

*Westfield*

*Local Heroes*

2020

Westfield Local Heroes is a recognition and awards program that discovers and celebrates people across Australia and New Zealand who make a positive impact to their local community and environment.

Individuals are nominated by their local communities and a public vote determines the successful 2020 nominees for every Westfield centre.

The successful heroes are each awarded \$10,000 for their affiliated organisations.

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*

Since the program began, we have awarded \$3.62 million to 363 community organisations.

Every year, we recognise more than 120 Westfield Local Heroes and provide more than \$1.2M in community grants to their affiliated organisations.

We congratulate all the 2020 nominees for being recognised by their communities and thank them for the important contribution they all make.

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

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

# Westfield

# Burwood

# NSW

**Jenny Smith has been a Raise Foundation mentor at Burwood Girls High School for three straight years.**

She gently encourages students to overcome their barriers by generously sharing her own story of overcoming adversity, including anxiety and depression.

"I love inspiring and encouraging others," says Jenny.

Raise Foundation volunteer mentors give up two hours a week for 22 weeks to help young people become resilient, capable and connected by ensuring that they feel heard, valued and supported.

Jenny grew up in a family with mental illness and was bullied as a child. After leaving school, she endured long periods of unemployment, but completed courses and participated in volunteer work and casual work to improve her chances.

Today Jenny is a respected member of the mental health sector and participates in several organisations that have a direct influence on mental health policy.

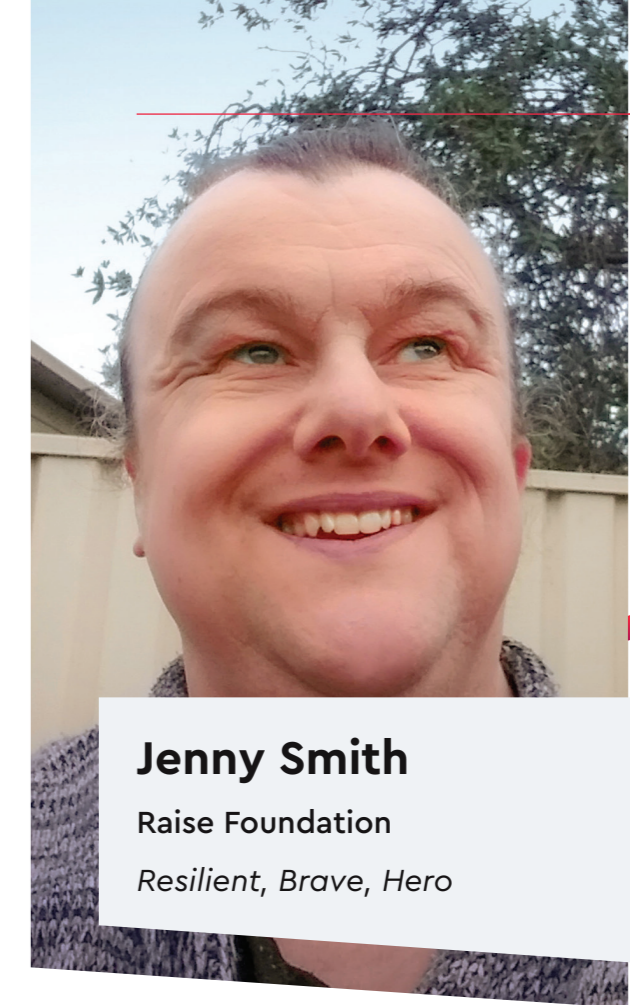
"Everyone in the wider community benefits from my work in the sector, but the young people I mentor within Raise Foundation programs benefit the most from my knowledge and life experience," Jenny says.

"I do what I do because it gives me a sense of purpose and brings me so much satisfaction, especially seeing young people flourish."

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.

Raise Foundation will use its grant to offer a mentor program to at least five additional students at Burwood Girls.

*Jenny's nominator says: "Jenny is fearless, resilient and brave. This woman has achieved so much in the pursuit of breaking down the stigma of mental illness, despite her own battles."*



