

Tasmania

PRINCES WHARF 1

6 November 2024

Australian
of the Year
▶ **Awards**

Reflect. Respect. Celebrate

20
25

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

As Governor of Tasmania, I am delighted to acknowledge our 16 Tasmanian finalists and to recognise their achievements through the 2025 Australian of the Year Awards.

Each year, the Awards celebrate Australians who have made a significant contribution to the Australian community and nation, demonstrate excellence in their field, and are inspirational role models for the Australian community.

Our finalists have emerged from hundreds of nominations from all over Tasmania. They lead by example and dedicate their time, knowledge and experience to the benefit of others. They are committed to building stronger communities and share qualities we can all aspire to: compassion, courage, enthusiasm and resourcefulness.

While only four people can advance to represent Tasmania in the National Awards in January, I thank each of our 16 finalists for everything you have done to support our diverse Tasmanian community. You are a great credit to Tasmania, and I offer each of you my sincere congratulations and best wishes.



**Her Excellency the Honourable
Barbara Baker AC**
Governor of Tasmania



20
25

MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

The Australian of the Year Awards recognise our greatest strength – our people.

It celebrates the Tasmanians who go above and beyond and whose contributions – whether local, national, or global – greatly benefit others.

Tasmania's 16 finalists are from all walks of life, each with their own unique talents and strengths, and have been recognised at the highest level for their extraordinary efforts.

Their stories inspire us to challenge ourselves, reach for our goals and give back to our state and nation.

Each finalist has positively influenced the lives of others and made a significant impact on the wellbeing of their community.

It is an honour to celebrate each of these incredible Tasmanians and everything they have achieved.

On behalf of all Tasmanians, it is with an enormous sense of pride that I congratulate our finalists and thank them for their service to Tasmania and beyond. I wish them all the very best at the Awards and with their future endeavours.



Jeremy Rockliff MP
Premier of Tasmania



2025

THE AWARDS PROCESS



1

It 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



REES CAMPBELL

Tasmanian wild food advocate

Rees Campbell is a fifth generation Tasmanian who has elevated her community's appreciation of Tasmania's edible native plants through her ground-breaking research, use and celebration of these unique native plants and seaweeds.

Rees works closely with Aboriginal people, including the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, to share understanding. She assisted the Centre's language workers to retrieve some names of the native plants in the palawa kani language.

Her books, *Eat Wild Tasmanian*, *Eat More Wild Tasmanian* and *The Seaweed Supplement*, are the only published sources on Tasmanian edible wild plants. Rees' research has been reported in academic and mainstream publications and over 1,000 people visit Rees' Wild Food Garden each year.

Rees speaks throughout the state to community groups, schools and childcare centres on how to grow and use Tasmanian wild food plants. Because of her advocacy, schools and childcare centres are now growing edible native plants – inspiring the next generation of Tasmanians.



SARAH DE JONGE

Founder, 1000 Hearts

Sarah De Jonge believes that kindness can change the world. In 2016, she started the social enterprise 1000 Hearts as a way of offering kindness, hope and comfort to those in need. The movement has reached people around the world, including schools, healthcare services and community groups.

Through 1000 Hearts, Sarah inspires people to sew and share pocket-sized fabric love hearts. The hearts are small gestures of love and kindness for people of all ages who may be facing challenges like physical and mental illnesses, trauma or grief.

Carrying one of Sarah's hearts has helped people deal with anxiety, grief, depression and separation from loved ones. She has also sent hearts to places impacted by violence, natural disasters and acts of terrorism.

Sarah has started an online community that connects and supports people from around the world. Through 1000 Hearts, she is showing love and kindness in troubled times.



SAM ELSOM

Founder, Sea Forest

Sam Elsom is a climate solutions innovator who's commercialised a new way to reduce methane emissions. Methane is a significant contributor to global warming because it's 28 times more harmful than carbon dioxide.

Sam founded Sea Forest, one of the first start-ups to successfully turn asparagopsis, a native Australian red species of seaweed, into a livestock feed supplement.

