

MEDIA RELEASE
MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2024

2025 AUSTRALIANS OF THE YEAR FOR NORTHERN TERRITORY ANNOUNCED

2025 Australian of the Year for the Northern Territory - Grant Ngulmiya Nundhirribala (Arnhem Land)
2025 Senior Australian of the Year for the Northern Territory - Michael Foley OAM (Casuarina)
2025 Young Australian of the Year for the Northern Territory - Nilesch Dilushan (Darwin)
2025 Local Hero for the Northern Territory - Mignon McHendrie (Darwin River)

Awards event livestreamed via australianoftheyear.org.au

EMBARGOED - Monday 4 November 2024, 7:45PM (Darwin time): The 2025 Australian of the Year Award recipients for the Northern Territory have been announced at a ceremony in Darwin this evening.

The four Northern Territory recipients will join those from the other states and territories for the national awards to be announced on 25 January 2025.

The 2025 Australian of the Year for the Northern Territory is musician, role model and cultural leader Grant Ngulmiya Nundhirribala

Internationally recognised, 49-year-old Grant Ngulmiya Nundhirribala is a musician and cultural leader in Numbulwar community, Arnhem Land.

Grant has inspired Numbulwar's next generation to excel at performing their traditional music and dance. He's shown how Numbulwar people can make an income from expressing their internationally esteemed culture, in a place where employment is scarce.

Bridging cultural differences, Grant has been an ambassador for his music, language and culture across the world. He collaborated with the Budapest Art Orchestra to release an award-winning album and worked in Japan with North Indian classical artists. He's travelled to Ubud, Bali to collaborate with a Balinese Gamelan and recorded an album with a Spanish guitarist in Barcelona.

Grant was the driving force behind the three-day Numburindi Festival in Numbulwar. He regularly performs at Garma Festival and took 45 Numbulwar artists to the Barunga Festival two years in a row. And for decades, he's led the renowned Red Flag Dancers.

Community volunteer and founder, Seniors Of Excellence NT, Michael Foley OAM is the 2025 Senior Australian of the Year for the Northern Territory.

(Note: Michael was unable to attend the Awards announcement event as he is currently in Europe)

For more than 40 years, Michael Foley OAM has been contributing to the recognition of senior citizens in our communities and their mental wellbeing. Michael saw a need for seniors to be acknowledged for the hours of volunteer work they do every day. In

2014, he founded Seniors Of Excellence NT, inspiring senior citizens to share their valuable expertise and see the value of achievement that comes through community service. He went on to establish the Seniors Of Excellence NT Award to recognise their selfless work, with 183 seniors receiving the award since 2014.

Michael has raised thousands of dollars and volunteered countless hours for community organisations such as Cancer Care NT, Variety and Royal Darwin Hospital Palliative Care Hospice. He's also served on the board of directors of the National Heart Foundation Australia (Northern Territory).

At 84 years of age, Michael continues to ensure the contributions of seniors are not forgotten.

The 2025 Young Australian of the Year for the Northern Territory is community service leader Nilesh Dilushan

Nilesh (Nil) Dilushan inspires and unites young people from diverse backgrounds to serve their community. As co-founder of two not-for-profit organisations, the 28-year-old fosters youth-driven initiatives for social change.

Nil's commitment to community service has led him to spearhead two successful community initiatives: The Kindness Shake and Rotaract Young Professionals NT. These organisations focus on upskilling young people, addressing literacy gaps and creating employment pathways, making a positive impact on their local communities.

Their programs, such as FINSMART and Jumpstart, are making a difference by closing service gaps and providing young people with essential peer-to-peer support in financial literacy and substance abuse awareness.

In 2023, Nil won Northern Territory Volunteer of the Year and the Chief Minister's Youth Volunteer of the Year. From an immigrant grappling with cultural displacement and language barriers to a community leader inspiring a new generation, his journey embodies the Territory's multicultural spirit.

Wildlife carer and advocate Mignon McHendrie is the 2025 Local Hero for the Northern Territory.

For over 30 years, Mignon McHendrie has brought compassion and education to her community, rescuing and caring for the Northern Territory's unique wildlife.

As head of the community organisation, Wildcare Incorporated, Mignon is at the helm of a team of volunteers who rescue wildlife. She also donates her time to working with remote communities, including organising for animals to be flown to Darwin for specialised care.

As a volunteer, the wildlife warrior shoulders a large responsibility: applying for government grants, managing finances, recruiting and coordinating volunteers for rescues and facilitating board meetings. Organising fundraising events and managing public relations is also part of her considerable remit.

Mignon is expanding the work of Wildcare Incorporated by training the community on how to care for orphaned baby animals and licenses the taking of animals with carers into local schools. A true advocate for Australia's treasured wildlife, 57-year-old Mignon's kindness and compassion are contagious.

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

"The award recipients for the Northern Territory are to be congratulated on their outstanding achievements and contributions and we look forward to welcoming them to Canberra in January," said Mark.

“Grant’s leadership is ensuring survival of culture and confident futures for people; Michael is a proud example of the value seniors bring to our society; Nilesh is drawing on his own experience to inspire and support others, and Mignon’s dedication is protecting the unique wildlife that makes the Territory and Australia so special.”

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. 8:30pm Darwin time from this link (credit NADC/Salty Dingo): [NT Media Distribution photos - High res](#)

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