Westfield
Local Heroef
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.

# Westfield Local Heroef

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



## Hurstville

NSW

PAGE 2 HURSTVILLE, NSW



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# Dad uses science to create inclusive Scouts experience

## **Craig Scott** — 2nd Mortdale Scout Group

Committed, Inspiring, Resourceful

Not only is Craig Scott a widowed dad raising two sons while working full-time for Sydney Trains. He is also a Scout leader for a group of girls and boys and a regional Special Needs Advisor, helping to make Scouts inclusive for as many people as possible.

"My aim is to provide opportunities for each Scout to challenge themselves physically and intellectually, develop leadership skills and feel a sense of belonging and community," says Craig, who is pleased to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"Like my fellow nominees, I'm not a volunteer to seek awards, but the recognition is nice."

Craig ensures everyone in his group can live up to Scouting's motto of "Do Your Best", but this is always in the context of each child's ability.

His Scout name is "MacGyver", which was given to him when he showed Scouts how to use sticks and a pocket-knife to get around a shortage of tent pegs.

Craig is mindful of the need to be inclusive and comes up with fun and challenging or interesting science-related activities that are popular among Scouts who may not be able to manage adventurous outdoor activities.

He is particularly proud of the more than 50 science activities he developed for his advanced training project.

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.

The Scout Association of NSW will use its grant to provide mental health first aid training and train leaders to support people with special needs. It will also develop a sensory needs kit for camp activities.

"A lot of Scout leaders don't know we have a special needs team. We would like to train more leaders," says Craig.

The funding will help broaden access to Scouts for people like Craig's son, who uses a wheelchair. While he may not be able to attend major camps, leaders can help him and others participate in other activities, he says.



He feels grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It is humbling to be recognised for all the work I have done. I feel content and satisfied that the community has awarded me for all I have given over the years," says Kiro.

# Helping an entire community feel at home in Australia

## **Kiro Pasovski** — Macedonian Australian Welfare Association of Sydney

Committed, Self-sacrificing, Devoted

Like many Macedonian immigrants, Kiro Pasovski arrived in Australia in the 1960s with only a suitcase.

He worked in factories and built a life for himself and his family, rising to a senior position at the Rockdale City Council where he was in charge of forty parks.

He rose to prominence in the community and supported Macedonian churches and educational, cultural and artistic organisations.

He was often the person new immigrants would go to for help finding a job or support to bring their family over to Australia.

Thirty years ago, Kiro became a founding member of the Australian Macedonian Welfare Association to help new migrants at the time and now the elderly and the rest of the community.

Now in his eighties, he is still on the board of the welfare association and takes a keen interest in its programs.

"I am involved in the seniors nursing-home visiting program. It is close to my heart as many people I know are becoming isolated and do not have much support as life changes. We visit and provide cultural friendship, conversations in a person's first language and socialising around cultural understanding," says Kiro.

He feels grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It is humbling to be recognised for all the work I have done. I feel content and satisfied that the community has awarded me for all I have given over the years," says Kiro.

"I have achieved a lot for the community over the years, including improving family functioning, community identity and harmony."

He has also been a mentor to many young people in the community.

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The association will use its grant to hire a support worker and extend and develop the nursinghome program.

"We are grateful for this grant.
The support worker will
accompany volunteers to
the facilities and help deliver
traditional food and arrange music
and activities," says Kiro.



"The grant is going to go a very long way," says Meni. "It is giving us the opportunity to thrive and grow and continue what we do best."

## Ensuring no child is left out or left behind

## Meni Pefkos — Diversity Kids

Passionate, Innovative, Inclusive

Meni Pefkos lives and breathes diversity and inclusion and does everything in her power to prevent children from feeling excluded because of language, culture, challenging behaviour, disability or any other reason.

This passion led to the launch of her statewide social enterprise, Diversity Kids, which sends bilingual, disability and Indigenous support teams to coach teachers and educators and provides resource materials for use in schools and early childhood settings.

The aim is to ensure nobody is left out or left behind, says Meni.

"Children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities may require additional support to enable their full inclusion and authentic participation."

Meni says it feels surreal to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It tells us that the community has noticed and values what we do to make sure all our children have voices."