Sea Forest's SeaFeed supplement contains bioactive compounds that stop methane production in the animal's gut. Adding just 0.2 per cent of the supplement to livestock feed can reduce the methane emissions of cows and sheep by up to 90 per cent, while increasing productivity.

Sea Forest was named as a finalist for the \$1.9M Earthshot prize set up in 2020 by Prince William and nature documentarian Sir David Attenborough.

By dramatically reducing methane emissions, Sam is strengthening the sustainability of livestock industries, slowing global warming and potentially changing the course of our planet's future.



**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
LOUISE NOTT**

Oncologist and treatment equity champion

Associate Professor Louise Nott's innovative work in patient advocacy, clinical trials and oncology practice leadership is enabling people with cancer in Tasmania to achieve equity in cancer outcomes.

Louise strongly believes that cancer patients in Tasmania should receive the same treatment options as those living on mainland Australia. To this end, in 2021 she worked to establish a comprehensive research unit at Icon Cancer Centre Hobart. Since then, the Centre has offered over 20 clinical trials to more than 100 public and private patients.

Louise has been involved as a principal and sub-investigator in over 50 oncology clinical trials that advance the global understanding of cancer treatment. She also inspires her peers and the next generation of oncologists by initiating knowledge sharing – ensuring that more patients can benefit from developments in cancer care.

Through her work to overcome disadvantage in cancer treatment, Louise has progressed the fight against cancer, in Tasmania and globally.



**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
PENELOPE BLOMFIELD**

Gynaecological oncologist

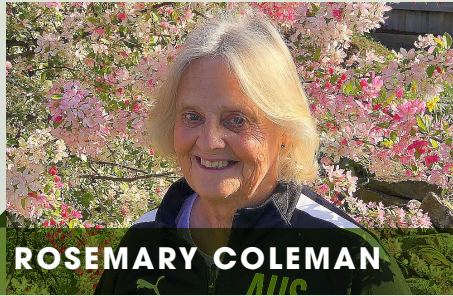
Associate Professor Penelope Blomfield's life's work has been dedicated to improving the quality and longevity of life for her patients and others affected by gynaecological cancers.

In 2000, she became the first female gynaecological oncologist in Tasmania and has remained at the forefront of the continuous advancement of medical research, both as an associate professor at the University of Tasmania and an active contributor to a range of research studies.

Holding various leadership and advisory positions in her field, Penelope has provided submissions to government committees, advice to numerous cancer advocacy groups and contributed to multiple research papers.

In 2018, in recognition of her outstanding contribution to her field, Penelope was appointed by the Federal Minister for Health to the Cancer Australia Advisory Council and was reappointed in 2021.

Penelope is passionate about addressing the disparities faced by many women diagnosed with a gynaecological cancer and champions best and innovative care.



ROSEMARY COLEMAN

Athletics coach and inclusion champion

Rosemary Coleman has dedicated much of her life to young people through her involvement in education and sport. Most recently, she has brought her talent for coaching to Para athletics, and is deeply committed to improving inclusion in sport and broader society.

Formerly a paediatric nurse, Rosemary went on to become a teacher's assistant at St Virgil's college where she worked with students with intellectual and learning disabilities.

She soon became the school's athletics coach and a prominent coach of young Tasmanian athletes at the local, state, national and international levels as well as training new coaches.

Rosemary is now retired but still coaching and still an officiator and administrator of athletics, having held positions such as manager, secretary, president and committee member across multiple athletics clubs and organisations. She has changed the lives of countless young athletes, supporting them to fulfil their potential and encouraging their belief in themselves.



CAROL NAGY

Nurse and humanitarian

Carol has dedicated much of her professional life to humanitarian work in the most extreme and unpredictable circumstances around the world.

For the past two decades, nurse Carol has been working and volunteering with various non-government organisations including Médecins Sans Frontières.

Her work ranges from managing complex medical programs, to providing desperately needed healthcare to vulnerable people in conflict zones and areas facing natural disasters and disease outbreaks. This includes Afghanistan, Ukraine, throughout Asia Pacific and most recently, Gaza and the West Bank. Carol also helps at-risk children access social support and education.

