



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.

Westfield
Local Heroes

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

Geelong
VIC



"Our clients come from many complex life situations. A few words of encouragement and support can work minor miracles," Michael says.

Creating a friendly place for the homeless and lonely

Michael Nolan — Lazarus Community Centre

Committed, Generous, Humble

Former priest Michael Nolan has worked tirelessly to establish the Lazarus Community Centre to provide a safe and welcoming place for the most vulnerable and needy people in Geelong.

It's a place where those living rough or experiencing social isolation can share a daily meal, shower, clean their clothes and watch TV or play pool.

In its first eighteen months of operation, the service has served close to five thousand meals and assisted well over two thousand people to cope better with daily living, says Michael.

He is delighted to be named a Westfield Local Hero as it means more people will learn about Lazarus Community Centre.

"I have a great crew of about twenty volunteers and thanks to

the publicity I have eight more waiting to do volunteer training," says Michael.

"I'm totally chuffed. It gives me a sense of real satisfaction that what we are doing is worthwhile for our clients. It's great that something good has come through me to the centre."

The facility is open Monday to Friday and is linked in with other community services so clients can be given referrals for housing and other practical help.

After serving as chairman of the board for twelve months and training a group of leaders, Michael is now a regular volunteer. He pops in regularly through the week and loves to cook at home for his rostered volunteer duty day.

"Our clients come from many complex life situations. A few

words of encouragement and support can work minor miracles," he says.

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.

Lazarus Community Centre's grant will provide welcome relief from the ongoing stress of finding funds to buy high-quality food to prepare nutritious meals. "This will cover us for six months. That's a lot of worries straight off my plate," says Michael.

"I also want to use the funds to add an additional toilet. Sometimes we have three or four people queuing up for our one toilet."



"Our guests enjoy person-centred care," says Tessa. "I firmly believe all people have a right to good nursing."

Giving carers a break at home-like day hospice

Tessa Davis — Anam Cara House

Compassionate, Caring, Giving

Nurse Tessa Davis is known for her big heart and her empathetic care of people with life-limiting illnesses.

She runs the day hospice program at Anam Cara House in Geelong, which gives carers a well-earned break for a few hours while their loved ones are well looked after by a team of trained palliative care volunteers.

People at the hospice are treated as guests and encouraged to engage socially with others in a similar situation. Guests can also choose to live out their final days in home-like comfort at the house.

The aim is to have one volunteer for each guest so everyone receives individualised care.

Tessa and the team are always on the lookout for beautiful little things that make a difference.

"We had one lady who loved gin and tonic, and we encouraged her to enjoy a drink for as long as she wanted," says Tessa.

She feels privileged to be voted a Westfield Local Hero and is happy it will increase Anam Cara House's recognition in the community.

"It's really important to let people know about our hospice and that it's a happy, supportive and safe place."

One of Tessa's outstanding contributions is a satellite hospice in the northern suburb of Norlane, which she helped start because she was concerned some people couldn't afford to travel to Geelong to visit Anam Cara House.

Every Wednesday, she heads off for the satellite program in a minibus, picking up guests along the way.

Now Anam Cara House plans to develop a second satellite day program south-east of the city of Geelong.

"Our guests enjoy person-centred care," says Tessa. "I firmly believe all people have a right to good nursing."

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.

Anam Cara House will use its grant to bring Tessa's dream of a second satellite program to fruition.

"My wish is that we have many more hospices like this in our country. We don't have a lot of hospices that offer home-like care," she says.



"It's lovely to see that community support behind us and recognition that more needs to be done about brain cancer, which is often a forgotten cancer. Our clients will feel that their voices are being heard."

Family tragedy inspires brain cancer foundation

Rebecca (Bec) Picone — Peace of Mind Foundation

Driven, Dedicated, Unstoppable

Rebecca (Bec) Picone created the Peace of Mind Foundation to support people with brain cancer after her sister-in-law died from the disease.

