



*Westfield*  

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*Local Heroes*  

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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

## Tuggerah

### NSW

**Pauline Maniskas is passionate about helping people with disabilities enjoy surfing.**

She is volunteer secretary of the Central Coast branch of the Disabled Surfers Association and has dedicated the past 15 years to helping people experience the restorative effect of the ocean.

Pauline is a whirlwind. She helps organise surfing events, sources donations and visits schools to speak about the value of being inclusive.

She also raises awareness of surfing among disability providers.

Pauline is the first contact for families interested in surfing and gives them the confidence to come along and enjoy the events.

"My passion is to nurture a sense of inclusion and belonging for those less able in the community and provide a safe and happy environment for participation in our surfing events," she says.

"This has a far-reaching benefit in the community, raising awareness of those less able and encouraging other organisations to facilitate a more inclusive environment."

Not even breast cancer could keep Pauline away from her volunteering.

In fact, her regular swims in the ocean to counter the side effects of treatment made her more determined to help.

"I need to share the restorative effect of the ocean with as many people with disabilities as possible," she 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.

Disabled Surfers Association of Australia Central Coast will use its grant to buy a beach wheelchair and other equipment such as rash shirts and surf boards.

*Pauline's nominator says: "Pauline lives and breathes diversity and inclusion by giving those with a disability the opportunity to socially engage through surfing in a safe and happy environment."*



**Pauline Maniskas**

Disabled Surfers Association of Australia

*Tireless, Dedicated, Awesome*

## Sharing the ocean

**"My passion is to nurture a sense of inclusion and belonging for those less able in the community and provide a safe and happy environment for participation in our surfing events."**



## Les Smith

Berkeley Vale Rural Fire Brigade

*Selfless, Community-minded, Passionate*

# Protecting lives and property

**"There is no better satisfaction than being thanked by someone for what you have been trained to do."**

**Les Smith has been putting his own life on the line to save other lives and property for 43 years.**

He is a much valued and admired volunteer with the Berkeley Vale Rural Fire Brigade, where he currently serves as Deputy Captain.

Les is always there on the frontline during emergencies such fires, floods, storms and car accidents.

Despite the horrendous conditions on the fire front, and the long, tiring shifts, he has continued to come back to help time and time again over the past four decades.

His commitment to putting the community above his own safety was on show during the recent bushfires where his brigade faced the worst and most dangerous fires in living memory.

"I can honestly say that if I had my time again, I would not change a thing in relation to my service with the Rural Fire Service," Les says.

"There is no better satisfaction than being thanked by someone for what you have been trained to do."

Les is dedicated to training up the next generation of firefighters, passing on his knowledge and acting as a mentor.

"It's been estimated that over the years I have been involved in the training of over 400 members of our brigade," he says.

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Berkeley Vale Rural Fire Brigade will use its grant to purchase safety and protective gear, firefighting equipment and to complete a safety haven for the community.

*Les's nominator says: "Every time there has been a serious danger to our community, Les has been there to help. He gives his all to protect life, property and the environment."*

**As a child, Mel knew what it felt like to go without, so she always goes the extra mile for children and families in need.**

Mel volunteers for 20 hours a week at children's charity We Care Connect, putting together packages of clothing, linen and baby items for caseworkers helping disadvantaged local children.

Mel is always cheerful, but can't help feeling touched by the children's stories. She always tries to include special items that meet children's individual needs.

Mel also works outside of the charity's hours, collecting and distributing donated items.

"It's wonderful when caseworkers tell us their clients are so relieved and overwhelmed on receiving the items we gave them," she says.

Such is Mel's dedication that she continued to volunteer even when very stretched herself, after she became the primary carer for her grandson for several months.

Mel overcame her own childhood neglect and qualified as an early childhood educator, a career she loved until she had to retire due to the increasing physical demands required and progression of her arthritis.

