

Tasmania

CROWNE PLAZA HOBART

4 November 2022

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MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

As Governor of Tasmania, I am proud to recognise 16 of Tasmania's most remarkable citizens and celebrate their achievements as part of the 2023 Australian of the Year Awards.

The Awards acknowledge Australians who have made a significant contribution to their community and nation, who demonstrate excellence in their fields and inspire people everywhere with their enthusiasm and courage.

Today's finalists have been selected from hundreds of nominations all over Tasmania, each with stories of extraordinary resilience, innovation and compassion. They lead by example, dedicate their time, knowledge and experience for the benefit of others, and commit to building stronger communities that create a better Australia for all.

It is my great honour to recognise and congratulate our Tasmanian finalists today. I have the highest respect and admiration for all the work that you do. I wish you all the very best for the future.



**Her Excellency the Honourable
Barbara Baker AC
Governor of Tasmania**



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MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

Each year the Australian of the Year Awards recognise individuals who are very worthy of acknowledgement and praise. Those who go above and beyond, and whose contributions – whether local, national or global – greatly benefit others.

Tasmanians work hard, give generously and deeply understand the value of community. These values are reflected in our four recipients, who will represent Tasmania at the National Awards in January. They – along with all Tasmanian finalists – have demonstrated the excellence, passion, commitment and selflessness that exists right across our State, and it is a great honour to celebrate them on this occasion.

On behalf of all Tasmanians and with great pride, I thank our finalists for their incredible contributions to our state and our nation. Their achievements serve as inspiration to us all, and I wish our four recipients all the best for the upcoming National Awards.



Jeremy Rockliff MP
Premier of Tasmania



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**ADJUNCT PROFESSOR
GILLIAN BISCOE AM**

Health sector leader and founding director, Tasmanian Leaders

Adjunct Professor Gillian Biscoe AM is an outstanding health sector leader who has devoted decades to the health and social policy sectors.

She has been a leader in international, national and state government health departments, chief executive officer of the Royal Canberra Hospital, and accepted multiple board and advisory appointments nationally and internationally.

Gillian has consulted extensively to the Asian Development Bank, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, federal and state governments, the New Zealand Government, and the private and not-for-profit sectors.

She has built national health strategies in developing countries-led multi-year health reform projects-provided strategic policy advice to the World Health Organization; worked on HIV/AIDS projects in China and promoted the importance of leadership.

Gillian prioritises developing our next generation of leaders, including as a founding director of the not-for-profit Tasmanian Leaders, to which she has made a significant pro bono contribution over the years.



**PROFESSOR PETER
DARGAVILLE**

Neonatal specialist and creator of the Hobart Method

Less than two decades ago, the survival rate of premature babies in Tasmania was below Australian standards.

Thanks in part to the innovation and leadership of Professor Peter Dargaville, survival rates in Tasmania at every gestational age are now on par with or ahead of the national average, and the rates of chronic lung disease are consistently lower.

As the Director of Royal Hobart Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Peter was responsible for developing the innovative 'Hobart Method' - a less invasive way to deliver treatment to relieve respiratory distress in premature babies.

The method avoids the need for a breathing tube, reducing the risk of lung damage and improving outcomes for premature infants. It's now used in over 40 countries.

Peter has also been instrumental in developing an automated system for controlling oxygen therapy in preterm babies. It increases time spent in a safe oxygen range by up to 25 percent, potentially improving long-term outcomes.



JOHN KAMARA

Humanitarian and co-founder, Culturally Diverse Alliance of Tasmania and African Communities Council of Tasmania

John Kamara escaped war-torn Sierra Leone 19 years ago and started a new life in Tasmania in 2004. He now does all he can to assist migrants, refugees and people from culturally diverse communities.

His own experiences and work in child protection mean he understands the challenges new arrivals and marginalised groups face.

Sitting on multiple boards and involved in many community groups, John highlights systemic disadvantages for migrants such as racism, labour exploitation and recognition of overseas qualifications. He also assists with migrants' resumes and their search for jobs and housing.

John co-founded the Culturally Diverse Alliance of Tasmania to support education and promote social cohesion, as well as the first ever African Communities Council of Tasmania. It strives to cement relationships among African Australians and the wider community.

He and his wife, Mavis, have also since established Kamara's Heart Foundation, a charity to assist children in Sierra Leone.



**PROFESSOR BRETT
MCDERMOTT**

Director, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Tasmania

Professor Brett McDermott is a researcher and psychiatrist specialising in young people with mental health challenges.

As head of Tasmania's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, he completed a review of the state's support for young people. He also successfully lobbied the State Government for funding and now has \$41 million to drive reforms.

Brett pioneered in 1994 one of the first public health programs in the world to screen adolescents and children for anxiety, PTSD and depression following natural disasters.

