

# South Australia

ADELAIDE OVAL

1 November 2023

Australian  
of the Year  
▶ Awards

Reflect. Respect. Celebrate

20  
24

# MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

Congratulations to South Australia's nominees for the 2024 Australian of the Year Awards.

Each year, these awards celebrate our state's, and our nation's, finest.

This year's nominees are people who lead by example, dedicating their time, knowledge and experience for the benefit of others.

To read their stories, learn about their work and hear of the challenges they have overcome is a source of inspiration.

Each contribution, while unique, shares a commitment to, and compassion for, others.

For many it is about using their expertise generously, beyond the boundaries of their roles.

Some have overcome challenges and assisted fellow South Australians to become the best they can be.

Others are tireless in their resolve to promote inclusion and opportunity.

To everyone who submitted a nomination – thank you for taking the time to highlight the generosity and achievements of your peer, colleague, family member or friend.

I wish nominees the best of luck. You make us all proud to be South Australians.



**Her Excellency the Honourable  
Frances Adamson AC**  
Governor of South Australia



# 2024

# MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

On behalf of all South Australians, I congratulate our state's nominees on their well-deserved recognition in the 2024 Australian of the Year Awards.

Since their inception in 1960, these awards have been a source of national pride and inspiration, not only providing us with a window into the work and personal stories of ordinary Australians doing extraordinary things, but also giving us a chance to come together to celebrate these amazing individuals who represent the best of us.

Here in South Australia – a state with an outstanding record of representation in these awards – the nominees are people of different ages, abilities and cultural backgrounds, demonstrating a commitment to making a contribution with passion and purpose.

Along their journey, they have earned the admiration and respect of their families, friends and fellow Australians as quiet achievers, going about their business while making a lasting impact

on the lives of those around them and the communities they live in.

Our state, and indeed, our nation is a better place because of their efforts and their legacy, which can serve as the foundation stone upon which we can all combine to build a better Australia for ourselves and future generations.

To our South Australian nominees, I offer my heartfelt congratulations on your outstanding achievement. Your service is an example to others of how one person's help can bring hope to the lives of their fellow Australians.

I wish you luck and thank you for your wonderful contribution to South Australia.



**The Honourable Peter Malinauskas**  
Premier of South Australia



# 2024

# MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY CHAIR

I am honoured and incredibly proud as a South Australian to welcome you to the presentation of the 2024 Australian of the Year Awards for South Australia.

The Australian of the Year Awards celebrate Australians who have made a significant difference to our communities in our amazing country, and sometimes beyond – they reflect the very best of our nation.

To the 16 nominees who we are recognising tonight, congratulations to each of you on your recognition. These Awards provide each South Australian nominee a platform to draw our attention to issues that impact us all. I would also like to recognise all the nominees that we have received this year and thank them all for their contributions and to those who nominated them, this has been a challenging process. You're all incredible individuals who do so much for so many.

It is a tremendous privilege for the Australia Day Council of South Australia to be able to acknowledge your contributions to our state. On behalf of the Board, I would like to congratulate you all for your courage, determination and care that you extend to our state and wish you all the very best.



**Mrs Michelle Cox**  
Deputy Chairperson  
Australia Day Council of South Australia



# 2024



**STELLA BRAUND**

**Mental health advocate**

Stella Braund uses her lived experience of childhood family violence, sexual assault and trauma – at home and in institutional settings – to improve people’s lives.

As a counsellor, Stella helped establish 1800 RESPECT, the national domestic violence and sexual assault helpline, enabling vulnerable individuals to access crisis counselling and begin their journey of recovering from violence.

She has worked across four psychiatric inpatient hospitals advocating for trauma informed care, ensuring people living with mental ill health – and their carers and families – have access to appropriate, person-centred support services.

Stella continues to seek improvements in mental health policy, planning, emergency services and service design throughout SA Health, campaigning for a greater lived experience workforce.

She’s a powerful advocate for marginalised and vulnerable people, and holds numerous executive board appointments across government.