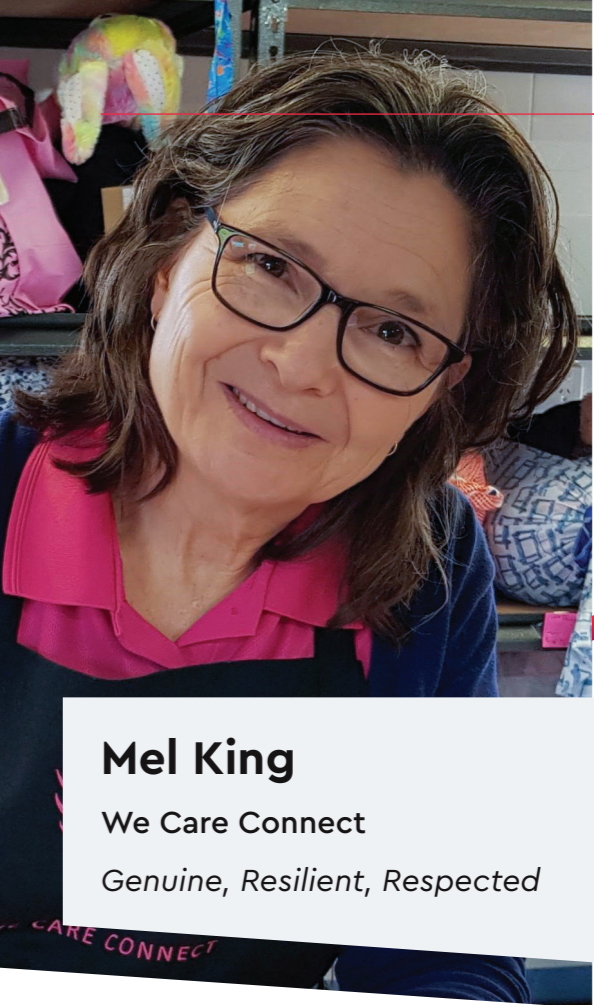
"I've now been able to bring my professional background to working with caseworkers; putting together support packages to match children's needs," Mel says.

"I've also known what it's like to be a child in need."

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.

We Care Connect will use its grant to expand their programs to meet the increased need in these difficult times.

*Mel's nominator says: "Mel is an anchor stone of the We Care Connect programs, supporting thousands of vulnerable children on the Central Coast."*



## Mel King

We Care Connect

*Genuine, Resilient, Respected*

# Giving with a smile

**"I've now been able to bring my professional background to working with caseworkers; putting together support packages to match children's needs," Mel says.**

# Your 2020 Finalists

**Gina Lynn Lemke**

**Lifeline Central Coast**

Gina Lemke has volunteered a day a week at Lifeline Central Coast for 10 years, first as a telephone crisis counsellor and now as a face-to-face counsellor in Wyoming.

Gina knows from personal experience how hard life can be and that recovery is achievable.

Gina completed a degree and has been a foster mum to seven children.

"I've had tough times, but I am very grateful for my journey," Gina says.

If you need support, please phone:

- Lifeline: 13 11 14

**Bobby Redman**

**Central Coast  
Dementia Alliance**

Thanks to Bobby Redman people with dementia on the Central Coast have more support.

After receiving a diagnosis of frontotemporal dementia five years ago, she quickly realised there was a gap in education, support and services for people with dementia on the Central Coast.

Bobby reached out to local organisations and individuals for help, leading to the establishment of the Central Coast Dementia Alliance in 2017.

There are now dementia-friendly cafés and greater awareness in the community and among businesses.

"I am encouraging them to find ways to improve the lives of people living with dementia," she says.

**Tanya Macfie**

**SHINE for Kids**

Tanya aims to reduce the risk of young people reoffending as they transition back into the community.

She is the program coordinator for Stand as One mentoring program run by SHINE for Kids.

Tanya matches young people from the Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre with a caring adult mentor, starting four to six months before they are released.

After their release, the mentor stays closely involved for up to nine months, when they are at the highest risk of reoffending.

"The program has had massive success in reducing the likelihood of reoffending," Tanya says.

# Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

**Dawn Hooper**

Iris Foundation

**Kirsty Raff**

Central Coast Bombers

**Jasmin Hughes**

Coast Shelter

**Justin Rumore**

Morisset Lake Macquarie Show

**Joshua Maxwell**

Jopuka Productions

**Sharyn Burgess**

Wyong Neighbourhood Centre

**Christine Mastello**

Wyong Neighbourhood Centre

**Robert McGrath**

St Joseph's Workshop

**Sally Hudson**

Happiness Habits Inc

**Rachel Peters**

Roundabout Circus

**Rebecca Forte**

Raise Foundation

**Jacqueline Batty**

Vision Australia

**Wendy Mcnamara**

Toowoona Bay Surf Life Saving Club

**Dianne Waterhouse**

Camp Breakaway Inc.

**Brad Cardis**

Fixx Events

**Michelle Brereton**

Bells Echo Animal Rescue

**Michelle Fleming**

International Pageants

**Sally Kable**

Raise Foundation

**Heather Jones**

Wallarah Rural Fire Brigade

**Pauline Maniskas**

Disabled Surfers Association Of Australia Inc Central Coast

**Gina Lynn Lemke**

Lifeline Central Coast

**Mel King**

We Care Connect

**Les Smith**

Berkeley Vale Rural Fire Brigade

**Tanya Macfie**

Shine For Kids

**Bobby Redman**

Central Coast Dementia Alliance

**Annette Johnstone**

St Vincent De Paul Society

**Andy Long**

Roundabout Circus

**Deborah Walters**

The Smith Family

**Michelle Shetab**

Help Find Missing And Lost People In Australia

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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