He's now led eight major post-disaster programs in NSW, Queensland and Tasmania to better support young people experiencing the trauma of floods, cyclones, bushfires and storms. His approach has influenced post-disaster interventions globally.

Brett has long been committed to improving child and adolescent mental health service delivery. He established Australia's first child and adolescent eating disorders team and is currently creating services for children in out-of-home care and youth.



DR SCOTT BELL

Citizen scientist and environmentalist

Dr Scott Bell is so passionate about saving our wildlife and the planet he's been arrested nine times and convicted four times for peacefully protesting for what he believes in.

His dedication comes after a lifetime working as a GP in locations that require a lot from doctors, including regional Tasmania, remote Aboriginal communities in WA and the NT, jungle villages in Laos, and in Burundi.

Scott has focused on environmental causes since retiring and buying 260 hectares of bushland near the coast of north-eastern Tasmania in 2007.

A conservation covenant now covers 98 per cent of the property, with 24 hectares designated as a bio-secure breeding enclosure for Tasmanian devils. The property is also used for education, the release of rehabilitated wildlife, and as a monitoring site for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife.

Scott is an active member, volunteer and benefactor of a range of social and environmental organisations.



DR FRANCES DONALDSON

Doctor, frontline COVID-19 worker and prisoner advocate

Dr Frances Donaldson began her lifelong commitment to health care as a young nurse in Hobart, rising to become Director of Nursing before switching to study medicine in her 40s.

She's since spent four decades working to improve health care standards in Tasmania.

Dr Fran spent 12 years navigating Tasmania's under-resourced prison health service, advocating for better health outcomes for prisoners and other disadvantaged Tasmanians.

Most recently she's served at the frontline of Tasmania's COVID-19 response and has been one of the lead doctors working in the COVID@homeplus service from the beginning. Working sometimes seven days a week, she's consistently shared her knowledge as the stalwart of the team.

Before borders were reopened in December 2021 she volunteered to look after seasonal workers in hotel quarantine, requiring a significant on-call commitment.



WENDAL PITCHFORD

Aboriginal Frontier Wars advocate

Aunty Wendal Pitchford is a Palawa elder and advocate who is seeking recognition of the Frontier Wars and of the Aboriginal warriors who fought in the Black War in Tasmania.

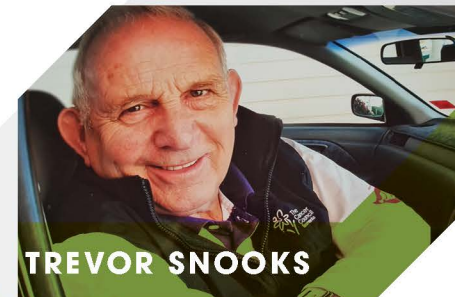
She's quietly fought for many years for the Tasmanian Government to formally acknowledge the horrific conflict and its devastating impact on Indigenous peoples.

She's headed multiple community campaigns and led peaceful protests each year at Anzac Day and Remembrance Day events in Hobart and Launceston for recognition of the war.

Her efforts have resulted in a request from RSL Tasmania to work together to better understand and recognise the conflict.

The national veterans' organisation has also now supported Aunty Wendal's push for the establishment of Australia's first Frontier War Memorial in Tasmania to honour fallen ancestors.

In another national first, the Aboriginal community marched in the 2022 Anzac Day Parade as a group, rather than with their veterans' battalions.



TREVOR SNOOKS

Volunteer, Cancer Council Tasmania's transport2treatment program

Trevor Snooks, a volunteer with the Cancer Council's transport2treatment program, has made the four-hour round trip from Burnie to Launceston every week for the past 16 years.

But he doesn't make the journey alone. He's driven thousands of cancer patients and their carers to important appointments since the program began in 2006.

It's his way of giving back to the community after having to retire due to a prostate cancer scare himself.

He set a target from the outset, saying he'd be satisfied if he could 'stick it out' and volunteer until he was 80, a milestone he's already celebrated. Trevor made his last trip in 2022.

He's regarded as the backbone of the program in the state's north-west, maintaining vehicles and acting as the go-to person for any on-the-ground issues.

Countless people have benefited from Trevor's many volunteering roles between 1964 and 2022, including his decades of service to the South Burnie Football Club.



MERIEM DAOUI

Humanitarian and marathon runner

Meriem Daoui, a Tasmanian marathon runner and registered nurse, uses her love of running as a platform to do good. She ran her first marathon at age 16, raising over \$5,000 for displaced Syrians affected by their country's civil war.

Born in Morocco, Meriem relocated to Tasmania at age 10 where she experienced racism and was bullied for wearing a hijab. Anxiety, depression and eating disorders plagued her teenage years, but the support she received during her adversities inspired her to give back to the community.

