

## **NEW SOUTH WALES AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD FINALISTS ANNOUNCED**

The New South Wales finalists for the 2010 Australian of the Year, Senior Australian of the Year, Young Australian of the Year and Australia's Local Hero Awards include a crime victims' advocate, a whale conservationist, a solar energy researcher, a neurosurgeon and the founder of the OzHarvest food bank.

There are four finalists in each award category and recipients will be announced at the NSW Australian of the Year Awards presentation on Wednesday 18 November 2009 in Sydney. The NSW recipients will then join recipients from all other States and Territories as finalists for the national awards. The national awards will be announced on 25 January 2010 in Canberra and will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Australian of the Year Awards program.

Ms Tam Johnston, Program Director at the National Australia Day Council, said the awards had attracted more than 2,500 nominations nationally this year, for people who were making a difference to the lives of others.

"The NSW finalists are a reflection of the many different types of people we all find inspiring," said Ms Johnston.

"They are all passionate about what they do, whether that is making the world a greener place, improving the lives of others, changing our society for the better or giving their time to the local community or charity."

Ralph Norris, CEO Commonwealth Bank, offered his congratulations to the NSW finalists. The Commonwealth Bank has been the major sponsor of the Australian of the Year Awards for more than thirty years.

"On behalf of the Commonwealth Bank, I would like to congratulate all the NSW finalists. We wish them all the best of luck in this stage of the awards and in their future endeavours," said Mr Norris.

The NSW finalists are:

### **NSW AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

Jon Dee - *Environmental campaigner (Katoomba)*  
Professor Martin Green - *Photovoltaic researcher (Bronte)*  
Andrew Penfold - *Indigenous education advocate (Vaucluse)*  
Dr Charles Teo - *Neurosurgeon (Queens Park)*

### **NSW SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

Sue Dengate - *Consumer advocate (Woolgoolga)*  
Ken Marslew AM - *Crime victims' advocate (Jannali)*  
Hiskelina (Lyn) Thorpe - *Surgical theatre nurse (Charlestown)*  
Tony Trimmingham OAM - *Anti-drug campaigner (Leura)*

### **NSW YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

Skye Bortoli - *Whale conservationist (Medowie)*  
Nina Funnell - *Anti-violence campaigner (Huntleys Point)*  
Jack Manning Bancroft - *Indigenous mentor (Balmain)*  
Shannon Nott - *Rural health crusader (Bondi Junction)*

### **NSW LOCAL HERO**

Nancy Adams OAM - *Volunteer (Redhead)*  
Peter Baines - *Charity founder (Middle Cove)*  
Barbara Browne - *Indigenous nurse (Jerilderie)*  
Ronni Kahn - *Food rescuer (Bronte)*

For more information on the Australian of the Year Awards visit [www.australianoftheyear.org.au](http://www.australianoftheyear.org.au).

#### **Ends.**

Finalist bios attached with this media release or downloadable from [www.australianoftheyear.org.au](http://www.australianoftheyear.org.au)

For further information or to arrange an interview please contact:

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## **Australian of the Year**

### **Jon Dee - Environmental campaigner**

Jon Dee has inspired millions of Australians in to making positive environmental and social change. He founded Planet Ark, National Recycling Week, The National Recycling Hotline and National Tree Day. He spearheaded the campaign to phase out plastic bags, and initiated the lobbying campaign for Australia's phase out of incandescent light globes. Jon Dee has led the way in showing us all how we can change our planet for the better.

### **Professor Martin Green - Photovoltaic researcher**

Professor Green is acknowledged as a world leader in photovoltaic research. He founded the Photovoltaic Laboratory at UNSW in the mid-1970s which is now recognised as one of the premier photovoltaic research institutions worldwide. Professor Green was awarded an inaugural Australian Federation Fellowship in 2002 and was one of the first researchers to receive this honour for a second time. Professor Green's groundbreaking work is sure to bring lasting benefits to people all over the world.

### **Andrew Penfold - Indigenous education advocate**

Andrew Penfold left a successful career as a lawyer and investment banker to devote his time voluntarily to help transform the lives of Indigenous children through education. He founded the St Joseph's College Indigenous Fund and raised \$5 million to support 40 Indigenous boys to board at the College, and recently established the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF) to expand the delivery of Indigenous education scholarships for thousands of Indigenous children on a national basis.

### **Dr Charles Teo - Neurosurgeon**

Dr Charlie Teo is the Founder of the Cure for Life Foundation and founding director of the Centre for Minimally Invasive Neurosurgery at Prince of Wales. He has an international reputation for performing radical surgery on brain tumours that other neurosurgeons consider inoperable. Patients come to him from all over the world, and he lives by the principle that a doctor should always treat his patients as he would a member of his own family.

## **Senior Australian of the Year**

### **Sue Dengate - Consumer advocate**

Sue Dengate has changed the lives of many Australian families by providing information about harmful food additives and their effects on health, behaviour and learning ability. She is the author of the bestselling *Fed Up* series of books and runs the Food Intolerance Network (FIN). Sue actively lobbies food manufacturers and those in government to raise awareness about the negative effects additives have on our children, and to encourage the use of safe alternatives.