For her commitment, Stella was recognised as a South Australian Citizen of the Year and is on the Women’s Honour Roll.



**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
SUSAN EVANS**

**Co-founder, Pelvic Pain  
Foundation of Australia**

Associate Professor Susan Evans has dedicated her life to helping women and girls who experience pelvic pain and menstrual issues. A practitioner, researcher, philanthropist, volunteer, advocate and mentor, Susan is a true pioneer in women’s health and gynaecology.

Her book *Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain* has helped women who experience pelvic pain to understand their treatment options.

In 2015, she co-founded the not-for-profit charity Pelvic Pain Foundation of Australia, to promote education, advocacy and research in pelvic pain and endometriosis. The ‘Periods, Pain and Endometriosis Program’ – or PEP-Talk – is now available to schools in all Australian states.

Susan founded the bio-pharmaceutical company, Alyra Biotech, which produces intrauterine products to treat neuroimmune conditions, including chronic pelvic pain in women.

She helped secure government funding for the first National Action Plan for endometriosis, has served on multiple representative bodies and boards, and was the first woman elected to the Board of the Australian Gynaecological Endoscopy Society.



**TIMOTHY JARVIS AM**

**Environmental scientist  
and advocate**

An environmental scientist, author, filmmaker, philanthropist and speaker, Timothy (Tim) Jarvis AM seeks pragmatic solutions to climate change and biodiversity loss.

This includes South Australia’s Forktree Project, which involves restoring degraded farmland back to nature and growing rare native plants to safeguard them from extinction.

Tim is also vice-president at Fauna & Flora; a global ambassador and governor of WWF, ambassador to Koala Life and a board director of the Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife.

As an adventurer, Timothy re-enacted Douglas Mawson and Ernest Shackleton’s Antarctic explorations and advocates for the protection of Antarctica. And this year, he helped secure 475,000 square kilometres of marine sanctuary off World Heritage-listed Macquarie Island.

In 2017, Tim was made a Bragg Fellow by the Royal Institution of Australia and has won multiple awards, including the Australian Geographic Society’s 2016 Conservationist of the Year for his 25Zero project about melting equatorial glaciers.



**APRIL LAWRIE**

**Changemaker for Aboriginal  
children and community**

Mirning and Kokatha woman April Lawrie is dedicated to creating generational change for all children. For more than 30 years, April has led systemic reform in Aboriginal health, justice, education and child protection.

As the inaugural commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, April leads the work that promotes the rights, development and wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people within South Australia.

April is also the co-founder of Tjindu Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation that works to promote wellbeing, cultural resilience and school retention for Aboriginal young people in communities across South Australia.

As director of the award-winning Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation for two decades, April ensures local native title rights support generations to come by helping establish business ventures to enable self-determination and economic development for the far west coast people.

She is a passionate advocate for government service reform in child protection and for land rights within native title.



**PROFESSOR FRANCES BAUM AO**

**Health equity advocate**

Professor Frances (Fran) Baum AO has spent her professional life working to create healthy, equitable and sustainable societies.

The public health social scientist is a past national president and life member of the Public Health Association of Australia and a member of numerous boards and committees, including the board of Cancer Council SA.

Fran is a powerful ambassador for social determinants for health: non-medical factors that influence health outcomes such as distribution of income and wealth, education, employment and housing.

She served as co-chair of the Global Steering Council of the People's Health Movement, a global network of health activists addressing determinants of health.

Her five-year NHMRC Investigator Fellowship, 'Restoring the Fair Go', is providing strong evidence for policies that reduce inequality.

An author of numerous books and papers, Fran was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2016 for her service to the community and public health.



**SISTER MEREDITH EVANS**

**Sister of Mercy**

Sister of Mercy Meredith Evans has dedicated her life to helping the vulnerable and inspiring others to do the same.

Through her vocation, Meredith has provided kind, non-judgemental care and assistance to many - including refugees, young people, women experiencing homelessness, women exiting violent relationships and women leaving prison.

