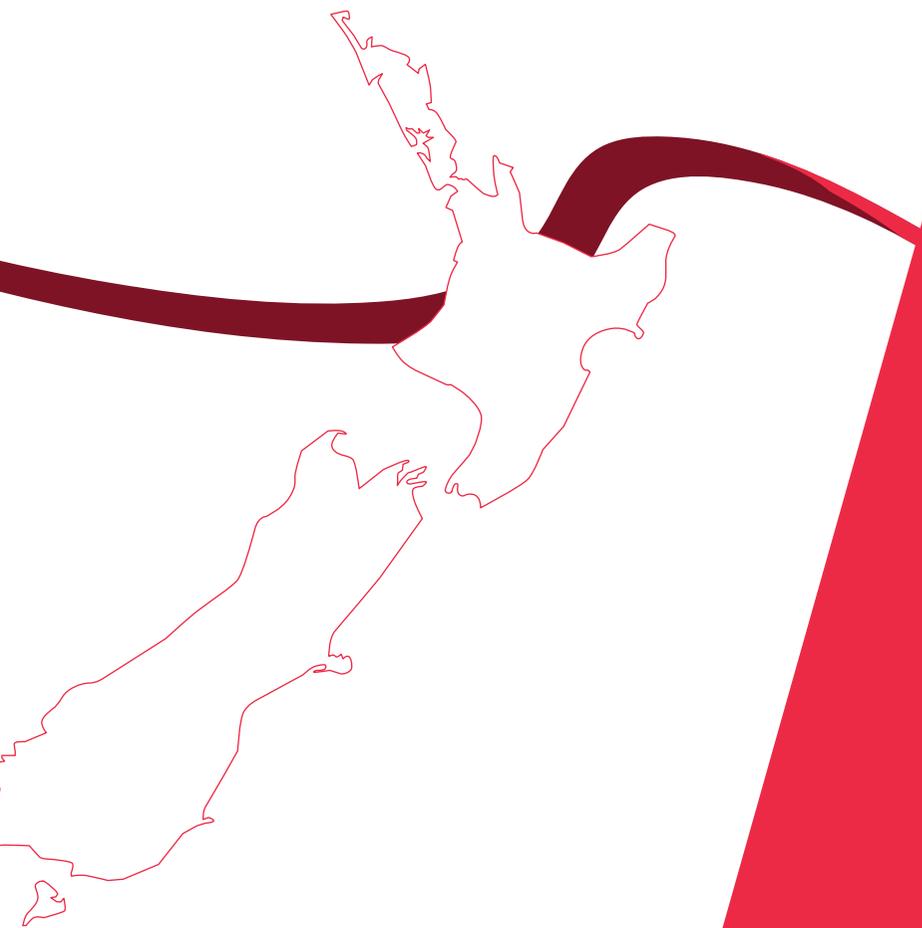
**Suzanne TUNKS**

Stella Bella Little Stars Foundation

**John VANCE**

Belconnen Community Service





# Victoria

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Airport West

Doncaster

Fountain Gate

Geelong

Knox

Plenty Valley

Southland



*Westfield*

**AIRPORT WEST**

VIC



## **Marisa Debattista** Second Chance Animal Rescue

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*Inspirational, Proactive, Dedicated*

### **The pet project Marisa launched from her lounge room**

As a young girl, Marisa Debattista's connection with animals was obvious to everyone around her. But few could have guessed she would go on to launch an organisation from her lounge room that would support thousands of pet owners to continue to care for their dogs and cats in times of hardship.

Marisa set up SCAR (Second Chance Animal Rescue) nearly 10 years ago, inspired by her work as a veterinary nurse and volunteering at the local animal shelter.

"I was able to see firsthand how many animals and their owners needed help versus the limited resources that were available to them," she says.

Her pet project is an Outreach Program which helps financially stressed and underprivileged owners access free veterinary care and food for their furry companions.

In the past year, SCAR has helped 79 families in the Moonee Valley community.

Today, SCAR, and its network of volunteers, foster carers and adopters have saved the lives of close to 10,000 abandoned, injured, sick or abused cats and dogs.

The services SCAR provides include animal de-sexing, resources to

encourage responsible pet ownership, veterinary services and pet food.

The owners' gratitude is something that gives Marisa goosebumps. "If you saw how much some of the outreach participants absolutely love their pets you would understand what this assistance means to them," she says.

Marisa is honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero but she struggles to see herself in that light.

"I don't see myself as a hero. But I do know that my team and I have done great things and are committed to continuing our life-saving work, no matter what obstacles we face."

She is thrilled with the \$10,000 Westfield grant awarded to SCAR. It will go directly to the Outreach Program, providing food and veterinary services to assist more than 200 pet owners for another six to seven months.



## **Katie Koullas** Yellow Ladybugs

*Passionate, Inspiring, Bright*

### **Katie's ladybugs are a beautiful way for girls with autism to connect**

To Katie Koullas yellow ladybugs are as beautiful as they are rare. And when they gather together it's lovely.

And just as it's harder to spot a yellow ladybug than a red ladybug, so too is it harder to spot girls on the autism spectrum than boys.

Katie saw a need to cater for girls when she noticed how many of the therapy groups are dominated by boys.

She formed Yellow Ladybugs in 2015 as a volunteer group and works hard to run events in the local community to help the girls connect with one another, while also offering support to parents and raising awareness that girls can be autistic.

"I simply wanted to help unite girls on the spectrum and create a community that celebrated, nurtured and supported our tribe," she says.

Over a relatively short period, the group has connected thousands of autistic girls and women, both in person and via its Facebook page.

Its positive impact goes deep into the community, touching extended families, school networks and health professionals.

This is one parent's touching description of her daughter's introduction to the club: "She realised she was not alone in the world. She saw girls with headphones and oral sensory necklaces, girls playing parallel and quietly. I saw her shoulders relax and the light return to her eyes; she was not alone."

Despite having a fulltime job and demanding family responsibilities, Katie has an unwavering commitment to the club and always finds time to focus on the members and advocacy for girls and women with autism.

Katie is overwhelmed and humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero, but says the title belongs to the whole committee of dedicated Mums who help deliver the programs.

Yellow Ladybugs will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to pay for four fun sensory-friendly events for autistic girls in the northern suburbs of Melbourne and their families and carers.



## **Veronica O'Brien** Roxburgh Rise Primary School

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*Passionate, Devoted, Caring*

### **Treatment of refugees ignites Veronica's caring spirit**

Veronica O'Brien's passion for refugee advocacy was ignited years ago in response to the way in which asylum seekers who travel by boat are treated.

It lit a fire in her that led to her working with refugees in a number of volunteer roles before finding what she describes as a "dream job" with the Roxburgh Rise Primary School.

"It's just such a wonderful way I can continue to offer support, welcome and a safe space to those who have come to Australia, having survived terrible experiences and are now rebuilding a new life for their families," Veronica says.

Veronica runs two programs at the school – an inclusive playgroup for refugee and migrant families and a women's leadership group for mothers.

The weekly session for the women's group is called, Sawt Al Nissa, which means Women's Voices in Arabic. It aims to build self-confidence and helps the women gain important knowledge about the education and health systems in Australia.

Veronica says the women have embodied the essence of the school's generous spirit with their kindness, taking on board its "learning for life" motto.

She's pleased to be voted a Westfield Local Hero, but says the real heroes are the women and children she works with, "who despite all manner of challenges have the courage to turn up and connect with others, show a genuine thirst for knowledge and learning, and share an incredible generosity of spirit".

"I get to see how much the children admire their parents when I present them with their certificate at the end of the year – these women are showing their children that even as adults you can always be learning and stretching yourself, being so courageous in doing new things," she says.

The school will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to buy toys and equipment for the playgroup program and to fund childcare while mothers attend the Women's Voices group.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Sarah Akamo** | Grace: West Melbourne Families Against Domestic Violence Inc

*Friendly, Humble, Humanitarian*

Sarah is the founder of Grace: West Melbourne Families Against Domestic Violence (WMFAD), an organisation that supports and empowers women and their children affected by domestic violence through programs and workshops. Through her work, Sarah created the Grace Care Package initiative, providing non-perishable/long-life pantry items, toiletries and sanitary items to women, with 20 care packages distributed each fortnight.

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## **Gareth Hanlon** | Westmeadows Football Club

*Courageous, Altruistic, Dedicated*

For the past two years, Gareth has been the President of the Westmeadows Football Club and in this time, has shown passion and commitment to ensuring the club promotes values of respect, inclusion and diversity. A strong believer in gender equality, Gareth oversaw the introduction of the first women's teams into the club in 2017, from under 9's through to under 18's. His vision is to create a club where women, people identifying as LGTBIQ, living with a disability or whom are from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds feel safe, positive and welcome.

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## **Ana Mrnjaus** | Western Melbourne Volunteer Branch of Make-A-Wish Australia

*Welcoming, Nurturing, Motivated*

For eight years, Ana has been a valued member of the Western Melbourne Volunteer Branch of Make-A-Wish Australia, an organisation that grants wishes to seriously ill children with life threatening illnesses. Over this time, Ana and her team have granted 79 wishes within the community, with a further 25 currently in progress.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Sarah AKAMO**

Grace: West Melbourne Families  
Against Domestic Violence Inc

**Kerry ASHBROOK**

Port Melbourne Colts Junior  
Football Club

**Bob CHALMERS**

St John's Uniting Church,  
Essendon, Friendship Club

**Julie CHITSOS**

Taylors Lakes Football Club

**Christine CRAIK**

Project Respect

**Marisa DEBATTISTA**

Second Chance Animal Rescue

**Enza GROSSO**

Training Employment  
Accommodation Mentoring Inc  
(TEAM Inc)

**Gareth HANLON**

Westmeadows Football Club

**Lachlan HEADLAM**

Barwon Child, Youth & Family

**Katie KOULLAS**

Yellow Ladybugs

**Peter LABBAD**

Tullamarine Football Club

**Jesse James LONGO**

J Square Bros

**Anne-Marie MASON**

Hillside Football Club

**Jade McKENZIE**

The Social Studio

**Natalie MOORE**

Be Moore

**Ana MRNJAUS**

Western Melbourne Volunteer  
Branch of Make-A-Wish Australia

**Veronica O'BRIEN**

Roxburgh Rise Primary School

**Patrick PAGE**

Niddrie Traders Association

**Annette SAX**

Yarn Strong Sista

**Angela SCAFFIDI**

Challenge Supporting Kids  
with Cancer

**Megan STAPLETON**

Moonee Valley Brass

**Margaret TORPY**

Moorabbin Kangaroos  
Football Club

**Liz TRIPODI**

Vocal Art Studios

**Graeme WALKER**

Moonee Valley Cricket Club  
Incorporated

**Alice WOJCIK**

Refugee Migrant Children Centre

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*Westfield*

**DONCASTER**

VIC



## **Karen Fox** Special Olympics – Melbourne Inner East

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*Committed, Enthusiastic, Kind*

### **Karen leads a team where everyone wins**

Every Wednesday a special group of swimmers meet at their local pool.

They are members of the Melbourne Inner East Special Olympics team and are training for local competitions and a chance to compete on a state, national or even world stage.

Coordinator and coach Karen Fox is always there to offer encouragement.

"It's all about the athletes, giving them a chance to train, compete and improve as well as have fun," she says.

At any time, around 40 intellectually disabled athletes aged between 10 and 40 train with the squad.

"Apart from the physical benefits, participation encourages social inclusion," says Karen, who has been a volunteer at the club for more than 10 years.

She is an active member of the Special Olympics committee and was a carer and team manager of the Victorian swimming team the Special Olympics National Games in South Australia.

The club training is tailored to the needs of each athlete so they can improve their swimming and self-esteem.

Thanks to her warm personality and enthusiasm, Karen has created an environment where everyone is welcome and included.

She encourages the swimmers to focus on personal bests rather than medals.

"We create equal opportunity for everyone and they all feel they are with friends," she says.

Karen feels honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"It will increase the profile of the Special Olympics and show the community how amazing our athletes are. And it means that volunteers get recognised for all the effort they put in."

The \$10,000 grant will go towards hiring the pool, new equipment and further training for the three volunteer coaches.

"We're also looking at getting some uniforms so the athletes feel part of a team," says Karen.



## Eva Jo Edwards Connecting Home and Link Up

*Exemplar, Mentor, Nurturer*

### Eva jo helps people of the Stolen Generation reclaim their identity

When Eva jo Edwards's six children each reached about five years of age, she stopped giving them lots of hugs.

It wasn't that she loved them any less. It was just that she had no experience of parental love beyond the age of five. That's how old she was when she and her siblings were wrenched from their family and community to spend the next 13 years as wards of the Department of Human Services.

"A lot of the Stolen Generation struggle to tell their kids they love them every other day," says Eva jo.

One of her passions is to educate all Australians about what happened to the Stolen Generation not so long ago. She shares her story widely, talking at schools, libraries and at corporate events.

"It's not about making people feel guilty, it's about learning from our past and healing our future," she says.

Thanks to what she describes as her own 30-year journey of healing, she is able to be a profoundly positive role model for people in her community.

She is a storyteller, an empathetic listener and an emotional healer. She is also an active volunteer for the two Stolen Generation organisations in Victoria, Connecting Home and Link up.

Connecting Home focuses on emotional rehabilitation and Link up helps people trace lost family and compile their family tree.

One of Eva jo's roles is to help find traditional names of descendants who were shunted around Victoria as a function of the land removal policies which predated the stolen generation policies.

Eva jo has only recently uncovered her own family history. "Last year I finally felt complete knowing who my family is and where I am connected."

She feels blessed to have been supported by the community and voted a Westfield Local Hero.

The \$10,000 Westfield grant awarded in her honour will be shared by Connecting Home and Link Up.

Connecting home will use its money to provide urgent emotional and financial support to people in need.

Link Up will use its portion to help people trace their family and return to country. This is a healing opportunity for people to visit Gravesites or homes where their family were once part of a community.



## **Melissa Noonan** Limbs 4 Life Incorporated

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*Passionate, Determined,  
Selfless*

### **How Melissa's trauma inspired her to help others**

Melissa Noonan came up with the idea for Limbs 4 Life soon after losing her right leg above the knee in an accident.

She was undergoing rehabilitation and was feeling isolated and worried.

"I couldn't believe how many amputees there were in rehab and I couldn't understand how in a country such as ours information and support didn't exist," she says.

It was only a chance meeting with another amputee that provided her with some guidance and comfort. "It was just amazing to share my fears and concerns with him and ask all the questions I had."

One year later, Melissa founded Limbs 4 Life.

Volunteers who have lost limbs provide one-on-one support to children and adults who have lost limbs through an accident or illness or who were born with limb differences.

There are also social activities and web-based information.

Melissa's unflagging efforts include visits to schools and community groups to share her story and raise awareness.

She is determined to help prevent future amputations by encouraging prevention, such as foot-health checks for older people and those at risk because of diabetes.

Initially, Melissa balanced Limbs 4 Life with her paid work. But a small seed grant eventually enabled her to become a paid executive officer — albeit with a significant drop in salary.

Limbs 4 Life responds to 2000 calls a year and around 150 people who have lost limbs have been trained to provide support.

It's a testament to Melissa's dedication that she has been recognised with three previous awards, including a Pride of Australia Medal for Courage.

She says, "it is an absolute thrill to be voted a Westfield Local Hero."

Limbs 4 Life will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to help increase its volunteer workforce and to print information kits.

"It will help cover our volunteer insurance, which is quite costly," says Melissa.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Jeanette Carrison** | Foster Care Association of Victoria

*Dedicated, Unselfish, Caring*

Jeanette has taken over 50 foster kids into her own home over the last 20 years until they can find a permanent family. She began foster caring as a single mum with four children, and has continued to be a safe haven for kids in crisis.

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## **Pippa French** | 3000acres

*Passionate, Generous, Creative*

By building community gardens, running educational workshops and facilitating residents to share their resources, Pippa through 3000acres has helped people grow fresh and healthy food. Through events and community gardens they promote social wellbeing through fighting isolation (bringing people together – mental health), ensuring people understand and have access to fresh/healthy food (physical health) and creating safe outdoor spaces for learning and sharing.

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## **Jo-Anne Otten** | Crossway Lifecare Ltd

*Compassionate, Tenacious, Caring*

Through her work as the Youth COACH Program Coordinator at Crossway Lifecare, Jo-Anne implements a mentoring program for at-risk and vulnerable young people in Doncaster and surrounding communities. Passionate about empowering disadvantaged youth, Jo-Anne works to increase resilience, create a sense of belonging and maintain their engagement with education and employment.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Jeanette CARRISON**  
Foster Care Association of Victoria

**David DYASON**  
Run Warrandyte

**Evajo EDWARDS**  
Connecting Home and Link Up

**Chantell FELLOWES**  
Little Lotus Books

**Karen FOX**  
Special Olympics –  
Melbourne Inner East

**Pippa FRENCH**  
3000acres

**Ian HOLOWKO**  
MICH Joint Venture.  
ABN 89381619828 (Manningham  
Inclusive Community Housing Inc)

**Liza KARRAS**  
Melbourne Volunteer Branch of  
Make A-Wish Australia

**Roy KOSSENA**  
Write On

**Natalie KYRIACOU**  
My Green World

**Chris LLOYD**  
Mitcham Thunder Basketball Club

**Bob MIETUS**  
Leukaemia Foundation

**Anthony (Tony) MONLEY**  
Doncaster Community Care and  
Counselling Centre Inc (Doncare)

**Melissa NOONAN**  
Limbs 4 Life Incorporated

**Jo-Anne OTTEN**  
Crossway Lifecare Ltd

**Peter ROYCE**  
300 Blankets Inc

**Jade SHANAHAN**  
Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia

**Mel TURNBULL**  
Firekeepers Incorporated

**Cathy WILLIAMS**  
Team Kill Cancer Inc

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*



*Westfield*

**FOUNTAIN GATE**

VIC



## **Leanne Petrides** Cranbourne Information & Support Service Inc

*Understanding, Trustworthy,  
Hardworking*

### **Nagging Leanne leads by example to help those doing it tough**

Leanne Petrides has a crucial job supplying emergency relief and support to people doing it tough. But she has an interesting side-gig — nagging politicians.

As Director of the Cranbourne Information & Support Service (CISS) for 20 years, she has spent countless hours advocating on behalf of her clients, many of whom are poverty stricken or escaping domestic violence.

Thanks to her good relationship with local politicians, she is able to phone them for support or invite them to visit the service to see the pressures people are under. This has helped win increases in funding that have paid for a financial counselling service.

One of the service's role is to negotiate with Centrelink, real estate agents and utility companies on behalf of clients. And Leanne's canvassing has also made money available for emergency relief, which provides people with essentials like food, petrol or baby essentials in a crisis.

"There have also been times when a politician has mentioned the agency and the work we do in Parliament in a bid to raise awareness of local issues," Leanne says.

It's a credit to Leanne that the service has become a major relief provider in her area.

It received over 26,000 inquiries in the last financial year and directly assisted more than 3,200 people.

Much of the success is attributable to Leanne's dedication and excellent management.

She leads by example and often takes on the most difficult clients.

"It is great to see people walking out of our doors looking brighter and happier than when they walked in," she says.

She is constantly coming up with new ways to help. An example is the service's popular Back to School program that helps families with school costs and settling into school.

Leanne says being voted a Westfield Local Hero means a lot to her personally. And the service will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to extend its practical help beyond petrol and food vouchers.

This could involve helping someone buy clothes to take up a job, repair windows to keep a domestic violence survivor safe or pay for a child to go to school camp.

Leanne says the money will help the service look at people's situations in a more holistic way and "make a difference, not just put a band-aid on it."



## Sukhwinder Kaur Sikh Volunteers Australia

*Dedicated, Passionate, Collaborative*

### Top cook Sukhwinder helps feed 200 hungry people every week

Sukhwinder Kaur is famous for her tasty cooking, but often it's the quantity of food she makes that's most important.

She spends at least 16 hours a week cooking meals for the hungry and goes out to deliver it every Wednesday and Saturday.

This has been her tireless routine for more than seven years as a member of Sikh Volunteers Australia.

The meals are distributed by the charity's food van, which feeds up to 200 needy people a week.

But sometimes the recipients are in such dire straits that the volunteers buy them items from their own pocket.

One man, in particular, shocked Sukhwinder.

He told the volunteers that the food was good. But he also needed a tent because he was living in the bush, Sukhwinder recalls.

"I felt very sad. We bought him a tent and gave two or three containers of food to him."

People often share their life stories with the volunteers, including one severely physically disabled man who came to collect containers of food to take home.

"One day he broke down and shared that he can't do much for his family but take food for them. Their stories give us strength and motivation to do more."

The ever-smiling Sukhwinder is an effective recruiter and role-model for the charity and has inspired more than 30 other Sikh women to become "very active" volunteers.

She also spends her time teaching children the Punjabi language, heritage and music. She encourages the students to be community-minded and to speak up against bullying.

Sukhwinder is proud and happy to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. Charity work is all part of the Sikh faith, she says.

The Sikh Volunteers will use the \$10,000 Westfield grant to fund the training of new volunteers and to buy new cooking appliances.

"It will pay for musical instruments too for the students," says Sukhwinder.



## Sylvia Ryan Berwick Secondary College

*Inclusive, Inspiring,  
Dependable*

### How Sylvia found her calling when her mum issued an ultimatum

Sylvia Ryan was just 15 when her mum issued an ultimatum that changed her life.

Worried that Sylvia was spending too much time thinking about herself, she told her to go out and not come home until she found volunteer work.

Sylvia signed up to help at an aged-care facility and soon realised she had a knack for community work.

"I just loved it and started looking at how I could pursue it as a degree," she says.

Sylvia qualified as a social worker and is now part of the student support team at Berwick Secondary College, where around a quarter of students come from homes where there is violence.

She has implemented a number of strategies to help students feel a part of a community, including a breakfast club.

"It's a privilege to journey alongside young people and experience various ups and downs beside them."

Sylvia also volunteers as a mentor at a local church-affiliated youth group, Epic Youth, which a number of students attend. Her involvement means she is around to be a positive role model for the students out-of-school.

She says volunteering makes it easier for students to believe people like Sylvia.

"Seeing there is genuine care has probably made some of the biggest impact on the highest-risk kids.

"I love seeing kids come alive at the youth group and start getting in touch with passions and interests they didn't know they had."

Sylvia feels "a little embarrassed" to be voted a Westfield Local Hero but is delighted the community recognises the value of her and her team's work.

Berwick Secondary College will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to fund a coffee-cart business for students at risk of leaving school.

The process of setting up the business is expected to be an engaging way for them to tackle the school curriculum.

Profits from selling coffee to teachers will be used to buy school resources or to help another local community group.

"We want to tap into their leadership skills and help them understand they can have an impact on their school community," says Sylvia.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Dean Cowan | Pakenham Pony Rescue Organisation**

*Dedicated, Tenacious, Creative*

Dean is the Founder of Pakenham Pony Rescue Organisation (PPRO), a not-for-profit organisation that rescues, rehabilitates and rehomes abandoned, abused and neglected miniature horses and ponies. Its volunteer program promotes positive action and behaviours and increases social inclusion. Volunteers, often young people, stay-at-home-mums and older members of the community, spend time interacting with the horses and ponies, cleaning paddocks, grooming, rugging and feeding the animals.

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## **Kathryn Sharp | Tulliallan Primary School**

*Proactive, Committed, Determined*

Kathryn has been an advocate for public education for over thirty years. As Community Engagement Leader at Tulliallan Primary, Kathryn works tirelessly to improve academic and social achievements of the students, promoting high expectations of social harmony between children, their families and the teaching team. This is achieved through lunch time activities, culture programs and celebrating diversity as well as through information sessions to encourage writing, reading, ICT and mathematical learning.

