

New South Wales

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART AUSTRALIA

13 November 2024

Australian
of the Year
➤ Awards

Reflect. Respect. Celebrate

20
25

MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

The 2025 NSW Australian of the Year Awards are an opportunity to celebrate the achievements and contributions of our incredible citizens.

Tonight's nominees represent the very best of our state – their efforts have changed lives, empowered communities and helped people in need.

The NSW Australian of the Year Awards isn't only about recognition – receiving an award opens a new and exciting chapter for our recipients.

They'll see their voices amplified and be encouraged to lead important conversations to help shape a brighter future for NSW and our entire nation.

Behind every nomination is a legacy of service by one person, and an expression of gratitude by another. That so many people have taken

the time to nominate their fellow citizens reflects the passion, civic spirit and gratitude of the people of NSW.

On behalf of the people of NSW, I offer my sincerest congratulations to all nominees and to the four category recipients.

I also wish them the very best as they represent our state at the national Australian of the Year Awards ceremony in Canberra.

Thank you for your efforts in making our state stronger and more inclusive.



Chris Minns MP
Premier of New South Wales



20
25

THE AWARDS PROCESS



1

If all starts with your nomination



2

An expert panel selects one state and territory 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 for the latest news and profiles of nominees, recipients and alumni

For information on Australia Day and the National Australia Day Council, visit australiaday.org.au

NOMINATE NOW



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware this program may contain images or names of people who have passed away

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



JESS HILL

Journalist, author and educator on coercive control

Jess Hill is a journalist, author and speaker on gender-based violence.

As more than one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner, Jess is fiercely advocating for a safer world for women and children. She's presented at almost 400 events about coercive control and delivers education for magistrates, communities and frontline workers. Jess is also regularly consulted on law reform, and this year sat on the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches panel.

Her book on domestic abuse, *See What You Made Me Do*, won the 2020 Stella Prize and was adapted into a docuseries for SBS. Following this came podcast series *The Trap* about coercive control, another docuseries on SBS on consent called *Asking For It*, and a quarterly essay on how #MeToo has changed Australia.

For over 10 years, Jess has been living with brain cancer. Yet despite this, she continues to work relentlessly towards ending gender-based violence.



KATH KOSCHEL

Founder, Kindness Factory

A former professional cricketer and Ironman competitor, Kath Koschel has faced unimaginable hurdles. In her twenties, she broke her back and was told she may never walk again. Shortly afterwards, she lost her partner to suicide. Then, piecing her life back together, she was hit by a 4WD and learned to walk again a second time.

Kath's resilience helped her to not only overcome these challenges, but to see the good in the world. In 2015, Kath founded Kindness Factory.

The not-for-profit, now based across three countries, has inspired over seven and-a-half million acts of kindness. Its curriculum teaches the power of kindness to children at more than 3,500 schools across Australia and had been downloaded over 60,000 times globally.

Kath's incredible story of courage and hope in adversity has become a global kindness movement, touching people from all walks of life. She consults to organisations globally, teaching the same principles of kindness.



DANIEL PRINCIPE

Youth advocate and educator

Daniel Principe champions boys across Australia, challenging them to live courageous, respectful and empathetic lives. Daniel helps them find their purpose, clarify their values and get intentional about the kinds of men that they want to be. And he's inviting others to join him on the path towards forming good men.

By partnering with schools and communities, Daniel has encouraged over 70,000 young Australians to recognise and resist distorted attitudes towards bodies, relationships and sex. He invites his audiences to instead aspire to healthy relationships built on mutual respect and empathy.

As the face of the Australian Government's 2024 'Consent Can't Wait' campaign, Daniel plays a pivotal role in promoting consent education and combating harmful behaviours among young people. His leadership in this national initiative underscores his effectiveness in driving social change on a large scale.

Daniel exemplifies hope, compassion and a relentless dedication to strengthening the next generation.



AMY SCOTT VA

NSW Police officer

Inspector Amy Scott VA has dedicated 19 years to the NSW Police Force, where she has been recognised on numerous occasions for her courage and leadership.

On 13 April 2024, Inspector Scott displayed unparalleled bravery and dedication to service during a mass casualty event at a shopping centre in Sydney. The day's events involved a knife wielding offender attacking people within the centre, resulting in death and chaos.

