



*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.



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

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

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*Westfield*

**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

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*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

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**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

Kidslines: 0800 54 37 54

Depression Helpline: 0800 111 757

Samaritans: 0800 726 666

Family Violence Information Line: 0800 456 450





SCENTRE GROUP

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