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## **Tori Norris | Victorian YMCA Community Programming Pty Ltd**

*Kind, Considerate, Inspirational*

For the past five years, Tori has been part of the Community Engagement Team within the YMCA. Whilst thousands of Victorians access YMCA programs or services on a weekly basis, some people don't have the same access, due to their economic or social situation. Tori's role is to improve the lives of those doing it tough within the community, to enable people to live healthier, happier and more connected lives.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Chalanka ATHALAGE**

Sri Lankan Dance Academy of  
Victoria Inc

**Kerry BARNARD**

Berwick Flames Basketball Club

**Belinda BOLGER**

Orchestral Futures Inc/  
Casey Philharmonic Orchestra

**Julie CIN**

Spinal Muscular Atrophy  
Australia Inc

**Dean COWAN**

Pakenham Pony Rescue  
Organisation

**Leon EGAN**

Bundy Gilang Pty Ltd

**Pamela GOODE**

Windermere Child & Family  
Services Inc

**Margaret HARRISON**

Lions Club of Cranbourne

**Nurten Kim HASAN**

Hampton Park Turkish Senior  
Citizens Club

**Kristy-Lee JONES**

Cardinia Casey Volunteer Branch  
of Make-A-Wish Australia

**Sukhwinder KAUR**

Sikh Volunteers Australia

**Troy KENWARD**

1st Cranbourne Scout Group

**Joanne LEMIERE**

Dandenong Baton Twirlers

**Julie McKNIGHT**

Casey Relay for Life

**Kumaradevdrar NARAYANASWAMI**

Tamil Refugee Council Inc

**Tori NORRIS**

Victorian Ymca Community  
Programming Pty Ltd

**Leanne PETRIDES**

Cranbourne Information &  
Support Service Inc

**Bassir QADIRI**

Bakhtar Cultural Association  
Rotary Club of Narre Warren

**Sylvia RYAN**

Berwick Secondary College

**Natalie SCANLON**

The WritComm Foundation and  
Written Communications

**Ashley SCOTT**

Operation Newstart Casey  
(Operation Newstart Victoria)

**James SEEARY**

Operation Newstart Casey  
(Operation Newstart Victoria)

**Kathryn SHARP**

Tulliallan Primary School

**Matt STONE**

**Anthony TONEN**

Fountain Gate Cricket Club

**Tom TUFUGA**

Melbourne Kangaroos Rugby Inc

**Alexandra VASSILOPOULOS**

The Women's Bootcamp Co

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*

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*Westfield*

**GEELONG**

VIC



## **Kris Angelovski** Barwon Valley Special Developmental School

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*Committed, Passionate,  
Respectful*

### **Kris creates a special safe place for disengaged students**

There's a special program at Barwon Valley Special Developmental School for year 9 and 10 students who become disengaged or disruptive in class.

It's a good place. A safe place where they don work vests, clock in and learn useful skills such as gardening and woodwork. All under the careful guidance of education support Kris Angelovski.

The program is called Teamworx and it provides opportunities for students to develop positive work attitudes and skills that they can use later in life.

"Without a doubt, the highlight of my work has been seeing some of the students who had previously exhibited extremely challenging behaviours or had become disengaged from their normal school programs now fully re-engaged in meaningful activities," says Kris.

Because of his positive relationships with each student, Kris is able to recognise and respond to potential triggers before any challenging behaviours escalate.

"It's especially gratifying to hear from parents about the positive changes they have noticed in the home life of their children."

The program aligns with the Victoria Department of Education and Training objective of breaking the link – where more students stay in education and the impact of disadvantage is reduced.

Kris and the students enjoy their work and have constructed many interesting items, often made using recycled materials. For example, in 2017 they constructed a range of Christmas trees made from timber they reclaimed from pallets that had been donated to the school.

A further initiative was a pop-up shop through which the students learned basic retail skills by selling timber products they had constructed and pot plants they had decorated.

Kris feels honoured and humbled to be voted a Westfield local hero. "It means the people of Geelong genuinely value inclusion and the provision of meaningful programs that allow for the best possible outcomes for students with disability."

The school will use the \$10,000 Westfield grant to expand the Teamworx program and to buy equipment. It will also be used to pay for transport for group outings.



**Lisa Hamling**  
Treehouse Autism Family  
Support Group

*Caring, Compassionate, Committed*

### **Busy Lisa always has time to take a call from anxious parents**

Lisa Hamling is a busy mother but she spends about four hours on the phone every evening.

As the volunteer director of an autism support group, she is often the first person anxious parents turn to after their child is diagnosed.

"A lot of people don't realise the impact an autism diagnosis has on families," says Lisa, who also works full-time at a disability service.

Treehouse Autism Family Support Group provides a social network for the families of children and young adults with autism spectrum disorder. There are different groups for different age ranges and interests.

Shared experiences such as movie nights, Lego, coffee mornings for mums and a pot and parmi night for the dads helps to reduce isolation and loneliness.

"There's no judgement — if your child has a meltdown no-one is worried," says Lisa.

"Others might even hop over and help."

Lisa started at Treehouse as a volunteer and became the director in 2015 when the founders decided it was time to bow out.

At the same time, the group lost its regular meeting place, so Lisa got on the phone and after many rejections found a home at Access Your Supports, which is now also her employer.

Lisa is known for her compassion and dedication and receives up to four calls a night from parents seeking advice, many referred by local psychologists.

"I tell families it's not a sprint, it's a marathon so you need to pace yourself a bit."

A highlight for Lisa was presenting a submission to a parliamentary inquiry into autism services.

"It was fantastic when just about every recommendation was approved."

Lisa feels honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

Treehouse will use the \$10,000 Westfield grant to fund tailored outings for each of the support groups.

"The kids all love animals so maybe a zoo trip for the younger kids. The young adults might like a horse-riding day."



## **Cormach Evans** **Strong Brother Strong Sister**

*Passionate, Dedicated, Strong*

### **Cormach bounces back from self-harm to pay it forward**

As the only Aboriginal kid in his school, Cormach Evans faced the tyranny of racism every day. The impact was so great he almost lost his life to drugs, alcohol and self-harm.

Thankfully, he had strong role models and they helped him change his life for the better.

Now Cormach is paying it forward, founding Strong Brother Strong Sister to help build self-esteem among Aboriginal youth.

"I want to give all young Aboriginal people a positive mentor, role model and leader in their own life to help them achieve their greatest dreams. And now we are doing that," Cormach says.

Strong Brother Strong Sister aims to keep Aboriginal kids in school or work by instilling pride in their culture while connecting them with the local community.

The program does this through various weekly activities, including group workshops and an art program with AFL football club the Geelong Cats.

In just 12 months Strong Brother Strong Sister has engaged with over 500 Aboriginal people aged 4 to 25 years.

Twenty homeless young people have received help while another 20 in out-of-home-care have returned to their families. Cormach

says the program also addresses the fact that Aboriginal youth are born 10 steps behind due to racism, land loss and the Stolen Generation.

"We are giving Aboriginal young people the bridge to step well over that gap to achieve excellence. That's what inspires me every day. That's what keeps me going."

Cormach says it is a privilege to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. He says he has been overwhelmed by support from the Wadawurrung and wider communities.

"Strong Brother Strong Sister will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to fund two leadership camps, one for boys and one for girls," Cormach says.

"The grant means that the right people are being acknowledged for the amazing work they are doing and will continue to do with the community."

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

*Lifeline: 13 11 14*

*Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467*

*Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800*

*MensLine: 1300 78 99 78*

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Chris Evans** | Encompass Community Services

*Dedicated, Compassionate, Visionary*

Chris Evans started as a casual Program Staff member for Encompass Community Services in 2004 without much experience in the disability field. In his role as Program Staff, he shows an extraordinary commitment to assist staff and clients, as well as a total commitment to increase accessibility. Encompass runs a life skills program, Farming It, where a work crew comprising of clients and support staff complete gardening and maintenance tasks at our property in Leopold.

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## **Phoebe Lovell** | Southern Cross Kids' Camps

*Dedicated, Caring, Inspiring*

Phoebe is a devoted volunteer for SCKC Geelong, working tirelessly to coordinate camp facilities to support children who have suffered abuse, domestic violence and family breakdowns. The camps offer an early-intervention respite service, where 1:1 mentoring helps create a safe space for struggling children and empowers them to build their self-esteem and resilience. Phoebe's commitment to the organisation extends into fundraising and community partnership building, helping to ensure that the camps can continue to run, year after year.

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## **Guy Mitchell** | Wombat's Wish

*Passionate, Selfless, Hardworking*

Guy is a passionate Camp Coordinator at Wombat's Wish, a twice-yearly camp which provides bereaved children with support to deal with the grief of losing parents. A Nurse by trade, Guy has a passion for helping others and as the Camp Coordinator at Wombat's Wish, he is a driving force behind the operational aspects of the camp, along with offering direct support of attendees and other volunteers.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Michelle ABBOTT**  
Geelong West Giants

**Kris ANGELOVSKI**  
Barwon Valley Special  
Developmental School

**Nick ANSELL**  
Disabled Surfers Association  
Ocean Grove

**James ASCIAK**  
Wild Rumpus Community Services

**James ASHLEY**  
The Salvation Army South Barwon  
Corps

**Carolyn BISCHOF**  
The Winged Horse Equine Welfare

**Margaret BURKE**  
Geelong Mums

**Glenn CLIFFORD**  
Geelong Volunteer Branch of Make  
A-Wish Australia

**Jan DANIELS**  
Encompass Community Services

**Tessa DAVIS**  
Anam Cara House Geelong

**Frank DE ROSSO**  
Music at the Basilica Incorporated

**Brandon DELLOW**  
Humans in Geelong auspiced by  
Geelong Sustainability

**Alex DESSANTI**  
Gateways Support Services

**Chelsea DOLBY**  
Geelong Community Foundation

**Nicki DUNNE**  
Bellarine Training and Community  
Hub Youth Program for  
Disadvantaged Young People

**Nestor ESTAMPA**  
CatholicCare

**Cormach EVANS**  
Strong Brother Strong Sister

**Chris EVANS**  
Encompass Community Services

**Libby GIBSON**  
HeartKids

**David GREENWOOD**  
CenterStage Geelong

**Lisa HAMLING**  
Treehouse Autism Family Support  
Group

**Kharen HARPER**  
Somebodys Daughter Theatre  
Company

**Louis HEHIR**  
Kardinia International College

**Joel INEI**  
OneCare Geelong Ltd

**Katherine JOHNSTON**  
Guide Dogs Victoria

**Jenelle JURCIC**  
Barwon Health Foundation

**Peter JURISIC**  
Inclusive Option  
Geelong Kokoda Youth Program

**Alicia KENNEDY**  
Cherished Pets

**Bron LAWSON**  
Bluebird Foundation Inc

**Wendy LEIGH**  
Lazarus Community Centre  
Geelong Victoria

**Phoebe LOVELL**  
Southern Cross Kids' Camps

**Guy MITCHELL**  
Wombat's Wish

**Stephanie RICE &  
Nathan BROCK**  
Bellarine Secondary College

**Michael NOLAN**  
Lazarus Community Centre

**Kane NUTTALL**  
The Power In You Project  
(Community Veracity)

**Rebecca PICONE**  
Peace of Mind Foundation

**Romeo PURLIJA**  
Geelong Soccer Club

**Sorayya RASOULI SHEMIRANI**  
Geelong Ethnic Communities  
Council trading as Diversitat

**Jo RIDGEWAY**  
Raise

**Dr Garry TESTER**  
Sports Challenge Australia

**Geoff THOMPSTONE**  
Jan Juc Surf Life Saving Club

**Marsha UPPILL**  
Arranyinha

**Michele WARREN**  
3216 Connect Inc

**Linda WONG**  
Hands of Change Limited

**Des YOUNGHUSBAND**  
Uniting Barwon

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*

A decorative graphic consisting of a thick red line that forms a large, flowing shape. A dark red circle is centered within this shape, framing the text. The background is white.

*Westfield*

KNOX

VIC



## **Sue Horwood** Citylife Community Care

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*Visionary, Committed, Faithful*

### **Sue gives struggling mums a recipe for life**

When the volunteers at Citylife Community Care teach mums how to cook as part of the life-skills program, the exchange is about much more than putting a meal on the table.

The volunteers get an invaluable opportunity to connect with the mum and the mum learns invaluable lessons about parenting, home organisation and, of course, cooking.

"The immediate impact is to relieve the mum's stress. But equally important is the longer-term benefit," says Sue Horwood, whose role is to assess the needs of mothers in distress and match them with a more experienced volunteer to mentor, support and encourage them.

Many of the volunteers are unemployed and isolated and have an opportunity to experience the joy of giving to someone else. They receive training and a confidence boost through their work, often enabling them to apply for formal employment.

Recently a former volunteer brought Sue a gift and said she would never have found a job without her experience as a volunteer.

Sue finds the connection between the mums and volunteers heart-warming to watch.

"I've found that people who are downtrodden are so generous and giving to other people," she says.

"We have people who are hanging on by a shoestring and yet will invite somebody else who is in a terrible situation into their own home, and that's because they know what it feels like."

Sue did a "happy dance" when she heard she had been voted a Westfield Local Hero.

The organisation will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to buy cooking equipment for the Life Skills cooking program. It also wants to buy a printable whiteboard and a laptop to help teach mums about meal planning on a budget, buying what's on special and looking up recipes that use those ingredients.

"So, you give people a lot more choices about their eating but also a lot more choices about their spending," says Sue.



## Stephen Barrington Foothills Community Care

*Compassionate, Hospitable, Driven*

### Stephen shares 9000 meals and food for the soul

Christmas Day can be miserable for people who are isolated because of homelessness, domestic violence or simply because they live alone.

That's what inspired Stephen Barrington to invite lots of strangers to Christmas Lunch at the Ferntree Gully Guild Guides hall back in 2001. And that's how Foothills Community Care was founded.

The charity has grown significantly since then and operates out of both the Girl Guides hall and the Upway Baptist Church. It has 200 volunteers serving 9,000 healthy meals a year through its Monday and Wednesday weekly meal; its community casseroles program and its annual Ferntree Gully Christmas Day lunch.

"It's not just about the food", says Stephen.

"Over a meal, we talk and we laugh and we share."

He says many people are deprived of community connection. "So that's a really important part: sitting down and listening to people's stories over a meal."

There are many stories of how Foothills has helped people. But one that stands out is about a person who was sleeping in their car when they first came for a meal.

"They weren't really eating healthily but, more than that they were really isolated. So, we provided a safe space for them to chat."

Over the years the person shared their story and began to help at Foothills.

The person moved to a local boarding house and then to public housing and now they bring other people for meals.

Over the years, the charity has expanded and now offers a domestic violence support group and hospitality training.

Stephen is excited to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"It's nice to be acknowledged for the work that we do in the community and for the local community to come on board to support that."

The charity will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to develop its in-house kitchen with new equipment and to expand the hospitality training program.



**Ian Ware**  
Ringwood Biala

*Dedicated, Hardworking,  
Optimistic*

## 90-year-old Ian gives breathing space to parents and carers

Being the parent of a child with special needs is a non-stop commitment. So it's a godsend when someone is willing to step in and provide respite, even for a few hours.

That's the role Ringwood Biala plays. Two days a week during the school term, 40 volunteers provide respite to dozens of parents to give them time to attend appointments, give undivided attention to the child's siblings, socialise or just have a rest.

The glue that holds it all together is Ian Ware, aged 90, who has been chair of the management committee for 30 years. He rarely misses a meeting and is assiduous about following up issues that arise.

Ian understands first-hand the value of the breathing space Ringwood Biala provides. He and his wife, Evelyn, have a disabled daughter, who is now 57 years old.

"When she was a baby there was no such thing as Biala and I know what my wife and I went through looking after Merryn, who is a delightful young lady now."

He relates the story of a family who moved from New Zealand. "They had nobody; no grandparents or relatives. They were stuck and Biala was really able to help them.

"It means so much to these parents who are stressed."

During their respite interventions, the volunteers work one-on-one with the children and follow plans set by their therapists.

There's also a social side to the program for the children. "They come and meet other children who they know are more like them. They make great friendships and our volunteers make great friendships."

To spread the word about Ringwood Biala, Ian has a regular slot on the local FM radio station and still takes his turn at fundraising sausage sizzles and selling raffle tickets.

Ian, a former Maroondah Citizen of the Year, says being voted a Westfield Local Hero is "a most unusual, but pleasant, feeling".

The \$10,000 Westfield grant will allow Ringwood Biala to fund employing a part-time coordinator and keep the organisation running for an entire year.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Denise Budge | Knox Infolink**

*Thoughtful, Humble, Strategic*

Denise has worked in the community sector for over 30 years. Through her most recent work with Knox Infolink – a non-for-profit community organisation providing information and services for those going through financial hardship, health issues and homelessness – Denise created 'Connecting Kids with the Knox Community'. 'Connecting Kids with the Knox Community' connects disadvantaged school-aged children to extra-curricular activities they are interested in, that they might have never been able to take part in due to their family's challenging circumstances.

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## **Jenny Tomlin | Araleun**

*Passionate, Selfless, Exuberant*

Jenny is part of Araleun, which provides a range of support services to people with intellectual disabilities including the Eastern Disability Housing Network. The Network works closely with the individual, their family and the wider community, to ensure the individual is happy, safe and an included member of society. Importantly, it provides people with a disability choice, control and independence, and gives their families peace of mind.

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## **Frank Zimmerman | Australian Red Cross**

*Sincere, Dedicated, Professional*

Frank is a well-known and loved driver for the Australian Red Cross. Frank drives people of all ages who can no longer drive themselves due to an ailment or illness, to their doctor's appointments during treatment. Frank's service extends so far beyond simply driving them from A to B – he acts as a friend, support and confidant during what can be one of the most difficult times in a person's life.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Sarah BARNES**

Mainly Music Wantirna South

**Stephen BARRINGTON**

Foothills Community Care

**Leah BISHOP**

Let's Eat School Food Program  
(Heathmont college)

**Denise BUDGE**

Knox Infolink

**Mara CHASE**

Syndal Baton Twirlers

**Rod DUNGAN**

Brentwood Secondary College

**Sue HORWOOD**

Citylife Community Care

**Michael JOHNSON**

The Basin 'Food is Free' Project  
and Community Garden

**Chuentat KANG**

GJS Intellectual Company Australia

**Andrew KENNEDY**

Eastern Lions Auskick and  
Junior Football Club

**Ann-Maree MANN**

Angel Gowns for Australian  
Babies Inc

**Mel SPENCER**

Different Journeys

**Venitha SUDUDEWAGE**

Make-A-Wish

**Jenny TOMLIN**

Araluen – Eastern Disability  
Housing Network

**Chris TUCKER**

Melbourne Volunteer Branch of  
Make A-Wish Australia

**Ian WARE**

Ringwood Biala

**Frank ZIMMERMAN**

Australian Red Cross, Patient  
Transport Section Melbourne

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*



*Westfield*

PLENTY VALLEY

VIC



## **Prabhat Sangwan** Brothers and Sisters Foundation Inc

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*Selfless, Communicative,  
Determined*

### **Prabhat takes things into her own hands to end a stigma**

Prabhat Sangwan has taken it upon herself to help end the silence and stigma around mental health among members of Melbourne's Indian community.

Concerned that her friends, family and community at large were experiencing mental illness in silence, Prabhat decided she had to do something to raise awareness and encourage people to seek help.

"That's why I started volunteering with mental health organisations, including the Brothers and Sisters Foundation," says Prabhat.

"We are a registered foundation and always looking for opportunities to provide assistance and services to disadvantaged people living in Melbourne to achieve their potential for a better life."

Already balancing a full-time job and raising a young family, Prabhat regularly volunteers her time to promote mental health awareness around the Plenty Valley region.

She has also started a mental health support group dedicated to the Indian community with help from Mind Australia and the Whittlesea Council. Through the group, Prabhat actively assists people to find timely and culturally supportive medical and social support.

She says she is blessed to have been voted by her community as a Westfield Local Hero.

"By voting for me, they have actually voted for mental health, which is a very positive sign," she says.

The foundation will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to fund a stigma-breaking community event to coincide with World Mental Health Day in October.

People attending the event will be treated to a fun family atmosphere with entertainment. There will also be mindfulness sessions and stories about mental illness from community members who have been through it.

"It will be the first event of its kind for Indian community mental health in Victoria," Prabhat says.



## **Anthony Dionis** Mill Park REBELZ Basketball Club

*Passionate, Dedicated,  
Unconventional*

### **The coach who jumps through hoops to be inclusive**

Anthony Dionis is no ordinary sports club president and the Mill Park REBELZ is no ordinary team.

With his mantra of "every child can play", Anthony works hard to ensure every player who puts on a REBELZ singlet feels like a winner - no matter the final score.

Over the past five years, he has dedicated himself to ensuring that the Mill Park REBELZ basketball club is an inclusive and affordable club that operates on the principles of fun, fitness and participation so all members have a positive experience.

"It is about the kids having fun because it is a domestic club, not a rep club, and one of our strongest points is that every player gets an equal amount of court time, whatever their skill level," Anthony says.

Despite running his own business, Anthony devotes countless hours every week to the club, coaching multiple teams, chairing committee meetings, mentoring junior coaches and actively participating in fundraisers.

Last year, he and a group of other club members took that dedication a step further and established a special needs academy within the club, making it possible for children with varying needs and abilities to feel supported and included.

He now coaches the academy on top of his other work, describing it as a fantastic experience for kids and parents alike.

"Many of these kids have never had an opportunity to participate in organised sport before and they absolutely love it," he says.

Anthony says it feels great to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero.

The club will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to buy new training equipment for the club's domestic teams and the special needs academy. It will also fund the development of coaches to upskill and attract more people.

"The special needs academy alone costs about \$3,000 per season to run and we have been funding it out of our own pockets so this money will be a huge benefit," Anthony says.



**Karen Bryant**  
Northern Hospital

*Selfless, Dignified, Caring*

## **Karen offers Indigenous hospital patients a gentle guiding hand**

When Indigenous patients and their families need help making their way around Epping's Northern Hospital, Karen Bryant is the person they turn to for cultural support.

As Senior Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer at the hospital, Karen provides assistance with admissions and navigating the complex health system.

"I work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients to offer a range of culturally appropriate support and advocacy to improve the patient journey," she says.

A tireless worker, Karen is also there to support Indigenous families during points of crisis such as family violence.

She ensures her clients have access to community services and programs to support and maintain their health after leaving the hospital and also gives support with emotionally difficult processes such as end-of-life planning.

"At times of crisis, people are overwhelmed and not thinking straight, but we help by approaching every situation in a positive manner and breaking issues down so they can be tackled one piece at a time," Karen says.

But Karen's work at the hospital is just the beginning of her contribution. She's also a longstanding member of the local Aboriginal Reconciliation Group and spends countless hours educating the broader community and health systems about Aboriginal culture.

"The cultural training allows our mob to express diversity and gives the doctors and nurses some practical tips about communicating and engaging with Aboriginal people," she says.

Karen says she is extremely humbled and excited to be voted a Westfield Local Hero by her community.

"This gives me another incentive to keep striving for the best health outcomes for my patients and it is great to be valued by my peers," she says.

Northern Hospital will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to buy essential items for Indigenous patients in need. This will include toothpaste, toothbrushes, nappies, non-perishable food and clothing.