### **Ken Marslew AM - Crime victims' advocate**

After the senseless murder of his 18-year-old son, Ken Marslew established the Enough is Enough anti-violence movement to provide a holistic approach for the needs of victims of crime, violence, anti-social behaviour and road trauma. He has spent the last 15 years taking his message of responsibility, change and peace into jails, primary and secondary schools, community groups, and into the political arena. Ken is a champion for the rights of victims of crime.

### **Hiskelina (Lyn) Thorpe - Surgical theatre nurse**

Since 1993, Lyn Thorpe has used her surgical theatre nursing skills to help others around the world, repairing cleft lips and palates, horrific burns, and birth deformities. In 2008, Lyn went to Cambodia and was part of a team that performed 100 cataract extractions that resulted in immediate sight. Lyn has also helped to raise \$50,000 to bring a young burns victim from Papua New Guinea to Australia for treatment, nursing her in her own home after each operation. Lyn's caring nature shines through in all that she does.

### **Tony Trimmingham OAM - Anti-drug campaigner**

When Tony Trimmingham went public about the death of his son from a heroin overdose it led to the creation of Family Drug Support. The organisation now runs a 24-hour help line, has produced a parent education kit for families, provides referral and support meetings for those coping with a family member's drug addiction or death, and offers a course for families called Stepping Stones to Success. Tony has become one of Australia's most effective anti-drug campaigners.

### **Young Australian of the Year**

#### **Skye Bortoli, 16 - Whale conservationist**

At the age of just 11 Skye Bortoli established Teens Against Whaling to campaign for the end of all commercial whaling. She travelled to Alaska at 14 to present a 40,000-strong petition to stop 'scientific research' in the southern ocean whale sanctuary to the Chairman of the International Whaling Commission. This year she headed to Antarctica with the Sea Shepherd organisation to witness Japan's annual whaling expedition firsthand.

#### **Nina Funnell, 26 - Anti-violence campaigner**

In 2007, Nina was attacked and held at knifepoint by a man who bashed, strangled and almost raped her before she managed to escape. Since then she has become a public spokesperson for survivors of assault, campaigning for the rights of all Australians to live free from physical and sexual violence. She has given her time to speak to students across Australia and is also a member of the management committee of the NSW Rape Crisis Centre, raising awareness of this important issue.

#### **Jack Manning Bancroft, 24 - Indigenous mentor**

At 24 years of age Jack Manning Bancroft heads up Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME), and has been named in Sydney's Top 100 Most Influential People. AIME works with Indigenous students from Years 7 to 12 to increase student retention and university admission enrolments. There are now 20 schools and three universities across NSW participating in AIME, with further growth expected nationally in 2010. Jack is well on the way to further increasing school attendance and providing Indigenous students with a solid educational foundation.

#### **Shannon Nott, 23 - Rural health crusader**

As National Rural and Indigenous Officer of the Australian Medical Students' Association, Shannon Nott breaks down prejudices, stereotypes and misconceptions about working in the rural health sector and rural life in general. He founded an annual Rural Appreciation Weekend, hosting 150 health and medical students on his family's property at Dunedoo. He is also Co-Chair of the National Rural Health Students' Network, a multidisciplinary student health network funded by the Australian Government.

### **Australia's Local Hero**

#### **Nancy Adams OAM, Redhead - Volunteer**

Nancy Adams is a registered nurse who has given years and countless hours to volunteer, community and charitable work. She was the Newcastle region training manager for St John's Ambulance and Head of Nursing of the Lake Macquarie State Emergency Service for 15 years. Among numerous voluntary positions, Nancy is a founding member of the Hunter Valley Scots Club, former chair of the SIDS and Kids Hunter region, and volunteer with the Scouts and Guides for more than 40 years.

#### **Peter Baines, Middle Cove - Charity founder**

Following his experiences working on the Boxing Day tsunami recovery, Peter Baines wanted to contribute in a meaningful way to help the many children orphaned by the tsunami. He founded the Hands Across the Water charity which has built two orphanages, raised \$2 million, and purchased a rubber plantation to provide income. Plans are underway for a tsunami-proof community centre. Peter is proof that a little help goes a long way.

#### **Barbara Browne, Jerilderie - Indigenous nurse**

Barbara Browne overcame prejudice and poverty to achieve her goal of becoming a nurse at Jerilderie Hospital, where she has worked for the last 39 years. She is well known for her caring and cheerful manner, and always goes above and beyond the call of her nursing duties. She is also proud of her Aboriginal heritage and has organised Aboriginal education days at Jerilderie's schools. Barbara's kind hearted nature has made her an inspiration to others.

**Ronni Kahn, Bronte - Food rescuer**

In 2004, Ronni Kahn founded OzHarvest, to collect and deliver surplus food from restaurants, cafes and events to charities. OzHarvest now has over 600 food donors and delivers more than 110,000 meals each month to 163 charities in Sydney, Canberra and Wollongong and continues to expand. With Ronni's guidance, OzHarvest has had a profound impact on the environment, saving thousands of tonnes of food from landfill and helping clients of charities to eat quality, nutritious food.