Meriem has also used marathons to raise awareness and funds for childhood cancer research. She most recently conquered the Everest challenge, running the Point-to-Pinnacle course – also known as the world's hardest half-marathon – every day for one week. The challenge raised over \$12,000.

In 2021, Meriem was awarded the Australian Peter Norman Humanitarian award for her community and philanthropic efforts.



LEWI TAYLOR

Rock climber and cancer fundraiser

For 158 days straight, Lewi Taylor climbed and conquered 158 of Tasmania's most challenging mountains – the Abels – trekking alone through rain, hail, snow and blistering sun.

He hiked through Tasmania's wilderness with a single-minded determination: to raise \$158,000 to improve the fighting chances of all Tasmanians with cancer. He was inspired by his mother, who'd been diagnosed with breast cancer for the second time.

Lewi started his '158 Challenge' in January 2022 and climbed the final peak, *kunanyi*, on 10 June, his 30th birthday. His goal was to raise \$1000 each time he reached the top of Tasmania's 158 Abels – mountains that peak above 1,100 metres with sheer drops from the summit.

Working with Cancer Council Tasmania, Lewi has raised more than \$167,000 so far.

The funds will stay in Tasmania and contribute to cancer prevention education, research and support services, including the Cancer Council's wig library and transport2treatment program.



ELIZABETH VAN DONGEN

Campaigner for cystic fibrosis support

Physiotherapist Elizabeth van Dongen was born with cystic fibrosis (CF) – a genetic disease primarily affecting the lungs and digestive system.

She successfully campaigned to have a drug that treats the underlying conditions of CF put on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

At a time when the medication cost about \$22,000 a month, Elizabeth shared her story on the CF Tasmania Facebook Page, spoke to media outlets and MPs, and helped publicise a petition to list the drug on the PBS. The petition gained 58,274 signatures and was presented to Federal Parliament.

On 1 April 2022, the treatment was made available for about \$42 a script. The national campaign means the 3,500 Australians living with CF can enjoy a better quality of life.

Elizabeth is passionate about helping others live a life unencumbered by disease or injury. She promotes the benefits of exercise for people with CF to maximise lung function and sustainably manage their wellbeing.



KRISTINE BULL

**Psychologist and founder,
Brain Boot Camp**

Kristine Bull has been a practising psychologist for more than 20 years. She's now using that knowledge to build a strong support network for children and families in Devonport.

Kristine was instrumental in creating Pathway Shed, a youth and families outreach centre, and Pathway House, which she set up and manages.

Pathway House provides low-cost psychology, counselling and social work services to the community, with a particular focus on people living with Autism Spectrum Disorder. She also volunteers at both centres.

Kristine developed her own mental health program for children, 'Brain Boot Camp', which is a safe space for participants with disabilities, social difficulties, for those who have suffered trauma or come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Through her paid and voluntary roles, Kristine has given the community access to mental health training, affordable counselling, and facilitated connection and understanding.



AMANDA FRENCH

Founder, Dress for Success Hobart

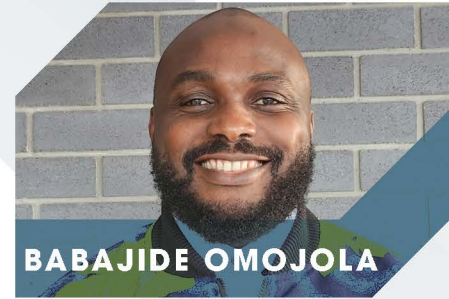
Amanda French has worked in the not-for-profit sector her entire career. Passionate about helping people achieve positive outcomes, she set up Dress for Success Hobart in 2019 to support women to achieve economic independence through employment.

Dress for Success is run by volunteers and empowers women to develop the right skills – and have the right clothes – to succeed at job interviews and ultimately, find work.

While the initiative helps these women achieve employment and financial independence, its broader goal is to empower women to overcome the barriers that prevent them from reaching their full potential.

Throughout her career, Amanda has had roles in the drug and alcohol sector, child protection, and contributed to the growth of the suicide prevention initiative SPEAK UP! Stay Chatty during her time at Relationships Australia Tasmania.

She has been a volunteer with Make-A-Wish for nearly 10 years and is a director on the National Board of Make-A-Wish Australia.



BABAJIDE OMOJOLA

Community mentor

Babajide Omojola believes a person's past doesn't have to define their present or future. He helps others reshape their lives for the better.

Babajide came to Tasmania from Africa. He now assists other African migrants to adapt to their new home, become familiar with Australian culture and law, and find study and employment opportunities.

He also encourages them to contribute to their new community, which he believes is key to a person feeling they are an asset.

In addition, Babajide works with prison inmates to identify skills they'd like to learn, or causes they can contribute to, so they can achieve a better quality of life in or out of prison. The aim is to redefine their situation and deliver a sense of dignity and purpose.