It will also fund artwork to create a culturally-appropriate and welcoming environment for Indigenous patients at Northern Hospital.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Tim Forster** | Mill Park Blue Light

*Passionate, Dedicated, Committed*

Tim is a current serving member of Victoria Police and for the past 15 years has worked with the Blue Light organisation in Mill Park. Blue Light helps to bridge the gap between local police and young people, by providing safe and fun activities, such as; dance parties, camps, boxing programs and more.

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## **Nishtha Goel** | Kool Moon Events Inc

*Charismatic, Hardworking, All-rounder*

Nishtha volunteers her time and skills to support several community groups, such as: Kool Moon Events, Whittlesea Multicultural Community Council, Whittlesea United Women's Group and more.

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## **Samuel Johnson** | Love Your Sister

*Passionate, Humble, Determined*

Samuel co-founded non-profit organisation 'Love Your Sister' with sister Connie following her terminal cancer diagnosis. As a young mum of two, Connie was determined to raise awareness of early detection and funds for cancer research. Sadly, Connie passed away last year, however Samuel is continuing what they started and is working tirelessly to fulfil his sister's wishes.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Claudio ANGIUCCI**  
B2C Technologies Pty Ltd

**Munish BANSAL**  
Family

**Karen BRYANT**  
Northern Hospital

**Thomas DI PALMA**  
The Scout Association of Australia,  
Victorian Branch

**Anthony DIONIS**  
Mill Park REBELZ Basketball Club

**Tim FORSTER**  
Mill Park Blue Light

**Nishtha GOEL**  
Kool Moon Events Inc

**Greg HEATLEY**  
Sth Morang Junior, Senior  
Football and Netball Club

**Samuel JOHNSON**  
Love Your Sister Foundation

**Bernadette REEVES**  
Mernda Dragons Rugby  
League Club and Touch  
Football Association

**Prabhat SANGWAN**  
Brothers and Sisters  
Foundation Inc

**Simon SMITH**  
City of Whittlesea

**Sevda TANKIR**  
Nisa United Inc

**Melissa TUMEO**  
Melissa Tumeo Music

**Alex TZELEPIS**  
Bundoora United Football Club

**Wes WRIDGWAY**  
Doreen RSL Sub Branch

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*



*Westfield*

**SOUTHLAND**

VIC



## Helen Romanis Marriott Support Services

*Motivational, Engaging, Positive*

### Helen focuses on people's abilities as she helps them gain independence

More than 30 years ago Allan T Marriott had a light-bulb moment. Realising there was a lack of disability services for adults in south-east Melbourne, he donated money to buy land for a new facility.

In 1985 Marriott House opened and began helping adults with disabilities to gain their independence.

"Marriott Support Services prides itself on being small enough to get to know people and their strengths while being big enough to have a range of supports to develop those strengths," says Helen Romanis, who has volunteered there for five years.

She is seen as an amazing role model for staff and students alike, thanks to her knowledge and positive attitude.

Marriott helps people with an intellectual disability become involved in their community and has grown to three sites across Glen Eira, Kingston and Bayside local government areas. It provides supported employment to 110 people, supports 130 people in community programs and employs 80 staff.

Helen volunteers two days a week and takes time to focus on what people are able to manage rather than on their disability.

Her current role is to help people complete a certificate to help get into a course or find work.

Helen patiently helps her charges learn writing skills and the ability to effectively express ideas, feelings and viewpoints.

"They gain confidence and often new skills, such as speaking to a group of people, travel planning and accessing facilities such as banks and public transport," says Helen, who is both humbled and thrilled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

She is known for building warm connections with the people she helps.

"Helen knows a lot about life and helps me by encouraging me," says one of her students.

"Helen has helped me through my fears about banking and self-control," says another.

Marriott will use its \$10,000 grant to replace outdated iPads and computers. The money will also help fund activities that build life skills, such as gym, cooking and make-up classes.



## **Cindy Longley** Southern Autistic School

*Passionate, Optimistic, Supportive*

### **Cindy just loves helping her students find their place in the world**

If there is one thing that is sure to bring Cindy Longley to tears, it's the annual graduation of her Year 12 students at Southern Autistic School.

Many of her students have been with the school since they were three, so Cindy has a strong bond with them.

This often endures after they have left the school, with students popping in to catch up.

"All of our students have differing abilities," Cindy says. "But we have had some that have got part-time jobs, that are travelling independently or have gone on to TAFE courses."

Cindy says one of the highlights of her job is helping students develop the confidence to go out and join in with the community when they leave the school.

She initially studied as a primary teacher but is now the leader of the secondary school and is directly responsible for 56 students and 60 special education teachers and support staff.

Cindy initially chose to do a graduate diploma in special education "because it was available." But she soon discovered it was her passion.

"I got the position at the school and I loved it so much I've stayed here ever since."

She has made her mark in those 23 years, and her teaching methods are highly regarded for providing a progressive, dynamic and supportive yet challenging environment for her students.

Cindy has a holistic philosophy and has developed a network of local organisations to provide work experience for the students. This has increased understanding of people with autism spectrum disorder and their ability to contribute to the community. The students are also giving back through volunteer work at charities such as Meals on Wheels.

Cindy feels humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. The Southern Autistic School will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to fund several secondary school programs.

These include activities to help students prepare for the Duke of Edinburgh Award.



## **Sarah Dobbie** TaskForce Community Agency

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*Passionate, Compassionate,  
Tireless*

### **Brother's care impressed Sarah, so she joined the team**

When Sarah Dobbie's brother needed help he turned to TaskForce, a support service for young people.

Sarah was so impressed by what she saw that she volunteered to help and was placed at the reception desk.

Later, she achieved the required qualifications and jumped at the chance to be employed with the youth team. Five years on she is the youth services team leader.

She feels a real sense of satisfaction at helping young people who have been through "foster care, residential units, homelessness and you name it."

TaskForce services inner South East Melbourne and helps young people aged 12 and up deal with a wide range of issues.

Some of Sarah's clients have spent 10 years in correctional institutions and are only 25 years old.

Others have an acquired brain injury or mental health issues as a result of drug and alcohol use.

Many come from homes affected by domestic violence, poverty and unemployment.

"To have them come in and sit down and have a very raw and real connection with someone who is actually there to help them, that's the reward," she says.

Sarah works hard to help her clients overcome these challenges and build positive social networks.

It takes a lot of time and hard work before her clients can even start thinking about a job and a brighter future.

She says it feels surreal to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"There are moments where you feel disheartened or you feel a bit bogged down by all the bad stuff. But to have the efforts of the youth team recognised in this way reminds us why we come to work each day."

Taskforce will use the \$10,000 grant to support its new youth hub, which Sarah helped design, right down to the fixtures and furnishings. Young people can drop in to play table tennis or Nintendo and get a hearty meal.

"There is a laundry so they can clean their clothes if they have been couch surfing — all the little things we take for granted," Sarah says with pride.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Michael Browne** | Seaford Primary School

*Humility, Compassionate, Inclusive*

Michael Browne is the Principal of Seaford Primary School and through his leadership and guiding principles Seaford Primary prides itself on being a school of inclusion. This is reflected in the enrolment of 154 students with 45 students with additional needs. Michael fought hard to keep guaranteed funding for the Language Unit at Seaford Primary to remain open which has created a legacy for some of the most at risk students to become confident learners.

## **Deb Napolitano** | Les Twentyman Foundation

*Patient, Persistent, Caring*

The Youth Assist Program is a voluntary program for young people aged between 10–17 years of age. The aim of the program is to support and guide at-risk or vulnerable young people through challenges they face. Deb is the Youth and Community Engagement Coordinator and her role includes: maintaining regular contact with young people, promoting positive social behaviours and problem solving skills.

## **Michelle Krueger** | Make-a-Wish (Bayside)

*Driven, Caring, Dedicated*

As part of the Make-A-Wish Bayside Volunteer Branch, Michelle has worked tirelessly to grant wishes to seriously ill children with life threatening illnesses in the Bayside region for four years. Over this time, Michelle and the Bayside Branch, have granted 23 wishes. Michelle is involved during all stages of a child's wish journey; from meeting the child and family to the diligent planning to make each wish perfect.

## **Shaye Woodhouse** | SANDS Australia

*Selfless, Inspiring, Passionate*

Shaye produces self-care support hampers for Mothers and families of pregnancy loss. The hampers are a valuable offering of acknowledgment and an act of compassion to those grieving and to help reassure families that they are not alone during this tragic time. Shaye began making the baskets as a one-woman-show, sourcing the donations and running the program. She has now merged with Sands Australia to distribute locally, and across Australia.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Amanda ADAMS**  
Minties Netball Club

**Charles AGIUS**  
Rotary Club of Bentleigh  
Moorabbin Central

**Gavin BLUE**  
Heartfelt

**Michael BROWNE**  
Seaford Primary School

**Linda DENNISON**  
Holmesglen Institute

**Christopher DENT**  
Revolution Sports Club

**Sarah DOBBIE**  
TaskForce Community Agency

**Charlotte EIZENBERG**  
Hineni Youth and Welfare

**Peter FOWLER**  
5th 6th Moorabbin Scout Group

**Gopal GANWANI**  
Friends of the Children Foundation

**Yvonne HONG**  
Pets of the Homeless

**Michelle KRUEGER**  
Bayside Volunteer Branch of  
Make-A-Wish Australia

**Cindy LONGLEY**  
Southern Autistic School

**Duncan MACKINNON**  
Victorian Maritime Centre

**Jessica MACPHERSON**  
St Kilda Mums

**Louise McCANN**  
Moody Activewear

**Ellen McGRATH**  
Brighton District Cricket Club

**Elisa MINEO**  
Reaching Out Because We Can

**Deb NAPOLITANO**  
Les Twentyman Foundation

**Natasha NOLAN ADDISON**  
Monash Children's Centre Clayton

**Rhett OGSTON**  
Qi Health Clinic Pty Ltd

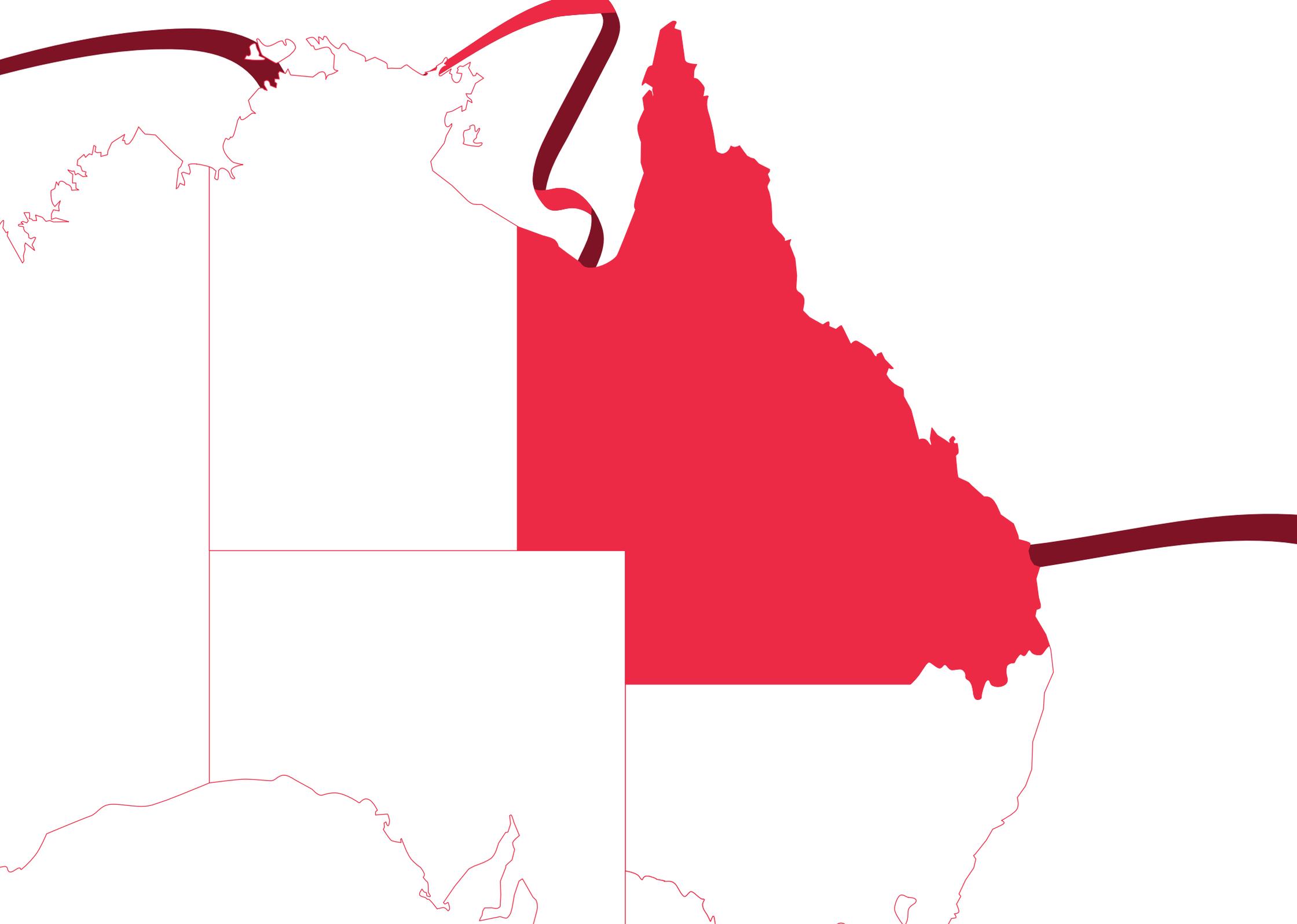
**David ROGERS**  
Challenge Supporting Kids  
with Cancer

**Helen ROMANIS**  
Marriott Support Services

**Shaye WOODHOUSE**  
Charlees Basket

**James YOUNG**  
Bayside Film Festival Inc

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*



# Queensland

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Carindale

Chermside

Garden City

Helensvale

North Lakes





*Westfield*

**CARINDALE**

QLD



## Debra Lenehan Vision Australia

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*Inspiring, Energised, Enthusiastic*

### How a shock diagnosis led Debra to start giving back

Losing her vision has done nothing to dim Debra Lenehan's drive to help others.

Diagnosed with the rare genetic eye disorder Retinitis Pigmentosa in her 30s, Debbie was in desperate need of a helping hand – not just to guide her through her new physical reality, but also to deal with the emotional side of her loss of sight.

That's where Vision Australia stepped in, offering mobility training to teach her how to get around her house and use public transport. It also gave her computer lessons.

"When I first got diagnosed I cried for about two weeks but Vision Australia was very supportive, with training and with helping me through the emotional side of things," she says.

Over time Debbie adjusted to her new reality and was able to get back to doing many of the things she had enjoyed in her old life, such as travelling and cooking.

Soon Debbie found herself wanting to give back to the blind and low vision community, and she became a Vision Australia volunteer.

She has become known as an essential representative at the "coal face" of the organisation and is especially good at helping people adjust to new diagnoses of vision loss. Beyond that, she leads by

example to show that it is possible to have a disability and still enjoy a rich and active lifestyle.

She is actively involved in fundraising and is a familiar face at local shopping centres, railway stations and hardware stores.

"It is worth it because I feel strongly that I need to get out into the public to teach people about blindness and low vision and to raise funds for the training of seeing eye dogs."

She says it's great to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I'm happy to do anything to raise awareness of blindness and low vision."

Vision Australia will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund the training of seeing eye dogs.



## Ken Loftus The Sunlight Centre

*Passionate, Empathetic, Caring*

### Kind Ken reaches out to teens and adults with depression

It doesn't matter how busy you are, if you can do something that might save lives, you should give it your all.

That's the attitude of Ken Loftus, who in 2017 founded The Sunlight Centre, a charity offering free crisis counselling to teenagers and adults at risk of suicide in Brisbane's Cannon Hill.

Ken had no government funding and a child on the way and was already working two jobs.

But he pushed ahead out of a desire to make it easier for people to access in-person counselling when they need it most.

"After 17 years of working in mental health, I learned that what people really want is somewhere safe to talk, somewhere they can feel listened to and that is what The Sunlight Centre is there to provide," he says.

Those who need The Sunlight Centre can book themselves a free appointment without a referral from a GP, reducing wait times and costs. Others can attend one of the centre's "Healthy Mind" workshops, where Ken teaches mindfulness and coping mechanisms for anxiety.

It's all about trying to reduce self-harm and suicide, which is the largest cause of preventable death among teenagers in Australia.

"We are trying to provide people with a warm environment where they can get help to get them through a crisis," he says.

Ken says he is proud to have been recognised by his community and voted a Westfield Local Hero after just a year.

The Sunlight Centre will put the Westfield \$10,000 Local Heroes grant towards running costs and hopes to take on a new therapist.

The centre can be reached on 1300 259 724 or via its Facebook page.

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

*Lifeline: 13 11 14*

*Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467*

*Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800*

*The Sunlight Centre: 1300 259 724*



## **Cindy Corrie** The Sycamore School

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*Courageous, Driven,  
Forward thinking*

### **The parents who started a school to improve their son's future**

Cindy Corrie only ever wanted to find a school where her son would be happy and supported through his autism.

But finding no such school in her area, she decided that the best thing to do would be to start her own. So, with her husband, Cameron, Cindy founded The Sycamore School in Alexandra Hills, Queensland, to specialise in educating children with autism.

Its mission is to change predicted futures of children with autism by building independence through self-awareness, learning, and developing their strengths.

"Our son and many children like him have incredible skills, but they are often unsupported in working on key goals and challenges, so they don't get the opportunity to do their best," says Cindy.

"At The Sycamore School, we want to foster autism-friendly learning, which means working on communication, social skills, flexible thinking, behaviour and all the things that can impact a child's opportunity to engage with education," she says.

Now in its second year of operation, the school has 62 students from across Brisbane, aged from prep through to Year 6.

Importantly, each student is encouraged to understand themselves and recognise what makes them unique, Cindy says.

"Kids who were never getting invited to birthday parties are now making friends and going to sleepovers. As families develop connections with others who have kids on the spectrum it's creating a really special community."

Cindy says it's "very humbling" to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

The school will put its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant towards science equipment and computers.

"Just about every child in the school is good with technology and we really think that many of them will be able to find work in scientific or IT jobs. So this is just another element of developing their skills," Cindy says.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **George Kambouris** | PCYC Carindale Branch

*Resilient, Supportive, Loyal*

George identified through personal experience that there was a strong need to provide life skills lessons for young people who find themselves wheelchair bound for the first time, through a comprehensive training program that involves learning navigation skills for wheelchair users around their home, school and community. Now delivered via the PCYC, the program includes weekly sessions on wheelchair usage and most importantly, care for the body due to strenuous and physical rigors of life in the wheelchair.

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## **Ron Ould** | The Lion's Club Macgregor

*Humble, Compassionate, Youthful*

Ron is a member of the Brisbane Macgregor Lions Club and as part of his commitment to the Club, works on several projects for local charities to help those in need. These include, the Indigenous Basketball Academy, Women's Refuges, YMCA, PCYC, Drought Relief for Australian Farmer's and more.

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## **Conan Visser** | ICANIWILL Limited

*Visionary, Altruistic, Dedicated*

Conan created the charity ICANIWILL to promote inclusion and reduce bullying, particularly in children with special needs. ICANIWILL targets the bullying culture in schools by creating anti-bullying videos starring individuals who are being severely mistreated by their peers in school and online. ICANIWILL leverages connections with famous influencers and their social media platforms to extend the reach and ensure the video goes viral – spreading the anti-bullying message far and wide.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Adam CASSIDY**

United Nations Youth Queensland

**Elizabeth CLAYDON**

Down Syndrome Swimming  
Australia

**Cindy CORRIE**

The Sycamore School

**Kristie DE BRENNI**

Queensland Pathways  
State College

**Cherrie DOWLING**

Horses in Mind

**John FLOWER**

SBH Queensland

**Edward HASELICH**

Carina Men's Shed Inc

**Robert INNES**

PCYC – Breaking the Cycle  
Programme

**George KAMBOURIS**

Living on Wheels Lifestyle  
Sporting Program Pty Ltd

**George KAMBOURIS**

QPCYWA – Carindale Branch  
(PCYC Carindale)

**Debra LENEHAN**

Vision Australia

**Ken LOFTUS**

The Sunlight Centre

**Caitlin McDONALD**

Girl Guides Queensland

**Marco MUNOZ**

Marco's Kitchens

**Ron OULD**

Brisbane Macgregor Lions Club

**Kristin PENHALIGON**

Brisbane Youth Service

**Natasha ROGERS**

Make-A-Wish Australia

**Philippa RUSSELL**

Juiced TV

**Philip SARGESON**

Cereal for Coffee Ltd

**Graeme SHERLOCK**

Brisbane Basket Brigade (part of  
the Magic Moments Foundation)

**Debbie SIMMS & Sue HANSFORD**

Carina C&K Kindy

**Chantelle THOMSON**

Fight With Me Inc

**Conan VISSER**

ICANIWILL Limited

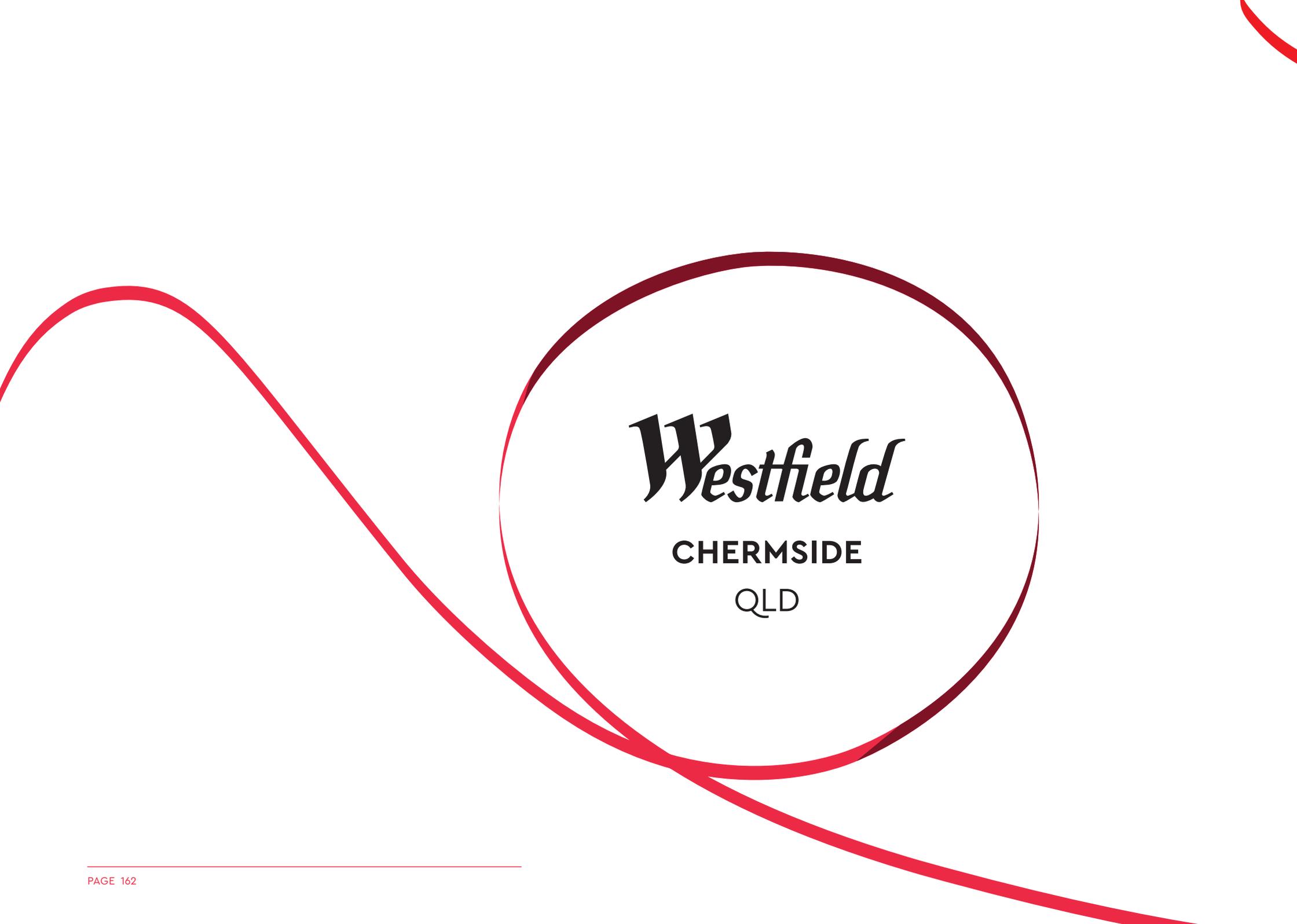
**Paul VOJTISEK**

OzHarvest

**James WHITE**

Traction Community Programs

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*

A decorative red wavy line starts from the left edge, curves upwards, then downwards, and then forms a large circle that encloses the text. The line continues to curve downwards and to the right, ending at the bottom edge. The text is centered within the circle.