Without hesitation or regard for her own safety, Inspector Scott responded with exceptional courage, not waiting for backup and choosing to face the threat head-on and alone, a decision that would define her heroism.

Inspector Scott located and advanced towards the offender, reflecting a dedication to protecting the public's safety and putting service before self. Her actions saved countless lives and showcased her unwavering leadership in the face of extreme danger. Inspector Scott's fearless and decisive actions are an inspiration to all Australians.



GWENDA DARLING

Dementia and aged care activist

Gwenda Darling, a Palawa woman, was diagnosed in 2012 with younger onset dementia; at 59, a shocking and challenging discovery. She had already survived many traumatic experiences with an alcoholic father who struggled with PTSD following World War II, incest and domestic violence.

Gwenda has invested her life and career advocating for trauma-informed care for all age groups and people, including Aboriginal Australian children, LGBTI+ and other minority groups. Since her diagnosis, she remains a respected, influential voice for choice and control in aged care settings, and believes that medication, isolation or restraint should be a last resort.

Gwenda participates in dementia research and is actively involved with the Aged Care Council of Elders, Older Persons Advocacy Network and Dementia Australia. She advocates for the human rights and dignity of all older Australians.

The living embodiment of commitment, strength and resilience, Gwenda's no-nonsense attitude has improved understanding, giving hope for countless older Australians.



PROFESSOR MICHELLE HABER AM

Childhood cancer researcher

Professor Michelle Haber AM has dedicated her professional life to improving outcomes for children with cancer.

When Michelle began her research, children with the same cancer type were all treated the same way – because doctors had no way of knowing what was best for any given child.

For children with the commonest cancer, acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, the game changer came when Michelle and her team developed technology that could show who was at high risk of relapse and therefore needed more intensive treatment. This led to a doubling of survival in children in the high-risk group, from 35 per cent to 70 per cent.

Michelle then applied this personalised approach to other cancer types. Now, because of her work, Australia is the first country to offer precision medicine to every child with cancer – and it's yielding remarkable results.

Today, Michelle is recognised as one of the leading scientists in the field globally.



DR KARL KRUSZELNICKI AM

Science enthusiast and educator

Dr Karl Kruszelnicki AM brings science to life with wit and charm. In 1981, he walked into ABC Radio station Triple J and offered to talk about the Space Shuttle launch. *Great Moments in Science* ran while Karl pursued his medical career.

Karl may have continued in paediatric medicine had it not been for the death of a baby from whooping cough. At the time, disinformation was circulating that vaccines didn't work. Appalled by the harm caused, Karl decided to quit medicine and make science communication his full-time career.

Karl presented on *Quantum*, co-hosted *Sleek Geeks* and appears regularly on radio and TV. His national weekly, one-hour science talkback show on Triple J, *Science with Dr Karl*, attracts over 750,000 listeners, while the podcast downloads are over six million. He's authored 48 popular science books and even built a machine to pick up electrical signals from the human retina for Fred Hollows.

With infectious enthusiasm, Karl continues his mission to spread the good news about science and its benefits.



AUNTY GLENDR A STUBBS OAM

Counsellor and First Nations leader

Aunty Glendra Stubbs OAM is a proud Wiradjuri woman who has lived in the Blue Mountains all her life.

She has been the aunty-in-residence at the University of Technology Sydney since 2020, and is a trained counsellor with over 40 years' experience providing advice and practical assistance to survivors of trauma.

Glendra has worked with several state and national bodies, including as an Aboriginal engagement advisor for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and is the elder-in-residence at Knowmore, a legal service supporting victims of child sexual abuse.

In her personal and professional capacities, Glendra has learned a great deal about the range of issues involved in supporting strong, resilient individuals, families and communities. This has led to her membership on a range of boards and committees, including leading as CEO of Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation, assisting those affected by past government policies.



NOOR AZIZAH

Co-founder, Rohingya Maiyafuinoor Collaborative Network

Noor Azizah, a Rohingya refugee, has overcome immense challenges to become an outstanding human rights advocate and educator. At the age of eight, she and her family resettled in Sydney, having fled the genocide of Rohingya people in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

Despite these hardships, Noor has emerged as a strong voice for Rohingya women who have experienced unimaginable atrocities, such as systematic rape, torture and the loss of loved ones. Their plight remains a constant motivation for her work.

