

*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

## Marion

### SA

**Thanks to Melanie Tate, kids doing it tough are making happy childhood memories, and thousands of people living in poverty are receiving food.**

Eight years ago, she founded the charity Puddle Jumpers at her kitchen table to make a difference in the lives of at-risk children and people living in poverty.

Melanie and her volunteers help in many ways, including camps for underprivileged kids who are living in foster care or with extended family. The kids get to do fun activities and make happy memories alongside positive role models.

Then there is the weekly food night that has made a difference to thousands of families and individuals. In addition to hot meals and groceries, participants are offered free haircuts, homewares, clothing and toiletries.

"When parents are unable to pay for the basic necessities, their children are at much greater risk of being abandoned or removed from their homes," Melanie says.

"We aim to keep families together, while at the same time maintaining safe environments for children to thrive in."

Another successful initiative is the MinTies program, which teaches mentorship and leadership skills to teenagers.

"The children's carers have also benefited, through respite and behaviour management for some of the children," says Melanie.

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Puddle Jumpers will use its grant to help hundreds more children with food, clothing and social activities.

*Melanie's nominator says: "Melanie is inspiring and will never stop fighting for children to have better lives and outcomes because she believes all kids matter."*



**Melanie Tate**  
Puddle Jumpers Inc.  
*Compassionate, Brave, Protector*

## Supporting at-risk kids

**"We aim to keep families together, while at the same time maintaining safe environments for children to thrive in."**



## Mish Simpson

Southern Koala and Echidna Rescue (SKER)

*Dedicated, Committed, Passionate*

## Native animal rescuer

**"Through education and community engagement, SKER is promoting a harmonious relationship with our native wildlife and empowering the community to actively preserve and protect our unique biodiversity."**

**Mish Simpson devotes much time, energy and money to rescuing and rehabilitating injured koalas and echidnas, and educating the community about the importance of protecting Australia's unique biodiversity.**

She and her husband, Wade, founded the non-profit Southern Koala and Echidna Rescue (SKER). Despite both having full-time jobs, they are on 24/7 standby and often receive calls for help in the middle of the night.

The recent bushfire crisis in South Australia saw them reaching capacity for koalas in their care and having to create temporary accommodation, as well as an influx of orphaned joeys requiring regular bottle feeds to survive.

SKER is based on a 22 acre property in Onkaparinga Hills and is run 100% by volunteers led by Mish and her husband Wade. They rehabilitate wild koalas and echidnas with the primary aim of returning them to the wild.

Another aspect of Mish's work is the promotion of harmonious human relationships with native wildlife.

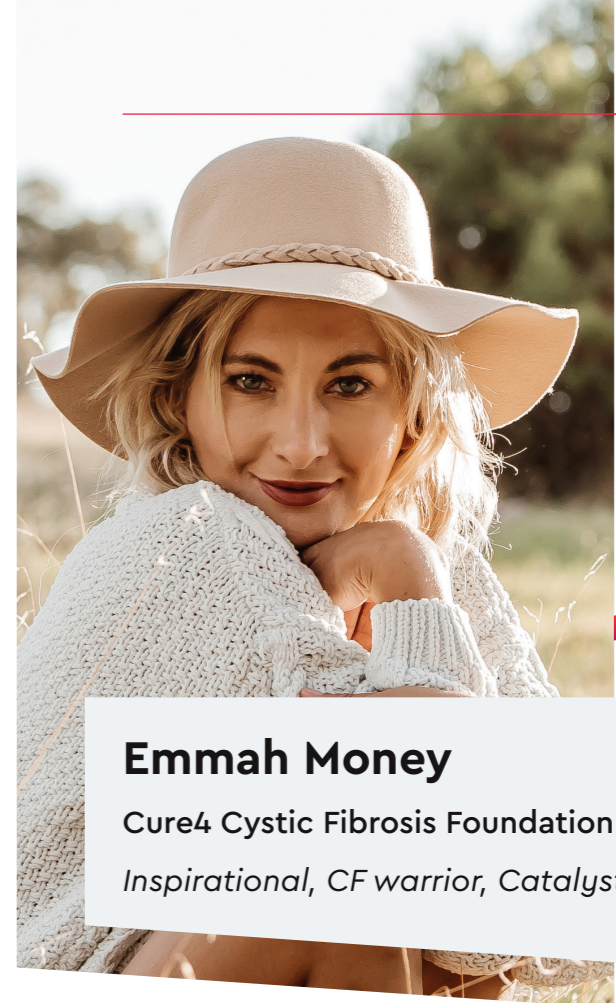
"Through education and community engagement, SKER is promoting a harmonious relationship with our native wildlife and empowering the community to actively preserve and protect our unique biodiversity," says Mish.

SKER also collaborates with other groups and organisations, and the Gemtree winery has accommodated a staged environment where koala joeys can be pre-released to ensure they have the skills to thrive on their own.