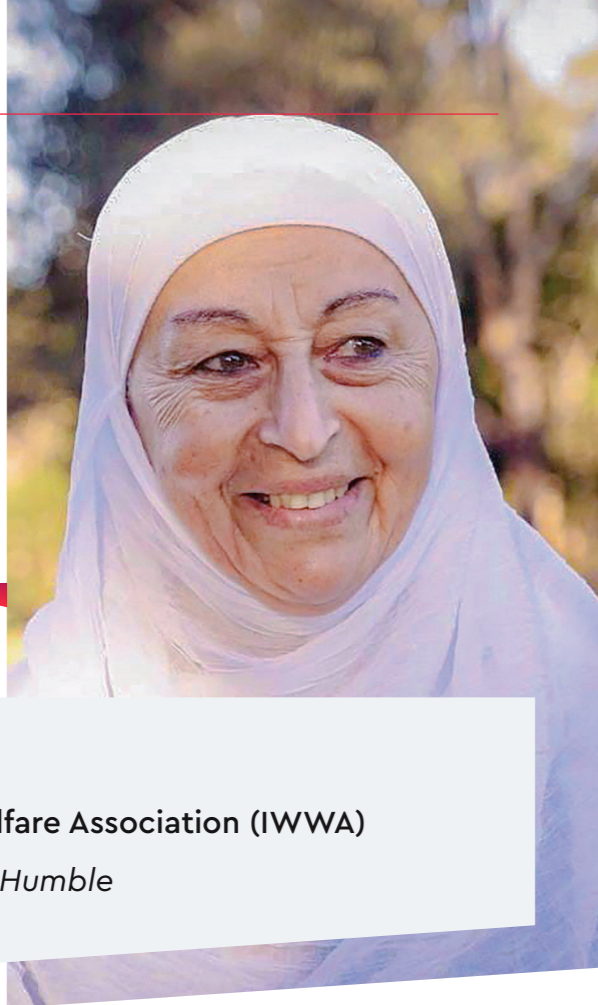
**Jenny Smith**

Raise Foundation

*Resilient, Brave, Hero*

## Supporting Burwood students

**"I do what I do because it gives me a sense of purpose and brings me so much satisfaction, especially seeing young people flourish."**



## Abla Kadous

Islamic Women's Welfare Association (IWWA)

*Incredible, Inspiring, Humble*

## 35 years of service

**"IWWA has over 1500 members from 56 nationalities and their welfare has always been my focus," says Abla, who started volunteering 35 years ago.**

**Seventy-year-old Abla Tohamy Kadous has overcome financial restraints and other challenges to create the Islamic Women's Welfare Association (IWWA).**

She leads 50 other volunteers and staff and is active in the activities of the thriving organisation she founded 17 years ago.

"IWWA has over 1500 members from 56 nationalities and their welfare has always been my focus," says Abla, who started volunteering 35 years ago.

The association helps Islamic women feel welcome and participate in their communities. It offers anti-discrimination forums, school-readiness programs, youth camps, cooking classes and events for elderly people.

Abla has also bridged the gap with other religions and organised inter-faith forums in Western Sydney.

One of her most impressive achievements was raising money to buy a state-of-the-art function centre after years of sewing, cooking and sourcing things to sell.

One of the association's most important projects is the provision of food and other essentials to people in need, and people queue at the centre for parcels.

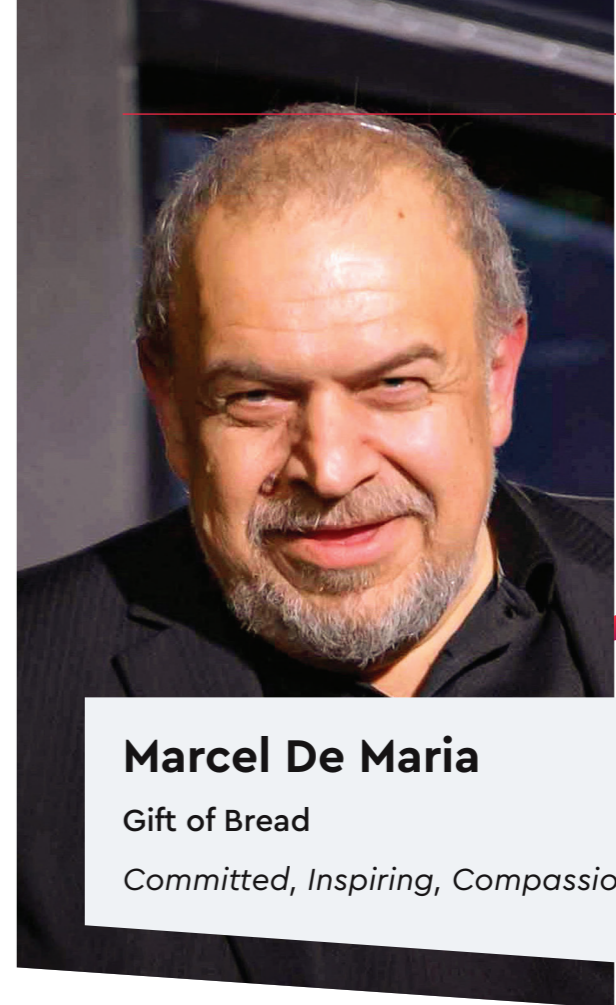
"I have seen the need for food packages grow exponentially," Abla says.

Last year, Abla was named NSW Senior Volunteer of the Year. In 2017 she received the Muslim Lifetime Achievement Award for over 25 years of service to the Muslim Community.

