

# Western Australia

GOVERNMENT HOUSE

14 November 2022

Australian  
of the Year  
➤ Awards

Reflect. Respect. Celebrate.

20  
23

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the presentation of the 2023 Australian of the Year Awards for Western Australia.

These Awards celebrate the achievements and contributions of Australia's finest – people who inspire us and who influence and elevate the lives of others.

From the thousands nominated around the country, this evening we celebrate 16 remarkable Western Australians who can proudly say they have joined a unique group of people, as Alumni of the Australian of the Year Awards.

On behalf of Auspire – Australia Day Council WA, congratulations to all Western Australian finalists. You have earned your place alongside an impressive and distinguished list of Australian of the Year nominees.

Thank you for your dedication and contributions to our State and our nation. It is a pleasure to welcome you here tonight.

Thank you to those who have nominated these outstanding Western Australians. Your nominations mean that we can recognise and celebrate members of our community who are worthy of our acknowledgement.

Thank you to our sponsors and selection panel members for your support, without which, we would not be able to share these remarkable stories.



**Bradley Woods**  
**Chairman**  
**Auspire - Australia Day Council WA**



2023

# MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

I am delighted and extremely proud to recognise and celebrate 16 remarkable citizens as Western Australia's nominees in the 2023 Australian of the Year Awards.

Our nominees epitomise all that is good about Western Australia. Without doubt, our greatest strength is our people and this group represents the values of compassion, commitment and entrepreneurial spirit which make Western Australia the strong and vibrant state it is today.

These Awards have celebrated our nation's finest for over 60 years – Australians who go above and beyond to make a difference and create a better community for us all. The nominees have emerged from hundreds of nominations from all over Western Australia. They lead by example; dedicating their time, knowledge, energy and experience for the benefit of others.

While four names will be announced tonight and go on to the national Awards to be announced in January, every Western Australian finalist being recognised has my respect and admiration.

As Patron of Auspire – Australia Day Council WA and on behalf of all Western Australians, I thank them all for their immense contribution to our community – you are an inspiration to us all.



**His Excellency the Honourable  
Chris Dawson APM  
Governor of Western Australia**



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**PROFESSOR  
SAMAR AOUN**

**Researcher and advocate for end-of-life care, bereavement and grief support**

Professor Samar Aoun advocates for a person-centred approach to end-of-life care. She focuses on under-served groups such as those with motor neurone disease (MND) and dementia, terminally ill people who live alone, and family carers.

As Perron Institute Research Chair in Palliative Care at the University of Western Australia, Samar is known as an international leader in the advocacy of public health approaches to palliative care.

Her work has strengthened the Compassionate Communities movement that mobilises and equips people to better support those facing death and bereavement.

As co-founder and chair of the South West Compassionate Communities Network, Samar also volunteers in roles including director on the MND Australia Board, president of the MND Association of WA and a board member of Palliative Care WA.

Among numerous awards, Samar received the Medal for Excellence from the European Society for Person Centered Healthcare in 2018 and the Centenary Medal in 2003 from Australia's Prime Minister.



**RODNEY BRIDGE**

**Founder, Sideeffect and anti-synthetic drugs campaigner**

Rodney Bridge's 16-year-old son died in 2013 after taking a synthetic form of LSD purchased over the dark web by a friend.

Told by authorities that investigating the drug organisation was futile, he tracked down the company that made the drug himself and travelled to China, secretly filming a meeting with the drug's distributors.

Rodney took the evidence to the Australian Federal Police. Later, he enlisted Nine's current affairs program 60 Minutes to film another meeting in China using hidden cameras. That vision was seen by 1.2 billion people worldwide.

Rodney's investigation resulted in a crackdown in China and the restriction of manufacturing, trade and sale of 116 synthetic drugs. Twenty-one thousand Chinese nationals were arrested, 1,500 factories were closed and 248 websites were shut down.

Rodney's tragedy became his life's mission. He founded Sideeffect Australia, a not-for-profit organisation that builds awareness about substance use and teaches young people to make informed decisions.



**DR SASCHVEEN  
SINGH**

**Tropical infectious disease adviser**

As a tropical infectious disease adviser for Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), Dr Saschveen Singh has helped some of the world's most disadvantaged people during epidemics and in conflict hotspots.

Saschveen has been on the front line with medical teams in the Democratic Republic of Congo, treating patients for tropical illnesses including Ebola amid civil unrest. She's worked in a variety of other contexts including COVID-19 and measles outbreaks, helping to treat malaria and neglected diseases of poverty, and caring for refugees in a camp in Tanzania after they fled conflict in Burundi.