Noor co-founded the Rohingya Maiyafuinoor Collaborative Network – a women-led, Rohingya-led, refugee-led organisation that focuses on addressing Rohingya human rights issues and sexual and gender-based violence through education and solidarity. Noor's leadership within this organisation is a testament to her commitment to bringing about positive change for the Rohingya community, especially for the most vulnerable members of this population.

Noor's life journey is a shining example of resilience, courage and unwavering determination.



MOLLY CROFT & AMY PARMENTER

Co-founders, The Tie Dye Project

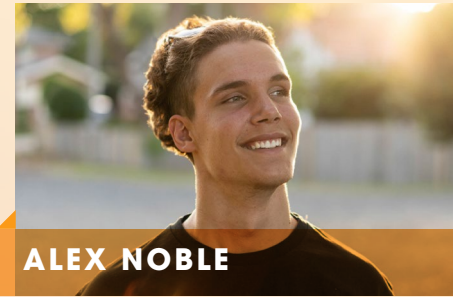
At the age of 12, Molly Croft was in hospital battling sarcoma cancer when she met elite netballer Amy Parmenter.

During her off-season in 2017, Amy started The Tie Dye Project, and soon after, Molly joined in, bringing with her the support of the Dubbo community.

The Tie Dye Project makes and sells tie-dye t-shirts to raise funds for sarcoma cancer research. So far, the project has tie-dyed 16,930 items and raised over \$1 million.

For Amy, the fight against cancer is personal, having lost her mum to the disease when she was just fifteen. Together, Molly and Amy are working tirelessly to spread awareness about sarcoma and inspire Australians to invest in research and support those affected by this devastating illness.

Their relentless dedication has influenced the medical community to prioritise sarcoma research, making a profound impact on the lives of children and families nationwide.



ALEX NOBLE

Founder, Alex Noble Foundation

Alex Noble was a 16-year-old rugby star when an on-field injury broke his neck and severely damaged his spinal cord.

While Alex was in hospital, his brother Zac didn't want to complete his final school exams. Alex's first words after a four-day coma were: "Zac, if I fight ... You fight".

This inspired the online campaign, IFIGHTYOUFIGHT. It has over 50,000 followers and a website reaching 300,000 people.

Diagnosed with C4 quadriplegia, Alex was not expected to have any movement from the neck down. Defying the odds, he has gone from learning to breathe again to standing up with a 20kg weighted vest.

At twenty-two, he is a bestselling author, motivational speaker and fundraiser for spinal cord injury research and rehabilitation. He's also studying full-time at university, working in a law firm and runs his own boat rental company. Alex inspires others to find happiness and reach their true potential.



MADDISON O'GRADEY-LEE

Mental health advocate and researcher

Maddison O'Gradey-Lee aims to improve the measurement of mental ill-health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people through her PhD research.

In 2020, Maddison co-founded the Orygen Global Youth Mental Health Fellowship, a six-month program providing youth advocates with support, mentorship and education modules to increase the impact of their advocacy projects in their communities and globally.

Together with Orygen Global, Maddison facilitated one of the largest global youth consultations on mental health. She heard advocates felt unsupported and lacked training. Within four years, the Orygen Global youth fellowship has trained 76 youth advocates in mental health education, lived experience advocacy and peer support across 42 countries.

Over 21,000 young people have been reached through the direct and indirect impact of the program. Maddison has created a global community that's combating taboos around mental health and was the first person from Oceania to win the Dalai Lama Peace Fellowship.



ADAM DEMAMIEL

Co-founder, Boys to the Bush

Adam DeMamiel taught students with behavioural issues for over 10 years before he saw an opportunity in 2017: to start Boys to the Bush.

For boys experiencing trauma and facing bleak prospects, Boys to the Bush provides wholistic early intervention support. For these boys, 88 per cent don't live with an adult male, 85 per cent are living away from home and 57 per cent are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The support Adam provides to many of these young men can make the difference between life and death. Boys to the Bush leans in to offer mentoring and practical support to boys who have nobody else in their corner. The program has impacted over 8,000 lives through 1:1 MENToring programs, camps, school programs and community engagement.

Adam has now created a scalable model that is changing the lives of our most vulnerable; the ripple effect enables communities to become far more connected.



RENUKA FERNANDO & BEN STAMMER

Co-founders, ReLove

Renuka Fernando and Ben Stammer were friends in a Sydney running group. As part of their 'Run for Good Project', they helped five women from a domestic violence shelter set up homes in social housing. Renuka and Ben collected good quality furniture and put the call out for donations.

