

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

westfield.co.nz/local-heroes

Westfield

Miranda

NSW

Bronte Hendricks is helping young adults with mild to moderate disabilities and mental health conditions gain access to the same opportunities as other young people their age.

Bronte and her business partner, Luke Muttton, are achieving this through Stellar Experiences, an enterprise they launched last year to take people aged 16 to 35 on day trips, evenings out and weekends away.

Their guests have all sorts of interests that they are unable to explore without support, says Bronte.

Their experiences include anything from football games, music festivals, sky diving, nights out, weekends away and travel.

"They are at a life stage now where they want to become independent," says Bronte, who has a degree in Inclusive Education and Disability Studies.

Bronte is a firm believer in enabling positive risk and believes people should have access to everything they want in life.

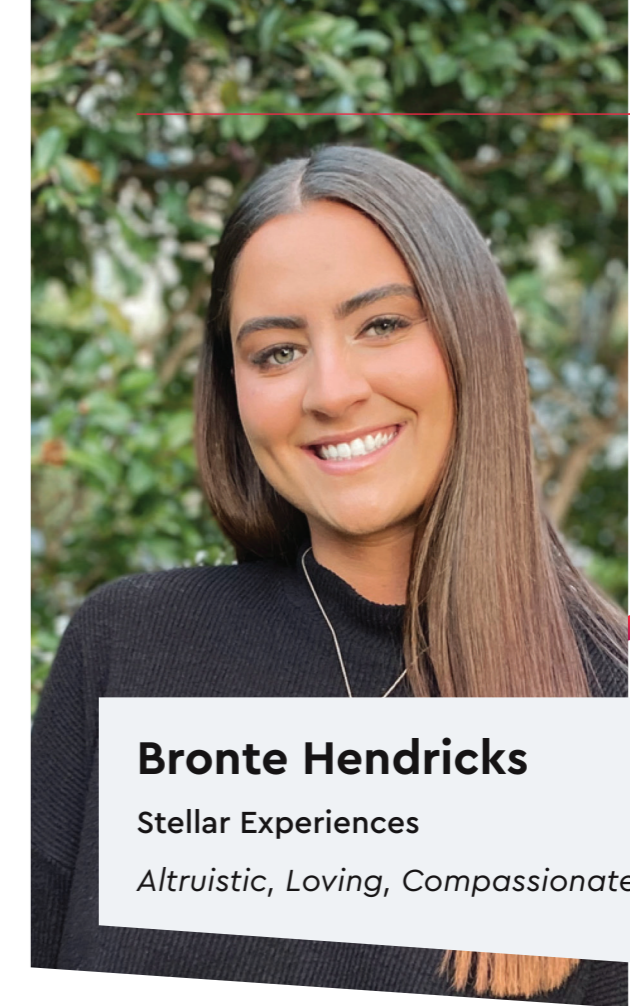
Although many of the guests are seen as higher functioning, they face a range of obstacles, including anxiety about being in crowded and noisy places, challenges with developing and maintaining friendships and difficulties with social skills.

"Unfortunately this can lead to social isolation and young people being somewhat confined to their family networks in terms of their social interactions," Bronte 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.

Stellar Experiences will use its grant to subsidise costs for their experiences to make them accessible for all young people, such as those who don't qualify for the NDIS.

Bronte's nominator says: "Bronte is changing lives and breaking down stereotypes."



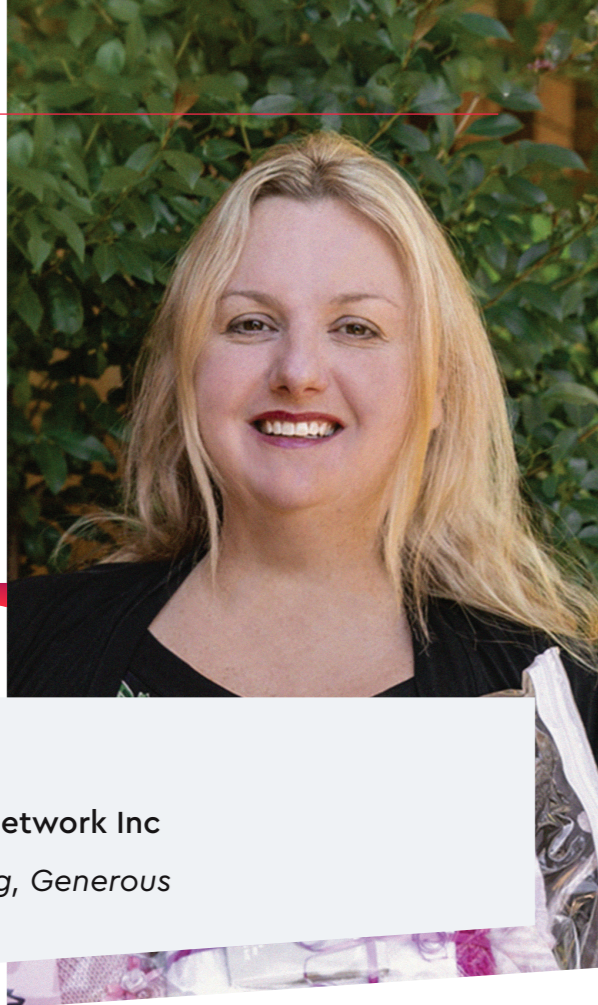
Bronte Hendricks

Stellar Experiences

Altruistic, Loving, Compassionate

Enabling positive risk

"Bronte is a firm believer in enabling positive risk and believes people should have access to everything they want in life."