Back home in Perth, Saschveen – an advocate for human rights and equitable access to healthcare – has worked in general practice, adult and paediatric emergency medicine, refugee health, travel and occupational health.

She is a long-term volunteer for community radio station RTRFM, presenting on a music show featuring women and gender diverse artists, and has featured on ABC Radio National's Health Report.



**PROFESSOR ANDREW  
WHITEHOUSE**

**Autism researcher and science communicator**

For more than two decades, Professor Andrew Whitehouse and his research team have significantly advanced research into autism, which affects about two per cent of the Australian population. Their knowledge has fundamentally improved clinical practice and community perceptions about autism.

Andrew is Professor of Autism Research at both the Telethon Kids Institute and the University of Western Australia. He led development of the first Australian guidelines for the diagnosis of autism and for supporting children with autism.

His internationally renowned research program was the first to prove that parent-led therapy applied early in life can significantly reduce disability experienced by children with autism.

Andrew has published more than 250 peer-reviewed journal articles. He is also a dedicated community advocate for autism and a renowned science communicator.

Thanks to Andrew's commitment and transformative work, Australians living with autism can now receive better, safe and effective therapies.



**VINCE GARREFFA**

**Lifeline ambassador, fundraiser and chair, Mondo Community Warriors**

Since leaving school to become a butcher at the age of 14, Vince Garreffa has lived a life of service, becoming one of Western Australia's best known and most successful butchers – and a major fundraiser.

Italian-born Vince appreciates everything he has but gets even more joy from helping others. Vince and his volunteers have raised more than \$1 million for a variety of charities and over \$4 million for Lifeline WA, over the past 25 years. All funds have gone towards mental health care.

Vince also supports many smaller charities as chair of non-profit organisation Mondo Community Warriors. And through COVID-19 he provided care packages for elderly customers who were isolated and vulnerable.

The philanthropist is an enthusiastic foodie and vocal advocate for Australian farmers, independent butchers and the food and wine industries.



**THERESA KWOK**

**Community advocate**

With a background in social work, Theresa Kwok has been helping migrants settle in Australia from the moment she arrived from Hong Kong 35 years ago.

For most of this time, she has supported older migrants from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities at Perth's Chung Wah Community and Aged Care. Theresa is now CEO of the organisation, which delivers a range of community care programs for clients, their families and ethnic communities. She looks after about 800 clients.

Theresa helps elderly members of CALD communities to live independently and has created more equitable access to culturally appropriate migrant and aged-care services across all communities.

Recognised with multiple awards for her efforts, Theresa is constantly reshaping how aged and community care services are delivered to meet changing demands.

Her advocacy continues to raise awareness of the unique challenges and strengths of CALD older people within government, service providers and CALD communities.



**ANTOINETTE RUSSELL**

**Community volunteer**

Eighty-year-old community volunteer and former nurse Antoinette (Toni) Russell packs more into a day than many do in a year.

Each morning from 7am, she hits the phones for the Red Cross, calling five different people considered socially isolated or vulnerable due to health issues. She's made more than 25,500 calls over the past 13 years.

Toni has also made almost 1,300 visits to elderly or vulnerable people as part of the Red Cross Community Visitors Scheme. And she volunteers with Uniting Care (now Juniper Aged Care) to visit those in care.

But Toni shares more than her friendly smile with the community. Over the past 50 years she's donated blood and plasma to the Red Cross about 650 times – that's an average of 13 times a year.

She also continues to play tennis at least twice a week, and supports junior development and other tennis club activities at the Greenwood Tennis Club.



**CAROLE STACEY**

**Paediatric physiotherapist and special needs advocate**

Paediatric physiotherapist Carole Stacey has advocated for almost 40 years for facilities to improve the lives of children with special needs.

Carole became aware early in her career of the lack of opportunities for these children to be included in activities others took for granted, such as playing, exercising and competing.

She knew parents, carers and families were also disadvantaged because of the lack of support, so she facilitated interactions between them to share experiences, advice and equipment.

Carole fundraised more than \$100,000 to design and construct an accessible, sensory-rich local playground for children of all capabilities and continues her advocacy for more widely accessible play equipment in Mandurah.

She has worked in aquatic physiotherapy and volunteer swim coaching both in mainstream swim clubs and with squads designed for children with physical, medical and learning difficulties.

Carole continues to voluntarily support children with a weekly swim squad and through Save the Children activities.



