



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

Garden City

QLD



"Our passion is to give a voice and a tangible solution to our community's most vulnerable," says Chris, who has 25 years of experience in community work and in 2012 completed a Churchill Fellowship on child protection and family support systems.

Social worker develops a life-changing safety plan

Chris Boyle — Commsync Foundation

Compassionate, Tenacious, Respectful

Social worker Chris Boyle has developed a way for women and children at risk of domestic violence to call for help discreetly if threatened.

Chris is the founder of the non-profit Commsync Foundation, which provides free wearable technology that transmits live audio and location at the touch of a button or in response to a voice command.

This alerts pre-identified supporters to call triple zero or respond in another way.

"Our passion is to give a voice and a tangible solution to our community's most vulnerable," says Chris, who has 25 years of experience in community work and in 2012 completed a Churchill Fellowship on child protection and family support systems.

He feels honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I am privileged to be giving vulnerable women and children a voice and to have that recognised by our community."

The foundation's philosophy is that recipients must never pay for their protection, and Chris and his colleagues have funded devices for 200 people.

The foundation trains caseworkers to help recipients identify their responders, which can take time as many are isolated from family and friends.

"The process helps them transition out of isolation into inclusion, connecting them with people who now know they are vulnerable and commit to caring for them any time, any day, any place. The connection helps circuit break the cycle of domestic violence," says Chris.

The technology in itself is not the solution, he says. "It is just a tool. The solution is people who care."

One recipient says: "Knowing I've got my safety team available at the push of a button has given me my life back. The feeling is awesome."

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 foundation will use its grant to provide devices to ten vulnerable people. "The investment will change their lives forever," says Chris. "We will keep those devices on for as long as they need. That could be for years or decades."



In the volunteer role, Claire is giving back for the support she has received from the charity since she was a child, when she participated in a specialised playgroup and attended school holiday camps.

Rising above severe personal challenges to help others

Claire Gonchee — SBH Queensland

Determined, Strong, Passionate

Claire Gonchee was born with disabling spina bifida and hydrocephalus and has endured social isolation, bullying and multiple hospital stays.

Despite this, she has managed to complete a Human Services degree and is engaged, but jokes she needs to stay out of hospital long enough to actually get married.

She is also a dedicated board member and secretary of SBH Queensland, supporting the charity's life-changing programs and therapy services for people with spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus.

In the volunteer role, Claire is giving back for the support she has received from the charity since she was a child, when she participated in a specialised playgroup and attended school holiday camps.

Something that Claire has learned from the charity over the years and wants to share with others is that it is ok to be a disabled person and there is nothing to be apologetic about.

Claire has a powerful voice in board decisions on governance, strategy, volunteering and advocacy for members of the charity.

She also puts many hours of work into planning and developing grant applications and coordinating events.

She is an engaging speaker and often shares her story at public events to raise awareness about the condition.

"I endeavour to support SBH Queensland to best represent our community," says Claire.

"We support seven hundred and fifty clients across the state

through therapy, group programs, advocacy, information resources and outreach trips to regional Queensland. We achieve this through our multidisciplinary therapy team, including physiotherapists, occupational therapists and social workers."

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SBH Queensland will use its grant to provide a four-day personal development workshop for adults with spina bifida and hydrocephalus.

The intensive program will help people to make sense of the difficulties of living with a disability.



"I am extremely aware of the challenges those in the blind and low-vision community face every day and the need for volunteers to assist."

Taking pride in helping people gain independence

Anne Clements — Vision Australia

Caring, Committed, Passionate

Thanks to Anne Clement, most people in Brisbane have come across Vision Australia's coin-collection dogs for the seeing eye dog program.

The dedicated volunteer builds warm relationships with the businesses across the city that are home to the plastic dogs and takes care of the coins when they are full.

Anne has a vision-impaired son and immersed herself in charity work when it was time for him to gain his independence after high school.

"With my children grown up, it was time for me to give back to ensure clients achieve their goals of independent lifestyles," says Anne.

"I am extremely aware of the challenges those in the blind and low-vision community face every

day and the need for volunteers to assist."