*Westfield*

**CHERMSIDE**

QLD



**Julie Ramsay**  
3rd Space

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*Dynamic, Inspiring, Dedicated*

## **Weekends are much more fun thanks to Jules's get-togethers**

Weekends are often a time people spend with their loved ones, but Jules Ramsay gives up hers to be there for those who would otherwise be alone.

As the manager of the weekend activities program at 3rd Space, an inner-city drop-in centre for homeless and marginalised people in Fortitude Valley, Jules works tirelessly so her visitors can have a bit of fun while the rest of the world is at play.

"I'm trying to empower our visitors by giving them experiences that they wouldn't ordinarily be able to have, which can often just mean something simple like going to a football game," says Jules, who was a volunteer before she took up the weekend position.

But it's not all fun. Jules firmly believes in the idea of a hand up rather than a handout and offers a range of educational courses and classes to improve work readiness and access to services.

She knows every visitor by name and is always careful to reflect and celebrate everyone's cultural background, particularly Indigenous people.

Jules has been known to reach into her own pocket to expand her knowledge and the range of activities on offer.

In one recent example, she worked with a local Bunnings store to create an urban food forest so the centre's visitors could have an opportunity to learn gardening and carpentry skills.

"Many of our visitors are guys who have been skilled tradesmen with homes and families before falling into a trap and losing it all, so giving them the responsibility of looking after a garden is great in terms of helping them believe in themselves again," she says.

Jules says she is "happy but slightly embarrassed" to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero by her community.

The centre plans to spend its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant on arranging more exciting off-site activities and expanding the program to other days of the week.

"If once a month I was able to take people somewhere simple like going fishing, to have a chinwag and lunch together in nature, that would be incredible," Jules says.



**Ken Gray**  
St Patrick's College Shorncliffe  
Foundation Limited

*Trustworthy, Dependable, Champion*

## Much-loved BBQ griller reaches out with food and goodwill

With tongs in hand, volunteer Ken Gray is a well-known figure at St Patrick's College Shorncliffe's regular outreach BBQs.

He's neither a teacher nor a parent, but almost every week for 14 years he has gone out on the Paddy's Van meal service to cook for hundreds of people in need across Brisbane.

In that time he has become a much-loved member of the Catholic school's community.

"I happened to see a flyer back in 2004 and I thought, having nothing much else to do, I might as well come along. I've been involved more or less ever since," says Ken.

By tending to the BBQ, he ensures the students who go out with the service can spend time getting to know their patrons – many of whom are marginalised and homeless.

"It's great to meet people and cook and I like doing it because it gets me out of home and gives me something to do," he says.

"And the students get a lot out of it because it gets them serving and talking to all sorts of people."

Ken is also known as a connector of people, and takes the van out even during school holidays when no-one else is available.

"If I had 10 cents for every cackleberry I've flipped over I'd be a very rich man but I come out and do it every week because I enjoy it more than anything else," he says.

Despite his own poor health, he has taken patrons under his wing and goes out of his way to drive them to medical appointments, arrange accommodation for them and organise life skills classes.

Ken never expected any recognition for his labour of love and sees being voted a Westfield Local Hero as a "bonus".

"I'm just doing what I enjoy and you can't really ask more than that."

The college plans to use the \$10,000 Westfield grant to cover the costs of the Paddy's Van for the next 12 months. It is also saving for a new vehicle.



## Athol Alcorn Hummingbird House

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*Selfless, Kind, Committed*

### The great-grandfather who helps kids through the fight of their lives

No task is too big or small for Athol Alcorn when it comes to helping the bravest fighters.

As a father, grandfather and great-grandfather, 86-year-old Athol has plenty of family of his own to keep him busy. But he still makes sure he spends two days a week giving his time to Queensland's only children's hospice, Hummingbird House.

"After having cared for my wife for a number of years before she passed away, I was looking for an opportunity to once again contribute to the community," he says.

"Volunteering at Hummingbird House is one small way I can do that and return something to the community which has been so good to me over the course of my life."

At the hospice, Athol's main job is to work with staff and other volunteers to create a home-like environment for children with life-limiting conditions and their families. A humble soul, he is always ready to perform some basic maintenance behind the scenes or do the legwork that makes a unique event possible.

He is even better known for his encouraging words and positive conversations with staff and guests.

It means sick children and their families can focus on creating special memories.

Athol says he is humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

Hummingbird House will put its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant towards its mission of providing short break stays, family support services, creative therapies, and care at the end of life, for children with life-limiting conditions.

"For me to see that my personal contributions are helping the children and their families is reward enough, but for this to have increased the recognition of what Hummingbird House does and result in a generous gift to support our work is wonderful," he says.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Janine Everett** | Wavell Heights State School

*Genuine, Tenacious, Engaging*

Janine is the sole teacher at the ASDAN school, a flexible school option for young people 10–14 years who are disengaged from school. These young people have often had behaviour or experiences that has lead to them not attending school, being asked to leave or being expelled from a traditional school model. Janine provides individual program and curriculum plans for each young person. This benefit flows to the community through reduced contact with social services and the criminal justice system.

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## **Simon La Rosa** | Kwest4Learning

*Dedicated, Approachable, Kind*

Simon is a mentor, advocate and educator of the autism community. His work is dedicated to empowering and educating young people on the autism spectrum, and enabling them to reach their highest potential. He develops opportunities for young people on the autism spectrum to appreciate who they are, their uniqueness, gifts and talents and teaches strategies to cope with the changes in the world around them to find their place in it.

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## **Paul O'Dea** | Community Living Association Inc

*Willing, Committed, Courageous*

Paul does voluntary work as Treasurer at CLA, which supports 150 people with disabilities to receive a wide range of support services including employment, budgeting, emotional support, health and mental health support. A significant element of Paul's legacy is that he has demonstrated that a person with an intellectual disability can engage in this wide range of community activities.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Aaron AINSWORTH**  
Y-Care (South East Queensland) Inc

**Athol ALCORN**  
Hummingbird House

**Belinda BAKER**  
Queensland Police Service

**Trudi BECHARD**  
Scripture Union Queensland, c/o  
Bracken Ridge State High School

**Jenny CASH**  
Albany Creek State High School

**Michelle CHARTERS**  
Angel Gowns for Australian  
Angel Babies

**James CHRISTIE**  
Second Shot

**Dane CHRISTISON**  
Survive to Thrive Nation

**Rochelle COURTENAY**  
Share the Dignity Limited

**Adrian DADDS**  
Brisbane Excelsior Band

**Emma DEAN**  
Cheep Trill Community Choir  
(A part of the Tiger Common)

**Janine EVERETT**  
Wavell Heights State School

**Daniel GAVIN**  
Sandgate District State High  
School

**Yasmin GRIGALIUNAS**  
World's Biggest Garage Sale  
(WBGS)

**Rhiannon JARVIS**  
Make-A-Wish Australia

**Tom KELSEY**  
Queensland Ambulance Service

**Nathan KNOX**  
North Star FC (Football Club)

**Simon LA ROSA**  
Kwest4Learning

**Nathan McCARTHY**  
Sporting Wheelies and Disabled  
Association

**Paul O'DEA**  
Community Living Association Inc

**Matthew PINK**  
Australian Catholic University

**Julie RAMSAY**  
3rd Space

**Eric RUSHTON**  
Spinal Life Australia

**Sara WATLING**  
Positive Humans Movement

**Harry WHITE**  
Sporting Wheelies & Disabled  
Association

**Juliette WRIGHT**  
GIVIT

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*



*Westfield*

GARDEN CITY

QLD



## Jonathan O'Loan Hep C Kombi Clinic

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*Altruistic, Innovative, Inspired*

### Colourful Dr Joss uses novel way to cure a serious disease

With his big smile, pink Hawaiian shirt and classic 1978 Kombi van, Dr Jonathan "Joss" O'Loan brings a fun approach towards tackling a serious issue.

Concerned about the rate of Hepatitis C in his suburb, the Inala GP decided to hit the streets and bring his medical practice to the drug rehab centres and rough sleeping locations where it is needed most.

"We decided it had to be a Kombi because it is such an iconic vehicle," says Joss.

"Not only does it have the room to carry all our medical equipment, but people are always coming up to ask us about the Kombi and then we'll use that conversation as an opportunity to talk about Hep C."

Hep C is a serious ongoing illness that is a leading cause of liver cancer. With the help of his van, Joss has been able to reach patients with new medicines that can cure up to 97% of patients.

"With the advent of these new drugs, the hard part is no longer the cure, it is getting the treatment in the hands of the right patients," says Joss.

Since starting the charity last June, he and colleague Dr Matt Young have been able to help 300 patients in Inala get on the road to recovery.

"This is a huge change in these people's lives because many of them were told they would have Hep C for the rest of their lives and all the stigma that comes with it. But now they are free," he says.

Joss says he is "very, very chuffed" to be voted a Westfield Local Hero for his pioneering work, but he is now planning bigger projects to help more people get treatment for Hep C.

Hep C Kombi Clinic will put its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant towards developing mass screenings for Hep C at music festivals and sporting events, with the bold goal of eliminating the disease from Australia.



## John Godwin Fair Go Australia Foundation

*Passionate, Tireless, Inspirational*

### The teacher who is changing lives outside the classroom

Former Brisbane teacher John Godwin is transforming lives beyond the classroom by offering disadvantaged young people a "fair go".

As the chairman of Fair Go Australia Foundation, John volunteers many hours a week to develop mentorship and educational programs for young and marginalised Australians.

"We are about helping young people to realise their gifts and to develop them in order to be able to contribute more fully to their families, their community and the Australian society," John says.

He is also involved in fundraising efforts and activities to promote the cause, such as the annual Fair Go Touch Football carnival and the Bridge to Brisbane run.

"We try to find mentors to help young people so they don't get lost and tied to negative peer group pressure," he says.

The mentorship programs are all about helping the young and marginalised to develop a focus and life purpose to break the cycle of poverty. The programs run for eight weeks and give participants the opportunity to set goals and create a vision statement describing the person they want to be.

"It's about a hand up rather than a handout."

John says it's both inspiring and rewarding to watch young people transform over the course of his programs, as they grow in confidence and take on positive and life-changing attitudes.

He is very grateful and humbled to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero.

Fair Go Australia will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to put on two complete mentorship programs, changing the lives of as many as 20 young people.

"It is wonderful, because that money goes straight to the programs, making a real and positive difference to the young people," John says.



## Lynn Atkinson Giving Grannies

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*Passionate, Dedicated,  
Tireless*

### Giving grannies step in with a helping hand

Lynn Atkinson is motivated by the conviction that every newborn child can use the help of a grannie.

Since 2013, Giving Grannies have been putting together "baby welcome kits" full of essentials such as nappies and clothes to give families in need a helping hand when a new baby is on its way.

From her home in Brisbane's Centenary suburbs, Giving Grannies also collect pre-loved baby goods like toys, cots and prams to pass on to families who can't afford them.

"Some people don't have the support of family around them and we want to make sure that they at least have the basics," says Lynn.

Together with her husband, Neil, Lynn formed the charity after seeing her own children grow up and learning the importance of support from one generation to the next.

"My own children and grandchildren were very lucky to grow up wanting for nothing but I got quite angry thinking that so many miss out on that," Lynn says.

As grannies, they're non-threatening to the young parents they support and sometimes even find themselves giving out "grannie cuddles" while on a visit.

"I think we seem safe and Neil doesn't mind being a grannie so long as he gets to be Head Grannie," Lynn says.

Lynn says it is "astounding" to be recognised as a Westfield Local Hero. "It's the biggest thing that has ever happened to me."

Giving Grannies plans to use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to grow the charity and supply even more families with baby welcome kits.

"We have no funding at all and it's wonderful to get the community support as well as the money that we'll be able to put to such good use," says Lynn.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Sophie Cox** | Woodridge North State School Community Hub

*Engaging, Compassionate, Tireless*

Sophie's work as the Community Hub leader at Woodridge North State School promotes social inclusion by breaking down barriers that migrant and refugee families face when settling in Australia, especially for women and their young children aged 0-5 years. The Hub was developed as a safe place for women and their children to engage in programs and connect with the local community.

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## **Grant Gamlen** | Queensland Blue Light Association

*Professional, Enthusiastic, Charismatic*

Grant is responsible for the inception, creation and delivery of 'Blue Edge', a program that takes a proactive, hands on approach to showing young people that they can take control of their lives. Through focusing on education, nutrition and exercise. The Blue Edge program motivates young Australians, especially those who are disadvantaged, to achieve their highest potential by fostering a positive relationship with the police, their parents and the community.

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## **Rami Saheb** | Arabic Interpreting Services

*Dedicated, Focused, Generous*

Rami is a registered Arabic-English interpreter and qualified social worker who has provided free interpreting services to migrants and refugees throughout Brisbane and Townsville since 2001. Rami also provides counselling, family therapy and mentoring to young adults, as well as sessions that focus on improving English and employment skills for Arabic migrants.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Irina ALEKSANDROVA**

EquusTerra

**Liam AMOS**

Multicap Limited

**Lynn and Neil ATKINSON**

Giving Grannies

**Gerard BEUERS**

Southside Community Care, Inc

**Ann BICHEL**

Woodturners Society Of  
Queensland Inc

**Rob CAINES**

Southern Group State  
Emergency Services

**Tracey COOLEY**

Springwood Central Primary  
P&C Association

**Sophie COX**

Woodridge North State School  
Community Hub

**Rosalind CREDON**

RJC Community Pty Ltd

**Malcolm DUNNING**

Asylum Seeker and Refugee  
Support Group (ASRSG)  
Indooroopilly Uniting Church (IUC)

**Percy EDULJEE**

Into people Inc

**Peter FERREIRA**

Black Dog Institute

**Grant GAMLEN**

Queensland Blue Light  
Association Incorporated

**Hayley GEISLER**

Make-A-Wish Australia

**John GODWIN**

Fair Go Australia Foundation

**Jeff HARDIE**

Brisbane City Apex Club Inc

**Bronwen HEALY**

Hope Foundation Brisbane

**Belinda HOWARD**

Queensland Pathways State  
College

**Melissa KIRKWOOD**

Brisbane Multiple Birth  
Association (Southside) Inc

**Michelle MACK**

Angel Gowns for Australian Angel  
Babies Incorporated (AGFAABI)

**Zac MORRIS**

Tour de Cure Ltd

**Louie NAUMOVSKI**

Logan House Fire Support Network

**Jonathan O'LOAN**

Hep C Kombi Clinic

**Paulo PAULO**

Riverview Good News Church Inc

**Josh QUARMBY**

Blokepedia

**Bruce RANDALL**

Leukaemia Foundation

**Rami SAHEB**

Arabic Interpreting Services

**Shannon SOWDEN**

Karawatha Marching Band –  
Runcorn State High School

**Juanita TEARIKI**

The Movement Brisbane

**Selina TOMASICH**

Hair Aid

**Narelle WYVILL-ANSTEY**

Lions Club of Brisbane  
Macgregor Inc

**David YOHAN**

Providing Awareness With  
Education & Sport (PAWES)

Westfield  
*Local Heroes*



*Westfield*

HELENSVALE

QLD



**Luke Harrison**  
Paradise Kids (a division of  
Hopewell Hospice Services Inc)

*Wise, Passionate, Giving*

### The teen whose music gives hope to kids in grief

Luke Harrison is using his musical gift to provide hope and encouragement to children when they need it most.

The talented 13-year-old singer, songwriter and actor is no stranger to the stage and has even released an original song – Heaven's Song.

Luke is already giving up his time to help children less fortunate than himself as a young ambassador for Paradise Kids, a centre dedicated to providing specialised programs and activities for children dealing with grief.

"It all started four and a half years ago when my grandfather spent the last 10 weeks of his life in Hopewell Hospice," says Luke.

"After personally going through that difficult time I realised there was a need to help children going through similar experiences."

From its home on the Gold Coast, Paradise Kids helps 400 children and their families every year to grieve after death, illness, loss and other traumatic events.

As a young ambassador for Paradise Kids, Luke volunteers at fundraisers and lends his voice to Christmas performances with the centre's Angel Choir. He also uses his growing profile as a performer to raise awareness of the centre's mission.

"I am also available to speak at events, sing and personally offer support to the children at Paradise Kids and residents at Hopewell Hospice," he says.

Outside his work with Paradise Kids, Luke is a mentor to younger singers and his personal goal is to touch lives around the world with his voice.

Luke says he is humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"I am excited and very happy that Paradise Kids can continue their amazing work in the community and 'heal the heartache' in so many children's lives."

Paradise Kids will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to buy equipment for the kids who participate in its programs, including workbooks, memory boxes and art supplies.



## Jade Mirabito headspace Southport

*Inspiring, Passionate, Fabulous*

### Jade gives young LGBTIQAP+ people a safe place to make friends and seek help

Jade Mirabito is a public example of courage and pride for young people across the Gold Coast who identify with being LGBTIQAP+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, allied, pansexual).

Through his work as a specialist counsellor at headspace Southport, Jade creates a safe place for people to make friends and express themselves, which is good for their mental health and well-being. An important part of his work is to sensitively ensure people are referred for appropriate follow-up care.

He also delivers engaging workshops to health professionals and actively supports Wesley Mission Queensland's Expanded Horizons Program, a youth suicide prevention service. But Jade's positive influence extends far beyond work hours. As a well-known face and member of the LGBT+ community, Jade is often stopped on the street to share personal stories and advice.

"Possibly due to being quite a visible person with my loud colours and rebellious beard, I get asked lots of questions—often quite personal—that I'm sometimes able to turn into teachable moments," Jade says.

With his warm smile and openness to educating others, Jade is a great role model and ambassador for the community. It makes

him a perfect fit to run the Gold Coast LGBTIQAP+ Mental Health Professionals network, which brings together services from across the region to network and share ideas for working with the local community.

Jade says he is "incredibly grateful" to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero by the Gold Coast community. "I hear so many disheartening stories about how society treats LGBTIQAP+ people, so this support is so validating and inspires hope for positive change. I'm honoured to be just one representative using lived experience to support LGBTIQAP+ young people on the Gold Coast."

Headspace Southport will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to provide extra support for at-risk young people, giving them the opportunity to attend community events. "For young people, it can be hard to find spaces to exist that are safe and affordable. This is especially true for LGBTIQAP+ young people, so this will help reduce isolation and have a positive impact," says Jade.

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

*Lifeline: 13 11 14*

*Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467*

*Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800*



**Nicolle Edwards**  
RizeUp Australia Pty Ltd

*Generous, Committed,  
Warmhearted*

## **Tireless Nicolle fights human rights violation that's on everyone's doorstep**

Something stirred deep inside Nicolle Edwards when she helped a friend set up a new home after escaping domestic violence.

She knew her community had a problem and she was determined to do something about it. So she started her own charity, RizeUp, which helps set domestic violence survivors up in a new home.

That was 2015. Today, the organisation has 250 other volunteers who not only help the families get back on their feet, but provide moral support as well.

If Nicolle was the seed at the start, she is now the glue that holds it all together. She works tirelessly collecting donations, mentoring and recruiting volunteers, setting up homes, driving the truck and using her powerful persona to advocate against violence.

"Australia is the lucky country but it is such an eye-opener to see how many families aren't quite so lucky," she says. "RizeUp is about confronting domestic violence as the human rights violation it is and connecting the broader community with creating better outcomes for the affected families."

Because many survivors leave home with nothing, RizeUp completely furnishes their new houses with everything from beds and linen to crockery and cooking utensils.

"We also give them hope by showing that the community commends them and we are proud of the courageous decision they have made to leave the violence behind," she says.

Nicolle is determined to address the root causes of domestic violence and promotes the importance of healthy, respectful relationships.

"Sadly, I don't believe it will ever be eradicated but we can control how we are looking at it as a community and we can raise our voices against domestic and family violence in Australia," she says.

"We can keep our eyes firmly planted on the perpetrators of the violence to ensure they know their anti-social behaviour isn't welcome in this great nation."

Nicolle says she is humbled to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero by her community.

RizeUp will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to furnish five homes for domestic violence survivors and help 25 children start school with new uniforms and backpacks.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Felicity Dearlove** | My Friend's Place

*Passionate, Selfless, Dedicated*

Felicity is a full time volunteer support worker for My Friend's Place Qld. Felicity's valued time, experience and input has assisted numerous woman and children who have escaped domestic and family violence. Her dedication, passion and selflessness has assisted these women and families to overcome their trauma, put their lives back together and move onto a safe self-managed life.

