



Westfield

Local Heroes

2019

Westfield Local Heroes is a community recognition and grants program, designed to shine the spotlight on those people who connect and enrich their local communities across Australia and New Zealand.

Individuals are nominated by their local communities, with the outcome of a public vote determining the three successful 2019 nominees for every Westfield centre. In total, we are recognising 121 Westfield Local Heroes across Australia and New Zealand in 2019.

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Each of the affiliated organisations of the Westfield Local Heroes have received a grant to support their work. Westfield will award 121 grants across Australia and New Zealand – totalling \$1.2 million.

We congratulate all the 2019 nominees for being recognised by their communities and thank them for the important contribution they all make to improving social wellbeing in their local areas.

westfield.com.au/local-heroes westfield.co.nz/local-heroes

Westfield

Eastgardens
NSW



"I aim to give people with physical disabilities opportunities to engage in various wheelchair sports for all the things that sport can provide," says Craig.

Life-changing devotion to wheelchair sports

Craig Jarvis (OAM) — Wheelchair Sports NSW

Dedicated, Committed, Generous

Craig Jarvis has touched the lives of many people who have tried wheelchair sports in the eastern suburbs of Sydney.

By day, he helps Prince of Wales Hospital patients with spinal cord injuries learn how to use a wheelchair.

After work, he often introduces newly disabled people to wheelchair sports and has been a volunteer for Wheelchair Sports NSW for thirty-nine years. Every Wednesday night, he runs a wheelchair basketball scrimmage at Daceyville PCYC.

"I aim to give people with physical disabilities opportunities to engage in various wheelchair sports for all the things that sport can provide," says Craig.

One of his players nominated him as a Westfield Local Hero. Craig says that it was pleasing to know

that the community had thrown their support behind him

"Wheelchair Sports NSW is a fantastic organisation that I've been involved with for 40 years."

Craig says that wheelchair sports have a variety of benefits, including fitness, camaraderie, peer support, competition, new friendships, confidence, resilience and belonging to a community.

Craig first volunteered at an event in 1980 and was enormously impressed with the concept of sport for people with disabilities. He has been involved ever since, being appointed to the board of Wheelchair Sports NSW in 1990 and named a Life Member in 1999 in recognition of his tireless voluntary work. He has also been involved in five Paralympic Games.

Craig is synonymous with wheelchair sport in the eastern

suburbs, particularly basketball, and has received much recognition for his efforts.

This includes being awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM), a Distinguished Long Service Award from the NSW Sports Federation and The Sir Ludwig Guttman Award from Disability Sports Australia.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield Centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Wheelchair Sports NSW will use its grant to buy two basketball wheelchairs for new players to try the sport.

"We would like to have a few chairs with different sizes on hand for their first go before they buy their first one," says Craig.



"Sometimes when you work in health, as a caring profession, you give a lot of yourself, and it's not very often that you get any thanks. Something as big as this means a lot."

Creating a warm hospital welcome for indigenous mums

Kate Williams — Malabar Midwives

Compassionate, Committed, Experienced

As a Wiradjuri woman, midwife Kate Williams has cultural insight that makes the Royal Hospital for Women in Randwick more welcoming to Indigenous mothers.

Kate provides culturally sensitive care at Malabar Midwives and has helped triple the number of Indigenous women giving birth at the hospital over the past twelve years.

This leads to healthier babies and mothers, many of whom breastfeed and make healthy lifestyle choices.

"Unfortunately, Aboriginal women still face prejudice within the mainstream health system, and if they do not feel comfortable with the service, they will not use it," says Kate.

She feels grateful and humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero by the community.

"It's such wonderful feedback that what you're doing makes a difference," she says.

"Sometimes when you work in health, as a caring profession, you give a lot of yourself, and it's not very often that you get any thanks. Something as big as this means a lot."

Kate regularly works after hours, with the Malabar team providing a 24-hour phone service and pregnancy care, so women always have someone familiar to speak to.

Once an indigenous woman is in the hospital system, Kate becomes a passionate and committed advocate for them, speaking up when necessary and reminding non-Indigenous staff to be sensitive to cultural diversity.

"A longer-term outcome of the service is that pregnancy is a soft entry point to health

care. A positive experience for the mother often results in her relatives becoming more trusting of the hospital system and more confident about seeking medical assistance," says Kate.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Malabar Midwives will use its grant to upgrade equipment at their three clinics and provide additional support to women, such as assistance with transport to attend appointments.

