

A vibrant red ribbon graphic that flows across the page from the top left to the bottom right. The ribbon is three-dimensional, with shadows and highlights that give it a sense of depth and movement. In the center of the ribbon, the text "Westfield Local Heroes 2021" is displayed in white. "Westfield" is in a serif font, "Local Heroes" is in a large, elegant script font, and "2021" is in a clean, sans-serif font. The ribbon's path is dynamic, with several loops and turns, creating a sense of celebration and energy.

*Westfield*

*Local Heroes*

2021

Westfield Local Heroes is a community recognition and awards program, designed to shine the spotlight on those people across Australia and New Zealand who make a positive impact to their local community and environment.

Individuals are nominated by their local communities, with the outcome of a public vote determining the three successful 2021 nominees for every Westfield centre.

# *Westfield*

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# *Local Heroes*

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Now in its fourth year, we have awarded \$4.88 million to 489 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 2021 nominees for being recognised by their communities and thank them for the important contribution they all make.



*Westfield*

**Doncaster**

VIC

**Chris Varney has helped thousands of Autistic students focus on their unique strengths since founding the I CAN Network in 2013.**

Chris was diagnosed as Autistic as a boy and was raised by parents who encouraged him to embrace an 'I can' attitude. They also celebrated his passions.

He founded his non-profit after realising many other young people don't have mentors to support them.

The network has employed over 60 Autistic people to deliver its 'I CAN' peer support program, most likely making it the largest autistic-led organisation in Australia.

Chris is proud that each year his team help over 2,000 young people aged 8-22-years-old across school mentoring programs and online mentoring programs to develop self-confidence, optimism and a sense of belonging through shared experiences with other students.

One of his most unforgettable moments was watching a student share their story at a school-wide assembly and feeling a palpable mind shift in the school's attitude to Autism.

Chris is humbled to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "I am motivated by a deep desire to build a world that embraces autism. I want every young autistic person to see themselves as I see them; capable, interesting and worthy of inclusion and respect," he says.

*Chris' nominator says: "Chris is a Westfield Local Hero because his strengths-based approach to mentoring autistic young people is transforming mindsets and lives."*



## Celebrating autism strength

### Chris Varney

I CAN Network Ltd

*Visionary, Authentic, Inclusive*

**"I want every young autistic person to see themselves as I see them; capable, interesting and worthy of inclusion and respect."**



## Feeding COVID hunger

### **Kellie Ann Wishart**

MCC CareNet

*Passionate, Visionary, Innovative*

**"To see the relief on a parent's face when you provide them with food that they not only need but their family will enjoy makes all the hard work worth it."**

**Kellie Ann Wishart leapt into action to meet the growing demand for food relief sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic, and many local families are better off as a result.**

Kellie has spent many years helping people in crisis as a social worker and started a small community food pantry, MCC CareNet, through her church in 2019.

When the pandemic hit, demand for food relief grew eight-fold.

This inspired Kellie and MCC CareNet to work with another local charity to create The Food Collective Project to expand food relief across the wider community.

Thanks to Kellie, a team of volunteers distribute food donated to the project to other services that can reach people doing it tough. The project currently provides 130 families with food relief each week.

"I have seen the difference that well-timed, useful emergency relief makes," says Kellie.

Now MCC CareNet plans to expand its hours and develop a mobile food pantry.

Kellie is humbled to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "What we have achieved has been a collaborative effort. To see the relief on a parent's face when you provide them with food that they not only need but their family will enjoy makes all the hard work worth it," she says.

*Kellie Ann's nominator says:  
"Kellie is a Westfield Local Hero because she has created a legacy that will have a long-lasting impact for vulnerable community members who fall through the cracks."*



**Michelle Power has transformed the lives of vulnerable young mothers and their babies through her work with the Lighthouse Foundation.**

Michelle was inspired to volunteer with the non-profit after opening her home to a homeless young mother who has a young son and realising she wanted to help more young people in need.

She now works alongside the young parents' program for the foundation, which offers young people experiencing homelessness and neglect a place to live while they heal and receive support to move on to a brighter future.

Her trusted volunteer team provides physical, emotional and financial support to three young mums and four children who live together in one of the foundation's 10 homes.

They take on the role of family, helping them feel cared for and loved, including sitting down with them for Christmas dinner.

Seeing the smiles on the young girls' faces and knowing their future is safe is all the reward Michelle needs.

She is honoured to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "I don't do this work for the recognition, and I feel like my work with the Lighthouse is really only beginning. Volunteering allows me to do kind things for others every day, which gives me great personal fulfilment," she says.