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 association will use its grant to hire a van for the food service and erect a shelter for people in the queue.

*Abla's nominator says: "Abla has brought positive change and hope to so many vulnerable women in her community."*



## Marcel De Maria

Gift of Bread

*Committed, Inspiring, Compassionate*

## Reaching out with rescued food

**"We believe it's important to extend the meaning of community, especially during hard times," says Marcel.**

**Driven by a spirit of compassion, Marcel De Maria has laboured to establish a charity that rescues thousands of surplus bread loaves and rolls every day and shares them with people in need.**

He started Gift of Bread in 2007, run entirely by volunteers they supply bread to more than 200 sites, including refuges, boarding houses, nursing homes, community groups, soup kitchens, food vans, special schools, churches and outreach programs.

"We believe it's important to extend the meaning of community, especially during hard times," says Marcel.

"When droughts were affecting our farmers, we supplied excess bread as animal feed. When our nation was ravaged by fires, we delivered useful packs of water, fresh bread and other provisions for the firefighters. With the COVID-19 crisis we are still reaching out to the isolated, the lonely and the most vulnerable in our community"

Marcel is also conscious of the environmental benefit.

Last year, Gift of Bread rescued over 160,000kg of bread from landfill. "The greenhouse gas emissions would be equivalent to 74.4 years of electricity for a home."

Marcel always leads with innovative solutions. One of the challenges for homeless people is that they may not have anywhere to store a loaf of bread. So Gift of Bread is trialling their Snackbag project to supply manageable portions with a long term shelf life.

The program has proved popular and has growing demand, says Marcel.

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.

Gift of Bread will use its grant to help cover operational costs.

*Marcel's nominator says: "Marcel's determination and willingness to help are an inspiration to all. His kindness resonates with those he interacts with, and he is a wonderful role model for the community, in particular the youth."*

## Your 2020 Finalists

### Carron Johnston

#### Stepping Out Program

Carron Johnston is driven by a profound desire to help women survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

She lives this every day as volunteer chair of the Stepping Out Program, a small organisation with seven social workers who help survivors overcome the trauma and stigma of abuse.

"Similar to cancer, it is likely everyone knows someone who has been affected by this trauma. However, unlike cancer, no one wants to talk about it," Carron says.

Carron, an accountant, has been on the board of Stepping Out for four years, initially as treasurer.

### Cheryl Gabin

#### Burwood Community Welfare Services Inc

Cheryl Gabin grew up in a family affected by domestic violence and knows the physical, emotional and psychological toll it can take. After 10 years in the corporate sector, Cheryl starting volunteering at Burwood Community Welfare Services Inc. in the Inner West Family Support Service.

She facilitates a program called After The Storm, which provides a supportive and nurturing space for women, affected by domestic violence, to grow their self-belief, become change agents and heal past traumas. "Over the years I have seen participants gain strength to move on and make life changing, empowered choices," Cheryl says.

### Rosemary King

#### St Paul's Anglican Church Burwood

If you ask Rosemary King why she goes to great lengths to help others, she'll most likely say: "I do what I do because there is a need, and it's no good just acknowledging a need, you have to act on it if you can. It's the right thing to do."

As a lay minister at the Parish of St Paul's Anglican Church in Burwood, Rosemary makes a seemingly endless list of contributions to the community.

She coordinates the Parish Pantry, the Community Hub and Life Jacket programs, each relying on volunteers to provide essential support to people in need.

## Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

### Carron Johnston

Stepping Out Program

### Abla Kadous

Islamic Women's Welfare Association (IWWA)

### Jenny Smith

Raise Foundation

### Rosemary King

St Paul's Anglican Church Burwood

### Marcel De Maria

Gift Of Bread

### Cheryl Gabin

Burwood Community Welfare Services Inc.

### Ray Sykes

Stepping Stone House

### Nabilah Chowdhury

School Strike For Climate And Yatz (Taronga Zoo Sydney)

### Dr Leng Tan

Chinese Australian Services Society Limited

### Peter Thomas Smith

Rotary

### Liam James

Balmain Para Rowing Program

### Alice Kang

Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway

### Rawah Arja

AusRelief

### John Hughes

Children's Tumour Foundation of Australia

### Dulce Munoz

Mums4Refugees

### Laurelle Wishart

Raise Foundation

### Nic Newling

The Champions

### Chris Stannage

Hunters Hill Sailing Club

### Fiona Patricia Arnold

Reverse Garbage NSW

### Bill Crews

Exodus Foundation

### Janu Dhayanathan

Children's Tumour Foundation of Australia

### Simon Chhoeu

SchoolAid

### Mona Mahamed

Community Support Services Inc.

### David Rafferty

The Sewing Basket

### Yashar Kammoun

Lebanese Muslim Association

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

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

*Westfield*  

---

*Local Heroes*

---

2020