Babajide is changing lives, one conversation at a time, and in doing that he is strengthening community for all Tasmanians.



KEITH PARKER

**Volunteer ambulance officer and
ammunition technical officer**

Keith Parker has specialised in explosive ordnance throughout his Army career, serving overseas and assisting the United Nations (UN) on several occasions.

He helped the UN modernise and improve its explosives storage when he managed an international explosives safety trial at Woomera, South Australia.

Keith also acted as an Australian representative to help negotiate weapons surrender during a period of conflict in the Solomon Islands.

Outside of his army role, since 2011 Keith has contributed more than 1,500 hours a year as a Volunteer Ambulance Officer (VAO) for Ambulance Tasmania in Sheffield. He has often been a first responder to the scene of medical emergencies in rural Tasmania and works alongside paramedics to provide patient care.

Keith has progressed to VAO-4 (the highest rank) and now assists in the training of new recruits, covers vacant night shifts and operates solo as a first responder if no paramedics are available.

RECOGNISING TASMANIA'S FINEST

Since 1960, the Australian of the Year Awards have recognised people from all across the country and from all fields of endeavour. This is just a snapshot of the recipients from Tasmania for the past five years. The full honour roll can be viewed at australianoftheyear.org.au.

Australian of the Year

- 2022** Craig Leeson - Documentary filmmaker and journalist
- 2021** Grace Tame - Advocate for survivors of sexual assault
- 2020** Dr Jess Melbourne-Thomas - Marine, Antarctic and climate scientist
- 2019** Bernadette Black - Advocate for teenage parents
- 2018** Scott Rankin - Theatre director, writer and arts charity leader

Senior Australian of the Year

- 2022** Bruce French AO - Agricultural scientist and Founder of Food Plants International
- 2021** Brian Williams - Scout leader and mentor
- 2020** Dr Graeme Stevenson - Landcare activist
- 2019** Sally Wise - Cookbook Author
- 2018** Tony Scherer - Organic farmer

Young Australian of the Year

- 2022** Kaytlyn Johnson - Youth leader and singer-songwriter
- 2021** Toby Thorpe - Advocate for youth empowerment & climate action
- 2020** Will Smith - Social justice activist
- 2019** Kirby Medcraft - Assistant Principal
- 2018** Dr Jessica Manuela - Dentist helping Indigenous communities

Australia's Local Hero

- 2022** Kimberley Smith APM - Community volunteer with the Rotary Club of Sullivans Cove
- 2021** Edna Pennicott - Founder of Kingborough Helping Hands
- 2020** Thomas Windsor - Advocate for men's health
- 2019** Vicki Purnell - Volunteer
- 2018** Judi Adams - Breast cancer fundraiser

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



* Names and post nominals of recipients in the Honour Roll are a reflection of the time they received the Award.

THE AWARDS PROCESS



1

It all starts with your nomination



2

An expert panel selects one State and Territory level recipient in each of the four award categories



4

The National Australia Day Council Board selects the national recipients



3

The state and territory recipients are awarded and go through to the national judging process



5

The four national recipients are awarded on Australia Day eve in Canberra

NOMINATE NOW FOR 2024



Want more information?

Visit the Australian of the Year Awards website australianoftheyear.org.au where you'll find latest news and profiles of Australian of the Year Awards nominees, recipients and alumni.

For more information on Australia Day, the Story of Australia campaign and NADC visit australiaday.org.au

Australia's Local Hero Award acknowledges people of any age making a difference in their local community.

In 2023, we'll celebrate 20 years of Australia's Local Hero award and pay special tribute to those humble people who inspire us with their selfless actions.

Thanks to the Department of Home Affairs, official partner of the award since its inception in 2003.



THE AWARDS TROPHIES

The Australian National University (ANU) is committed to better outcomes for our community, the environment, our nation and the world. As the national university, we feel immensely privileged to be the exclusive cultural partner of the 2023 Australian of the Year Awards, recognising the outstanding service to the community that many Australians make.

The trophies for the 2023 Australian of the Year Awards are the stunning result of a collaborative effort by staff and students of the Glass Workshop in the ANU School of Art & Design.

The geometric nature of the design aims to represent the multiple facets that have shaped Australian society, embodying a nation that is confident in its leadership, contemporary in its outlook and distinguished by its diverse community. The facets also capture the points of the Southern Cross, the star of federation, and are rendered in a brilliant blue symbolising the Australian sky.

Each award has been created through a process of cast glass, and meticulously ground and polished by hand. The awards have been a wonderful project for students to apply their creative and technical skills to complete a professional commission.

ANU School of Music students have also contributed theme music for the Australian of the Year Awards, which will be used throughout the state and territory announcements.





2023