



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 Local Heroes

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

Kotara

NSW

Lisa Griessl has raised over \$110,000 since 2018 when she came up with a beautiful way to support the Cure Cancer Australia Foundation.

Lisa was inspired to give back to the foundation after surviving an aggressive spinal tumour, diagnosed when her youngest child was only three months old.

In seeking a way to involve local community in her fundraising she established The Big Hug Box initiative in 2018 to raise funds through sales of beautifully curated gift boxes. The boxes are bought by friends and family to gift to loved ones being treated for cancer.

They are filled to the brim with comforting goodies, including organic teas, gourmet biscuits and online meditation sessions.

Lisa, who juggles motherhood and her job with the demands of her non-profit organisation, has also been able to donate over 300 Random Hugs of Kindness boxes to patients at three local hospitals with the support of donors.

One of her most memorable moments was hearing from a patient that the gift box made her feel human again.

Lisa's latest initiative in collaboration with Cure Cancer is a Buddy Box for children receiving treatment.

She is honoured to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "It reminds me that The Big Box Hug is making a real difference in the lives of patients in the local community. It motivates me to continue my work," Lisa says.

Lisa's nominator says: "Lisa is a Westfield Local Hero because of her tenacity and ability to think of others first. She juggles many hats with grace and humility and is an inspiration to us all."



Raising funds and spirits

Lisa Griessl

Cure Cancer Australia Foundation

Loyal, Empathetic, Giving

"It reminds me that The Big Box Hug is making a real difference in the lives of patients in the local community. It motivates me to continue my work."



Helping men find their inner voice

Luke Conners

#Talk2mebro

Inspiring, Dedicated, Influencer

"It gives me reassurance we are doing the right things in the community. That energises me to keep going, keep pursuing our mission to make suicide a thing of the past."

Luke Conners joined the army at the age of 17. Now he is serving on the home front, helping men of all ages to speak about their emotions and mental health.

In 2019 Luke started Talk2mebro in the Newcastle and surrounding areas with the goal to end suicide. He is changing men's lives through his work at seminars, retreats, schools, businesses and sports clubs.

The charity focuses on emotional resilience and suicide prevention, passing on the tools and skills to support others without judgment.

So far, Luke has reached more than 8000 Novocastrians through the different programs they offer.

Luke's passion for Talk2mebro was inspired by the memory of Matt, a corporal who took Luke under his wing when he was a young Digger but who later took his own life.

A testimony to Luke's drive is that he managed to engage with about 3000 people face to face

during COVID-19 social distancing restrictions.

With max 20 people allowed in a group, he organised close to 150 sessions of 90 minutes.

Luke feels great pride to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "It gives me reassurance we are doing the right things in the community. That energises me to keep going, keep pursuing our mission to make suicide a thing of the past."

Like's nominator says: "Luke is a Westfield Local Hero because he is such an inspiring hard worker and has an attitude of never giving up. All at the age of 28."

If you need support, go to Talk2mebro or phone Lifeline: 13 11 14

Christine (Chris) Jones lives by the motto "always room for one more" and has dedicated her life to serving her local community for decades.

Chris is the founder of the LIVEFree Project. She and her team support those in the community who are experiencing the effects of crisis, hardship and trauma, family safety and health care.

Their support is available to people from all walks of life, backgrounds and abilities and helps them turn their life around.

"From the young age of six, I used to help my grandfather feed the homeless on these streets. Forty-eight years later, I am still there, still working with the people of this community," says Chris.

She gives her time relentlessly, delivering weekly mentoring, doorstep check-ins, clothing parcels, household goods and furniture to people rebuilding their lives.

"There is something sacred about being invited into someone's pain or struggle. This gift is never lost on me," says Chris.

A crucial part of her work is to show vulnerable people they are cared for and heard.

Chris is delighted to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "The opportunity to be a part of such a widely recognised award in our local community just thrills my heart. I feel deeply moved to know that people in the community see what we do and recognise it as valuable."