In 2019, Meredith established the South Australian division of Young Mercy Links - a network of young people passionate about social justice, advocacy and education.

She was also instrumental in re-establishing Justice for Refugees SA and the Young Christian Workers Movement in South Australia. In 2014, Meredith partnered with like-minded people to start a new Circle of Friends in Adelaide, providing on the ground support for refugees.

Meredith's care has extended abroad, engaging people to contribute to the work of the Jesuit Refugee Service in Siem Reap, Cambodia. The service provides newly built homes for people with a landmine injury and their families.



**COMMANDER STEPHEN DUNNING RAN (RET'D)**

**Mental health and disability advocate for veterans**

Commander Stephen Dunning RAN (Ret'd) has made a profound difference to veterans - especially those experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder - and people with a disability.

A survivor of a serious car accident, a qualified mental health practitioner and an Australian Defence Force (ADF) Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Trainer, Stephen has trained more than 600 ADF personnel, defence civilians and others in suicide prevention strategies.

As a board member, Stephen was instrumental in growing the Community Bridging Services, a leading services provider for people with a disability across South Australia. He was also the Navy Aide de Camp to four state governors in a volunteer capacity.

Medically retired from the Department of Veterans' Affairs since 2019, Stephen has been a volunteer advocacy and peer support person, helping serving and non-serving members access mental health rehabilitation and recovery services.

Stephen's compassion and advocacy has provided life-saving help to countless veterans and serving members.



**GLYN SCOTT**

**Founder, Love Hope & Gratitude Foundation**

Glyn Scott survived years of violence and sexual abuse - first as a child and later in her first marriage.

In 2006, Glyn gave evidence to the Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry about her childhood experience of sexual abuse.

Her personal experience led to what became legal history in 2012 when a High Court decision ruled that there was no marital exemption to rape. This changed Commonwealth law nationally and set a precedent, paving the way for other women who had a similar experience to come forward.

In 2015, Glyn founded the Love, Hope & Gratitude Foundation. The organisation provides counselling, advocacy and educational programs to domestic violence survivors, and shelter for adults, children and pets.

With courage and compassion, Glyn continues to devote her own time, money and skills to support and advocate for other domestic violence and sexual abuse survivors.



**TIAHNI ADAMSON**

**Wildlife conservation biologist**

A proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman descended from the Kaurareg Nations, Tiahni Adamson is passionate about sustainability.

She graduated from University of Adelaide with a Bachelor of Science (wildlife conservation biology) and is now the lead community engagement officer at climate change solutions company CH4Global, where she ensures Indigenous knowledge is embedded into CH4Global's projects.

Tiahni has worked with the CSIRO on Indigenous education programs, trained under Al Gore as a Climate Reality Leader in 2019 and fostered relationships between First Nations communities and government.

A regular speaker on the intersection of Indigenous justice, climate change and environmental conservation, Tiahni is also on the national leadership team with Seed, Australia's only First Nations-led youth climate justice group, and a youth dialogue member for the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

She was recognised as one of Science and Technology Australia's Superstars of STEM and an InDaily South Australian 40 Under 40 for 2023.



**QASEM BAHMANZADAH**

**Ambassador, mentor and volunteer**

Qasem Bahmanzadah spends much of his time mentoring young people and giving back to the wider Australian community.

Qasem came to Australia as a refugee from war-torn Afghanistan with no possessions and no English.

Now an ambassador for the Australian Refugees Association, he educates the community on the challenges that refugees face and raises money to support people fleeing persecution.

As the coordinator of the Rotary Youth Program of Enrichment and the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, he helps young people develop leadership skills.

Qasem has mentored Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience and the Trek program at Mercedes College, actively promoting cultural understanding and mutual respect. He also volunteers for a range of causes including St John Ambulance.

Qasem's courage, dedication and empathy are inspirational. He dedicates his achievements to the immense support he has received from his mentors, teachers and, most importantly, his family.