*Michelle's nominator says: "Michelle is a Westfield Local Hero because her policy of helping another person every day is inspirational and profoundly caring."*



## Giving young mums a home

### Michelle Power

Lighthouse Foundation

*Kind, Determined, Proactive*

**"I feel like my work with the Lighthouse is really only beginning. Volunteering allows me to do kind things for others every day, which gives me great personal fulfilment."**

## Your 2021 Finalists



**Shelly Lynde**

### **Children's Tumour Foundation**

Shelly Lynde used her formidable powers of persuasion to secure Federal Government funding for the Children's Tumour Foundation to increase support for children living with neurofibromatosis (NF). The foundation runs specialised clinics to help manage the genetic condition, which causes tumours to grow on nerves. It also funds research.



**Lucy Thomas OAM**

### **Project Rockit**

Lucy Thomas stepped up to challenge bullying in schools and online, co-founding social enterprise PROJECT ROCKIT when she was fresh out of high school. Her social enterprise is now a national movement, with over 500,000 young people sharing their vision of a world where kindness and respect thrive.



**David Treloar**

### **Nexus Young Veterans Program**

David Treloar is helping veterans stay healthy and safe through his work with the Nexus Young Veterans Program.

David served in the Australian Defence Forces for 20 years before being medically discharged with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). He is now dedicated to assisting other young veterans. He uses his military experience to reach out in a way that doesn't overwhelm other veterans.



# Recognising all of our 2021 nominees

Maggie Lloyd  
**Life's Little Treasures  
Foundation ( LLTF)**

Andrew McIntosh  
**Victorian Aboriginal  
Remembrance Committee**

Anthony Field  
**The Wiggles**

Jessica Lillian Nooney  
**Head Nurse at Cabrini Health-  
Missionary Sisters of the  
Sacred Heart of Jesus**

Faye Drummond  
**BASScare**

Peter Abbott  
**Lighthouse Foundation**

Michael Leeds  
**Deepdene Uniting Cricket Club**

Ally  
**From Woolworths Doncaster**

Kirsty Jayne Porter  
**Umbrella Dementia Cafes Ltd**

Nina Laitala  
**Victorian Student  
Representative Council**

Rahela Fazli  
**Golden Heart Foundation**

Annette Subhani  
**New Pathways Life Coaching**

Heather Renton  
**Syndromes Without a Name  
(SWAN)**

Kat Agar-Teehan  
**Little Urchins Wildlife  
Sanctuary**

Caitlyn Georgeson  
**The Pinnacle Foundation**

Pam Meddings  
**Doncaster District Community  
Youth Club Inc**

Sarah Cavenagh  
**Quilts of Love for Fire Victims**

Brian Tooth  
**Doncare**

Keith Anderson  
**Parkinson's Victoria**

Geoff Constable  
**Parkinson's Victoria**

Irene Opper  
**Neighbourhood Connect**

Kritz Sciessere  
**Big Sister Experience**

Robyn Cronin  
**Pat Cronin Foundation**

Nic Moore  
**Bulleen Templestowe Junior  
Football Club**

Mark Gellie  
**Red Frogs Australia**

Adrian Ferris  
**Our Lady of the Pines Catholic  
Primary School**

Louise Callaghan  
**Fitted for Work**

Simon (Hengyu) Qian  
**The Federation of Chinese  
Associations VIC**

Kiraly Pugliese  
**ParentMedic Victoria**

Madeleine La Ferla  
**Yogahood Australia**

Robbie Singh  
**Gracie Jiu Jitsu Burwood**

Elizabeth Phillips  
**Doncare**

Krysti Severi  
**Rescue Rehabilitate Release**

Anna Dunn  
**North Balwyn Bowls Club**

Isabelle Mayne  
**Livin Social**

Jamal Elsheikh  
**One Love Australia**

Erin Smith  
**The Code 9 Foundation**

Shelly Lynde  
**Children's Tumour Foundation**

Samuel Kershler  
**Giant Steps Melbourne**

Chris Varney  
**I CAN Network Ltd**

Kellie Ann Wishart  
**MCC CareNet & The Food  
Collective Project**

Eva Giuretis  
**Project Underdog Rescue Inc**

Michelle Power  
**Lighthouse Foundation**

David Treloar  
**Nexus Young Veterans Program**

Lucy Thomas OAM  
**Project Rockit**

**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



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

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

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**2021**

SCENTRE GROUP