

MEDIA RELEASE
FRIDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2023

2024 AUSTRALIANS OF THE YEAR FOR TASMANIA ANNOUNCED

2024 Australian of the Year for Tasmania - Stephanie Trethewey (Dunorlan)
2024 Senior Australian of the Year for Tasmania - Reverend James Colville AM (Bagdad)
2024 Young Australian of the Year for Tasmania - Naarah (Glenorchy)
2024 Local Hero for Tasmania - Clair Harris (Blackmans Bay)

Awards event livestreamed via australianoftheyear.org.au

Friday 10 November 2023, 8:35PM (Hobart time): The 2024 Australian of the Year Award recipients for Tasmania have been announced at a ceremony in Hobart this evening.

The Tasmania recipients will join those from the other states and territories for the national awards to be announced on 25 January 2024.

The 2024 Australian of the Year for Tasmania is Stephanie Trethewey, rural women's advocate and the founder of Motherland.

It takes a village to raise a child – but with no family, friends or mothers groups nearby, too many rural women are raising children without support when they desperately need it.

Stephanie Trethewey, 34, experienced that crippling isolation herself when she moved from Melbourne to a beef farm in Tasmania's Central North with her husband and first baby.

So, in 2019, the former TV journalist set up national charity Motherland to connect mothers raising children on the land, along with her podcast, Motherland Australia.

Then in 2021, she created Australia's first online rural mothers group program – Motherland Village. The six-week online program matches rural mums to their own small support group to relieve isolation and improve wellbeing. In less than two years, Stephanie's online program has 20 virtual villages and is supporting over 200 rural women.

In 2022, Stephanie won the AgriFutures Rural Women's Award for her trailblazing work – and she's just getting started.

Reverend James Colville AM, the founder of Colony 47, is the 2024 Senior Australian of the Year for Tasmania.

When the Reverend James Colville AM opened the doors of Colony 47 in 1973, Hobart was a very different place. There were no gay rights, access to contraception was difficult and people were rejected for being different.

After renting an old church at 47 Davey Street, Hobart, a coffee shop was opened where everyone was welcome and help provided when requested. This included many young people, older people, Indigenous Australians, the lonely, hungry and unemployed.

James believed those struggling with rejection had a lot to give with the right support – they just needed non-judgemental assistance, acceptance and respect.

Fifty years on, not for profit Colony 47 continues to deliver programs for Tasmanians in need, with a particular focus on housing. It's helped more than 50,000 households with bond or rental assistance, more than 7000 young people with early intervention support, and more than 17,500 young people with education and employment.

The 2024 Young Australian of the Year for Tasmania is actor, musician and Indigenous activist, Naarah.

(NOTE: Naarah was unable to attend the event in Hobart and accepted the award via a video link from London)

A Gija woman raised in Hobart, 26-year-old Naarah is making a positive impact through her acting and music. She has toured in Wesley Enoch's musicals *The Sunshine Club* and *The Sapphires*. She played supporting lead Sharelle in the Amazon Prime series, *Deadloch*. She also co-created a TikTok series, *Bad Locals*, filmed in Tasmania.

During 2024, she'll be studying musical theatre at the Royal Academy of Music in London, after winning an Aurora Foundation Roberta Sykes Scholarship. All this from a 'proud underdog' who failed music at school in Hobart.

Naarah uses Instagram and TikTok to spark important conversations about First Nations identity, culture and representation.

She wants children to grow up seeing an entertainment industry full of diversity. To grow their dreams, she's worked with The Salvation Army Communities for Children music programs in disadvantaged schools, and with Indigenous students at schools in the Northern Territory through the National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy's programs.

Clair Harris, the founder of Tassie Mums, is the 2024 Local Hero for Tasmania.

Clair Harris believes no child should go without. She started Tassie Mums at her kitchen table in Hobart in 2018 to help families with essentials; her charity now assists more than 1,800 children each year with clothing bundles, nappy packs, activity packs, prams and car seats.

Tassie Mums supplies items to 70 social service organisations across the state working with refugees, families escaping domestic violence or affected by mental health issues and financial stress.

Clair, 42, is incredibly humble, but her efforts have made a real difference. She drums up financial support and clothing donations from across the community and her vision has inspired a large group of regular volunteers.

Last year, Tassie Mums' winter coat and pyjama drive collected more than 800 coats and vests and 600 pairs of pyjamas to ensure Tasmanian children are warm in winter. The group also helps schools with new socks and underwear to distribute.

National Australia Day Council CEO Mark Fraser AO CVO congratulated the Tasmania recipients.

“The award recipients for Tasmania remind us we all have greatness within us,” said Mark.

“They all share a sense of caring – for others, for the way we see the world, for those in need, for culture and for better futures. They’ve all stepped up to become leaders because they care.”

For more information on the Australian of the Year Awards, visit australianoftheyear.org.au.

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PHOTOS: From the awards announcement event can be downloaded as available after approx. 9:15pm Hobart time from this link (credit NADC/Salty Dingo): [TAS Media Distribution photos - High res](#)

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