

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. It is the central focus of the image, framing the text.

*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*

**Southland**

VIC

**Heather Baird has started a charity to provide clothes and a better life for thousands of children who have been placed in out of home care.**

Heather grew up in foster homes and remembers being teased at school for being a "homie" because she stood out with her old clothing.

She founded A Better Life for Foster Kids in 2014 to support the current generation of children in care. Most arrive at their placement with only the clothes they are wearing.

Her charity gives the children an age-appropriate crisis case containing 55 items. These include clothing, toiletries, a blanket, activities and baby supplies if needed. Heather also provides furniture, prams and bedding to carers.

So far, the charity has gifted cases to more than 1500 children in care in Victoria.

Heather's work relieves the financial burden on carers and

allows them to focus on the children's emotional needs.

One of Heather's greatest rewards is hearing from carers that the charity's support has enabled them to continue looking after vulnerable children.

Heather says it is wonderful to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "Our organisation is the community coming together to say that these kids deserve more than the poor outcomes they are currently facing," she says.

*Heather's nominator says: "Heather is a Westfield Local Hero because she never stops working to create more support for carers and to address the gaps in the system that are creating poorer outcomes for kids in out of home care."*



## Filling a gap in care

### Heather Baird

A Better Life For Foster Kids

*Persistent, Resilient, Devoted*

**"Our organisation is the community coming together to say that these kids deserve more than the poor outcomes they are currently facing."**



Striving for inclusion

## Sarah Backholer

Helping Hands

*Inspirational, Dedicated, Passionate*

"I can honestly say that in the 15 years that I have been working with them, they have taught me as much about myself and the world as I have taught them."

**Sarah Backholer has dedicated 15 years to helping more than 1000 people with autism reach their full potential.**

Sarah established her Helping Hands centre after a chance encounter with an 11-year-old boy with severe autism sparked a passion in her.

"He was non-verbal. However, he spoke to me on so many other levels. I still work with him today as a 29-year-old adult," Sarah says.

Her centre specialises in interventions that lead to lasting improvements in behaviour, cognition, motor and social skills and independent living skills.

The centre offers psychology services, early intervention in kindergartens and schools and a service for children and young teens.

It can be challenging work, but Sarah is motivated by her belief that the young people she helps are some of the funniest, wisest,

most intelligent and loving people she has met.

Over 1000 people with autism have benefited from the centre's services since it opened its doors.

Sarah is honoured and humbled to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "We have always believed that people with autism have so much to share with the community. I can honestly say that in the 15 years that I have been working with them, they have taught me as much about myself and the world as I have taught them," she says.

*Sarah's Nominator says: "Sarah is a Westfield Local Hero because she is committed to seeing a world of inclusion where we are supportive and grateful to the people who see, hear and feel things differently to us."*

**Deb Brook captured the imagination of thousands of people in her community with a Facebook group she started in response to the 2020 bushfires and has gone on to provide crucial mental health support to thousands of children and adults displaced by domestic violence and vulnerable elderly isolated by the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Deb is the founder of the volunteer-run Bayside Community Emergency Relief (BCER). She puts calls out to the community for specific donations, getting the right help to people by supporting organisations on the ground.

Thanks to her vision, the community responded by donating about \$1 million worth of specifically requested goods in 2020 alone.

Deb registered BCER as a charity in March 2020 and has continued to help thousands in need by meeting targeted requests from over 29 organisations.

BCER supports animal welfare, vulnerable elderly, adults and children fleeing domestic violence, plus other emergencies including bushfire, flood & storm relief.

Deb arranged more than 2,000 comfort packs for elderly people during COVID 2020 and was moved when she received numerous letters of thanks.

Deb was named Bayside Citizen of the year in 2021. She is beyond humbled to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "Being recognised for literally thousands of hours of work is appreciated. It gives me pride to see how thousands of community members have united to proactively help people and wildlife in need," she says.

*Deb's nominator says: "Deb is a Westfield Local Hero because she works around the clock doing good deeds for people who need a helping hand. She is one of God's angels."*



**Innovating to help others**

## **Deb Brook**

Bayside Community Emergency Relief Inc.

