



*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](https://westfield.com.au/local-heroes) [westfield.co.nz/local-heroes](https://westfield.co.nz/local-heroes)

*Westfield*

**Hornsby**  
NSW

## Dishing out friendship and low-cost groceries

**William (Bill) Bradley** — Hornsby Connect

*Inspirational, Friendly, Kind-hearted*

Many people in Hornsby have had their day brightened by a friendly greeting from William (Bill) Bradley as he passes on his mobility scooter.

The 84-year-old community leader has been a quadriplegic since he contracted polio at fourteen and has been involved in volunteering for sixty-five years.

He is a proud founder of the Hornsby Connect drop-in centre, which opens every Wednesday and provides low-cost dry groceries as well as free fruit, vegetables and bread to more than one hundred people a week. It also has a café at which people can socialise and enjoy free treats.

"I oversee the free fruit and veg section and meet and greet all the people coming through," says Bill.

"We make a point of talking to everyone because a lot of people don't have anyone to talk to. We are like a family. We know a lot of the people by name."

Bill is grateful that the community supported the centre and voted him a Westfield Local Hero. "But the title hero doesn't sit well with me because I consider myself just a spokesperson for a team of dedicated volunteers."

"I get a kick out of being a volunteer. This gives me a great feeling that there is nothing wrong with me and puts me on a level field with everybody else."

Bill is a keen sportsman and a world champion Paralympic bowls player, as well as a father of two and a grandfather of four.

"Sure, disabilities make it difficult or impossible to perform tasks that others take for granted," he says. "But I am happy to note that not only have I overcome life's challenges; I have truly succeeded."

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.

Hornsby Connect will put its grant towards a new delivery van and to fund ongoing operational expenses.

"We need a freezer truck so that we can pick up more food for the increasing number of people who are coming through," says Bill.

**"I get a kick out of being a volunteer. This gives me a great feeling that there is nothing wrong with me and puts me on a level field with everybody else."**



**Danielle finds being voted a Westfield Local Hero both humbling and thrilling. "To know that you do have the community's support is incredibly invigorating and inspiring. It gives you new energy for your work."**

## Teaching our children to challenge domestic violence

### Danielle Miller — Walk the Talk

*Passionate, Determined, Innovative*

Parenting author and educator Danielle Miller is fighting domestic violence from the ground up by teaching high school students about respectful relationships and gender equity.

In her role as Education Officer for Women's Community Shelters, she has designed and launched a two-phase program called Walk the Talk to encourage boys and girls to become change-makers in their schools and neighbourhoods.

In phase one, her team spend a day with year-nine and ten students, helping them understand that domestic violence is a reality in every neighbourhood of Australia and empowering them to speak up about it.

In phase two, the students are encouraged to work with a local shelter for a year.

The ultimate aim is to bring about generational change and

remove the need for shelters, says Danielle, who lives in the Hornsby Shire and is a long-term supporter of the local shelter.

She finds being voted a Westfield Local Hero both humbling and thrilling. "To know that you do have the community's support is incredibly invigorating and inspiring. It gives you new energy for your work."

So far, students at Barker College, Asquith Boys and Pennant Hills High have participated in the program.

"They have done some amazing things, such as fundraisers, volunteering at shelter events and running awareness campaigns at their schools.

"By teaming up with a local shelter, they learn that domestic violence is a reality in their neighbourhood," says Danielle.

This knowledge encourages the students to speak out and become a force for change.

Everyone benefits: the students, the shelter residents and the wider community, says Danielle, who in 2018 was one of four finalists for the NSW Premier's Award for Woman of the Year and has received a Suicide Prevention Australia Life Award for excellence in media reporting.

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"The impact will be quite significant," says Danielle.



**“Listening to people – really listening to them – and working out how they want to be helped and how I can help them is the first part of connecting with people in this industry,” Cherie says.**

## Building self-belief and helping people find work

### Cherie Raffan — Ability Options

*Sparkling, Professional, Committed*

Cherie Raffan has been an employment adviser for people with disabilities for thirteen years because she loves helping people.