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Southern Koala and Echidna Rescue (SKER) will use its grant to purchase materials to build more enclosures in preparation for the busy summer rescue season.

*Mish's nominator says: "In this me me world, Mish puts the welfare and future of one of Australia's best known and well-loved native animals, the koala, at the forefront of her world, and works tirelessly to ensure their survival."*



## Emmah Money

Cure4 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

*Inspirational, CF warrior, Catalyst*

## Brave campaigner

**"I seek to empower kids to understand that, despite adversity, they can rise up and make a difference in their own communities"**

**Emmah Money is a dynamo when it comes to advocating for people with cystic fibrosis, a life-limiting condition that she was born with.**

In her role as ambassador for the Cure4 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, she has helped raise \$50,000 for research into a cure for the genetic disease.

Thanks in part to Emmah's efforts, people with cystic fibrosis now have access to life-enhancing drugs, including one which was added to the PBS after years of campaigning.

As it stands, people with cystic fibrosis (CF) are not expected to live past the age of 38.

"I am hopeful that in my lifetime CF will stand for Cure Found and I will be able to see my children grow into adults," Emmah says.

She uses her own remarkable story to both shine the light on cystic fibrosis and give hope to children struggling with bullying and other adversity.

Emmah was placed up for adoption after doctors told her birth parents that she was unlikely to survive.

She rose above relentless bullying while she was growing up, and she defied the odds to become a parent.

"I seek to empower kids to understand that, despite adversity, they can rise up and make a difference in their own communities," Emmah says.

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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.

*Emmah's nominator says: "Emmah uses her remarkable story to inspire others, not only those impacted by cystic fibrosis but anyone facing adversity in their life."*

## Your 2020 Finalists

### Rebecca Aloisi

#### Supertee

When Rebecca Aloisi's son Cameron was younger, he faced a four-year struggle with acute lymphoblastic leukemia and needed a bone marrow transplant.

Something that cheered him up during his hospital stay in Sydney's Westmead Children's Hospital was a gifted Supertee, which is a special superhero outfit for sick children..

Not only did it make him feel strong, it gave his family and the hospital team a lift as well.

Cameron is now 13, and Rebecca has become the South Australia Supertee champion, raising funds to provide the medical garments to children in the state. They are MRI compatible, have a cape that transforms into a bib and openings for tubes.

### Peter Biber

#### Grandparents For Grandchildren (GFGSA)

Peter Biber moved to Adelaide six years ago to retire and play golf, but it hasn't worked out that way.

Peter has taken on a full-time volunteer role as CEO of Grandparents For Grandchildren.

Peter and other volunteers help an ever-growing number of Grandparents and Kinship Carers keep their Grandchildren out of statutory care.

"Children living other than in their parental homes are the primary beneficiaries of our services, and their extended families are the secondary beneficiaries."

### Leigh Aitken

#### Operation Flinders

Leigh Aitken is dedicated to helping at-risk youth overcome challenging behaviours, digging deep to continue his volunteer work with Operation Flinders while dealing with serious illness.

The charity takes young people aged 14 to 18 on a tough, outback trek to help boost their self-esteem. Leigh encourages them to make positive change.

"It is my role to lead them safely during their journey, to help them cope with the challenges and to encourage self-reflection with a view to positive change," says Leigh.

## Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

### Craig Westbury

St John Ambulance SA

### Arundhati Banerjee

Aida Bharatanatyaved

### Kate Videon

Aberfoyle Hub R-7 Primary School

### Bev Langley

Minton Farm Animal Rescue Centre

### Brett Bryson

Every Day Hero For Beyond Blue

### Olivia Jayne Nassaris

Parkinson's South Australia Inc

### Peter Marshman

Youth Opportunities Association (SA) Inc

### Paul Barnden

Goodwood Saints Football Club

### Helen Cutler

Seaford Storm Netball Club

### Samuel Charlton

Journey Of Resilience

### Emmah Money

Cure4 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

### Melanie Tate

Puddle Jumpers Inc.

### Mish Simpson

Southern Koala And Echidna Rescue

### Peter Biber

Grandparents For Grandchildren (Gfgsa)

### Rebecca Aloisi

Supertee

### Leigh Aitken

Operation Flinders

### Nicole Young

Girl Guides Australia

### Colin Jennings

Forestville Eagles Basketball Club

### Jennifer Howard

Safe Pets Safe Families

### Steve Turner

Variety – The Children's Charity Of South Australia

### Michael J. Boundey

Chimera Medieval Martial Arts

### Rikki Cooke

Treasure Boxes Inc.

### Kylie Thomas

Aerokids Australia

### Austin Edwards

Be The One

### Kirsty Whitehead

Children's Tumour Foundation

### Lani Kahl

Raise Foundation

**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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