She describes her work as a one-stop-social-inclusion shop covering language, culture, religion, disability, special education, speech and communication difficulties.

Language support is the most requested program, she says.
"There might be a child who has just hopped off the plane and has ended up in school or preschool and doesn't speak a word of English. We will send a bilingual educator to support this child and their educator."

Another focus is speech. If a child is struggling with communication, Diversity Kids provides a speech pathologist to help their educator.

"We have a whole heap of programs, and we have packaged them in a fun way for the children," says Meni.

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Diversity Kids will use its grant to run a series of supported playgroups for culturally and linguistically diverse children with speech and communication delays. It will also host a local forum on the seven secrets to inclusion and engagement for children's services providers.

"The grant is going to go a very long way," says Meni. "It is giving us the opportunity to thrive and grow and continue what we do best."

## **Your 2019 Finalists**

#### **Nicole Scobie**

## 2Connect Youth & Community

Nicole Scobie has dedicated her 35year working life to supporting young people. About 28 years ago, she was a founding member of 2Connect Youth & Community, a non-profit organisation that runs social inclusion and anti-racism programs for people aged 10 to 25. She is as inspired as ever to promote social wellbeing and harmony, with many of the people she works with needing a helping hand to re-engage with school, work or the community. "I contribute by being a consistent and reliable source of support," says Nicole, who provides practical assistance, advocacy and appropriate referrals.

## Jenny Bombardieri

## Recreation Sports and Aquatics Club

Thirty-two years ago, Jenny Bombardieri responded to a request from parents of children with disabilities and started a Friday night swimming class at Roselands Pool. That class, which is still running, was the catalyst for Jenny to start the non-profit Recreation Sports and Aquatics Club (RSAC), which has become a way of life for hundreds of people with disabilities in south-west Sydney. It operates from several venues and has 10 staff and 80 volunteers and provides dozens of sports programs as well as dance, drama, cooking classes, social clubs, camps holidays and family outings.

#### Iveta Kohutova

#### **PCYC St George**

International student Iveta Kohutova arrived in Australia from Slovakia only seven years ago and is making a significant difference in people's lives as a youth worker and volunteer mentor. Iveta, who has degrees in law and social work, believes individuals can make a positive contribution in the community and is committed to halting the cycle of juvenile crime. She is an enthusiastic activities officer in three programs at the St George Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC). These are Fit For Life, Fit For Change the Traffic Offenders Intervention Program.

## Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees



Trinity Financial Adviser-Joseph Meawad

Alanna BIORDI

Make-A-Wish Australia

Jenny BOMBARDIERI

Recreation Sports and Aquatics Club

Heidi BREEZE

Carlton South Public School P&C Association

**Daqi CHEN** 

St George & Sutherland Medical Research Foundation (SSMRF)

Catherine CLARK

St George Hospital Cancer Care Centre

**Shannon CROFTON** 

NSW SES Volunteers Association

**Tania CURLEY** 

Mood Active

**Darren GALEA** 

Carlton South Public School

Iveta KOHUTOVA

St George Police Citizen Youth Club

Teresa LI

Georges River Council Youth Advisory Committee Paula MASON

Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church – Peakhurst

**Tom McDONALD** 

Marrickville Youth Resource Centre

Lyn McFARLANE

St Aidens Anglican Church Hurstville Grove

Cathy NISBET

Shopfront Arts Co-op

KIro PASOVSKI

Macedonian Australian Welfare Association of Sydney Inc

**Meni PEFKOS** 

**Diversity Kids** 

Kathryn PHILLIPS

St George Instrumenal Eisteddfod Inc

**Angela PRYCE** 

Georges River College Combined

Stage Band

**Nicole SCOBIE** 

2Connect Youth & Community Inc

**Craig SCOTT** 

Scout Association of NSW - 2nd Mortdale Scout Group

Adele SHARP

St Aidens Anglican Church Hurstville Grove Justine WILLIAMS

Lugarno Public School

**Margaret WONG** 

St Aidens Anglican Hurstville Grove

Margaret WONG

The Exodus Foundation Schoolwise Project

Angela ZHANG

Asian Women at Work Inc

Yan Wen Eva ZHU

St Aidens Anglican Church Hurstville Grove

#### 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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