**ZAHRA AL HILALY**

**Gender equality and youth advocate**

Zahra Al Hilaly is determined to be heard. A first-generation Australian from a Palestinian and Iraqi family, she advocates for gender equality and sustainable change at local, national and international levels.

She helped deliver Christmas Island's first leadership and advocacy summit for young people, which led to the creation of the Christmas Island Youth Association, encouraging young people to speak out about issues that affect them.

Zahra has spoken for Australian youth at the United Nations and is in the UN Women's 30 for 2030 Network of young gender equality champions.

She is a participant of the UN Women's Generation Equality Youth Task Force, where she aided in drafting of the Global Young Feminist Manifesto and contributed to the pledge of \$40 billion for gender equality initiatives by 2026.

Zahra also delivers workshops to help organisations remove their unconscious biases when working with multicultural Australia.



**NAGMELDIN BOL**

**Athlete and Olympian**

Nagmeldin (Peter) Bol is a two-time Olympian, holds the current national 800m record, and in 2021 was the first Australian runner in 53 years to make it into an Olympic 800m final.

Peter and his family, originally from Sudan, arrived in Australia from Egypt when he was eight. His sporting talent was soon recognised with a sporting scholarship to Perth's St Norbert College for basketball. When he was 16, a coach persuaded him to try athletics.

His running soon started getting him noticed and Peter debuted for Australia at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. He became a household name at the Tokyo Games, held in 2021, where he won his semi-final and became the fastest-ever Australian over 800 metres.

When he's not training or studying, Peter works as a coach, mentor and keynote speaker, aiming to help others achieve their dreams. His philanthropic efforts were recently recognised by Athletics Australia with the prestigious 2022 Peter Norman Humanitarian Award.



**MADISON DE ROZARIO OAM**

**Athlete, Paralympic gold medalist and advocate**

Madison de Rozario OAM was just 14 when she won her first Paralympics medal as part of the Women's T53/54 4x100m relay in Beijing in 2008.

Madison is now widely regarded as one of Australia's greatest athletes. Nine of her 20 medals are gold. She is the first Australian athlete to win four gold medals in any Para sport at the Commonwealth Games and, in 2021, she was the first Australian woman to win the New York City Marathon.

Madison advocates for genuine and authentic diversity throughout society, with a specific focus on people with disability. Taking out top honour in the 2022 Australian Women in Sport Awards, she is determined to use her platform to influence change well outside of sport.



**SCOTT GUERINI**

**Telethon fundraiser and initiator, Scott's Great Walk**

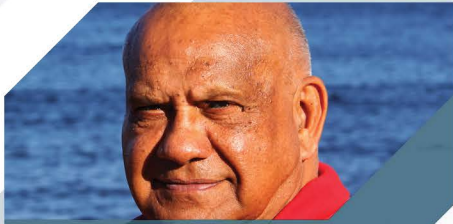
At the age of four, Scott Guerini spent two weeks trying to convince his parents to let him walk the 25km from their farm to the town of Southern Cross for charity. They weren't convinced he'd make the distance.

Scott did the walk in eight hours, 40 minutes and raised \$3,000 for Telethon. That was the beginning of Scott's Great Walk.

Now 16, Scott's walk has become an annual marathon bolstered by numerous walking challenges and hikes.

In 2017 Scott wrote, illustrated and published his book *Did You Know You Can Change the World?* with sales donated to Telethon. His podcast Scott's Great Chat also encourages young people to make a difference.

An accomplished public speaker at corporate events across Australia, Scott has walked more than 1,000km so far and raised more than \$200,000 for Telethon. His goal is to raise \$1 million for the charity by the time he's 90.



**JAMES MORRISON**

**Advocate for Stolen Generations survivors and founder, Yokai**

For more than four decades, Noongar Elder James (Jim) Morrison has advocated for Stolen Generations survivors, families and communities. He seeks acknowledgement, healing and redress for the children forcibly removed from their families, country and culture.

Jim founded the organisation Yokai to help heal the spirits of the Stolen Generations. Yokai hosts the Sorry Day commemorations in Perth's Wellington Square each year. He also championed the Mia Mias memorial in Wellington Square that acknowledges the Stolen Generations.

Jim personally supports and mentors many Stolen Generations survivors and family members. He advocates for appropriate financial redress, Aboriginal-led social and emotional wellbeing programs to heal intergenerational trauma, and for all Western Australians to know the truth about the genocidal policies that created the Stolen Generations.

Jim was a founding member of Reconciliation WA, the co-convenor of Bringing Them Home WA and the inaugural Chair of the WA Stolen Generations Alliance.