Christine's nominator says:
"Chris is a Westfield Local Hero because she strives daily to enhance our community by building up and caring for the people who define it. A hero is someone who continually puts the needs of others before themselves, carrying themselves with humility and selflessness – if you knew Chris, you would see that this is at her core."



Giving decades of care

Christine Jones

LIVEFree Project

Selfless, Inclusive, Generous

"From the young age of six, I used to help my grandfather feed the homeless on these streets. Forty-eight years later, I am still there, still working with the people of this community."

Your 2021 Finalists



Justine Russell

Police Citizens Youth Clubs NSW

Justine Russell has dedicated the past 10 years to helping vulnerable young people turn their lives around with mentoring, education and support. Justine works and volunteers at the Police Citizens Youth Clubs (PCYC). She goes above and beyond to ensure vulnerable young people have a safe place to play sport, create art and socialise.



Amy Harvison

Top Blokes Foundation

Top Blokes Foundation's Head of Programs & Operations, Amy Harvison encourages thousands of young boys and men to look after their mental health and avoid risky behaviours. She uses her extensive knowledge to develop mentoring programs that help at-risk boys and young men become future leaders. Amy is motivated by the knowledge that most young people want to succeed and just need support to make it happen.



Ann-Maria Martin

Survivor's R Us Incorporated

Ann-Maria Martin founded Survivors R Us in 2017 to provide much-needed support for women experiencing domestic violence and others needing help to piece their lives back together. Her charity offers food relief, counselling, clothing and furniture. Volunteers are recruited from the Work for the Dole program, and she helps them gain valuable work skills.

Recognising all of our 2021 nominees

Kathy Herber
OzHarvest

Laura Kebb
Secret Book Stuff

Malka Rodal
**Chabad of the Hunter and
Central Coast**

Jessica Shuwalow
Got Your Back Sista Limited

Suzi Ward
**Waratah Public School
Preschool**

Carmel Kaczmar
Miracle Assistance Dogs

Kayla Parker
Lifeline Hunter

Shelly Spalding
Charlie's Gift

Tracy Ellem
Creative Cooks Kitchen

John Dugas
Hunter Volunteer Centre

Cherie Peru and Renee
Ridgeway
**Callaghan District Netball
Association**

Craig Sparrow
Healing Path to Wellness

Sam Tassell
Alesco Senior College

Stephen John Meek
Bikers for Kids Inc

Callan Nickerson
Stockton SLSC

Katerina Razmovski
Merewether Public School

James Burrows
The Blonde Boy

Dave Sams
**CDAT Port Stephens / Port
Stephens Suicide Prevention /
Salimander Recycling**

Anne Patricia
Leukodystrophy Australia

Debra Stewart
Adulting for Australians

Chloe Chick
Ride Dungog Incorporated

The Novo's 105.3 Newfm:
Jade, Matty & Krivo.
**Food drive for the homeless.
Newcastle community
pantries.**

Tahlia Anderson
Surfing the Spectrum

Daniel Sloan
**South Lake Macquarie RSL sub
Branch**

Mark Basedow
Hunter Community Hub Pty Ltd

John McClymont
Kotara South Athletics Club

Sue Barker
Dog Rescue Newcastle

Winston Doak
**Macdonald River Restoration
Group Bendemeer**

Brooke Tacon
Inner Shift

Luke O'Donnell
Bloom Skateboarding

Mrs Margaret Paget
Victory CAP Centre

Wendy Jenkins
**Angel Gowns for Australian
Angel Babies Incorporated**

Luke Conners
#Talk2mebro

Justine Russell
**Police Citizens Youth Clubs
NSW**

Chrissy McGuinness
Camp Quality – Newcastle

Amy Harvison
Top Blokes Foundation

Sandra Jacobs
The Nappy Collective

Christine Jones
LIVEFree Project

Lisa Greissl
**Cure Cancer Australia
Foundation**

Ann-Maria Martin
Survivor's R Us Incorporated

**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

The background features a large, abstract graphic composed of overlapping, rounded shapes in various shades of red and white. The shapes are layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

westfield.com.au/local-heroes

westfield.co.nz/local-heroes

Westfield

Local Heroes

2021

SCENTRE GROUP