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## **Terry Kelly** | Volunteering Gold Coast

*Dedicated, Enthusiast, Beautiful*

Terry was a volunteer driver for Volunteering Gold Coast for 10 years and has assisted thousands of disadvantaged Gold Coast residents to access a range of standard living services including shopping, medical and health appointments, as well as to social and recreational pursuits, importantly allowing them to maintain independence and connection to the community. Terry excelled in communicating, interacting with and taking a genuine interest in clients and ensuring their travel was pleasant.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Bernd (Ben) BRAUER**

New Beginnings

**Rosalinde BRINKMAN**

Gold Coast Catchment Association

**Wendy BRITTON**

Ballina Soccer Club

**Ronan BYRNE**

Parkwood Sharks Rugby  
League Club

**Nicole CANSDALE**

Neighbourhood Watch

**Terry CARROLL**

Second Chances Gold Coast

**Lisa CHARLTON**

FSG

**Anne COBROFT**

Neighbourhood Watch

**Julie COX**

FSG Australia

**Nick DAY**

Coomera Cubs Baseball Club Inc

**Felicity DEARLOVE**

My Friend's Place Qld Inc

**Justine DILLON**

Ngarang Wal Gold Coast  
Aboriginal Association  
Incorporated

**Nicolle EDWARDS**

RizeUp Australia Pty Ltd

**Glen EVANS**

Coomera Cutters Junior Rugby  
League Club

**Tim FISK**

Rotary Club of Coomera Valley, Inc

**Teresa FOSTER**

Cancer Council

**Carly FRADGLEY**

Baby Give Back

**Melanie FUNK**

Hands to Hold Ltd

**Luke HARRISON**

Paradise Kids (A division of  
Hopewell Hospice Services Inc)

**Sid HOOKER**

Griffith University

**Sarah INGRAM**

Pacific Arts & Cultural Heritage Inc

**Leiza JOHNSON**

FSG

**Zoe KEARNEY**

FSG Australia

**Terry & Wendy KELLY**

Volunteering Gold Coast

**Toni KIRTO**

A.B. Paterson College

**Braden LAMB**

Lotus Living Organically Inc

**Fiona LAMB**

Lotus Living Organically Inc

**John LANE**

Gold Coast Roller Skating Club Inc

**Carol LARMOR**

Village Community Service Inc

**Hedy LUCRE-IMPENS**

Helensvale State P&C Association

**Nick MARSHALL**

Albatross Nippers Inc

**Ainsley McLAREN**

Baby Give Back

**Kristie MILLER**

Gold Coast Multiple Birth  
Association

**Jade MIRABITO**

headspace Southport

**Kay MORRISEY**

Arundel Park Riding for  
Disabled Inc

**Kimberly ONEILL**

Variety childrens charity  
(Jet Trek 2019 Ski 84)

**Rachel RIVE**

Wesley Mission Queensland

**Meg ROESSLER**

Make-A-Wish Australia

**Daniel TIATI**

Forward Church

**Alexandra WELLS**

Lutheran Ormeau Rivers  
District School (LORDS)

**Cappi WHITE**

Norfolk Village State School

**Mark WOODHOUSE**

Lynne Richardson Community  
Centre

**Ian WOOTEN**

On the Right Track -  
Kokoda Youth Foundation

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*



*Westfield*

**NORTH LAKES**

QLD



## Paula Burgess Beyond The Maze

*Determined, Dedicated, Altruistic*

### Experience with ADHD inspires Paula's different way of thinking

When Paula Burgess's son was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), she struggled to find advice on how to help him.

She had struggled with the condition as a child and was determined he would not have the same plight.

She could not find enough useful information on the internet so, after doing her own research, she wrote a book called *Beyond the ADHD Label* to help parents in a similar position. She also went on to complete an 18-month course in ADHD coaching.

She then set up a small business, Beyond The Maze, to help families cope with ADHD.

But she doesn't like the formal ADHD definition. "I like to refer to it as attention-different rather than deficit because ADHD is a different way of thinking," she says.

"A lot of people don't understand it. Some don't think it's real. They think it's just a child being naughty."

Beyond the Maze uses her real experience to provide low-cost coaching for people with ADHD or, in the case of children, their parents.

"I try to make everything accessible and affordable."

She also has a Facebook group and runs free support groups and free webinars, "because there's not a lot of support, and not much of it is free".

Paula is pleased to be voted a Westfield Local Hero and will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to purchase sensory tools and equipment and implement a membership program.

"I want to get more activities and equipment in the office for the kids to use in our sessions," she says.

"I also want to write another book for Dads with ADHD kids, as well as getting the book *Beyond the ADHD Label* into every day care centre and paediatrician's office."



## **Luke Skipper** Rivers Church of Christ (The Christian Crisis Caravan Initiative)

*Inclusive, Tolerant, Respectful*

### **Luke aims for a fleet of caravans to house homeless people**

Luke Skipper serves in the army and is an ordained Christian minister, so he's no stranger to serving others.

He is now spearheading an innovative short-term housing solution for Moreton Bay people displaced by domestic violence or poverty as there is no service suitable for families in the area.

Traditional bricks and mortar housing was not an option, so Luke originally suggested tents. But he and his colleagues decided that was too temporary.

"We settled on caravans. Depending on where the need is, we can move them around," says Luke, who has been on a pastoral placement with Rivers Church of Christ since 2016 and will eventually return to the army as a chaplain.

The housing initiative is a partnership between his church and several other churches. At present, there is funding for one caravan, but the plan is to eventually have a small fleet.

The caravan plan is a pet project for Luke, but he has been busy during his time in the area. He is the founding chairman of a community group, Moreton Bay Community Matters, which gives out more than 100 food hampers a week.

He has also set up a community garden for marginalised people and oversees a special needs program in conjunction with the local Pine Rivers Special School where children can develop valuable and practical life skills in a safe and friendly environment.

Since setting up the food scheme and food garden, the church has come across many people who have found themselves homeless or on the verge of becoming homeless.

"We get referrals from a wide variety of places, including hospitals, the Salvation Army, local churches and the police about people struggling with no place to go," says Luke.

He's pleased to be voted a Westfield Local Hero but says the most important concern is getting two caravans into service as soon as possible.

The churches have already set aside money for one caravan and the Rivers Church of Christ will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to buy a second caravan much sooner than expected.



## Jane McMillan Leukaemia Support Queensland

*Passionate, Dedicated,  
Hardworking*

### Blood cancer patients have Jane to hold their hand

Jane has held the hands of patients with blood cancer – figuratively speaking, but often literally as well – for more than a decade.

She started volunteering after a friend, a single mother of two children, was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia in 2004. Jane became her carer.

She founded the Caboolture branch of Leukaemia Support Queensland two years later and has spent 12 years organising all manner of fundraising events. This includes the Lose Your Locks campaign, which encourages schoolchildren to shave or colour their hair to raise money.

She works on car rallies, movie nights, dinners and sausage sizzles, raising funds to cover accommodation, hospital parking, counselling and food hampers for patients and their families.

When Jane isn't raising funds to help patients she's a carer herself, accompanying patients during treatment and providing emotional support for their families.

"I've sat with parents whose children are dying. These are horrible diseases and they don't discriminate, by gender or age," she says.

"It's so hard, but the strength the patients show, especially the children, is inspiring."

Jane is proud that a new haematology outpatient centre in North Lakes was the result of her advocacy.

"We fought hard, we organised rallies outside Caboolture hospital, we walked from Redcliffe to Caboolture and I badgered the health minister."

Jane also visits schools and community groups to update them on the latest blood cancer research.

She says it's very humbling to be voted a Westfield Local Hero by her community.

The Jane McMillan organisation will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to sponsor nurses and allied health professionals to attend haematology conferences.

"We'd also like to fund iPads for the haematology centre."

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Stephanie Blunt** | Y-Care

*Inspired, Creative, Teacher*

Stephanie has dedicated her career to assisting and developing young people, many of whom who have been highly disadvantaged, at risk and victims of trauma. Her mission is to empower and inspire today's young people to achieve their full potential. Stephanie works directly with young people and their families to provide support and practical assistance in development, parenting and engagement.

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## **Julie Fenton** | Centre Against Domestic Abuse Inc

*Unique, Effective, Holistic*

The PRADO (Partnership Response at Domestic Occurrences) is an integrated response for high risk Domestic and Family Violence cases in the Pine Rivers Area. The purpose of PRADO is to provide vulnerable families with individual support to enhance their wellbeing and safety. Julie delivers high quality case management responses to maximise the safety of families. She achieves outcomes through early intervention and multiple points of contact, teaching safety skills, developing safety plans, providing information and crisis accommodation options during critical timeframes.

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## **Karen Johns** | DARE Formal Wear

*Passionate, Dedicated, Selfless*

Karen raises awareness and educates communities about domestic violence through education and recovery programs. She maintains a busy schedule presenting awareness sessions about domestic violence to high school students, women's events and church groups providing them with information and resources on how to identify abuse early, the cycle of domestic violence, the nature of domestic family violence and where they can get help.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Aaron AINSWORTH**  
Y-Care (South East Queensland) Inc

**Donna BARLOW**  
KSP Theatre Inc

**Campbell BENNETT**  
Clontarf Beach Baptist Church

**Julie BLACKMAN**  
North Lakes District Rugby League  
Football Club Inc

**Stephanie BLUNT**  
Y-Care

**Shelagh BRENNAND**  
Stroke Foundation

**Janette BURCHARD**  
Angel Gowns for Australian  
Angel Babies Inc

**Paula BURGESS**  
Beyond The Maze

**Pru BURKE**  
Blackbird Kids Clothing Exchange  
Scarborough

**Courtney BURKE**  
Make-A-Wish Australia

**Daisy COX**  
A Little Sparkle- Bringing Girls  
on the Spectrum Together

**Leanne DINNING**  
Brisbane Convoy for Kids Inc

**Bruce ECKERSLEY**  
Clontarf Beach Baptist Church

**Jessica FAY**  
Brisbane Convoy for Kids

**Julie FENTON**  
Centre Against Domestic  
Abuse Inc

**Lyn GILROY**  
Redcliffe PCYC

**Ken GRAY**  
St Patrick's College Shorncliffe  
Foundation Limited

**Raewyn HARPER**  
Clontarf Beach Baptist Church

**Wes HENRY**  
Pine Central Holy Spirit Rugby  
League Football Club Inc

**Chantel HINE**  
Real Me – C3 Church Bridgeman  
Downs

**Rebecca HOLLOWAY**  
SU Qld – Undurba State School

**Karen JOHNS**  
DARE Formal Wear Ltd

**Sam McDONELL**  
C3 Bridgeman Downs

**Natalie McDONNELL**  
Clontarf Beach Baptist Church

**Jane McMILLAN**  
Leukaemia Support Queensland

**Andrew OTTIE**  
Clontarf Beach Baptist Church

**Melissa REDSELL**  
A Brave Life

**Patricia REILLY**  
Aussie Helpers

**Luke SKIPPER**  
Rivers Church of Christ (The  
Christian Crisis Caravan Initiative)

**Arthur VERNON**  
Multicap Limited





# South Australia

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Marion

Tea Tree Plaza

West Lakes



*Westfield*

MARION

SA



## Jenny Joy Parents Who Have Been There

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*Compassionate, Selfless, Generous*

### How a challenging experience spurred a mum into action

Jenny Joy knows how isolating it can feel for parents who have a premature baby or a baby who requires extended neonatal care.

Both her sons required neonatal care, experiences that left her wanting to give back to other parents facing similar challenges. That's how her support group, Parents Who Have Been There (PWHBT), was born.

There can be weeks or months in the neonatal unit and it's difficult for family and friends to fully understand what parents are going through, she says.

"A lot of families go through this all the time and it's such a different journey."

PWHBT volunteers regularly visit three of Adelaide's neonatal units, providing support in the form of morning tea; Dinner on Us; or simply a listening ear. They also reach out to parents in regional areas with essentials packs and an offer of food hampers.

"It's like anything in life, if someone comes alongside you and they get what you're going through, it's a beautiful lifeline," says Jenny.

The support is ongoing.

Jenny says health visits and playgroups that focus on developmental milestones can be confronting and isolating for parents if their baby experiences delays after their neonatal journey.

PWHBT runs a playgroup which is open to any ex-neonatal family in Adelaide. It also has an active private Facebook group so parents can connect with others who have been there.

Jenny says being a Westfield Local Hero is humbling and very exciting, but also surreal.

The support her nomination received in the local community was "incredibly touching."

PWHBT will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund its 10th anniversary celebrations with a community family fun day and to increase the frequency of dinners and morning teas for parents.



## Jannet Stolinski Lutheran Community Care

*Devoted, Passionate, Generous*

### Jannet gently helps new refugees navigate life in Australia

Arriving in Australia as a refugee can be daunting, particularly if your English is not so fluent.

That's why Jannet Stolinski is available to personally meet new refugees in southern Adelaide and help them to assimilate into the community.

She is fluent in Arabic, so she is a comforting presence and is able to engage quickly and deeply with people who come from international trouble spots such as Afghanistan or Syria.

As an employee of Lutheran Community Care, she gently guides them through health and community services, helps them fill in forms and explains general correspondence.

Jannet's own family came to Australia as migrants. Her mother was from Egypt and her father from Lebanon. "I watched how difficult it was for my parents. From a very, very young age I knew I wanted to help," she says.

One of Jannet's many innovations has been to set up a network of bilingual doctors and dentists. And thanks to a partnership with the City of Marion Council, she has pioneered a community program for isolated mothers, complete with creche facilities.

"It was really important to get a program up and running that they can bring their kids along to so they can get out there."

Many of the people Jannet works with experienced significant trauma before arriving in Australia. So, an important part of her role is to be an ongoing presence in their lives and to lend an empathetic ear as they relate their life stories.

Jannet says her work with refugees has taught her a lot about life and humanity. "Their resilience and their compassion and just the fact that they are able to get up in the morning and do what they need to do, it's so incredible to me."

She says being voted a Westfield Local Hero feels fantastic and she is grateful for the support from the community.

Lutheran Community Care will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to fund support services for new migrant and refugee women in South Australia, including supported visits to libraries and community, shopping and recreation centres to introduce them to the services and options available to them.



## **Lorraine Rayner** International Order of the Rainbow for Girls

*Hardworking, Resilient,  
Compassionate*

### **Lorraine adds colour to the lives of girls and young women**

Igniting community spirit in girls is what the International Order of the Rainbow for Girls is all about. And it's a spirit that has warmed Lorraine Rayner's heart for 50 years.

The group for girls and young women aged 7 to 21 aims to instil community caring in members through volunteering and fundraising for local charities.

It's been a lifelong mission for Lorraine, who joined the international group when she was 12 and is now one of two Australian leaders.

"I enjoyed the social side but it also instilled in me community service and the knowledge that there's always someone worse off than what you are," she says.

As a senior mentor, she's had the privilege of influencing generations of girls, helping them develop skills in everything from leadership to public speaking and decision-making to teamwork.

"It's very rewarding to think I had a little bit of input along the way," she says of watching girls go on to pursue their life dreams.

As a Rainbow member, you always have friends wherever you go, says Lorraine, who is still in touch with American Rainbow girls she met 48 years ago.

To her, it's vital to have an inclusive membership where everyone

is welcome and accepted. One of her most precious memories is when a vision impaired girl joined the group and learned the spoken rituals by listening to them on a cassette player.

"She was one of the best ritualists that we've ever had."

Lorraine and the girls are "over the moon" that she has been voted a Westfield Local Hero.

The organisation will use its \$10,000 grant to fund free school holiday activities including lunch for the local community. The money will also go towards updating marketing materials and the purchase of a fridge and oven to support catering activities.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Janine McIntosh** | Port Noarlunga Sea Scout Group

*Committed, Selfless, Determined*

The Port Noarlunga Sea Scout Group provides youth development opportunities to build resilient and confident boys and girls aged 6 to 25 in the Joey Scout, Cub Scout, Scout, Venturer Scout and Rover Scout sections. Janine provides effective leadership to their scout group and supports Scout Leaders, adult helpers and group committee members to ensure that the group operates effectively for the youth members.

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## **Ben Scales** | Time for Kids

*Committed, Selfless, Humble*

Time for Kids delivers life-changing programs in support of vulnerable and disadvantaged South Australian children and young people. Ben plays a pivotal leadership role in Time for Kids through involvement in their board, which he has been a member of since 2009, including over five years' service in the role of chair.

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## **Melanie Tate** | Puddle Jumpers Inc

*Driven, Selfless, Passionate*

Puddle Jumpers Inc is an Adelaide Not-For-Profit charity, which provides camps, activities and a huge range of other support services for children/youths (particularly those not living with their birth parents) and families, who are experiencing disadvantage in various forms. As Founder of Puddle Jumpers Inc, Melanie works tirelessly to promote the organisation and its' myriad of support services to South Australia.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Josephine ANDERSON**

Adelaide Volunteer Branch of  
Make-A-Wish Australia

**Mitchell ANDERSON**

Uniting Communities –  
Rubys Reunification Service

**Paul BARDEN**

Goodwood Saints football Club Inc

**Azzy BATIC**

Azzurro Arts

**Veronica BOULTON**

South Australian Youth Brass

**Laura BOWMAN**

Bright Brainz

**Leighton BOYD**

MarionLIFE Community  
Services Inc

**Helen CUTLER**

Seaford Storm Netball Club

**Darren DAVIS**

Get Home Safe Foundation

**Emmah EVANS**

Cure4CF Foundation

**Melissa HOLLAND**

Guide Dogs Association of  
SA and NT Inc

**Jenny JOY**

Parents Who Have Been There

**Susan LEE**

Angel Gowns for Australian  
Angel Babies Inc

**Lindy LEWIS**

Chiton Rocks SLSC

**Janine McIntOSH**

Port Noarlunga Sea Scout Group  
(affiliated with Scouts SA)

**Megan NEINDORF**

Kenilworth Football Club

**Mark NEVILLE FRANKLIN**

Camden Park Scout Group

**David NICHOLAS**

G McEwin

**Lorraine RAYNER**

International Order of the  
Rainbow for Girls

**Derek ROBERTSON**

Prostate Cancer Foundation of  
Australia (SA & NT Branch)

**Ben SCALES**

Time for Kids

**Raf SHAW**

Ancient Wells/Ramoth Gilead Inc

**Jannet STOLINSKI**

Lutheran Community Care

**Melanie TATE**

Puddle Jumpers Inc

**Ben TAYLOR**

Morphettville Park Football Club

**Joanna ZEITZ**

Relationships Australia South  
Australia

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*



*Westfield*

TEA TREE PLAZA

SA



## John Flack Pathway Communities

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*Tireless, Servant, Embracing*

### The charity where people come back to return the favour

Something special happens to the people who have been helped by Pathway Community Centre. Once they are back on their feet, they tend to come back and give back.

Pathway is a Christian charity that provides food, counselling and interest-free loans to people in need.

Under the guidance of director John Flack an army of volunteers provide support to 9,000 people in need, ranging from the homeless and unemployed to people who are feeling isolated, school students and disadvantaged youth.

John is employed to work for the charity three days a week but inevitably works seven.

His philosophy to give people a hand up rather than a handout.

"The food really is a means to an end. The end result that we really hope for is that people will gain some resilience and some options in their lives."

He tells the story of a woman who has started paying off her electricity bill thanks to the money she has saved by not having to buy food.

Restoring a sense of purpose and connection can be part of the

process too. People who have been helped by Pathway often come back as volunteers.

"They've come in because they want to take the opportunity to give back for the help they have received."

John says he feels privileged to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero.

The organisation will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund much-needed maintenance of its community centre.

John also hopes to use a portion to fund solar panels to reduce the centre's \$14,000 electricity cost.



## Lachlan Miller SA Health – Hampstead Rehabilitation Centre

*Confident, Compassionate, Caring*

### Why Lachlan feels lucky after devastating car crash

Lachlan Miller was in a car crash that broke his back and his neck and caused a brain injury. Even though he's no longer able to work as a diesel mechanic or play rugby, he reckons he's one of the luckiest people alive – because he's alive.

Having come to terms with his acquired brain injury (ABI), he's giving back at the Hampstead Rehabilitation Centre, where he was helped after his accident.

His appreciation for life is something he shares with patients still facing up to living with a brain injury.

He recognises the importance of patients being able to talk to someone who can show them that they can still go on to have a good quality of life.

One of the first patients he helped was someone who was no longer able to continue with her horse-racing career after an accident. "It changed her whole outlook on life so I can really see the benefits of what we do."

He takes patients to football games and participates in on-site music and dance events.

He's also joined a consumer advisory group to provide a perspective on the care and rehabilitation of younger patients.

He is proud to be a Westfield Local Hero. "I want to help show people that they can get back to having a really good quality of life again."

The centre will use its 10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund day-to-day activities to help patients build their confidence. It will also support vocational training for patients, such as coffee-making.



## **Rachael Zaltron** Bacpacks4SAKids Inc

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*Inspirational, Tireless,  
Committed*

### **How a five-year-old summed up Rachael's good work**

Many people are grateful for the work Rachael Zaltron does in the community. But she is particularly touched by a thankyou note from a five-year-old girl.

The child had received one of the colourful backpacks Rachael and her colleagues send to displaced children. In it were a few useful age-appropriate items such as new clothes, a torch, a soft toy, toiletries, pencils and a colouring-in book.

The grateful girl had never had new underwear before and she sent Rachael a drawing of herself with a big smile.

Feedback like that is a "big reality check", says Rachael, who started Backpacks 4 SA Kids in 2013 with the aim of helping a few vulnerable and neglected children.

Together with another family, she began collecting donations for items with which to fill the backpacks and assembled them in her carport.

In that first year, 554 backpacks were provided to children under the age of 16 who had been displaced from home, often because of abuse, neglect or violence.

Now the organisation has state-wide reach, a large warehouse and a band of committed volunteers.

It provides more than 3,000 backpacks a year to children displaced from home and the demand is increasing as Rachael's work is recognised by child support and domestic violence agencies across South Australia.

The organisation also provides about 1,000 Anchor Packs to people aged 12-24 who are homeless and often sleeping rough. These comprise a duffle bag, a mobile phone, toiletries, sunscreen, ponchos, colouring items, a torch, a radio, a drink bottle and socks.

The organisation also provides Home Starter Packs to young mothers moving away from domestic violence.

Rachael says it is a "big honour" to be a Westfield Local Hero.

Backpacks 4 SA Kids will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to buy pyjamas and other types of clothing for the children.

Rachael says: "By giving them something new you are giving them a new level of confidence."

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Lenae Bradbury | Salisbury High School**

*Dedicated, Selfless, Vibrant*

Lenae is involved in Salisbury High Schools Student Representative Council (SRC) as a volunteer and has recognised the need to help students who were lonely, isolated or being bullied. Lenae has gathered a team around her, working tirelessly to build a safe space for students.

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## **Mary Galouzis | Talk Out Loud**

*Inspirational, Empathetic, Passionate*

As the volunteer CEO of Talk Out Loud, Mary works tirelessly to assist youth in crisis or a parent concerned for their child's safety and mental health. She ensures that young people are given the tools to help themselves and acts as a friendly ear for those in need.

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## **Frank Jackowiak | Make-A-Wish Australia**

*Committed, Calm, Approachable*

Frank founded the Adelaide branch of the Make-A-Wish foundation over 31 years ago, and has worked tirelessly to grant wishes to critically sick children with life-threatening illnesses in the Adelaide region. Together with the team, Frank has helped to grant 779 cherished wishes, and is described as part of the backbone of not only the Adelaide branch but Make-A-Wish as a whole.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Luke AMES**

Mark Oliphant College

**Heather BITTER**

Northern Adelaide State  
Secondary Schools' Alliance  
(NASSSA)

**Lenae BRADBURY**

Salisbury High School

**Estelle BROADBENT**

NASSSA Community Learning  
Centre

**Jarrad CHESTER**

Northern Adelaide Senior College

**April CRISANTI**

Moveit Fitness & Wellbeing

**Anu DISSANAYAKE**

Mark Oliphant College

**Marissa ELSWORTHY**

Figure Skating

**John FLACK**

Pathway Community Centre

**Mary GALOUZIS**

Talk out Loud Ltd

**Keeley GRAY**

Craigmore High School

**Franciszek (Frank) JACKOWIAK**

Adelaide Volunteer Branch of  
Make-A-Wish Australia

**Elisa JOHNSON**

Women's & Children's Hospital  
Neonatal Intensive Care

**Dan LESTER**

Dans Gym Australia

**Jane MARSHALL**

Craigmore High School

**Lachlan MILLER**

SA Health – Hampstead  
Rehabilitation Centre

**Stacey MOUSLEY**

Talk Out Loud Australia

**Ted MULDOON**

Para Hills Knights Soccer Club

**Matt NANKERVIS**

Craigmore High School

**Jules PECK**

Salisbury East High School

**Pat PIETSCH**

Good grief

**Emma RAMKE**

Disability Unit Para Hills  
High School

**Josh SANDERS**

Gawler & District College B – 12

**Garry STEWART**

Hope Valley Sporting Club

**Jenny SUTER**

Act for Kids

**Lisa WEIL**

Guide Dogs Association of  
SA and NT Inc

**Steph WILSON**

Aboriginal Education Team at  
Salisbury High School

**Rachael ZALTRON**

Bacpacks4SAKids Inc

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*

The page features a large, decorative red wavy line that starts from the left edge, curves upwards, then downwards, and finally loops back to the right edge. A dark red circular frame is centered on the page, overlapping the wavy line. Inside this circle, the text is centered.