**JAMES MURPHY**

**Co-founder, Town Team Movement**

Social entrepreneur James (Jimmy) Murphy founded the Town Team Movement to inspire and support people to be responsible for improving their communities. The non-profit social enterprise enables people and local government to connect, organise and act to regenerate neighbourhoods.

Jimmy uses Town Teams to advocate for more accessible and affordable community spaces that reflect the people who inhabit them. Residents, businesses and other community members are encouraged to form or join an existing Town Team group.

Town Team Movement groups have held street festivals, run working bees, introduced street art, built community gardens, rewilded areas and created food co-ops.

Jimmy also co-founded Arts Impact WA, a philanthropic organisation that funds arts projects.

Jimmy's practical, positive approach has spread from Western Australia across the nation and to New Zealand. There are now more than 108 Town Teams making the world better – one community at a time.



**HELEN SHERVINGTON  
OAM**

**Co-founder and chairwoman, CinefestOZ**

Helen Shervington OAM is a driving force behind the hugely successful CinefestOZ Film Festival, held annually in Busselton. The festival has grown from 2008 from being a small event attended by 1,800 people to one drawing over 26,000 in 2022.

The \$100,000 CinefestOZ Film Prize is the largest in the Australian film industry. The event also provides a boost to tourism and the arts to the State's south-west region.

Born and raised in Busselton, Helen has been an unwavering supporter of her local community since returning in 1996 from Perth. From 2002 to 2007 she was a Councillor for the Shire of Busselton. She spent 10 years as the chair of the Busselton Water Corporation and chaired the committee that designed and oversaw the redevelopment of the Busselton foreshore.

Helen has received multiple awards including a Lifetime Achievement award at the 2018 Business Excellence Awards, and an honorary Doctor of Arts conferred by Edith Cowan University in 2022.



**JANINE WOOD**

**Co-founder, No Limits Perth**

Janine Wood is co-founder and Chair of No Limits Perth, a not-for-profit that supports vulnerable people in metropolitan Perth and its surrounds.

The organisation provides food and essential items to people doing it tough – including those escaping domestic violence, the homeless, vulnerable families and older people. It also gives care, respect and hope to those seeking help.

No Limits Perth supports 72 other charitable and government organisations. With no ongoing financial support, it's Janine and her dedicated volunteers who keep it running.

Janine has collaborated with Fortuna Foundation on its Positive Spin mobile laundry van so vulnerable people can clean their clothes. She has also set up Heart of the Street, a mobile service to distribute essential items to homeless people.

Janine was the 2019 Westfield Whitfords Local Hero. Her compassion and kindness have created an inclusive environment, allowing vulnerable people to create friendships and experience a sense of belonging.

# RECOGNISING WESTERN AUSTRALIA'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 Western Australia for the past five years. The full honour roll can be viewed at [australianoftheyear.org.au](http://australianoftheyear.org.au).

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  - 2022** Paul Litherland - Cyber safety educator and campaigner
  - 2021** Professor Helen Milroy - Australia's first Indigenous medical doctor
  - 2020** Annie Fogarty AM - Education social venturer
  - 2019** Craig Challen SC OAM - Cave-Diver and rescuer
  - 2018** Dr Tracy Westerman - Psychologist
  
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  - 2022** Janice Standen - President of Grandparents Rearing Grandchildren WA
  - 2021** Dr Richard Walley OAM - Champion of Aboriginal culture
  - 2020** Professor John Newnham AM - Leader of modern obstetrics
  - 2019** Mr F Mallard In Memorium - Elder, ex-serviceman and volunteer
  - 2018** Kathleen Mazzella OAM - Gynaecological health awareness champion
  
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  - 2022** Kendall Whyte - Founder and CEO of the Blue Tree Project
  - 2021** Grace Forrest - Founder and director of Walk Free
  - 2020** Yarlalu Thomas - Medical student and precision public health fellow
  - 2019** Noelle Martin - Feminist, activist and law reformist
  - 2018** Samantha Kerr - Sportsperson
  
- 
  - 2022** Craig Hollywood - Founder and CEO of Short Back & Sidewalks
  - 2021** Rebecca Prince-Ruiz - Founder of Plastic Free July
  - 2020** Suzy Urbaniak - Science educator
  - 2019** Professor Cheryl Kickett-Tucker - Basketballer and researcher
  - 2018** Peter Lyndon-James - Addiction treatment specialist

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

# THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS





# THE AWARDS PROCESS



**1**

If 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](http://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](http://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