Sarah Mross

Dandelion Support Network Inc

Hard-working, Caring, Generous

Providing essentials to families

"The families we support may have mental health issues, be experiencing domestic violence, be living with disability, be homeless or at risk of homelessness or may be refugees," says Sarah.

Sarah Mross has her own family to take care of, but still, she finds many hours a month to help others.

Over the past eight years, Sarah has worked and volunteered for the Dandelion Support Network, which provides families with new and preloved cots, prams, car seats, clothes, toys and linen

Sarah, a board member, has had many roles, both day-to-day and strategic, including managing the operational side of the charity, raising funds and nurturing partnerships.

Sarah was there in the early days, helping to grow the client base from 125 families a year to more than 2000.

"The families we support may have mental health issues, be experiencing domestic violence, be living with disability, be homeless or at risk of homelessness or may be refugees," says Sarah.

Much work is needed before a generously donated item can be delivered to its appreciative new owner. The volunteers sort, clean, repair and safety check everything before sending it on.

Importantly, the work extends the lifecycle of goods and saves them from landfill.

"Juggling family with Dandelion has been difficult at times, but my passion for making a difference has kept me focused on Dandelion's goal of making a difference in the community," Sarah says.

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Dandelion Support Network will use its grant to provide 55 families with essential items such as cots, prams, clothes, toys and linen.

Sarah's nominator says: "Sarah has made a generous long-term commitment to the Dandelion Support Network and provides ongoing and passionate support to vulnerable children and families in the local and wider community."

Jason Stanton is a fierce advocate for children with a disability.

Many of these children are excluded from social and sporting activities, so he and his wife, Sarah, set up a program for children of all abilities to connect and learn together.

Skillz4me combines fun with therapy, with volunteers and qualified therapists running the programs. Jason and Sarah personally fund the non-profit and work hard to ensure it remains free of charge.

Over the past four years, the number of children attending has grown to over 80 children per week. "We don't exclude anyone. Our programs reduce isolation, develop children and positively impact families," Jason says.

As parents of two children with autism, one needing constant care, Jason and Sarah understand how tough and isolating it can be to look after children with disabilities.

Skillz4me has established sessions for parents also, where they can connect and speak about common issues, challenges and support each other.

"A growing number of families have a member with a disability," Jason says. "We need more initiatives like Skillz4me to bring our community together."

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Skillz4me will use its grant to help keep the program free for families.

Jason's nominator says: "Jason has shown dedication and selflessness in providing a much-needed and valuable service to local families in need, despite facing his own incredible adversity and challenge."

Jason Stanton

Skillz4me

Selfless, Leader, Committed

Providing fun, therapy and connection

"A growing number of families have a member with a disability," Jason says. "We need more initiatives like Skillz4me to bring our community together."



Your 2020 Finalists

Amethyst (Ame) Barnbrook Expanding Influences

Amethyst (Ame) Barnbrook has co-founded the Expanding Influences disability service, where she leads a team of 17 staff in a quest to help others.

Disability is something Ame knows about because she has a rare condition called phocomelia and was born with no arms and half of her left leg.

"Having our own business has provided us with the opportunity to support clients and their families," Ame says.

Despite her disability, Ame has sailed competitively since she was seven, plays the trumpet, has a degree in creative arts, a diploma in community services and an Australian Sports Medal.

Geoff Vickers Special Olympics Sydney South Club

Generous Geoff Vickers dedicates a considerable amount of time and has done in the past 25 years, to driving the success of the Special Olympics Sydney South Club.

As club chair, Geoff is devoted to helping children and adults with intellectual disabilities train and compete in a wide range of sports.

"People with an intellectual disability are often marginalised and dismissed as useless by the broader community. We use sport to provide the benefits of physical activity and social interaction," says Geoff, who has personal experience of disability in his family.

"Sport allows people with an intellectual disability to interact with the broader community," Geoff says.

Sarah-Jo Lobwein Sustainable Organisations of the Sutherland Shire (SO Shire)

As a marine scientist and high school teacher, Sarah-Jo Lobwein believes education is the key to improving the way people interact with the ocean, which is why she co-founded Sustainable Organisations of the Sutherland Shire and Plastic Free Sutherland Shire. She tirelessly gives her time to help locals understand the need for sustainable choices.

"Our beaches, cliffs, rivers, parks, roads and drains are direct gateways to the ocean," Sarah-Jo says. "We support local residents, schools, businesses and visitors to invest in sustainable choices."

The main messages are aimed at reducing the "single-use plastic habit."

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Roy Cowley
NSW SES Menai Unit

Kathryn Wakelin
Levi's Project

Brett White
Bonnet Bay FC

Brianna Macdonald
Rescue And Recovery Resource

George Koulouris
Cronulla Seagulls Football Club

Tony Cranney
St Vincent De Paul Society NSW

Catania Aviles
Shire Music Theatre – SMT

Emma Watts
Daisie Chain

Bronte Hendricks
Stellar Experiences

Ameythst Barnbrook
Expanding Influences

Geoff Vickers
Special Olympics 'Sydney South'
Club

Sarah Mross
Dandelion Support Network Inc

Jason Stanton
Skillz4Me

Sarah-Jo Lobwein
Sustainable Organisations
Of The Sutherland Shire

Russell Smith
Make-A-Wish Australia

Kellie Stubbs
Mates 4 Mental Health

Scott Fisher
Empowered Healthcare

James Kozlowski
Cure4 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

Jessika Hay
Garie SLSC

Luke Muttdon
Stellar Experiences

Edgar Allan
Push Up For Life

Michael Cooper
Kurnell Men's Shed

Jan Gartrell
Hurstville Rotary

Darian Lenton
We, Future Leaders

Toni Burnham
WIRES

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
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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