*Westfield*

WEST LAKES

SA



## **Anthony Forby** SMOSH West Lakes Junior Football Club

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*Passionate, Energetic, Fun*

### **Anthony gets a buzz out of making football female-friendly**

All too often football is a spectator sport for girls. But that's something SMOSH West Lakes Junior Football Club is working hard to change.

The club is already kicking goals. Under the directorship of volunteer Anthony Forby, its girls' academy has grown from one football team in 2016 to six teams. "I'm a true believer that girls can play and do anything that men can do," says Anthony, who has an infectious love of football. "If girls can play soccer and hockey and basketball why can't they play football?"

That belief is rubbing off. The club's program now includes 113 female footballers, eight coaches and a team of volunteers.

For Anthony, the first year delivered an undisputed highlight. "Of the 24 girls I had in my squad maybe three or four had experienced some type of football. The rest of them were ballet dancers, ballroom dancers, basketball players, soccer players or gymnasts," he says.

The team went on to win the grand final against a well-established team. "It wasn't something you'd ever dream of," he says.

One girl had never played football before. "Now two years later she is captaining the state under-16 girls' team. That's what gives me the buzz."

Apart from attending all the training sessions and supporting the coaches, Anthony is involved in developing further opportunities for women in football.

He is part of the development and coaching team at The Woodville West Torrens Football Club, which is working to add a female team to the SANFL Women's League in 2019. Then girls will have a clear pathway beyond junior football.

Anthony says he feels honoured to be a Westfield Local Hero.

The club will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to make its facilities more female-friendly by helping to fund the construction of new change rooms.



## **Denis Brien** West Torrens District Cricket Club Inc

*Selfless, Fair, Nurturing*

### **What an innings! Selfless Denis comes out to bat for young players**

Denis Brien is perhaps best known for being a mentor of the late Test cricketer David Hookes.

The former president of the West Torrens District Cricket Club (WTDCC) has notched up many accolades during his decades as a player and a coach. But perhaps the most heart-warming story is of him giving refuge to two Ugandan cricketers, Jimmy Okello and Patrick Ochan.

After a chance meeting, he took them into his home, brought them into the club and eventually won a long-running battle to help them gain residency.

In the 1990s he coached the state under-19 men's team and later the senior women's team, which won three national titles in four years. He is particularly proud that seven of his players went on to play Test cricket for Australia.

For the past 12 years, Denis, 77, has been the coordinator of WTDCC's Young Eagles Boys and Girls Academies and is dedicated to ensuring all children can play cricket, regardless of their socio-economic background.

WTDCC provides the young players with weekly training by former South Australian and Australian cricketers at no or minimal cost.

Two male Young Eagles have made it into the elite Redbacks team and one woman has been selected for the Scorpions.

The youth program is about much more than the sport of cricket, says Denis.

"It's trying to develop the total person, develop the child not just in sport but in social, cultural and physical activities so that they are prepared for life as well as being prepared for cricket."

Denis, a former teacher, handles all aspects of the academies, from promotion to recruitment; coordination to coaching and has organised trial matches against other academies and an annual country trip to play against teams in the West Torrens Country zone on the Yorke Peninsula.

He says he feels both "chuffed" and "humbled" that he has been voted a Westfield Local Hero.

The club will use its Westfield Local Heroes grant to continue subsidising training and to train new coaches.



## Loretta Zemitis Flinders Park Football Club

*Reliable, Unflappable,  
Committed*

### You can rely on Loretta to step in when the chips are down

If you look for Loretta Zemitis on almost any evening you will find her doing volunteer work at Flinders Park Football Club.

That's where she has spent four nights a week for the past 10 years: working behind the bar, managing event bookings and working on functions with the social committee.

Her passion for the club started one Friday night when she popped in for a drink and there was nobody to make chips. She put her hand up, and it just grew from there, she says.

With no paid coordinator at the club, Loretta steps in wherever she is needed. She also keeps track of food and beverage stock and recruits members for fundraising activities.

Each season she provides on-the-job training for new groups of junior canteen staff. She is particularly proud that some have gone on and found work elsewhere. "We've got some really good kids," she says.

It's the children who give her the most reward for what she does.

"The best part for me is you're doing something that allows kids to play a sport and that they are not roaming the streets doing things they shouldn't be doing."

That's part of the positive energy that is drawing more families to the club.

On Friday evenings, more than 250 junior members attend training, and their families and other members visit the club to socialise.

Loretta is grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero by her community.

Flinders Park Football Club will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to improve its facilities to accommodate its growing number of families.

"Knowing that the benefit will go to everybody who is a member of the club is great," Loretta says.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Benito Carbone | The Port Church Inc**

*Committed, Tireless, Selfless*

The purpose of Ben's work is to support and care for the local community through the provision and supply of basic needs, such as food and clothing, but more importantly to build relationships with those at a disadvantage in the community. Not only is Ben the driving force behind this program on a weekly basis, he also takes time out of his week to visit people, check on their welfare and offer support wherever possible.

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## **Kylie O'Callaghan | Zahra Foundation Australia**

*Passionate, Modest, Selfless*

Kylie is the Manager of the Zahra Foundation Australia which supports women and children experiencing or escaping domestic violence. The foundation provides financial counselling, small grants and programs to help women develop financial independence to help break the cycle of domestic & family violence.

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## **Nikki Von Bertouch | Henley Surf Life Saving Club**

*Enthusiastic, Proud, Respected*

Nikki is currently the Junior Manager at the Henley Surf Life Saving Club and responsible for the education and development of their junior members who range in age from 5 through to 14. Nikki heads a committee which ensures that Henley Life Saving Club has a program to teach children the skills that allow them to enter the water knowing the risks and how to manage them.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Patricia APPS**

Adelaide Volunteer Branch of  
Make-A-Wish Australia

**Denis BRIEN**

West Torrens District Cricket  
Club Inc

**Lynette CALLAGHAN**

Port Adelaide Softball Club

**Benito CARBONE**

The Port Church Incorporated

**Julie CLIFFORD**

NASSSA – Northern Adelaide State  
Secondary Schools' Alliance

**Gabrielle COMEY**

Time for Kids

**Anthony FORBY**

SMOSH West Lakes Junior  
Football Club

**Kylie FRANSON**

Limbs 4 Life Inc

**Steven HORSMAN**

Henley Beach Surf Life Saving Club

**Anna KEMP**

Seeds of Affinity –  
Pathways for Women Inc

**Michael KIRA**

Westpac Life Save Rescue

**Stacey O'BRIEN**

The Parentmedic Movement

**Kylie O'CALLAGHAN**

Zahra Foundation Australia

**Aisling O'TOOLE**

Muscular Dystrophy  
Association Inc

**Eman RAHIM**

Heart & Soul Community Group Inc

**Taylor RUSANOFF**

St Michael's All Angels Netball Club

**Alister SANDOW**

Blenheim Music and  
Camping Festival

**Chelsea SLACK**

Can:Do 4Kids  
(Townsend House Inc)

**Hoda TEIMORZADEH**

Muscular Dystrophy  
Association Inc

**Nikki VON BERTOUCHE**

Henley Surf Life Saving Club

**Ben WAECHTER**

KYD-X Ltd

**Ross WAIT**

Zahra's Quest for the  
Zahra Foundation

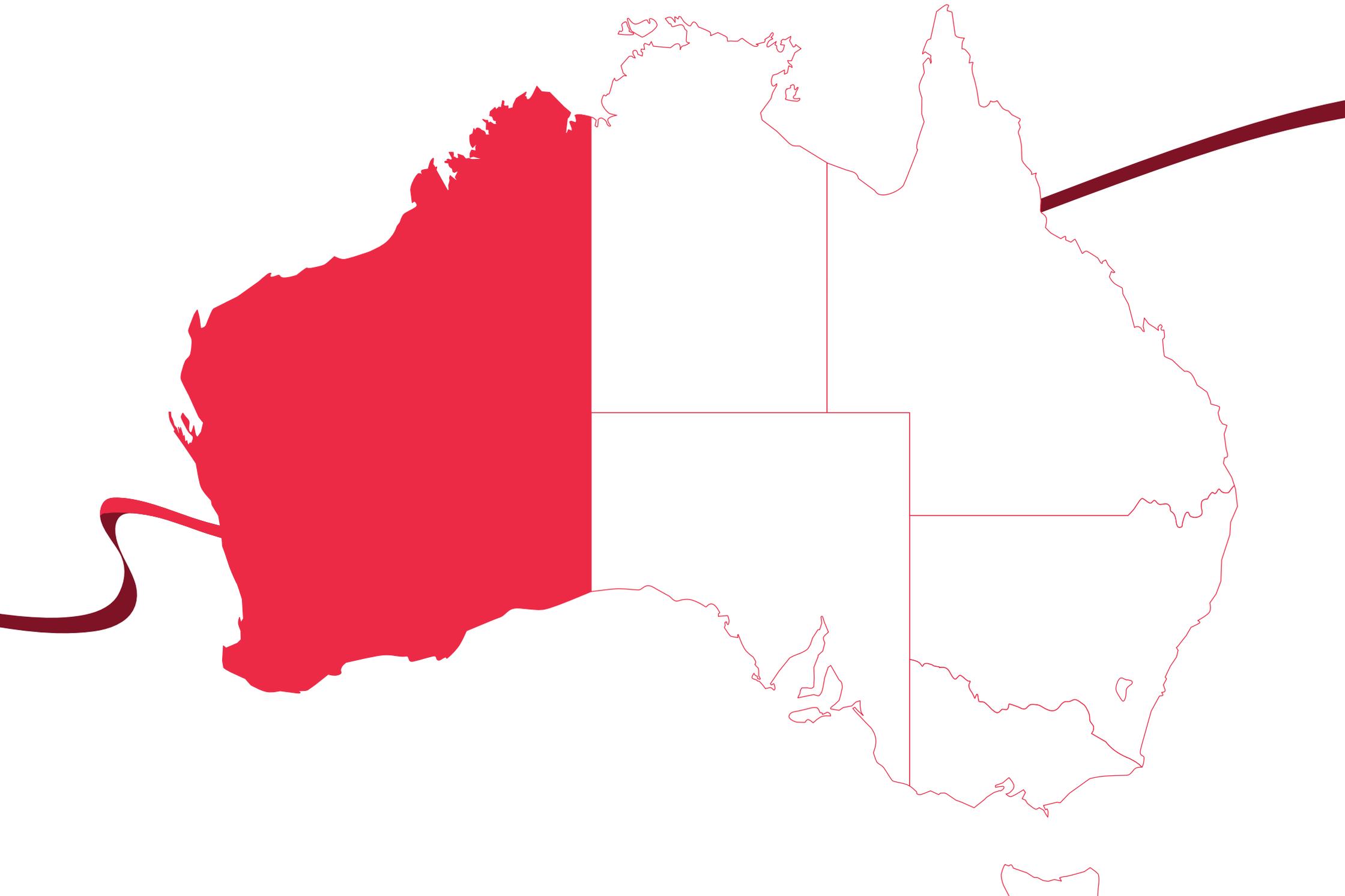
**Grant WILES**

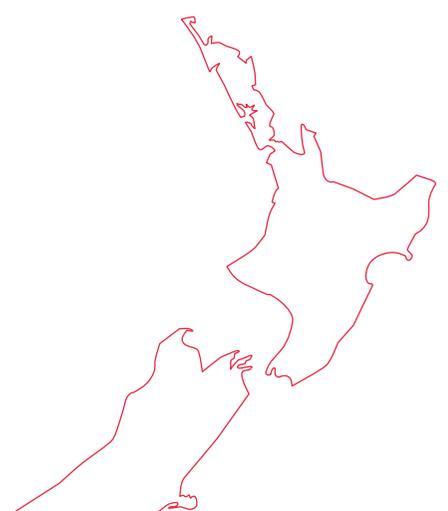
Grange Surf Life Saving Club Inc

**Loretta ZEMETIS**

Flinders Park Football Club

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*





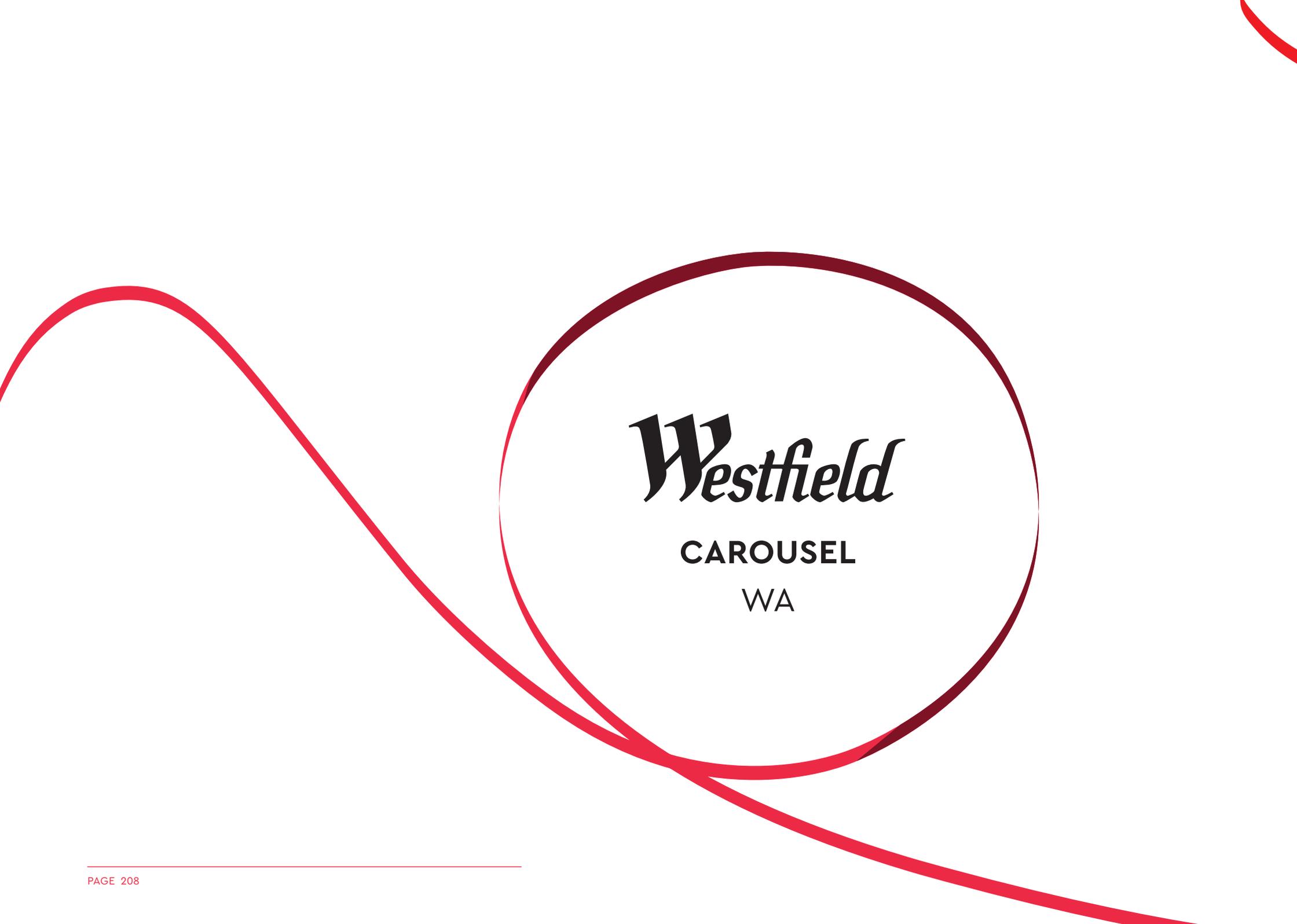
# Western Australia

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Carousel

Innaloo

Whitford City



*Westfield*

**CAROUSEL**

WA



## Todd Meyn Dismantle

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*Selfless, Inspiring, Energetic*

### BMX pro jumps in to help kids repair bikes and their confidence

Todd Meyn was just like any other 10-year-old who enjoyed riding his bike around the southern suburbs of Perth when a friend dared him to take a jump off a homemade ramp.

He was hooked. "It was awesome. One of the best feelings ever," Todd says.

He started riding at the local Belmont skate park whenever possible, which "kept him out of trouble" as a teenager. He graduated to pulling stunts for a living with action sports group Nitro Circus.

After a decade in the US, the Belmont-raised BMX star has returned to Perth. Now, in between travelling the world with Nitro, he volunteers as a bike mechanic with BikeRescue, the flagship mentoring program of the Dismantle youth organisation.

"When I was growing up I had a lot of positive influencers who were really good to me," Todd says. "Now I'm in that position. I see a little kid and I treat them like they're my best friend and want to inspire them too."

BMX pros spend a lot of time modifying their bikes and Todd has become an expert bike mechanic – with lots of skills he can share.

The program targets disengaged school students with low attendance and motivation. Participants get to fully strip and restore two bikes each – one for charity and one to keep – while building their confidence and social skills under the watchful eye of the bike mechanic.

"The program is more about praising than criticising," Todd says. "You can relate to the kids and talk to them about what's going on in their home life. The program helps kids work through a problem and use these problem-solving skills in other areas."

Todd says it's awesome to be voted a Westfield Local Hero, but he thinks he's the one getting the payback from volunteering.

"To be able to go back to where it all started and help the community where I grew up is so rewarding. In fact, it's almost selfish – that's how good it makes me feel!"

Dismantle will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to help activate three more BikeRescue programs – supporting 30 at-risk young people.

"The money will be used to reach more kids and give more schools the opportunity to be part of the program," Todd says.



**Lisa Whittle**  
C3 Langford

*Generous, Compassionate,  
Purposeful*

## Lisa's community dinners bring all types to the table

As a committed member of her local C3 church, Lisa Whittle was always casting around for ways to bring the community together.

It was the rising crime rate and a break-in at the church that prompted the out-of-the-box idea to create Love Langford, a regular communal dinner which Lisa oversees.

"After the break-in, there was talk of putting a fence up. But we thought we would change our outlook," says Lisa. "Instead of keeping ourselves isolated, we wanted the church to be the hub of the community."

Although free for all, the meals are in the style of a community gathering rather than a charitable soup kitchen.

They are for anybody, not just those in need, says Lisa. "At the heart of it, our intention is just to really get to know the community."

The first dinner was in 2015, and there have been no more break-ins.

Love Langford operates every fortnight providing meals for up to 200 people from all corners of the community.

One special regular was an Indigenous woman who touched Lisa's heart.

"She was living in public housing and started coming to the dinners.

She was one of our first volunteers and this gave her a sense of purpose and a place where she belonged."

The woman died tragically and many people gathered and sought comfort from the church, "which identified her as a valued part of our Love Langford community", Lisa says.

Lisa is "blown away" to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero. But she's quick to mention the many people who give up their time to help set up and prepare the meals.

"We have about 20 to 25 people who volunteer each fortnight, so I would love all of them to be recognised," she says.

The church will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to fund a mini-van to transport isolated community members who couldn't otherwise make it to the dinners.

"We have so many people who are seniors, disabled, or for safety reasons can't walk alone, so we will be able to pick them up," says Lisa.

There are also plans to buy a freezer. "At the moment, the amount of food we can keep for people is limited. We make everything fresh, so having an extra freezer means we can freeze leftovers and give them away," she says.



## **Emma Gardiner** Nulsen Disability Services

*Devoted, Selfless, Motivated*

### **Caring Emma gives students an invaluable life lesson**

Thanks to Emma Gardiner Perth high school students are learning to feel comfortable in the company of people with complex disabilities.

"So many people don't know where to look or how to act around people with complex disabilities," says Emma, who facilitates the Nulsen Youth Patron Program.

"One of the highlights of my work is seeing these high school kids standing up for people with complex disabilities and saying, 'they're just the same as you and me'."

Emma is employed by Nulsen Disability Services and students taking part in the program visit the organisations' supported-living homes. They invite the residents to attend school events such as sports days, arts and music events.

Through their interactions, the students develop a greater understanding of the needs of people living with a disability, and also expand the social networks of all involved.

Mum-of-two Emma knew immediately that Nulsen was a good fit for her when she was looking to re-enter the workforce. She says she loves everything the charity stands for.

"Having the courage to support people with challenging needs is important to me," Emma says.

The organisation was established more than 60 years ago at a time when children with severe disabilities had nowhere to turn and continues to support people with complex disabilities and their families and advocate on their behalf.

Emma is "extremely grateful" to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero and feels proud that this will help raise awareness of disability issues.

"It means that the community gets to see how important it is that we recognise, accept and support every community member, and nurture them to be the best person they can be."

Nulsen Disability Services will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to strengthen the Youth Patron Program and its alumni group.

"The grant will go towards exploring more opportunities for alumni members to stay connected with people with disabilities," Emma says. "We are working with three schools at the moment but are hoping to add another."

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Rita Kleinfeld Fowell** | Midland Information Debt and Legal Advocacy Service (Midlas)

*Selfless, Inspirational, Giving*

Rita is a qualified Restricted Practice Lawyer who has volunteered with Midlas 3 days per week for the past 12 months. Rita provides invaluable, free legal support to families experiencing Domestic and Family Violence, supports clients in court and assists in getting crucial protections in place for families at risk of violence and abuse.

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## **Karoline Jamieson** | Nardine

*Passionate, Genuine, Dynamic*

Nardine women's refuge provides safe and secure accommodation for women and children escaping domestic violence in their homes or community, including assistance with overcoming the impacts of violence and abuse through support with housing, education, accessing benefits, employment and counselling. As well as being the CEO, Karoline spends time working 'on the front line' with staff and clients and is always looking for ways to further assist and support our clients.

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## **Evelyn McKay** | Be My Koorda

*Inspiring, Dedicated, Caring*

Evelyn McKay is the founder of an Aboriginal disability support group in Perth called Be My Koorda (Koorda means friend in Noongar language), helping 28 families and over 30 children to form friendships, develop skills and grow in self-confidence. What started as a simple wish, expressed by her two children to make some friends, Evelyn has worked incredibly hard over the past few years to establish Be My Koorda and to offer vital support to families in need.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Leanne BARRON**

Starick

**Chance BATEMAN**

Wirrpanda Foundation

**Travis CLARK**

Variety WA

**Shirley Anne FORTINA**

The Nappy Collective

**Emma GARDINER**

Nilsen Disability Services

**Natasha GEORGIU**

Sevenoaks Senior College

**Nicole GORDON**

Heart Health and Fitness

**Cherylynn HUNT**

Crosslinks Incorporated

Canning Agricultural Horticultural  
& Recreational Inc

**Karoline JAMIESON**

Nardine

**Scott JOHNSON**

Assisting Your Life to  
Achieve AYLA Inc

**Rita KLEINFELD FOWELL**

Midlas

**Evelyn McKAY**

Be My Koorda

**Todd MEYN**

Dismantle Inc

**Julian PACE**

Happiness Co

**Mohammad (Rambo) RAMDIANEE**

Perth Volunteer Branch of  
Make-A-Wish Australia

**Kristy RODWELL**

100 Women

**Jennifer SUTEY**

WA Pet Project

**Gai WALKER**

Southern Communities Legal and  
Education Service Inc (SCALES)

**Lisa WHITTLE**

C3 Langford



*Westfield*

**INNALOO**

WA



## Joanne Beedie Helping Little Hands

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*Selfless, Strong, Inspiring*

### Joanne's baby trauma inspires her to offer a helping hand

Joanne and Scott Beedie thought they'd won the lottery when they discovered they were expecting identical twins. But that turned to worry when the boys were diagnosed with twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome.