**KYLAN BEECH**

**Fundraiser, Cancer Council**

At age 14, Kylan Beech lost his mother Tammy to cancer. Kylan has made it his mission to help others avoid the same loss by supporting the Cancer Council.

In 2019, the then-Year 11 student rode his bike 220km from Adelaide to Barmera to raise money and awareness for the Cancer Council. Enlisting the help of his older brothers, Kylan co-ordinated the event, organised sponsors and held a dinner with music and auctions, raising \$30,000.

In 2022, 20-year-old Kylan and his brothers completed a 2,220km ride from the Gold Coast to Adelaide for The Cancer Council. He organised a crew, videographer and media interviews and spread the word through social media.

The two-week ride culminated in a huge fundraiser with entertainment. Later, Kylan showed a documentary about the ride, raising even more money. All up, Kylan's selfless efforts have raised more than \$100,000 for the Cancer Council.



**HUGO TAHENY**

**Elite athlete and health ambassador, Down Syndrome Australia**

Hugo Taheny is an elite athlete living with Down syndrome. He's the current world-record holder for shot put, discus and the 4x100m relay in the Virtus Global Games and International Athletics Association for Persons with Down Syndrome.

Hugo also lives with intellectual, vision and hearing impairments.

An exceptional athlete and young person, he's achieved outstanding results through hard work and dedication. He's totally self-funded and travels thousands of kilometres most weeks to train and compete.

Hugo has broken many world records - including his own. In 2019, he was awarded the Australian Sports Medal for representing Australia at the Virtus Global Games.

A health ambassador for Down Syndrome Australia, Hugo lectures university medical students about inclusive communication with his mentor Natalie Graham.

An exceptional role model for all young athletes, Hugo is also a volunteer coach for young athletes and children and speaks at schools, encouraging people to be active.



**CHRIS MCDERMOTT**

**Founder, Little Heroes Foundation**

As the inaugural Captain of the Adelaide Crows, Chris McDermott is a household name in South Australia. He's also the founder and board chair of Little Heroes Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation supporting the mental and physical wellbeing of South Australian children.

Chris and footballer friend, Tony McGuinness, set up the organisation that became Little Heroes Foundation in memory of Nicholas Berry and Nathan McClean, two young boys who died of cancer.

In the last 27 years, Chris has helped the foundation raise and contribute almost \$40 million towards major pieces of equipment and facilities at Adelaide's Women's and Children's Hospital.

Currently, the foundation is working closely with Breakthrough Mental Health Research Foundation to raise funds for child and adolescent mental health. It is also raising awareness of and funds for childhood dementia.

As well as his commitment to Little Heroes Foundation, Chris is a radio presenter and sports commentator.



**JACK NIXON**

**Volunteer, state emergency services**

Since arriving in South Australia's Riverland region in 2016, Jack Nixon has helped protect his community and the people of South Australia.

Jack began as unit training coordinator and a member of the SA State Emergency Service Dog Operations Unit at Loxton's State Emergency Service (SES).

In 2018, while still a member of Berri SES, Jack also joined Glossop Country Fire Service (CFS) because its membership was low. Here, he's served as training coordinator, equipment coordinator, lieutenant and from 2022, brigade captain.

During the 2019-20 bushfire season, Jack completed two deployments to Kangaroo Island and was awarded the National Emergency Medal for his contributions. He also took on extra responsibilities during the 2022 Riverland floods.

Jack has coordinated joint training efforts among Riverland emergency services including CFS, SES, SA Ambulance and St John Ambulance. A selfless, enthusiastic and patient volunteer, he's currently working to address skills shortages in local emergency units.



**PAULY VANDENBERGH**

**Co-founder, Tjindu Foundation**

Growing up within the Wirangu and Kokatha people of the far west coast of South Australia was a driving force behind Pauly Vandenberg's passion for creating opportunities for Aboriginal young people.