"This will allow our organisation to give women the little extras, such as giving new mums and their families fruit and veggie baskets," says Kate. "These little things can make a real difference."

Working with families to make wishes come true

Emma Levett — Make-A-Wish Australia

Fun-Loving, Compassionate, Encouraging

Make-A-Wish Australia touches a chord on many levels for Emma Levett, who is President of the charity's Central Sydney branch.

One of her many roles is to visit families in their homes to speak to children about their wishes and make them come true.

During these visits, she is often reminded how kindness, love, compassion and fun can help the whole family.

On a personal level, Emma knows what it's like to have a family member diagnosed with a life-threatening illness, and this gives her insight into how many of the families that she meets are struggling.

Emma she is proud and grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "To be recognised for the work that we are doing for the kids is amazing," she says.

It can take the volunteers some time to develop a plan for each child's wish, she says. "You build relationships with these families to have a positive impact."

Apart from many hours of fundraising and administration duties a month, Emma is closely involved in delivering every wish in central Sydney to ensure every child has the best possible experience.

"Receiving a wish has a significant positive impact on children's physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing," she says.

Under her watch, kids have been gifted wishes such as meeting SpongeBob SquarePants, being a purple pirate princess or riding in a batmobile.

Part of the reward is seeing the delight on kids' faces and making a difference, no matter how small, says Emma.

Almost all parents say the whole family benefits from the granting of a wish, as do friends and school communities, who are often deeply affected by the serious illness of a child in their network.

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Make-A-Wish Australia will put its grant towards delivering the thirteen active wishes in the central Sydney region.

"With the money, we can keep unlocking the imaginations of children and granting those wishes," says Emma.



Emma she is proud and grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "To be recognised for the work that we are doing for the kids is amazing," she says.

Your 2019 Finalists

Samantha Heron

Youth off the Streets

Samantha Heron has created heart-warming experiences by bringing disconnected school students and their elders together in a pilot mental health program. The two generations built a strong rapport, telling their stories during weekly visits over an eight-week period. The students from The Bowen College Maroubra's Youth Off the Streets program delighted their teachers by showing how patient and caring they could be, and some have gone on to complete work experience at aged-care facilities. "My vision is, at its heart, to reduce social isolation and promote inclusion and harmony for our local community," says Samantha.

Kirsty Levin

The Parents Village

When psychologist Kirsty Levin suffered early parent shock and postnatal depression in 2012, she was surprised by the lack of preparation programs available for early parenthood. This fuelled her desire to help expectant and new parents prepare for their lifelong job, and she co-founded The Parents Village to fill the gap she had experienced. "I am driven to support our clients to find their voice and their feet at home and work, to feel connected to their children, their family and the community, and to thrive instead of just survive through parenthood," says Kirsty.

Peter Hennessy

Dunbar Rovers FC NPL

Peter Hennessy has been an active and dedicated volunteer at Dunbar Rovers FC for twenty-one years. As a director, he plays an integral part in helping to keep the club fee-free, which is special, because most premier league clubs charge players more than \$1500 a season. It's an important ethical issue for the club leadership because they don't believe youth players should subsidise senior football. However, it puts extra fundraising pressure on Peter and the leadership. "I put thirty to forty hours a week into running the club," he says.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Jenny ABELA
Vision Australia

Rebecca ANDREWS
John Brothie Nursery School

Dr Adam GORDON
Maroubra Veterinary Hospital

Adam HEGEDUS
Educating The Future

Peter HENNESSY
Dunbar Rovers FC NPL

Samantha HERON
Youth off the Streets,
The Bowen College Maroubra

Craig JARVIS
Wheelchair Sports NSW

Nirmal JENA
Odissi Dance & Music Company

Emma LEVETT
Make-A-Wish Australia

Kirsty LEVIN
The Parents Village

Patrick LIM
Maroubra Rotary

Kate MELHOPT
South Eastern Community Connect

Regan MITCHELL
WEAVE

Hannah MORE
Sio Ratu Foundation

Elizabeth SHEPHERD
Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick

Tony VECCELLIO
Randwick Botany Little
Athletic Centre

Kate WILLIAMS
Malabar Midwives

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

AUSTRALIA

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800

MensLine: 1300 78 99 78

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732

NEW ZEALAND

Lifeline: 0800 543 354

Suicide Crisis Helpline: 0508 828 865

Kidsline: 0800 54 37 54

Depression Helpline: 0800 111 757

Samaritans: 0800 726 666

Family Violence Information Line: 0800 456 450

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