After losing baby Logan at 21 weeks, Joanne gave birth to the surviving twin, Lewis, at 27 weeks. He weighed just 940 grams and spent 12 weeks in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Perth's King Edward Hospital.

It was traumatic, says Joanne. "It's not something that mums and dads should go through. It's so stressful, and the anxiety... you never know what's going to happen."

Joanne was determined to turn the experience into a positive one. She joined forces with another couple, their "bedside buddies", who also had premature twin boys to set up Helping Little Hands.

The charity provides practical help for the hundreds of parents with a premature baby in 'King Eddies'.

Joanne has organised a Dinner's Ready program offering home-cooked meals to tired mums and dads; a Nutritious Nibbles service providing healthy snacks for long days at the hospital; home support such as lawn mowing and cleaning; and fuel vouchers to ease the cost of travel.

Joanne says it's "incredible" to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It means the community is supporting what I and my team are doing.

"We've been running Helping Little Hands for a year and I don't think we appreciated just how big the need is. The spotlight that's been given to this issue is wonderful."

Little Helping Hands will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to continue its work at the hospital.

"We'll put some of it towards the Helping Get There program. A team of social workers identifies the families most in need and we will provide fuel vouchers to allocate to the family and help with their travel costs," says Joanne.

"The rest will go towards facilities in the NICU environment that makes parents' time there easier, as well as the Nutritious Nibbles service that is refilled at the hospital twice a week."



## **Kiren Bigwood** Little Things for Tiny Tots

*Passionate, Dedicated, Caring*

### **Kiren's big heart brings lots of joy for tiny tots**

As a new mum, Kiren Bigwood was struck by her baby daughter's vulnerability. She had lots of family support but began to think about other parents who might be struggling to afford essential items for their newborns.

That's where the seed for Little Things For Tiny Tots was planted, says Kiren. "I had a lot of baby goods myself and so many things I wanted to donate."

She spoke to several women's refuges and family support services and, together with two other Perth mums, was inspired to set up a charity to help babies in need.

The three women began by gathering their own pre-loved baby items and reaching out to friends on Facebook. Soon they had enough to put together five New Baby Boxes.

That was in November 2015. By mid-2018, the Little Things charity was distributing up to 38 boxes – including more than 1500 nappies – each month.

Kiren runs the charity from home, spending her spare time collecting new and pre-loved items such as clothing, blankets, nappies, wipes, bibs and toys that help families care for a baby in the first few weeks of life.

The boxes are then distributed by partner organisations and government agencies – mostly to women with limited financial and emotional support. Every one contains a handwritten note with words of encouragement.

"The mums find it very touching because there are people who care about them."

Kiren is "humbled" to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero and have the support of the community.

"It's great that Westfield recognises what an individual such as myself can do on a smaller level," she says. "We are a grass-roots organisation and operate only in Perth, so the local aspect is very important."

Little Things for Tiny Tots will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to help pay for one of its biggest challenges, storage.

"This will go towards a new warehouse facility. We've been able to achieve so much working out of a two-car garage, but if we have more space we can double our donations and give help in other ways, such as donating cots, prams and car seats."



## Wayne Bradshaw The Fathering Project

*Kind, Devoted,  
Accelerator of change*

### Get on the b-u-s to be a better dad

If you want to be a better father, just think of a bus, says Wayne Bradshaw, the leader of the Fathering Project.

He believes kids need three things from their dad, and each is represented by B, U or S:

- B stands for being there.
- U stands for unconditional love, even when there's bad behaviour.
- S stands for special, as in finding the specialness in your kids and helping them build their self-worth.

Wayne says he's no expert on being a dad, but after becoming involved with the Fathering Project in 2014 he has learnt a lot about the importance of fathers.

The project is based at the University of Western Australia and was founded by cancer specialist Dr Bruce Robinson more than 20 years ago after he noticed that many of his dying patients expressed regret at not having spent more time with their kids.

As leader of the project, Wayne is a tireless champion for fathers across Western Australia.

The charity reaches thousands of people with the motto of "changing kids one dad at a time".

And Wayne drives a variety of approaches to promote the role of fathers – and father figures – including a schools program and Champion Dads groups.

"It's about trying to improve outcomes for kids," says Wayne. "The main program is to create fathering groups in schools and opportunities for men to gather. Typically, men don't communicate as well as women, and the groups give them a chance to do activities together.

"As part of that process, they learn how to be better dads, which makes them realise how important they are," says Wayne.

Wayne is "grateful" to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero and achieve recognition for his cause within the community.

The Fathering Project will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to expand the core program in schools.

"We should be able to reach another dozen schools with the grant," says Wayne. "We can impact about another 1,000 dads and about 1,700 kids. It also helps to support our volunteers – the champion dads who are the leaders in the schools."

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Brian Becker** | Spine & Limb Foundation Inc

*Committed, Indomitable, Old-School*

Brian is a 76-year-old volunteer for the Spine & Limb Foundation, an organisation providing rehabilitation assistance and support to people with spinal cord injury, paralysis and those suffering from traumatic genetic limb loss. Brian is responsible for the maintenance of over 200 charity clothing collection bin sites throughout Perth – travelling around to remove illegally dumped litter or unwanted goods, cleaning up graffiti, replacing damaged or cut padlocks and righting and replacing bins.

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## **Robyn Cardy** | Perth Inner City Youth Service

*Diversity, Belonging, Hope*

Robyn works for the Perth Inner City Youth Service (PICYS), an organisation providing shelter, food and mental health services for the 'hard to reach' members of the community; people who have not been accepted by other services and often deemed 'too difficult' to manage.

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## **Chandra Woodley** | Cat Haven

*Passionate, Determined, Creative*

Chandra is a valued member of the Cat Haven, Western Australia's largest cat welfare organisation, taking in up to 8,500 stray and unwanted cats and kittens each year. Its purpose is to rehome as many cats as possible, to educate owners and improve the welfare of cats across the state. Chandra and her team find the time and resources to take the cats to community events (to be rehomed) and deliver cats in their own cars, with their own fuel.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Rasha ABU-JEIDA**  
Girl Guides Western Australia

**Brian BECKER**  
Spine & Limb Foundation Inc

**Joanne BEEDIE**  
Helping Little Hands

**Kiren BIGWOOD**  
Little Things for Tiny Tots

**Isabella BOLADERAS**  
The Performance Company

**Wayne BRADSHAW**  
The Fathering Project

**Eleana BREDEMEYER**  
Ability Centre

**Lesley CANGEMI**  
Ishar Multicultural Women's  
Health Centre

**Robyn CARDY**  
Perth Inner City Youth Service

**Jeanette ("Netteke") CROMBIE**  
The Ladybird Foundation

**Sain DZEMAIL**  
Insain

**John & Karen ELLIS**  
West Coast Futsal Association

**Jack FAHEY-GILMOUR**  
Swan Districts Junior Football  
Umpires Association

**Molly FERRIER**  
RSPCA Western Australia

**Robert FERRITTO**  
Nulsen Disability Services

**Hayden GLASS**  
Red Frogs Australia

**Rebecca GUY**  
Sweethearts Music Management

**Sarah HAMILTON**  
Hampton Park Scout Group  
(Scouts WA)

**Katie HARDMAN**  
Mt Hawthorn Primary School

**Sandra HASLER**  
Carine Calisthenics

**Stephen HUNT**  
Scouts WA

**Shane JOHNSTONE**  
Be Inspired Foundation

**Monique LE ROUX**  
Perth Volunteer Branch of  
Make-A-Wish Australia

**Bethany MULDER**  
H.O.P.E Inc

**Anthea PECZKA**  
Dog's Refuge Home

**Aishvarya SATKUARAJAH**  
Girl Guides Western Australia

**Paul SHANAHAN**  
Future Bayswater

**Brooke TRAN**  
Transplant Australia WA

**Kira TREMAIN**  
Department of Fire and Emergency  
Services (WA)

**Murray WEBB**  
Dismantle Inc

**Chandra WOODLEY**  
Cat Haven

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*



*Westfield*

WHITFORD CITY

WA



## Neil Atkinson Ocean Heroes

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*Compassionate, Friendly, Patient*

### Ocean Heroes gives Neil the perfect wave to ride

When Neil Atkinson found out about Ocean Heroes in 2016, he knew he had found a perfect way to combine his love of the surf with his desire to help others.

Ocean Heroes is a not-for-profit charity that helps children and adults with autism spectrum disorder experience the joys of surfing in a safe and supportive environment.

He was attracted to the positive nature of the people in the group and their "really good energy" from the start. "This was something I felt I could really help with," he says.

Neil knows people with autism spectrum disorder and understands the challenges they face.

One of those challenges can be finding ordinary outings like a day at the beach overwhelming.

But with the careful and gentle guidance of Neil and the other Ocean Hero volunteers, members get to enjoy the confidence-boosting benefits of surfing.

Neil is involved in every aspect of the charity, from instructing the children to tirelessly working on the logistics and helping to organise events.

Ocean Heroes run an event every month on a stretch of Perth beach, providing surfboards, wetsuits and life jackets for dozens of participants, who range in age from three to 30.

Neil is happy about being voted a Westfield Local Hero, but he believes it's far more of an affirmation for the great work done by the organisation.

"I'm just a representative of all the volunteers who are all very inspiring people. The best part for me is when medical professionals see positive results from what we do and you see the joy on the faces of the kids and the parents.

"The fact that 150 places for an event can be booked out in 10 minutes means we must be doing something right."

Ocean Heroes will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to help finance a much-needed super-long-wheel-base van to transport the 15 large surfboards, gazebos, wetsuits and life jackets used at each event.

This will allow Ocean Heroes to have further reach throughout WA and eventually around Australia.



## Sian Williams Kidzucate

*Inspirational, Determined, Vibrant*

### Brave Sian stands up to bullies with an empowering message

Sian Williams did not like being bullied because of her stutter. So, at the ripe old age of six, she decided to do something meaningful about it.

"I used to stutter a lot and I still do, but I'm much better now," Sian says.

"My peers bullied and mocked me all the time. One day I came home from school, jumped on my bed and cried my eyes out."

When her mum asked her what was wrong she said she was praying to God to take her voice away.

But then she decided she had a right to stand up to the other kids. She also decided she would help other children learn how to stand up for themselves.

So, with her mum's help, Sian started Kidzucate in 2012 to empower young people with the knowledge and awareness required to break the chain of bullying.

Kidzucate started off small but has grown considerably over the years.

"I was not expecting this at all," says Sian, who is now aged 11. I think I have impacted many people I don't even know."

She has not let her stutter hold her back from public speaking and she regularly delivers talks to large groups of children, young people and adults about her vision for creating a happier world.

In 2014, Sian attended a youth summit organised by Youth for Human Rights in Brussels and was awarded the Human Rights Hero Award. In 2017, she received the City of Joondalup Student Citizenship Award for her advocacy work in the community.

Sian is greatly appreciative and honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I'm so proud of what my mum and I have accomplished over the years. It is so cool to know that the community appreciates the work we do."

Kidzucate will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to develop advocacy packs and to implement programs in local schools, including training.

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

*Lifeline: 13 11 14*

*Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467*

*Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800*



## Jan Standen Grandparents Rearing Grandchildren WA Inc

*Passionate, Dedicated,  
Altruistic*

### Caring gran finds sense of belonging through giving back

When Jan Standen found herself having to take care of her young grandchildren, the special people at Grandparents Rearing Grandchildren WA rallied to help her.

She was so impressed that she started giving back almost immediately.

"The people were so lovely and supportive I was compelled to do as much as I possibly could to help them right from the outset," Jan says.

The organisation's purpose is to provide relief, respite and support services to grandparents who are rearing grandchildren, and to protect and promote the well-being and development of grandchildren in their care.

Some grandparents care for more than four school-age children and many rely on a small government grant and their age pension to do it.

In Jan's case, her daughter has a mental illness and left her children when the youngest was 22 months. Their father looked after them for five years, but he could not manage and they were "basically living on the street".

When the children came to live with her, Jan had to give up her part-time job and lost her livelihood.

This experience gives Jan a deep understanding of other people's needs as they work to rebuild the lives of their grandchildren.

Jan is the organisation's vice president and events coordinator. She also liaises with federal and state members of parliament, advocating for grandparents who are rearing grandchildren.

She is extremely grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"It's totally amazing to be recognised for what I do, especially considering the devastating situation that I came from. I now have a sense of belonging and community like I've never had before. I've found my forte in life thanks to this organisation."

The organisation will use a portion of its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to provide school holiday respite for grandparents and grandchildren and a fun day out for the kids, which Jan says has the added benefit of helping the kids bond with each other.

"When they see how they are all being cared for by their grandparents they develop a strong bond and a sense of belonging which is priceless," she says.

Some of the money will also go towards much-needed pamper days for the carers.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Greg Hire** | A Stitch in Time

*Humble, Selfless, Passionate*

Greg is the vice-captain of the Perth Wildcats and the founder of A Stitch in Time, a non-for-profit organisation that targets at-risk-youth through basketball. Greg coaches weekly workshops and clinics as a means to engage and educate youth via team sport. The participants are also given opportunities to mentor or teach other kids which in-turn helps to develop leadership skills and a sense of purpose.

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## **Vincent Pettinicchio** | Rotary Club of Hillarys

*Kind, Dedicated, Humble*

In 2013, at the age of seven, Vincent decided to help the homeless of Perth by providing them with packs of toiletries and comfort items. Now aged 12, each year Vincent enlists the help of the community to raise the funds he needs to make the packs and then brings volunteers together to ready the bags for distribution. Since 2013, 4,075 packs have been provided to the homeless of Perth and surrounding areas.

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## **Melissa Porteus** | Youth Futures

*Passionate, Dedicated, Committed*

Melissa has been the driving force behind NEST, a program that aids mothers who are already experiencing or are at-risk of homelessness, to maintain custody of their infant. The program provides single dwelling accommodation and intensive support to teenage mothers and their infants. Since commencing the program in 2008, Melissa has successfully helped over 400 young women maintain custody of their baby.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Neil ATKINSON**

Ocean Heroes

**Marcus BLINCO**

Oceanside Little Athletics

**Eliza BOURGAULT DU COUDRAY**

Rotary Club of Joondalup

**Emma BUITENDAG**

Epilepsy WA

**Ashlyn BULLEY**

Mullaloo Surf Life Saving Club

**Alma CABASSI**

Good Grief

**George COWCHER**

The Spiers Centre Inc

**Nicole CRAMPTON**

The Spiers Centre Inc

**Lucy DICKENS**

Managing The Juggle

**Greg FARRELL**

West Coast Futsal Association

**Scott GUERINI**

Telethon

**Greg HIRE**

A Stitch in Time

**Susan LYNCH**

Alzheimer's Research – Ralph  
Martins Edith Cowan University

**Kirsteen McCRORY**

Athena Branch Calisthenics  
Association of Western Australia

**Vincent PETTINICCHIO**

The Rotary Club of Hillarys

**Melissa PORTEUS**

Youth Futures

**Sarah SHORT**

Goollelal Greenwood Scout Group

**Jan STANDEN**

Grandparents Rearing  
Grandchildren WA Inc

**Jeff TRUDGIAN**

The Rotary Club of Hillarys

**Rhiannon WILLIAMS**

Communified (Inc)

**Sian WILLIAMS**

Kidzucate

**Whitney WILLIAMSON**

Perth Volunteer Branch of  
Make-A-Wish Australia





# New Zealand

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Albany

Manukau City

St Lukes

Riccarton



*Westfield*

ALBANY

NZ



## **Annette Wilson** North Shore Group Riding for the Disabled Inc

*Generous, Diligent,  
Compassionate*

### **Annette dedicates her horse passion to a human cause**

Not everyone gets to combine what they love doing with the chance to make a difference in people's lives, but Annette Wilson is definitely one of those people.

Annette has been volunteering at the North Shore Group Riding for the Disabled for 17 years, working with riders, their families and schools.

"I have had a passion for horses all of my life which is why I was drawn to the group," Annette says.

The association welcomes disabled children and adults of the North Shore, from Devonport through Takapuna, Glenfield, Albany and Whangaparaoa.

As a direct result of the sessions, the riders show improved social interactions with their peers and family and their learning at school often becomes more focused.

They often form a strong emotional connection with the horse that is difficult for them to make with people.

In the past, the organisation has focused on the physical advantages horse riding provides. However, there is a new focus on enhancing the riders' educational, social and emotional wellbeing.

"Watching the riders come through the group is the icing on the cake for me," Annette says.

One of her roles is to organise programs for the riders. This includes stimulating activities individualised to each rider's needs and abilities and allocating volunteers to each rider. She is also a long-serving member of the governance committee.

On top of all that, as acting horse manager, Annette prepares the horses for their special roles. This involves finding the best horse for each rider and selecting new horses as the older ones retire.

Annette is respected for her compassion and willingness to work with all riders, regardless of their physical or behavioural problems. If a volunteer finds a child particularly challenging Annette will step in and take over the care while encouraging the volunteer to observe and help once they feel able.

She says she has lived in the area all her life and she is truly humbled that people have recognised her as a Westfield Local Hero.

The organisation will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to buy a horse for the group, which Annette says is significant. "We will be able to source a horse with the perfect size, age, health and temperament to join our current herd."



## Ashleigh Phipps Conscious Kids

*Selfless, Positive, Dedicated*

### Win-win as Ashleigh finds the perfect way to help kids embrace the outdoors

Ashleigh Phipps hit upon the perfect outlet for her desire to help children when she accepted a position at Conscious Kids two years ago.

The organisation offers a completely nature-based experience that gets Kiwi kids aged five to twelve outside.

Ashleigh says she "absolutely loves working with kids in the outdoors. The passion of those involved with Conscious Kids really excites me."

During their outdoor educational programs, the children work collaboratively with local communities, families, parks and schools. They develop social competence in mixed aged groups and self-confidence through problem-solving and sensitivity to the environment.

There is a special focus on providing a safe and inclusive space for those with mental health and behavioural concerns or sensory sensitivities, who are likely to struggle in standard classrooms.

Ashleigh helps design the programs based on her personal experience with ADHD and has pushed the organisation to develop specialised youth skills and career development opportunities for its teen volunteers.

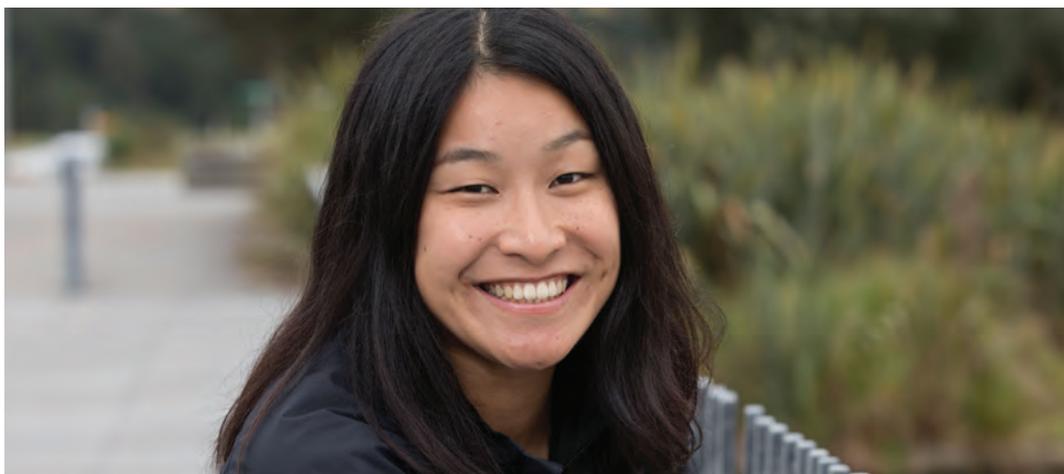
Children on the programs make their own choices within a framework of respect for those around them and the environment. They extend their thinking through skill-building workshops in areas such as marine biology, fishing, building shelters and fire craft.

Ashleigh's work creates a sense of place for children, youth and families within the context of the natural environment, while her infectious enthusiasm promotes positive engagement for staff and volunteers.

She says being a Westfield Local Hero means a lot because it shows that, no matter what age you are, you can make a real difference by standing up for what you are passionate about.

"I hope the award will inspire this new generation of teenagers to get more involved in community projects and initiatives."

Conscious Kids will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund a part-time youth development specialist to provide hands-on learning and skills to the next generation of outdoor educators.



## Shoko Maeda Harbour Sports

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*Intelligent, Dedicated,  
Energetic*

### Shoko champions an active lifestyle to promote wellbeing and social inclusion

Shoko Maeda's passion for promoting wellbeing, harmony and social inclusion through sport and recreational activities has made her a much-valued and admired member of her adopted local community.

Originally from Japan, Shoko organises and participates in a number of events for Harbour Sport, a community-based organisation dedicated to enriching the local community through greater physical awareness and activity.

"Harbour Sport is at the forefront of physical wellbeing teaching in the North Harbour region and this is what inspired me to get involved," says Shoko, who has a Masters degree in sports science.

"Sport brings people together and encourages wellbeing."

Shoko organises and participates in the following activities: Active Families, a program that helps children and their families develop better eating habits and lead an active lifestyle; Retirement Villages Exercises, which encourages the elderly to be more active; and Early Childhood Fundamental Movement Skills, which teaches young children basic movement skills essential for development.

She has also organised an internship program for Japanese and other international students to learn about the educational and

cultural differences between New Zealand, Japan and other countries with regard to physical well-being and diversity in sport.

Shoko's energy levels have helped her to forge meaningful connections with people from all ages, ethnicities and cultures, and she has been particularly inspirational in getting new immigrants to participate in events, which helps them discover their new surroundings and reduces their sense of social isolation.

Shoko is deeply touched to be a Westfield Local Hero.

"Harbour Sport constantly strives to get more people involved in physical activity to improve their quality of life so it's crucial to the community's wellbeing. I am so excited about what I can do to give back to our local community. This has inspired me to do more and I'm confident I can live up to this recognition," she says.

"I am overwhelmed by the warmth of the local people, which has further reinforced my decision to move to New Zealand."

Harbour Sport will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to develop its internship program for international students who find it hard to connect with their new environment.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Nicola Cronin** | Bellyful New Zealand Trust North Shore Branch

*Level-Headed, Energetic, Kind-Hearted*

Nicola is a volunteer coordinator for the North Shore branch of Bellyful NZ, where she volunteers her time to cook and deliver free meals to families who are struggling and do not have a good support network. Her sense of community and nurturing personality drive Nicola's desire to help others.

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## **Ursula Elisara** | Immerse Charitable Trust

*Passion, Integrity, Vision*

Ursula is an experienced foster caregiver who understands the complex and ongoing impact that childhood trauma can have on development. Through her work with the Immerse Charitable Trust, Ursula aims to transform the culture of foster care in New Zealand by educating, upskilling, inspiring and supporting caregivers and professionals to better understand and meet the needs of children who have experienced abuse, neglect and other traumatic events.

