



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

*Westfield*

**West Lakes**  
SA



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## Supporting and informing families on their epilepsy journey

### Kym Meers — The Epilepsy Centre SA

*Humble, Devoted, Selfless*

Kym Meers could not find enough information or support when her daughter Izla was diagnosed with a catastrophic form of epilepsy at the age of four months.

Izla has West Syndrome and the family were told she would "never do anything developmentally".

However, when she started to walk at the age of two, Kym wanted to save other families from the same lack of information and founded Izla's Purple Crusade.

"We bring communities together," says Kym, whose work is closely aligned with The Epilepsy Centre SA.

In the past seven years, the Crusade has raised close to one hundred and fifty thousand dollars to support children and families with epilepsy.

The money goes towards seizure monitors, children's

camps, community support and information sharing.

Thanks to one of the biggest fundraisers, every hospital in the state has pamphlets for people to take home after a diagnosis.

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Kym describes living with epilepsy as a rollercoaster ride. "It is heartbreaking because you can't fix it and you never stop thinking about it.

"Our basic aim is inclusiveness of children with epilepsy, which quite often can come with disability as well, which our daughter has," she says.

"What we would have loved back when Izla was diagnosed would have been a path to follow."

In 2016 Kym won the prestigious Epilepsy Australia Golden Light award for the Purple Crusade, and in 2017 she was named an SA local hero.

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The Epilepsy Centre SA will use the grant to fund seizure monitors to keep people with epilepsy safe while they sleep.

"The benefit of the grant is that it will go back to families living with epilepsy," says Kym.



**"We are certainly becoming a larger organisation," says Rikki, who feels honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's an incredible privilege to know that people are supporting our charity. It's a lovely feeling."**

## Virtuous circle grows out of a challenging foster-care experience

**Rikki Cooke — Treasure Boxes**

*Passionate, Dedicated, Kind*

Social worker Rikki Cooke was spurred into action when four emergency foster children arrived at her home without any necessities.

She started a charity, Treasure Boxes, that provides clothing, toys, car seats and other items to families escaping domestic violence or to children going into foster care.

That was in 2015. At first, it was a humble contribution towards filling a big need.

However, this year has been a turning point, with the charity growing five-fold and distributing seven hundred thousand dollars' worth of goods in the first eight months.

"We are certainly becoming a larger organisation," says Rikki, who feels honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's an incredible privilege to know that

people are supporting our charity. It's a lovely feeling."

The charity provides mostly donated items to over eighty agencies. These include domestic violence shelters, poverty support, refugee support, drug and alcohol support, child protection, Aboriginal support and family support services.

"By marrying up giving with receiving, we are creating an avenue for compassion, change and optimism for children and their families who desperately need a hand up," says Rikki.

She shares a story about a woman who donated one thousand dollars: "Four years ago we gave her some items after she had left her husband because of domestic violence. She promised herself that when she was back on her feet she would donate back to support other women

experiencing domestic violence. That meant a lot to us and showed us the impact of what we are doing is life-changing at times."

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Treasure Boxes will use its grant to engage a specialist to coordinate a large-scale fundraising event aimed at bringing in \$30,000 and boosting awareness about the charity.

"Most of the money will be used to buy goods and to expand our operations. We constantly run out of cots and car seats, so we have to buy them new because the demand is outweighing the donated supply," says Rikki.



**Barry has previously been named Neighbour of the Year and Volunteer of the Year, but says being voted a Westfield Local Hero is a beauty! "It makes me feel good. I'm real proud of it."**

## Big-hearted neighbour devotes his days to children's centre

**Barry Nitschke** — Le Fevre Community Children's Centre

*Generous, Selfless, Hardworking*

Barry Nitschke lives next door to the Le Fevre Community Children's Centre and has been helping in one way or another for decades.

The retired port worker is a 24-hour volunteer caretaker, toy repairman, groundsman and sausage sizzle turner.

Barry, who is in his eighties, helps at working bees and assists with walking the children to the local preschool a few days a week.

He also built a chook house to use up the centre's food scraps and gives the eggs to the staff.

Not only that, he shares his yard with the centre, allowing the children to play under his large Norfolk pine.

"By doing all these jobs I save the centre a few bob," he says.

"It keeps me alive as it gives me something to do. I enjoy hearing

the sound of children laughing coming over the fence."

Barry has previously been named Neighbour of the Year and Volunteer of the Year, but says being voted a Westfield Local Hero is a beauty! "It makes me feel good. I'm real proud of it."

His neighbourliness doesn't stop at the centre. He cares for everyone in the neighbourhood. He ensures bins get put out and checks on people's wellbeing.

Barry regularly collects dumped old bikes and fixes them for children in the community, he mows the lawn for several people and is always happy to help with repair jobs such as fixing a fence.

In the past, he would help an elderly neighbour tie his shoelaces every day until he passed away.

"I've been living here for 54 years. I know everybody in Taperoo," Barry says.

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The centre will use its grant to replace its damaged storage shed and lay more grass for the children to play on.

"The shed will have a roller door and electricity for my blower. And it's going to be called Barry's Shed. That really means something," says the proud volunteer.

# Your 2019 Finalists

## **Tricia Flowers**

### **Enlighten Education**

Tricia Flowers has always been passionate about encouraging women in business, sport and the media. As a mum to two young children, Tricia has now turned her passion towards the wellbeing of children. She is an active advocate and gets involved in many local causes. These include volunteering for the Kids Matter mental health and wellbeing initiative, volunteering as a sports coach, advocating and encouraging girls and women to succeed in life and business.

## **Carolina Correa Posada**

### **Portlife Church**

When Carolina Correa Posada emigrated from Colombia with her Australian husband and baby 10 years ago, she was sad to leave her family. She struggled with English and felt so isolated that she cried every day. Her life improved when the Portlife Church launched its Green Monkeys play group for pre-schoolers and their carers, where she found companionship and support. She quickly became a regular volunteer at the twice-weekly group, giving back to other parents over several years. This made her the obvious choice when a paid position to coordinate the program came up.

## **Alipate Carlile**

### **Power Community**

As a retired Port Adelaide Football Club player and multicultural ambassador for AFL, Alipate Carlile is the perfect person to promote social wellbeing and harmony among high school boys and girls from diverse backgrounds. He does this through his key role in implementing the Power Intercultural Program on behalf of Power Community. The program uses AFL and the football club as catalysts for social connection and acceptance. "The aim is to create a welcoming environment that is willing and able to work with the young people to help them achieve their individual goals," says Alipate.



# Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

**Shirley BROOKMAN**  
Portland Football Club

**Lynnie CALLAGHAN**  
Port Adelaide Softball Club

**Alipate CARLILE**  
Power Community Ltd

**Jade COCKRELL**  
Dynamic Gymnastics Club Inc

**Rikki COOKE**  
Treasure Boxes

**Carolina CORREA POSADA**  
Portlife Church Inc

**Sarah DAVIES**  
Foodbank SA

**Tricia FLOWERS**  
Enlighten Education SA

**Chris GLACKEN**  
coastalfunruns

**Debbie GULLY**  
Make A Wish

**Kym MEERS**  
The Epilepsy Association  
of SA & NT Inc

**Roy MENNER**  
Henley Surf Life Saving Club

**Dennis MEREDITH**  
Port Adelaide District Hockey Club

**Barry NITSCHKE**  
Le Fevre Community  
Children's Centre

**Bronwyn PLATE**  
Nanas Free Food Basket Inc

**Eman RAHIM**  
Heart and Soal Food Assistance

**Jack WELLS**  
Grange Surf Life Saving Club Inc

**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**