The experience opened their eyes to the critical needs of vulnerable people when they move into safe housing. So, in 2020, the charity ReLove was born.

Renuka and Ben have since furnished homes for more than 2,000 families, providing over \$20 million worth of furniture.

ReLove has become a leading support service for people in crisis who need to set up a home from scratch. Renuka and Ben provide good quality rescued furniture and household items at no cost to 25 families each week.

They have made exceptional contributions to the lives of at-risk Australians through generous compassion and practical support.



MARTHA JABOUR OAM

Co-founder, Homicide Victims Support Group

Martha Jabour OAM helped establish the Homicide Victims Support Group in 1993 to care for families and friends of homicide victims throughout New South Wales. It provides life-changing counselling, support and referrals to more than 4,200 members.

Using her experience across grief, trauma, policy development, strategic planning and crisis management, in 2013, Martha developed a vision for a world-first trauma recovery facility for those impacted by homicide. She inspired politicians, public servants, community organisations and others to raise funds, while land for the facility was donated by Blacktown City Council and the Western Sydney Parklands Trust. Grace's Place opened in 2023.

In April 2024, Grace's Place provided care for the overseas families of the victims of a Sydney shopping centre attack, including accommodation, counselling and funeral assistance.

Martha is also a community member representative on the NSW State Parole Authority, representing the families of homicide victims once an inmate becomes eligible for parole.



CLAUDE ROBINSON

Manager, The Rainbow Lodge Program

Claude Robinson cares for the men that no one else cares for. As manager of The Rainbow Lodge, Claude helps men to transition back into the community following a period of incarceration.

Every year, almost 20,000 people leave prison in New South Wales, but less than three per cent of them get a bed in an accommodation program. The residents of Rainbow Lodge are among the lucky few.

With a focus on helping men heal from trauma, Claude's 'never give up' attitude helps men to survive and thrive after incarceration, some who have spent decades in prison. His care and dedication help prevent men from becoming homeless and reoffending.

By taking in the men no one else will, Claude cares for those who've fallen through the cracks of society. He's determined to change people's lives for the better and has been doing so for years with care, love and kindness.

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 2025 Australian of the Year Awards, recognising the outstanding service to the community that many Australians make.

The trophies for the 2025 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.



RECOGNISING NEW SOUTH WALES' 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 New South Wales for the past five years. The full honour roll can be viewed at australianoftheyear.org.au

- | | | |
|--|-------------|---|
|  | 2024 | Professor Georgina Long AO and Professor Richard Scolyer AO
– Melanoma treatment pioneers |
| | 2023 | Craig Foster AM – Human rights and anti-racism activist, former Socceroo |
| | 2022 | Professor Veena Sahajwalla - Founding Director of the Centre for Sustainable Materials Research and Technology at the University of New South Wales |
| | 2021 | Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM - Ex-NSW Fire Commissioner |
| | 2020 | Professor Munjed Al Muderis - Orthopaedic surgeon & human-rights advocate |
|  | 2024 | John Ward – Geriatrician and co-founder, Hunter Ageing Alliance |
| | 2023 | Teresa Plane – Palliative care pioneer and advocate |
| | 2022 | Abla Tohamy Kadous - President of the Islamic Women’s Welfare Association |
| | 2021 | Aunty Isabel Reid - Elder and advocate for the Stolen Generation |
| | 2020 | Sue Lennox - Environmental educator and social enterprise founder |
|  | 2024 | Nikhil Autar – Researcher and founder, Bheem Health |
| | 2023 | Lottie Dalziel – Founder, Banish and sustainability champion |
| | 2022 | Dr Daniel Nour - Founder of Street Side Medics |
| | 2021 | Nathan Parker - Pilot Invictus Games gold medallist |
| | 2020 | Corey Tutt - Indigenous mentor and fundraiser |
|  | 2024 | Angus Olsen – Childhood cancer illustrator and author |
| | 2023 | Amar Singh – Founder, Turbans 4 Australia |
| | 2022 | Shanna Whan - Founder and CEO of Sober in the Country |
| | 2021 | Rosemary Kariuki - Advocate for migrant and refugee women |
| | 2020 | Bernie Shakeshaft - Founder of BackTrack Youth Works Program |

* 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 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