*Hardworking, Generous, Humble*

**"It gives me pride to see how thousands of community members have united to proactively help people and wildlife in need."**

## Your 2021 Finalists



**Lisa Lovell**

### **Black Rock Pre School Centre Inc**

Lisa Lovell has helped the community-run Black Rock Preschool grow from strength to strength, raising thousands to improve educational opportunities for young children. Lisa's children have now graduated from kindergarten but took on the role of president of the non-profit because she believes all local families have a right to an affordable pre-school close to their home.



**Madeleine Buchner**

### **Little Dreamers**

Madeleine Buchner was just 16 when she started her Little Dreamers non-profit for people aged up to 25 who take care of someone else. Twelve years later, her team of 42 staff and 140 volunteers are making a big impact. They offer online tutoring, group mentoring and programs focused on identity, health and wellbeing, social connection, education, employment and financial literacy.



**Marion Harriden**

### **Make a Difference Dingley Village**

Marion Harriden has spent more than three decades responding to every request for food and crisis support through Make a Difference Dingley Village. The non-profit may be small, but thanks to the perseverance and commitment of Marion and her fellow volunteers, at least 100 vulnerable families receive a much-needed grocery voucher each week.



# Recognising all of our 2021 nominees

Helen Maxwell-Wright  
**JDRF Australia**

Leticia Yamaki Camoleze  
**Brainwave**

Ruby Healey  
**Omega Netball Team,  
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart**

Timothy Marchinton  
**Purple Soup**

Sofia Vatos  
**Dogathon Family Fun Day**

Tina Elias  
**UPPAREL**

Alexandra Cole  
**ACE Dance Studio**

Jaqueline Hendrey  
**Longbeach Anglican Parish –  
Matt's Place**

Megan Seccull  
**Australian Animal Protection  
Society**

Jo Mawson  
**BMW Drivers Club Melbourne  
Inc**

Kate Robb  
**Marine Mammal Foundation**

Dr Smitha  
**Team Dental**

Sarah Wade  
**Kids in Philanthropy**

Mark Shannon  
**St. Vincent de Paul**

Madeleine Buchner OAM  
**Little Dreamers Australia**

K'sForDays (Nathan Harris-Dent)  
**Dogs for Kids with Disabilities  
Limited**

Kerri Anne Brussen  
**JoCare Pty Ltd**

Priya Rani and Chris Hope  
**100 Coffee Movement**

Paul Clifford  
**Cheltenham 7th Scout Group**

Tahlai Vilorio  
**UPPAREL**

Kate Gillard  
**TaskForce Community Agency**

Michelle Hornstein  
**Save the Delta Site Parkland /  
Move the train yard**

Barbara Belfer  
**Yeshivah Beth Rivkah Colleges**

Berlin Liew  
**Make-A-Wish**

Bronwyn Covill  
**Need a Tutor Pty Ltd**

Michael Elias  
**UPPAREL**

Hector Simpson  
**UPPAREL**

Chel Campbell  
**Australia Alopecia Areata  
Foundation**

Ms Natasha Reus  
**Cheltenham Cat Rescue**

Hannah Gabrielle Friebe  
**Sincerely Survivor – Mental  
Health Advocacy through  
the Arts**

Mr Dean Cohen  
**Flying Fox**

Sarah Backholer  
**Helping Hands**

Madeleine Buchner  
**Little Dreamers**

Deb Brook  
**Bayside Community  
Emergency Relief inc.**

Karyn Spilberg  
**Parkinson's Victoria**

Bridie Roberts  
**CleftPALS Victoria**

Marion Harriden  
**Make a Difference Dingley  
Village**

Lisa May Lovell  
**Black Rock Pre School Centre  
Inc**

Peter Duncan  
**Lighthouse Foundation**

Heather Baird  
**A Better Life for Foster Kids**

**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

The background features a large, abstract graphic composed of overlapping red and white shapes. A large, rounded red shape dominates the right side, while a white shape overlaps it from the bottom left. The overall composition is clean and modern.

[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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SCENTRE GROUP