An influential cultural educator, Pauly instils strength in identity, pride in culture and country, and works to achieve better health and wellbeing outcomes for his people.

He co-founded the Tjindu Foundation that provides culturally responsive education, sporting and cultural awareness activities to help students succeed at school, gain career opportunities and become future leaders.

A former elite basketballer for the Canberra Cannons, Paul also founded the Aboriginal Basketball Academy, helping Aboriginal children achieve excellence in basketball and school.

He's now forged an acclaimed career in Australian football as Port Adelaide Football Club's director of Aboriginal programs and is the national diversity talent manager for the AFL.

Pauly also started the fully Indigenous-owned and operated businesses Wanna Mar tuna fishing and Munda Wines.



**RACHAEL ZALTRON OAM**

**Founder, Backpacks 4 SA Kids**

In 2013, Rachael Zaltron OAM and another family began collecting donations and putting them into backpacks to help a few vulnerable and neglected children.

This was the start of Backpacks 4 SA Kids. Commencing in Rachael's carport, the organisation now has its own warehouse and volunteers helping vulnerable children across the state.

Under Rachael's leadership, the organisation provides backpacks with age-appropriate emergency clothing, toiletries and other necessary supplies for children aged 0 to 16 years who are taken into care, need to quickly leave their homes due to family violence or experiencing homelessness.

Backpacks 4 SA Kids also provides home starter packs for families starting again after domestic violence, and anchor packs for young people aged between 12 and 25 who are experiencing homelessness. They also provide Christmas presents for 0- to 18-year-olds entering emergency care.

Since 2012, Rachael and her team have helped more than 86,000 South Australian children.



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

	<b>2023</b>	Taryn Brumfitt - Body image activist, director, writer and speaker
	<b>2022</b>	Professor Helen Marshall AM - Vaccination researcher
	<b>2021</b>	Tanya Hosch - Leader, changemaker and visionary
	<b>2020</b>	Dr James Muecke AM - Eye Surgeon and blindness prevention pioneer
	<b>2019</b>	Dr Richard Harris SC OAM - Specialist anaesthetist and cave diver
	<b>2023</b>	Sandra Miller - Aboriginal rights activist, advocate for Indigenous health and welfare
	<b>2022</b>	Mark Le Messurier - Educator, counsellor and author
	<b>2021</b>	Professor Richard Bruggemann - Disability advocate
	<b>2020</b>	Sylvia McMillan - Volunteer
	<b>2019</b>	Reginald Dodd OAM - Reconciliation advocate
	<b>2023</b>	Awer Mabil - Professional soccer player and co-founder, Barefoot to Boots
	<b>2022</b>	Dr Trudy Lin - Special Needs Dentistry
	<b>2021</b>	Isobel Marshall - Social entrepreneur
	<b>2020</b>	Zibeon Fielding - Runner, cyclist and fundraiser
	<b>2019</b>	Eleni Glouffsis OAM - Australia's first female AFL umpire
	<b>2023</b>	Christine Robertson OAM - Co-founder, Lost Pets of South Australia and creator of the Chipblitz program
	<b>2022</b>	Monique Bareham - President of Lymphoedema Association SA Inc.
	<b>2021</b>	Russell Ebert OAM In Memoriam - Respectful relationships advocate
	<b>2020</b>	Emmah Money - Cystic fibrosis advocate
	<b>2019</b>	Megan McLoughlin - Advocate for organ donation

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

# THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



# THE 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 2024 Australian of the Year Awards, recognising the outstanding service to the community that many Australians make.

The trophies for the 2024 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.



# 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

## 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 the NADC, visit [australiaday.org.au](http://australiaday.org.au).



If our nominee stories have brought anything up for you or you're concerned someone you know is at risk, please reach out to:

Lifeline on 13 11 14

Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636 or

13YARN, a crisis line for Indigenous Australians.



The National Australia Day Council acknowledges and pays its respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and recognises their continuous connection to country, community and culture.

**NADC** | National  
Australia Day  
Council