

*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

## Helensvale

### QLD

**Melanie McKenzie is devoted to supporting mothers who have been given a grim diagnosis during pregnancy.**

She founded Harrison's Little Wings in 2010 following the birth of her fourth child, Harrison, who lived for only 28 hours due to an incurable condition.

As Harrison had been diagnosed at his 20-week scan, Melanie and her family faced months of emotional turmoil before this birth.

"Harrison's Little Wings is designed to hold the hand of these families, providing them with compassion, understanding, guidance and friendship," says Melanie.

"Only a Mother who has had a poor or fatal diagnosis in pregnancy, or the uncertainty of not knowing if her baby is going to survive, truly understands the mental and emotional hardship women and their families experience."

Melanie also successfully advocated for the Gold Coast University Hospital to improve its model of care.

The charity offers several levels of support, including free information packs, peer support and practical support with the extra costs including housecleaning, counselling and hospital parking.

"I have given my life to support mums," says Melanie.

"I travel to the Gold Coast University Hospital regularly to provide peer support, and I also regularly have coffee meetups with the local Gold Coast mums."

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.

Harrison's Little Wings will use its grant to launch a project aimed at providing entertainment packs to mums in hospital. It will also use the funds to cover ongoing costs.

*Melanie's nominator says: "Melanie has a huge resource of compassion and understanding. Mel sits among the most devastated, holds their hand and never fails anyone that asked her for help."*



**Melanie McKenzie**

Harrison's Little Wings

*Compassionate, Passionate, Available*

## Helping mums through turmoil

**"I have given my life to support mums."**



## Jane Padden

Christmas Presents for Kids in Care

*Inspiring, Hardworking, Dedicated*

## Remembering the forgotten children

**"By providing a gift for them on Christmas Day, we want them to know that someone is thinking of them with kindness and love and wishing them the very best life can give them."**

**Teenagers in residential care are often the forgotten children of the welfare system and may be longing for a foster home.**

While they may be desperate for a family of their own, it's harder to find a foster family able to cope with challenging teenage behaviours.

Jane Padden is doing what she can to ensure that nearly 400 young people feel remembered this Christmas, thanks to her charity Christmas Presents for Kids in Care.

Jane founded Christmas Presents for Kids in Care to ensure they get the thrill of a present that has been specially purchased just for them. They also receive other goodies, including chocolates, pencils, gel pens and a sketchbook.

She works hard to raise money to buy the gifts.

Thanks to her, the number of kids receiving gifts continues to increase, with 301 parcels delivered for Christmas 2019.

While Jane can't meet the kids because of their circumstances, their carers report the gifts are eagerly anticipated and bring huge smiles to their faces.

"We know that our charity is not going to solve the problems that they are facing," she says.

"By providing a gift for them on Christmas Day, we want them to know that someone is thinking of them with kindness and love and wishing them the very best life can give them."

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Christmas Presents for Kids in Care will use its grant to buy large quantities of items like headphones, t-shirts and make-up.

*Jane's nominator says: "Jane seeks no recognition but has inspired many people; the volunteers who achieve a sense of belonging, and the forgotten children who have been remembered."*

**Amy O'Rourke's son William has Neurofibromatosis (NF), a condition that causes benign and malignant tumours to form throughout the central nervous system.**

In his case, William has a tumour on his optic nerve which requires 6-monthly MRIs under general anaesthetic to monitor and the potential for many more in his lifetime.

As a mental health nurse, Amy's first instinct has been to fight for greater understanding of the condition and to advocate for him and other families living with NF.

Despite being a busy Mum and working full-time for Queensland Health, Amy has taken on a leading role with the Children's Tumour Foundation who represent families with NF.

"I am passionate about our community showing and teaching all children to be kind; teaching them that they deserve to be loved and feel safe", says Amy.

Amy has been able to build a support network for the NF community on the Gold Coast, while also helping to unite families from across the state; promoting inclusion and creating a sense of belonging for NF families.

"I use my time to help others understand NF, to fundraise for a cure and to support families of newly diagnosed children in particular. It is a lonely journey, but I hope my positivity helps others to get through the tough times," Amy says. "I take one day at a time, and commit to enjoying every second that I am privileged to share with my little angel William."

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Children's Tumour Foundation will use its grant to create a new patient registry to help identify both adults and children who would benefit from clinical and support services, as well as future research initiatives.

*Amy's nominator says "Amy has created a community support network that has changed lives. Through her empathetic nature, she helps people build resilience and volunteers much of her spare time to supporting others and improving access to community services."*