The foundation runs a support group and annual retreats and provides financial and in-home support to brain tumour patients and their families.

Bec is available 24/7 to offer support and has raised more than \$680,000 for the foundation.

"I founded Peace of Mind to provide much-needed and difficult-to-find support and care for patients and families fighting brain cancer," says Bec, who is honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"It's lovely to see that community support behind us and recognition that more needs to be done about brain cancer, which is often a forgotten cancer. Our clients

will feel that their voices are being heard."

However, she sees her clients as the true heroes. "They're going through the most awful, challenging time of their life but they are still so positive and courageous."

Brain cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in people under forty and kills more children than any other disease.

However, it receives less funding than other cancers, which is why Peace of Mind is raising awareness and much-needed funds.

Bec works full-time for the charity as its CEO and takes only a small, part-time wage, volunteering the remaining hours.

"The end goal is to run Australia's first nationwide support service for families fighting brain cancer," she says.

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. Peace of Mind will use its grant to fund the annual running costs of its Geelong Brain Tumour Support Group and its regional forum, which help reduce social isolation.

"Unless people go along to a support group or our forum, they may never meet anybody else who has brain cancer. It's a great opportunity for people to connect and build support networks and friendships," says Bec.

"We also have a lot of bereaved carers who come along. Our services don't just stop when the person has passed away."

Your 2019 Finalists

Libby Gibson

HeartKids

When nurse Libby Gibson was asked to help HeartKids, she took up the challenge and ran with it. The request was simply to host monthly gatherings for families of children with congenital heart disease (CHD). But Libby's enthusiasm grew and she took it upon herself to get involved in fundraising and organised regular events at local hospitals. The passionate volunteer is now the Geelong branch coordinator for the national charity. "Over the past 11 years I have raised almost \$100,000. I have been able to help numerous families and have made lifelong friends," says Libby.

Rachel Parker

Ocean Mind

When Rachel Parker discovered surfing, she finally found the perfect coping strategy for her mental illness. Eager to share her discovery, the experienced youth worker founded the charity Ocean Mind, which teaches surfing to children and teenagers with mental health issues, disability or social isolation. Over six weeks, surf instructors work one-on-one with the young surfers to build their confidence, self-efficiency and resilience. "I discovered surfing in 2015 and found my saving grace. I knew it could change the lives of many of the young people experiencing challenges," says Rachel.

Sarah Tuohey

Angel Gowns for Australian Angel Babies

Sarah Tuohey is doing what she can to support parents who have lost their babies and need to plan a funeral. The mother of three is a volunteer with Angel Gowns for Australian Angel Babies, which transforms wedding dresses into gowns for babies who have passed away up to the age of 18 months. Angel Packs containing a gown or wrap, blanket, nappy, beanie, booties and a keepsake are provided to hospitals, funeral homes and direct to distressed parents who find it difficult to find an outfit for their angel baby.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Hazy-Mars CONNELLY
The Stroke Association of Victoria

Tessa DAVIS
Anam Cara House Geelong Ltd

Nicki DUNN
Bellarine Training and
Community Hub

Mieke FOSTER
NOMAD Teddy Bear Hospital

Libby GIBSON
HeartKids

Kate-Victoria INGRAM
KV Dance

Rachael MARSHALL
Department of Justice and
Community Safety

Michael NOLAN
Lazarus Communicate Centre

Rachael PARKER
Ocean Mind

Rebecca PICONE
Peace of Mind Foundation

Louise PITITTO
bestchance Child Family Care

Nicole RIDDLE
OneCare Geelong

Angela SEECKTS
Make-A-Wish Foundation Australia

Annaliese SZOCS
The Inspiring Grace Foundation Inc

Sarah TUOHEY
Angel Gowns for Australian
Angel Babies Inc

Michele WARREN
3216 Connect Op Shop

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

westfield.com.au/local-heroes

westfield.co.nz/local-heroes

Westfield

Local Heroes

2019

SCENTRE GROUP