Some of her clients are highly qualified but are struggling to find a position; others have never worked or have no recent work history. Many have a mental illness.

Cherie enjoys proving them wrong if they don't believe they will find a job. “We say that right now you're a little bit stuck, grab my hand, and we will drag you out of it.”

Some clients are fearful of employment, fearful of failure or fearful of bullying. “We help them overcome those barriers,” says Cherie. “We try to keep them positive and focused. It might mean creating a resume for someone who has never had a resume or upskilling them to open new doors.”

Cherie feels both embarrassed and honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. “I don't see myself as extraordinary. But I am so very grateful to everyone who voted for me. It's a huge honour for disability employment services to be recognised.”

She believes people should encourage and support each other to reach their potential, and always takes care to treat her clients as individuals.

“Listening to people – really listening to them – and working out how they want to be helped and how I can help them is the first part of connecting with people in this industry,” Cherie says.

Once a client has a job, Cherie and a multidisciplinary team provide ongoing support to help them thrive in their new role.

“Seeing any unemployed client return to the workforce is incredibly rewarding,” says Cherie.

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Ability Options will use its grant to fund driving lessons for ten young clients.

“Having a licence would mean the world to them. It can change someone's future,” says Cherie.

“Many positions that our clients would love are ruled out because they can't reach them on public transport.”

# Your 2019 Finalists

## **Elizabeth Campbell**

### **Studio ARTES**

The first time Elizabeth Campbell visited Studio ARTES with her son, Josh, he was so happy that they had to visit again. Josh, who has autism and is twenty-four, became a member of the arts-based disability service in 2013 and has been happily attending ever since. Eventually, Elizabeth was volunteering three or four days a week, and she jumped at the opportunity when a part-time admin job came up. She still volunteers, helping members with everyday activities, working at community stalls and running the studio's shop. "I love working with the members and staff," she says.

## **Kate Guild**

### **BlowFly Cricket**

Kate Guild loves sport and believes in breaking down barriers for children and young adults with special needs. That's why she is the volunteer Director of Operations for Blowfly Cricket, which provides a safe, caring, non-judgmental environment in which people with disabilities can enjoy the sport. Participants don't even have to play cricket if they don't feel like it. They can watch, cheer on their friends, help with the BBQ and socialise. "The wonderful thing is the participants and their families are out being active and socialising in the community," says Kate.

## **Peter Kirkwood**

### **PCYC Hornsby**

Peter Kirkwood has been involved with the Hornsby Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) for sixty years. In his youth, he achieved his black belt in karate there, and in the 1990s he coached his son's basketball team. In 2002, he was appointed President of the club and persevered with a long and eventually successful campaign to replace the ageing George Street premises with a modern \$15 million building. One of Peter's priorities is inclusivity, and he has ensured the club is friendly to everyone, including the large Southeast Asian community living in local apartments.



# Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

**Wendy BLAXLAND**  
Marian Street Theatre  
for Young People

**William BRADLEY**  
Hornsby Connect Inc

**Elizabeth CAMPBELL**  
Studio ARTES

**Brad DOWLING**  
Children's Tumour Foundation

**Paul GODFREY**  
Hornsby Kuring-gai PCYC

**Kate GUILD**  
BlowFly Cricket

**Libby HEFFEREN**  
Make-A-Wish Australia

**Peter KIRKWOOD**  
Police Citizens Youth Club NSW  
(PCYC Hornsby)

**Jo MARX**  
It's About Us Ltd

**Peggy McDONALD**  
Higher Ground Raptor Centre

**Dannielle MILLER**  
Walk The Talk

**Marnie NISSEN**  
BlowFly Cricket

**Cherrie RAFFAN**  
Ability Options

**Priya SHARMA**  
Stroke 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

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**SCENTRE GROUP**