

MEDIA RELEASE
THURSDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2023

2024 AUSTRALIANS OF THE YEAR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA ANNOUNCED

2024 Australian of the Year for Western Australia – Mechelle Turvey (Perth)
2024 Senior Australian of the Year for Western Australia – Charles Bass (Applecross)
2024 Young Australian of the Year for Western Australia – Kate Kirwin (Perth)
2024 Local Hero for Western Australia – Nick Hudson (Wembley)

Awards event livestreamed via australianoftheyear.org.au

7:45pm Thursday 2 November 2023, Perth : The 2024 Australian of the Year Award recipients for Western Australia have been announced at a ceremony in Perth this evening.

The four Western Australia 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 Western Australia is advocate for victims of crime, Mechelle Turvey.

In 2022, Mechelle Turvey's 15-year-old son, Cassius Turvey, was assaulted coming home from school. Tragically, the Noongar Yamatji schoolboy died of his injuries 10 days later.

Cassius' death sparked a national day of action across Australia, with rallies and vigils to express grief, anger, hurt and solidarity with his loved ones. Mechelle, still grieving the recent death of her husband Sam, led the march in Perth. She gave a powerful speech about her son, calling for calm and non-violence – and the need for proper care for victims of crime and their families.

In 2023, Mechelle began utilising her lived experiences by training Western Australia Police Force recruits in dealing with victims of crime with empathy and support.

Through her life, 57-year-old Mechelle has volunteered to support her community, including helping people in prison. She has donated much of the money raised for Cassius to youth organisations. Her courage, care and compassion for others are exemplary.

Founder of the Centre for Entrepreneurial Research and Innovation, Charles Bass, is the 2024 Senior Australian of the Year for Western Australia.

When Charles (Charlie) Bass founded the Centre for Entrepreneurial Research and Innovation (CERI) in 2015, he became a mentor for hundreds of start-ups and a powerful supporter of innovation and sustainability in Western Australia.

To date, CERI has provided over 600 aspiring entrepreneurs with the tools, mentorship and support needed to turn their ideas into successful businesses – including raising over \$7.5 million in funds.

CERI also facilitates research commercialisation, particularly in medical technology and biotech.

Charlie worked in Western Australia's mining industries – very successfully – for decades. But he knows the state can't rely on its resources forever. CERI reflects Charlie's desire to see greater economic diversification in Western Australia. Through speaking engagements and CERI, 74-year-old Charlie advocates for the creation of high-knowledge, high-value, export-oriented businesses for the long-term sustainable growth of the state.

A notable philanthropist, Charlie created the Bass Family Foundation in 2006 to help provide disadvantaged children with a quality education.

The 2024 Young Australian of the Year for Western Australia is the Founder of She Codes and women in STEM advocate, Kate Kirwin.

Kate Kirwin founded She Codes Australia in 2015 with the aim of teaching women coding skills, helping them enter technical careers and building a likeminded community.

As a country girl, 30-year-old Kate strongly believes in empowering women from some of Australia's most remote regions. So far, more than 6000 women from all over the country have learned to code through She Codes.

Kate's work is closing the gender gap in tech, where only 30 per cent of employees are women. She has sourced more than \$1 million from government and industry to support women in STEM.

Kate has also contributed to the growth of Spacecubed, a start-up hub in Perth, and since 2014 has played a pivotal role in building communities and coordinating programs such as Plus Eight and Startup Weekend. Her achievements have been recognised with the Business News 40 Under 40 Award and The West Australian's Rising Star Award.

Nick Hudson, Founder of The Push-Up Challenge and mental health advocate, is the 2024 Local Hero for Western Australia.

Nick Hudson and his friends had started a push-up challenge in 2017 to get fit and motivate each other. In 2018, Nick extended the challenge to more friends to raise awareness and funds for mental health. Then Nick experienced depression himself following open heart surgery. While recovering, he focused on making The Push-Up Challenge a public event.

Fast forward to 2023 and The Push-Up Challenge has become an annual event. Individuals and teams across Australia aim to meet set push-up targets, learn facts about mental health and, if they choose, raise funds for mental health charities. To date the event has raised \$40 million.

In 2023 alone, over 200,000 participants completed 315 million push-ups, making them fitter, raising \$14.6 million for mental health and getting people talking and thinking about mental health.

Now an inspiring public speaker and aged 46, 'Chief of Push-ups' Nick was awarded Mental Health Advocate of the Year WA 2021.

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

"The recipients for Western Australia epitomise the values of the Australian of the Year Awards – they are inspirational people whose contributions and achievements are helping to create better outcomes for all of us," said Mark.

Old Parliament House,
King George Terrace,
Parkes ACT 2600

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“Mechelle’s grace and courage are exceptional; Charlie and Kate are building the future and Nick has created a movement with understanding and care at its heart.”

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

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****NOTE****

The Australian of the Year Awards program is run by the National Australia Day Council.

It includes state and territory awards, including the Australian of the Year Awards for Western Australia.

The Australian of the Year Awards for Western Australia are NOT connected with an awards program known as the Western Australian of the Year, run by the Celebrate WA organisation.

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PHOTOS: From the awards announcement event can be downloaded as available after approx. 8:30pm Perth time from this link (credit NADC/Salty Dingo): [WA Media Distribution photos - High res](#)

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