

MEDIA RELEASE

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FROM LIFESAVING VIRTUAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS TO BASKETBALL LEADERSHIP, MEET THE 2027 AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Four extraordinary people have been named the 2027 Australian of the Year Award recipients for Western Australia* at a ceremony in Perth this evening.

2027 Australian of the Year for Western Australia – Esther Oh (Perth)
2027 Senior Australian of the Year for Western Australia – Tina Baldwin (Bedford)
2027 Young Australian of the Year for Western Australia – Pheobe Ho (Perth)
2027 Local Hero for Western Australia – Adam Desmond (Bellevue)

From delivering telehealth solutions for remote communities and decades of dedicated volunteering, to supporting people affected by eating disorders and transforming young lives through basketball, the stories of this year's award recipients highlight the extraordinary ways in which Western Australians are making a difference and inspiring positive change.

The 2027 Australian of the Year for Western Australia is Telehealth innovator Esther Oh.

After her son lost his vision due to delayed treatment during COVID-19 lockdown and skills shortages, Esther Oh founded Agili8 to teleport the 'virtual' eyes and hands of multi-disciplinary medical experts – using smart glasses and smartphones – to remote frontline areas.

Despite battling an aggressive cancer, 49-year-old Esther pioneered her telehealth solution with remote Aboriginal communities to deliver a culturally safe model of care. In one instance, a remote patient in Port Hedland was saved from deadly infection and potential amputation in just 15 minutes using Agili8's solution.

Agili8's breakthroughs transcend time, distance, costs, manpower, socio-cultural and language barriers to close the gap for Aboriginal and remote communities. Since 2021, Esther has won multiple global awards for leadership, innovation and impact, including receiving more than \$500,000 as a Google AI Scale Tier company.

Esther's achievements highlight how determination and innovation can transform personal adversity into new technologies that can improve the lives of others in Australia and around the world.

The 2027 Senior Australian of the Year for Western Australia is long-serving Lifeline volunteer Tina Baldwin.

Tina Baldwin is the longest serving volunteer with Lifeline WA, with more than 40 years of experience providing vital crisis support to people in need.

Tina and her husband, Daniel, started out as Lifeline's first volunteer crisis supporters in Western Australia in the mid-1980s. Since then, she has answered more than 33,000 calls from people in distress needing support. In each case, Tina responds with compassion, openness and a willingness to listen.

Today, Tina applies her experience to mentoring new crisis supporters, helping equip them with the skills and empathy needed to support others. Beyond Lifeline, she volunteers with her local parish church and works as a family liaison officer with Ronald McDonald House.

Tina, 78, exemplifies the spirit of volunteering, selflessly dedicating her time to making a lasting difference to thousands of lives.

The 2027 Young Australian of the Year for Western Australia is mental health advocate Pheobe Ho.

Pheobe Ho is using her lived experience to help people with eating disorders recover from debilitating physical and mental conditions.

Pheobe's journey of recovery from an eating disorder as a teenager inspired her to study psychology with a focus on young people and eating disorders. Now a senior clinical psychologist specialising in eating disorders at the Child and Adolescent Health Service, she treats some of Western Australia's most vulnerable young people and supports their families. Her lived experience continues to inform her clinical work and research, including exploring the role it can play as a part of a patient's recovery process.

Alongside her clinical work, Pheobe is a tireless advocate, mentor, public speaker and national policy adviser on a range of eating disorder and broader mental health topics.

Through her work and by sharing the insights of her own story, Pheobe's openness and generosity is an example of selfless dedication to helping others in need.

The 2027 Local Hero for Western Australia is Indigenous community leader Adam Desmond.

Adam Desmond, 47, founded Binar, Perth's first Indigenous basketball association, 15 years ago with just six young people and a basketball court, creating a safe place for Aboriginal youth to connect, belong and thrive. What began on a Perth basketball court has grown into a thriving Aboriginal community organisation supporting more than 2,500 predominantly Aboriginal children across Western Australia.

Today, Binar provides wraparound support through basketball, education, health, mentoring and cultural identity, creating positive pathways for young people both on and off the court. Its programs extend into schools and regional communities across Western Australia, connecting children with opportunities, services and strong role models.

Binar has also grown into a successful basketball association, becoming the first Aboriginal-led club to enter WA's representative basketball competition.

Adam's vision has always extended beyond sport. Young people who once participated in Binar are now coaches, mentors and leaders themselves – creating a powerful cycle of Aboriginal leadership for the next generation.

National Australia Day Council CEO Carrie Leeson congratulated the Western Australia award recipients.

"The 2027 Australian of the Year Award recipients for Western Australia are all making a tangible difference in people's lives, strengthening communities and even saving lives," said Carrie.

"Esther has drawn on her own experiences to create better outcomes for others, both here in Australia and potentially around the world. Pheobe is using her lived experience to support young people and their families; Tina has dedicated decades of her life to helping those in need; and Adam is harnessing the power of basketball to give young people connection, purpose and direction."

The Western Australia award recipients will join those from the other states and territories for the national awards, to be announced on the evening of 25 January 2027 in Canberra.

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. This program is delivered in each state and territory, including 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 from [WA Media Distribution photos - High res](#) (credit NADC/Salty Dingo). Award recipient photos will be available after approx. 8:45pm Perth time.

LIVESTREAM VISION: The Western Australia awards announcement event is livestreamed from 6:00pm Perth time via australianoftheyear.org.au. The vision is YouTube based and is accessible for media use.