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## **Kathryn McMahon** | Age Concern North Shore Incorporated

*Generous, Dedicated, Sensitive*

Kathryn co-ordinates a volunteer visiting service for isolated older people to help improve morale, connectivity and inclusion. She recruits, screens and trains volunteers of all ages and backgrounds to match up with an older person to visit both in their homes and at local shopping centres.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Louise ALLNUTT**  
Foster Hope Charitable Trust

**Deidre ANDERSON**  
Victim Support North Shore –  
Division of (New Zealand Council  
Of Victim Support Groups  
Incorporated)

**Melanie BARR**  
Shore Junction

**Renee BECKETT**  
Stella Maris School

**Kavita BUDHIA**  
North Shore Playcentre Association

**Nicola CRONIN**  
Bellyful New Zealand Trust –  
Auckland North Shore branch

**Haiying DONG**  
Whanau Marama Parenting

**Deb DOYLE**  
St John Youth

**Ursula ELISARA**  
Immerse Charitable Trust

**Katie HILLEBRAND**  
Waimauku Doctors Ltd

**Jane HUNTER**  
North Harbour Community Patrol

**Justine IOUTA**  
North Shore Women's Centre

**Alex KOPPENAAL**  
No 6 (North Shore) Squadron,  
Air Training Corps

**Shoko MAEDA**  
Harbour Sports

**Kylie McGREGOR**  
Harbour Sport

**Kathryn McMAHON**  
Age Concern North Shore Inc

**Ashleigh PHIPPS**  
Conscious Kids

**Chris STEEL**  
Child Cancer Foundation

**Hannah STREET**  
Springboard Community Works

**Chris TURNER**  
Life Education Trust Rodney

**Salil WAREKAR**  
YMCA of Auckland Inc

**Allen WESCHE**  
Tuilaepa Youth Mentoring Services

**Lesley WILSON**  
Albany Primary School

**Annette WILSON**  
North Shore Group Riding for  
the Disabled Inc



*Westfield*

MANUKAU CITY

NZ



## **KJ Hundal** Do Good Feel Good (Alliance Community Initiatives Trust)

*Passionate, Dedicated, Selfless*

### **KJ took a pay cut to give himself more time to do good**

Getting young people to tidy up is a challenge many parents never overcome.

So when a group of 10 to 24-year-olds willingly spend 10 weeks cleaning up a South Auckland alleyway, it's a big deal.

It shows the positive impact the Do Good Feel Good (DGFG) movement is having in the community, says volunteer KJ Hundal.

"This is one of many social activations we do as a youth-led movement."

KJ jumped at the chance to volunteer when the Do Good Feel Good movement started in 2015.

"Events such as sports and leadership meetings encourage young people to become change agents," he says.

"We meet on a regular basis to plan these events, to talk about what needs to be done," says KJ.

DGFG is aimed at young people in the suburb of Mangere, where some families struggle financially.

"I grew up in South Auckland and I have seen kids who haven't been able to be a part of something like this during school or at home," says KJ.

His commitment to DGFG goes above and beyond.

He even cut back his paid work for six months — reducing his salary in the process — to help grow the movement.

He also covers the cost of giving lifts to leaders who don't have transport to make sure they can join in event planning.

"It was a way for me to give back to the community because with Maori and Pacific culture there is always a sense of family and providing as much as you can."

KJ feels humbled to be recognised as a Westfield Local Hero.

DGFG will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund new events and to ensure its survival.

"There will also be new merchandise for the kids to enhance their sense of belonging and ownership of the movement," KJ says.



## Maree Steunebrink Humans of South Auckland

*Relentless, Brave, Passionate*

### Maree tells stories that bring people to life

Social worker Maree Steunebrink is more used to helping other people tell their stories than having stories written about her.

She is the Director of Humans of South Auckland, a non-profit project inspired by Humans of New York that helps local people share their personal stories of hope and pride.

She put up her hand to help the charity, which was founded by a friend who wanted to bring the community together following the tragic death of a local student.

The stories are posted on Facebook, Instagram and a dedicated website.

"We've also done a couple of art gallery shows and had our stories as a regular feature in a newspaper," says Maree.

Apart from her, there are two other storytellers.

Maree took over as Director when the Founder left Auckland two years ago. Since then, her infectious enthusiasm has kept the project going from strength to strength.

Maree and the other writers have so far brought 200 stories to life. They rely on people to write in to nominate friends or family with an inspiring tale to tell.

One story that stands out for Maree involves a couple named as foster parents of the year. They became foster parents when they were unable to have their own children. But when interviewed they had some exciting news. They were pregnant. They were determined to keep fostering, however.

"They are an incredible couple," says Maree.

A 12-year-old boy who created a short film about his younger brother who had died from cancer also touched Maree.

"It was chosen for a film festival and was shown in New York's Time Square."

Maree is delighted to be a Westfield Local Hero as it shows the stories are uniting the community.

The \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant awarded to Humans of South Auckland will fund more of Maree's story-telling workshops in schools. She says it is therapeutic for vulnerable students to share stories about their hardest moments or an incident that changed them.

"The feedback we get from teachers is that they had no idea what the kids had been through and they now understand each other more. It tells young people they have value and to me, that is super important."



## Rebecca Va'ai Saintz Up Performing Arts Trust

*Passionate, Dedicated,  
Selfless*

### Astounding things happen when Becks helps kids find their voice

It's amazing what can happen when Rebecca (Becks) Va'ai and her team encourage children to find their voice.

Not all become TV sensations, but one testament to their good work is Selevasio Tu'ima of *Little Big Shots* fame.

When he started at Saintz Up Performing Arts Trust (SUPA) he was so shy he barely said anything.

But in 2017, the 13-year-old wowed millions of fans after being flown to Australia to sing on the TV show.

"Over the last couple of years, he's just really flourished and really grown into a wonderful young man," says SUPA Founder Becks.

"Our vision and mission are to use the performing arts to build confidence and self-belief so the children can reach or chase whatever dreams they may have."

"It could be a simple thing where a child puts their name forward for a student leadership role at school or goes for a trial with a rugby team."

The 400 or so kids aged three to seventeen who attend SUPA all leave with skills beyond music and dance," she says.

Becks and her partner, Nainz, started SUPA in 2009. It sprang from Lil Saintz Dance Crew, which she and sister Vaimoana created three years earlier for her nieces.

Within a few years the girls had won national competitions and eventually won a silver medal at the 2011 World Hip Hop Championship.

Other kids were clamouring to get involved. Private tuition was out of reach for most, so Becks sourced sponsorship to keep fees to a minimum.

Her passion is contagious, with several former students, including her nieces, coming back to teach the next crop of kids.

Becks is overwhelmed to be a Westfield Local Hero.

"Our team are the heroes, giving up their time knowing they could be paid a whole lot more somewhere else," she says.

SUPA will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to pay for operating costs, including venue hire and the purchase of musical equipment.

"It will make more dreams come true," says Becks.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Neil Denney** | Friendship House

*Energetic, Public-Spirited, Committed*

Neil has been the CEO of Friendship House for the last 3 years where he provides a safe, all-inclusive space for those in need. He has also established Parenting and Violence Prevention programmes to include all cultural groups within the South Auckland community.

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## **Renee Mose** | Village Collective – Family Life Education Pasefika

*Empathetic, Determined, Unique*

Renee has developed Fusion, a mentoring programme for young Pasifika LGBTQI secondary students that supports the personal development of Pasifika Rainbow Youth. As an employee of Village Collective, Renee provides one on one and group mentoring sessions for LGBTQI youth in a safe and supportive environment.

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## **David Ringrose** | Family Success Matters

*Kind, Honest, Passionate*

David runs Fathers For Families, a programme that encourages men to reflect upon their role as a father and partner. As a volunteer, David has changed the lives of many men in the local community by challenging their existing belief systems and putting an end to negative cycles of abuse.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Melissa ATAMA**  
Clendon Pride Project

**Colleen BROWN**  
Manurewa Neighbourhood  
Support Inc

**Graeme BRYANT**  
Ambury Park Centre for Riding  
Therapy

**Lynette BURTON**  
Family Ministries, Clevedon  
Presbyterian Church

**Jenn HOOPER**  
Changing Places

**Andrea DEETH**  
Child Care & Child Safety

**Neil DENNEY**  
Friendship House

**Betty DOWSWELL**  
Victim Support Counties  
Manukau Central – Division of  
New Zealand Council Of Victim  
Support Groups Inc

**Emma DUNN**  
Smash Fit by Emma Dunn

**Joseph FA'AFIU**  
Gateway Community Trust

**Roger GREEN**  
The Retreat NZ

**Judi HARTLEY**  
Dress for Success Incorporated –  
Auckland

**Yvonne Hinemoa HAWKINS**  
Citizens Advice Bureau Otago Inc

**Jenn HOOPER**  
Changing Places NZ

**Philip HORROBIN**  
Babystart Charitable Trust

**KJ HUNDAL**  
Do Good Feel Good (Alliance  
Community Initiatives Trust)

**Jo HUNTER**  
YMCA of Auckland Inc

**Hannah JACOBSON**  
St John Youth

**Jit KAUR**  
New Zealand Sikh Womens  
Association Incorporated

**Ana KIREKA**  
Child Cancer Foundation

**Leighton LEEVARD**  
HeartKidz NZ

**Marcella MAIHI**  
Mā te Huruuru

**Renee MOSE**  
Village Collective – Family Life  
Education Pasefika

**Swanie NELSON**  
Cooper Cres OTARA

**Patricia PRESSNELL**  
Victim Support Counties Manukau –  
Division of New Zealand Council Of  
Victim Support Groups Inc

**David RINGROSE**  
Family Success Matters

**Maree STEUNEBRINK**  
Humans of South Auckland

**Tapuosi Marco SULLIVAN**  
Early Childhood Education Centre

**Victoria TAUPAU**  
#INSPIRE

**Essendon TUITUPOU**  
Faith City Trust Board

**Rebecca VA'AI**  
Saintz Up Performing Arts Trust

**Sir John WALKER**  
John Walker Find Your Field of  
Dreams Foundation

**Caine WARREN**  
Man Up New Zealand

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*

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*Westfield*

RICCARTON

NZ



## Charlotte Pawson ParaFed Canterbury

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*Passionate, Compassionate,  
Energetic*

### Why youth worker Charlotte never has a bad day

There's so much more than just sports on offer at Charlotte Pawson's sports programs.

Friendships blossom as the children with disabilities meet others facing similar challenges to themselves at the action-packed sessions.

"When you see a five-year-old girl with a disability making friends with another little girl with a similar disability, it's just so beautiful," says Charlotte, the Junior Sports Manager at ParaFed Canterbury.

"She may never have met another child with a similar disability, so it's lovely to be able to bring kids together in this way."

Charlotte designs and delivers sports programs for children and youth aged five to 21 with physical disabilities. She offers a different sport each week, including football, triathlon, laser tag and 10-pin bowling, as well as disability-specific sports.

Through physical activity, children are encouraged to build confidence, a love of movement and a sense of community.

Parents, too, have an opportunity to make friends and help create a support network for themselves.

Charlotte also manages the ParaFed Canterbury Junior Team, which competes in the annual Halberg Junior Disability Games, and in 2017 won the best regional team award.

Winning is always nice, but the highlight of her role is the kids themselves, she says.

"They are just so courageous and determined. It's so rewarding seeing them achieve their goals and have success. And that's just so inspiring. You can't have a bad day when you are with people like that."

Charlotte says she's honoured and thankful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"We feel it's great to have our organisation recognised for what it does."

Families pay a nominal annual fee for their kids to participate, so ParaFed will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to keep participation costs to a minimum.



## Mana Harema La Vida Youth Trust

*Bighearted, Real, Inclusive*

### Why Mana chooses his words and tone so carefully

Sometimes it's not what you say, but how you say it that can have the biggest impact.

That's why youth worker Mana Harema is careful to use an empowering tone and language when he connects with young people.

"We just want to walk alongside young people who are having a tough time as their adult but friendly figures who are helping them through that stage in their lives," Mana says.

"Young people are capable, and at times just need a guiding hand."

He's a 24-7 youth worker with the La Vida Youth Trust to promote a greater connection between young people, their families, schools and the community in the Riccarton area.

Mana is also a community worker, supporting people who are potentially falling through the gaps, helping to connect them into the wider community and to find ways for them to make their own contribution.

He provides safe group activities and sports for youth, role modelling, mentoring and helps them gain access to services where necessary, challenging anti-social behaviours along the way.

His approach is paying dividends, with problems such as graffiti virtually disappearing since he started supporting young people in the area.

"That was achieved just through connection," Mana says.

"So instead of judging and being negative about people who are not doing a great thing, our approach was to build relationships with them."

He is moved to be a Westfield Local Hero.

"I don't think you can get better recognition than that, personally or for the Trust as well. It's a massive acknowledgement of the Trust doing good work in its local community."

La Vida Youth Trust will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to run junior sports programs for 40 weeks and to continue funding Mana's role.



## **Robyn Twemlow** Tourette's Association New Zealand (TANZ)

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*Generous, Determined,  
Devoted*

### **It's easy to see why a little boy called Robyn a hero**

When Robyn Twemlow's daughter was diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome aged nine, she had no one to turn to for support, information or advice.

She didn't even know of anyone with the syndrome, which added to her isolation.

"At the time, my husband and I didn't know anything about Tourette's," says Robyn.

"Amid the complete and utter shock of the diagnosis, there was nothing – no website, no support groups, nothing."

So, Robyn set about creating her own organisation to connect with others and to offer a friendly ear to families and those who have Tourette's.

That was five years ago and now, through setting up the Tourette's Association New Zealand, Robyn has established a support network across the country, raising awareness in schools and the wider community.

Robyn is hands-on and multidimensional. She visits parents, gives talks at schools, manages the organisation's website and lobbies the government to have the condition recognised as a disability.

She has also set up and runs Camp Twitch, an annual gathering of children and young adults with Tourette Syndrome, where they can be themselves without fear of bullying or ridicule.

One little boy who attended Camp Twitch nominated her as his hero in a school writing exercise.

"He said going to Camp Twitch was the first time he'd felt normal and not different," Robyn says.

"That really touched me and made all the hard-work worthwhile."

Robyn says being a Westfield Local Hero represents awesome acceptance and recognition from the wider community.

The \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant will be used for improvements to Camp Twitch and funding professional development.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Matthew Button** | Big Brothers Big Sisters

*Humble, Dedicated, Giving*

Matthew singlehandedly started Big Brothers Big Sisters in Christchurch, providing trained volunteer mentors for disadvantaged young people. The relationship that develops between mentor and youth helps to increase self-esteem, confidence and resilience and provides them with an adult to confide in and rely on. Matthew is integral to the running and continual development and since opening he has improved the lives of over 550 young people.

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## **Charlotte Ellis** | Royal New Zealand Plunket Trust

*Humble, Passionate, Giving*

Charlotte's purpose as a volunteer for Plunket Christchurch is to support families and work towards the Plunket vision – "In the first 1000 days we make the difference of a lifetime." In her 4.5 years as a Plunket volunteer she has helped to ensure that parents have access to community services such as parenting education classes, and helps them to develop a well-connected support network, supporting families to raise happy, healthy children.

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## **Bob Shearing** | Enrich Community Chaplaincy Trust

*Dedicated, Friendly, Grafter*

Bob is a volunteer and Chairperson of the Enrich Community Chaplaincy Trust, an organisation that was established to benefit the intellectually disabled community of Canterbury. He has worked tirelessly for the past 20 years to help the vulnerable and is the driving force behind the continual fund-raising required to support the Chaplain's who visit the disabled in their community homes to ensure the well-being and inclusion of the intellectually disabled.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Bella AITKEN**  
Kiwi Family Trust

**Bridget ALLEN**  
New Brighton Stitch o Mat

**Matthew BUTTON**  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of  
Christchurch

**Mary Jo CHASE**  
The Village Community Centre

**Charlotte ELLIS**  
Royal New Zealand Plunket Trust

**Priscilla GLASSON**  
St George's Cancer Wing

**Mana HAREMA**  
La Vida Youth Trust

**Jennifer HEPERI**  
Mini Ha Ha Horse Haven

**Rebecca MILLIGAN**  
Cat Rescue Christchurch  
Charitable Trust

**Charlotte PAWSON**  
ParaFed Canterbury

**Carol RENOUF**  
Oak Development Trust

**Sauna REVELEY**  
Delta Community Support Trust

**Ginny RHODES**  
Dress for Success Christchurch

**Robert Arthur SHEARING**  
Enrich Community Chaplaincy  
Trust

**Nick STONEMAN**  
ASK Trust

**Robyn TWEMLOW**  
Tourette's Association  
New Zealand (TANZ)



*Westfield*

**ST LUKES**

NZ



## **Richard Stanton** 1st Mt Albert, St Jude's Scout Group

*Dedicated, Committed,  
Passionate*

### **Scout leader Richard helps out a little, but it turns into a lot**

Like many people, Richard was a Scout growing up and later enrolled his own children when they were a similar age.

Like many parents of Scouts, he was asked to help out a bit.

"I have an interest in maps and mapping, which grew when I was a Scout, so I was asked to instruct in that," Richard says.

"Then I was asked to assist with other things. Before I knew it, I was training as a leader. And then it was 15 years later."

As well as keeping track of the activities for the Keas, Cubs, Scouts and Venturer Sections of the Mt Albert-St Jude's group, Richard's role includes promoting the overall growth of Scouts.

"People think of Scouting as an activity for the kids," he says.

"They are at the centre of what we do, but as an adult it's a great way to be part of the community. We meet so many people, from all walks of life, on equal terms."

Many of the young people Richard has led at the Scouts have become leaders in their own right, in a wide range of endeavours across New Zealand.

"In the Scouts, we say good leadership doesn't create followers, it creates other leaders."

Richard says being a Westfield Local Hero is a reflection of the work that all Scout leaders have done.

"It's very kind of the community to recognise me, but it's really the scouts that have been recognised for 90-plus years of work for the Mt Albert community."

The Group will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to help fund a new roof for its Den. The current roof is notorious and a bit of a joke for its many leaks.

"We're using a tarpaulin to guide the water into a large tub and it's become known as the water feature," says Richard.

"Other leaders that come over keep asking how the water feature's going."

The grant will also help fund kitchen refurbishments and upgrades to the toilet facilities to make them wheelchair-accessible.



## Wendy John Friends of Oakley Creek

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*Optimistic, Selfless, Inspiring*

### Wendy turns polluted creek into something worth fighting for

If you walk along Oakley Creek—Te Auaunga, you'll see people running, cycling, doing yoga, holding picnics, watching the birds and playing by the waterfall.

People walk for leisure or as part of their commute, where the forest acts as a natural buffer against the usual city hustle and bustle.

But not too many years ago, Oakley Creek was a polluted, rubbish-strewn and weed-infested city waterway.

There was a proposal for State Highway 20 to be extended through the catchment, which inspired Wendy John and other locals to set up Friends of Oakley Creek in 2004.

"It would've been a bulldozer job and people were fighting to stop it," says Wendy.

But Wendy did not want to focus on fighting the bulldozers, she wanted to do something positive.

"With the highway proposal having been in the pipeline for some 15 years, something had to be done to make Oakley Creek worth saving."

And that's what Wendy and the other friends of the creek have achieved.

Wendy coordinates community planting days where locals help maintain the creek by weeding, planting and cleaning up rubbish.

The help Wendy offers doesn't just protect the creek; the community planting day brings together schools, families and the local community.

Residents and businesses whose properties back onto the area are encouraged to ensure their property maintains the quality of the Oakley Creek environment.

Wendy says she is humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

Friends of Oakley Creek will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund community planting days at Oakley Creek. The organisation will also create a trail to help people learn more about the natural environment.



## Jill Gibson Young Men's Christian Association of Auckland Incorporated

*Generous, Caring,  
Community-minded*

### From starting a childcare service to supporting those during the 2018 storms

Jill's 20-year association with the YMCA Mt Albert Community and Leisure Centre began because, in her words, her son was being a pest one day when she took him to her aerobics class there.

She decided to set up a childcare service at the centre, and it has grown to accommodate 30-odd children a day.

Since then she has taken on employment at the centre, where she is now the manager.

"After seven years, my children were older and I wanted a stable job," she says.

As a centre manager, Jill continues to come up with new ideas that benefit the community.

These include partnerships with GPs to bring health services to the YMCA-run centre and targeted fitness classes for young people with mental health conditions.

During the storms and power outages in April 2018, Jill made sure the centre opened its doors to anybody in need of a hot shower.

The centre offers playgroups, after-school care and holiday programs on top of the usual organised sport.

Perhaps most significantly, Jill makes sure that nobody's financial position stops them from joining the community.

"Those who are willing but unable to pay can apply to have their fees paid for them," says Jill, who is obviously pleased to be a Westfield Local Hero.

The centre will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to help fund a school outreach program.

"We take sporting activities to schools and give students the opportunity to do something they couldn't usually afford, to keep them healthy and active," says Jill.

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

*Lifeline: 0800 543 354*

*Suicide Crisis Helpline: 0508 828 865*

*Kidsline: 0800 54 37 54*

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Micaella Stone** | RainbowYOUTH

*Caring, Adventurous, Loyal*

RainbowYOUTH is a charitable organisation dedicated to helping young queer and gender diverse (LGBTIQ) people up to the ages of 27 as well as their local communities. Micaella Stone is a lead facilitator for RainbowYOUTH's under 18 peer support group (GQ) which aims to encourage young people to develop confidence, leadership skills, increase connectedness and community.

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## **Patrick Wilkes** | Child Cancer Foundation

*Determined, Selfless, Compassionate*

Patrick has been associated with the Child Cancer Foundation for more than 15 years and joined as a volunteer after his daughter Eilish was diagnosed with cancer. In 2005, Patrick joined the local connect group eventually becoming the Northern Region Connect Groups' Chair. Run by volunteers, Connect Groups provide a way for families with a lived experience of child cancer to connect in a peer-to-peer environment that is informal, kind, respectful and supportive.

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## **Stephanie Ireland** | Victim Support Auckland West

*Caring, Committed, Skilled*

Stephanie is an important member of Victim Support Auckland West. Stephanie and her team provide 24/7 community response, support and advisory services to victims of crime, trauma and loss in the Mt Albert and surrounding areas as they cope through difficult times.

# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Shalbie BOWEN**

The Order of St John Northern  
Region Trust Board

**Clare CALDWELL**

Auckland City Mission

**Kristina CAVIT**

The Kindness Institute

**Gina COCKER**

College Rifles Rugby Union  
Football & Sports Club Inc

**Bruce CROSS**

Physical Disability Rugby League  
New Zealand Incorporated

**Jill GIBSON**

Young Men's Christian Association  
of Auckland Incorporated

**Stephanie IRELAND**

Victim Support Auckland West –  
Division of New Zealand Council  
Of Victim Support Groups Inc

**Wendy JOHN**

Friends of Oakley Creek

**Mark JOHNSON**

Boot It

**Carol LINDLEY**

Mt Albert Primary school PTA  
(Parent Teachers Association)

**Poli MATAAFA**

Grey Lynn Community Church

**Geoff MORRIS**

Edendale Tennis Club

**Vandana PATEL**

Mt Eden Hockey Club

**Marie PERSON**

Silver Fern MotorSport  
Charitable Trust

**Hamish REID**

Project Litefoot Trust

**Paul SAGGERS**

Eden Rugby Club Inc

**Richard STANTON**

1st Mt Albert, St Jude's Scout  
Group

**Micaella STONE**

RainbowYOUTH Incorporated

**Jan TATE**

Cystic Fibrosis New Zealand

**Peter TAYLOR**

The Farmers Santa Parade  
(The Auckland Children's  
Christmas Parade Trust)

**Patrick WILKES**

Child Cancer Foundation



**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





SCENTRE GROUP

Owner and Operator of **Westfield** in Australia and New Zealand