Anne is genuinely surprised at being voted a Westfield Local Hero but says it feels great to know that other people appreciate her work. "It is nice to have something that says you are a valued member of the community and the organisation."

Anne is also an enthusiastic member of the Friends of Vision Australia Coorparoo volunteer group, which raises funds for seeing eye dogs and promotes Vision Australia at various events.

Something that gives her great satisfaction is her work with the client services team, which involves accompanying clients on outings and helping to teach life skills.

"I take great pride in seeing our clients learn how to prepare

and cook a meal for ongoing independence," she says.

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Vision Australia will put its grant towards providing a seeing eye dog to someone who is either waiting for a replacement dog or is waiting for their first dog.

"I know what people are able to achieve by having a seeing eye dog to help them get out and about. The \$10,000 will go a long way towards funding a dog for someone," says Anne.

Your 2019 Finalists

Ron Ould

Lions Club of Brisbane Macgregor

Lions International member Ron Ould knows things get done when organisations work together instead of separately. He's the go-to person for community groups who know he will arrange help through his many connections when people are in need. "I have always tried to be a committed member of the community," says Ron. "I have established a large network of not-for-profit organisations who assist the ever-growing group of low socio-economic households."

Angela Lynch

Women's Legal Service Queensland

Women tend to have a tougher time navigating the legal system than men. But thanks to lawyer Angela Lynch and her the team at Women's Legal Service Queensland, those facing domestic family violence have a team of expert lawyers on their side. Angela is a lawyer with more than 20 years of experience in the domestic and family violence sector and is a respected advocate for women in need. "The purpose of the service is to build safer futures for Queensland women and their children who have experienced domestic and family violence," she says.

Tamsyn Rosenberg

Alive Project

Tamsyn Rosenberg wants everyone to be part of the effort needed to reduce youth suicide. Her contribution is the Alive Project, which runs school and online interventions to build emotional resilience in young people and educates teacher and others to be part of the solution. The project's youth programs empower and prepare young people to navigate away from a crisis. They address stress, anxiety and bullying, and they promote healthy boundaries with social media and technology. "I've personally grappled with anxiety through my life, and this is what initially led me to this work," says Tamsyn.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Amanda AMOS
Caring Angels Funerals

Dana BLINCO
Brisbane Broncos

Matt BOULTON
Hope Centre Services – Circuit
Breaker Domestic Violence Program

Chris BOYLE
Commsync Foundation

Peter CAMERON OAM
Legacy Brisbane

Justine CHRISTERSON
Centenary Plains BMX Club Inc

Anne CLEMENTS
Vision Australia

James CLIPPINGDALE
Make-A-Wish Australia

Ciara CONDREN
Code Blue for Autism

Wendy COX
Graceville Fine Foods and Deli

Karen DAY
Angel Gowns for Australian
Angel Babies Inc

Shaun DORNEY
Brisbane Regional Youth
Orchestra Inc

Tyson ELISAIA
Lava Lava Boys

Frank FONTAINE
Coot-tha MTB Inc

Donny FRASER
Australian Skateboarding
Community Initiative

Claire GONCHEE
SBH Queensland

Brittany GORDON-BROWN
The Nappy Collective

Jane GRIFFIN
Friends of HEAL Foundation

Bronwen HEALY
Hope Foundation

Natasha KILBY
Alliarna's Wish

Tom KYLE
Sporting Wheelies and
Disabled Association

Angela LYNCH
Women's Legal Service Queensland

Ann Maree MANN
Angel Gowns for Australian
Angel Babies Inc

Gladys MATEKUARE
Destiny Church Brisbane

Doug McDONALD
Leukaemia Foundation

Noela O'NEIL
Starlight Children's Foundation

Ronald OULD
Lions Club of Brisbane MacGregor Inc

Caitlyn ROBINSON
Cait's Charity Cards

Gabriel ROMERO
Spanish Centre Mortimer Road
Acacia Ridge

Tamsyn ROSENBERG
Alive Project

Caron WATT
Mount Ommaney Special
School – Early Childhood
Development Program

Russel WIRINGI
Keystone Community &
Family Services

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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SCENTRE GROUP