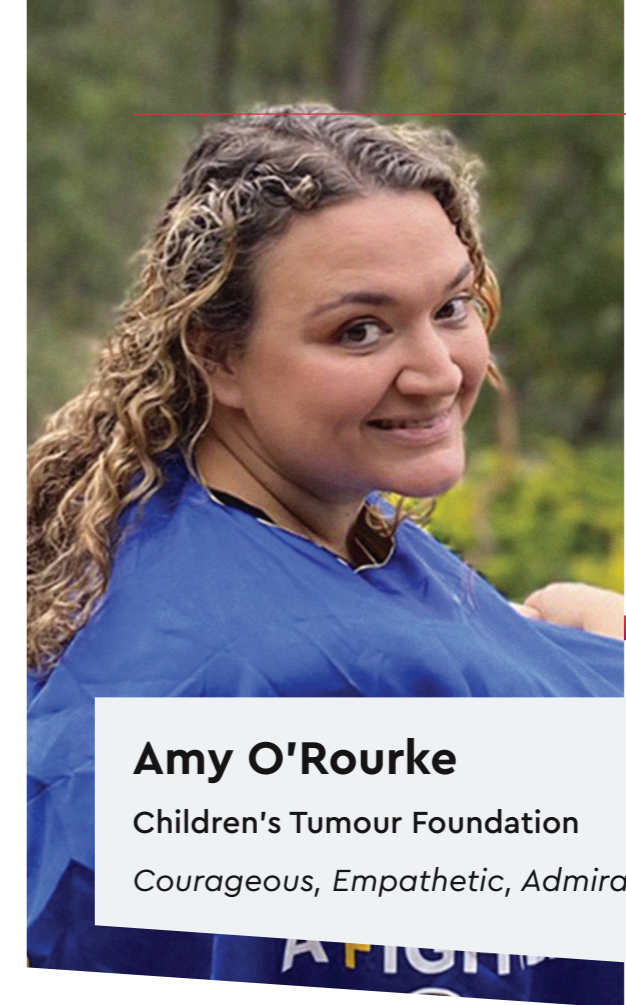
## Amy O'Rourke

Children's Tumour Foundation

*Courageous, Empathetic, Admirable*

## Advocating for inclusion

**"I am passionate about our community showing and teaching all children to be kind; teaching them that they deserve to be loved and feel safe."**



## Your 2020 Finalists

### Barbara Elizabeth (Barb) Wood

#### Boob Buddies Inc.

Barb Wood is offering a much-needed service for patients with cancer.

Research shows cancer can spread faster when patients are under stress, so she founded the charity Boob Buddies to provide free, weekly in-home counselling.

Thanks to Barb, patients and their families are relieved of huge levels of stress.

Prior to COVID-19, Barb would give freely of her time to give talks within the community to introduce them to Boob Buddies and encourage donations.

### Vicky Rose

#### Nerang Neighbourhood Centre

Vicky Rose never rests when it comes to helping those in need, living by the motto that if she can help, she will help.

As the coordinator of the Nerang Neighbourhood Community Centre she has plenty to do, but still finds the time for every person in crisis who walks through the door.

Vicky has been known to use her spare time to help those in need, such as delivering food to an elderly couple living in their car who are ineligible for government support.

"I do what I do because I can, and therefore I should," Vicky says.

### Simone McKeown

#### The Sanctuary Refuge

Simone McKeown has opened her heart and wallet to help women and children fleeing domestic violence from all over Australia.

She received minimal government funding and put \$1.3 million of her own money into building the retreat-style refuge.

Simone has designed the refuge so women and children can bring their pets, as she knows leaving animals behind adds to their distress.

## Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

### Lyn Glover

Spinal Life Australia

### Fiona Lamb

Lotus Living Organically Support Group

### Linda Newton

Gold Coast Hospital Foundation

### Rachel Rive

Wesley Mission Qld – Expanded Horizons Program

### Leeanne Butcher

Australian Anti Ice Campaign

### Glynis Nunn Oam

Gold Coast Academy Of Sport

### Wilhelmina Elsa Ford

Share Abode Pty Ltd

### Gwen Woods

Southport Uniting Church – Community Breakfast

### Tani Bloudell

Radio Lollipop (Australia)  
Gold Coast University Hospital

### Mark David Woodhouse

Lynne Richardson Community Centre

### Gunchala Fuangfu

Thai Aussie Sisters Support Inc

### Nikki Segal

Walk With Us

### Lily Grubb

Little Grubbs Orchard

### Travis Templar

A.B.Paterson College

### Donna-Leigh Perfect

Resilient Rockstar Show

### Melanie McKenzie

Harrison's Little Wings

### Barbara Elizabeth Wood

Boob Buddies Inc.

### Leanne Kyle

Defence Community Dogs

### Amy O'Rourke

Children's Tumour Foundation

### Vicky Rose

Nerang Neighbourhood Centre

### Simone McKeown

The Sanctuary Refuge

### Annie Christie

Parkwood Heights Scout Group

### Cindy Paterson

Full Circle Formals

### Abe Bland

Tribes Adventure Group

### Penelope Grandy

Raise Foundation

### Adam Garcia

Endeavour Foundation

### Dolores Palavra

Raise Foundation

### John Holbrook

Animal Welfare League Of Queensland (AWLQ)

### Marianne Whalen

Healing Hooves Inc.

### Wayne Court

Helensvale Hornets JRLFC

### Barb Wood

Boob Buddies

### Denise Bills

Musgrave Soccer Club Inc

### Sharyn Watson

Rotary Club of Hope Island

### Garth Plank

Mentor 4 Me

### Sarah Jantos

Green Heroes

### Andrew Cullen

PTSD Resurrected Inc

### Chloe Wotherspoon

Rotary

### Michelle Beattie

Hearts Of Purple

### Natalie Contogee

Boots For One & All Community

### Luke Mitchell

Youth Insearch Foundation

### Manuela Whitford

Friends with Dignity Australia

### Jane Padden

Christmas Presents For Kids In Care

**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  
Kidslines: 0800 54 37 54  
Depression Helpline: 0800 111 757  
Samaritans: 0800 726 666  
Family Violence Information Line: 0800 456 450

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