She exemplifies resilience, compassion and bravery, frequently placing herself in difficult environments and using her expertise to help in delivering patient care. By speaking about her experiences in the community, she's raising awareness about the impact of war, disaster and poverty on some of the world's largely neglected peoples.



NORMAN SPURR

Retired farmer and volunteer

Driven by an innate sense of fairness and great determination, Norman Spurr is not a man to let anyone fall by the wayside. Now retired, Norman was a farmer, a church deacon and volunteer, and a respected mentor in the Boys Brigade for many years.

Norman has a talent for bringing people together, organising working bees and other group efforts to support a long list of causes, over many decades.

With many struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic and with the ensuing cost of living crisis, Norman co-ordinated the donation and transport of more than 140 tonnes of vegetables from farmers and other food suppliers, helping innumerable charities and welfare agencies provide meals to disadvantaged people.

Endlessly generous with his time, resources, skills and spirit, Norman was recognised in 2021 with the ABC Radio Community Champion award. Now in his 80s, he still gives his time to support those doing it tough.



ELLSIE BIRD

Inclusion advocate

Ellsie Bird is a rising talent in construction whose visionary thinking, leadership and unwavering commitment to excellence has set her apart.

As the first female apprentice at Mead Con, a leader in construction in Tasmania, she has been a trailblazer since her entry into the industry. Ellsie has become a mentor and advocate for new apprentices and has helped to foster a cultural shift towards inclusivity, serving as an example to others through her dedication, leadership and welcoming attitude.

Ellsie is passionate about carpentry and has continued to undertake diverse education to broaden the scope of her practice, ensuring she is always on the cutting edge of industry quality and safety standards.

In recognition of her outstanding skills and knowledge, and her role in championing a more diverse and supportive construction industry, Ellsie was awarded the Master Builders Association's State and National Apprentice of the Year Award in 2023.



DR ELLA SMALLEY

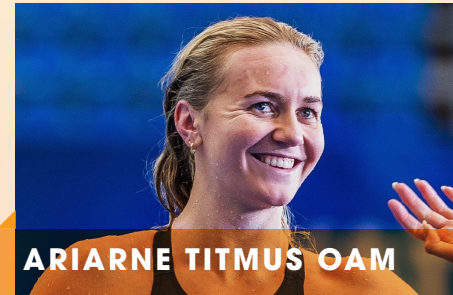
Cancer care advocate

At 23, Dr Ella Smalley – a postdoctoral research fellow at the Menzies Institute for Medical Research – was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma. This lived and professional experience gave her a unique perspective on the specific challenges of young cancer patients.

It inspired her to join the Youth Cancer Action Board, through which she advocates for improved care for young people experiencing cancer.

Ella's tenacity and drive has led her to spearhead initiatives for youth that deliver benefits nationwide, such as improved mental health programs and subsidised fertility preservation. She also recently co-ordinated an outreach program connecting young people with chronic illness, passionate about STEM, with mentors.

Ella's resilience and dedication were recognised when she won the Tasmanian Young Achiever of the Year award in 2024. She hopes to connect with policy and change makers to continue to increase consumer and community involvement and deliver better healthcare outcomes for vulnerable groups.



ARIARNE TITMUS OAM

Olympic swimmer

At the age of only 24, Ariarne Titmus OAM has already achieved more in her sporting career than most could ever dream of.

Ariarne first made a name for herself on the global stage in 2018, winning two gold medals and a silver medal in the freestyle events at the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast.

After Ariarne began working with expert coach Dean Boxall in 2016, she was named Swimming Australia's Swimmer of the Year in 2019. Ariarne has demonstrated extraordinary dedication and grit to improve her performance in the pool, and some of her long-time idols have now become her rivals both in Australia and overseas.

Ariarne holds several world records and has won gold medals in both the 2020 Tokyo and 2024 Paris Olympics. With her quiet strength and determination, she is a role model for young swimmers who want to improve and test the boundaries of what is possible.



ROMANY WAKE

Domestic violence survivor and change advocate

Romany Wake has lived through unimaginable tragedy as a witness and victim to domestic violence, and that lived experience has driven her to become a passionate advocate and campaigner for change.

In the immediate aftermath of the murder of her mum, Rachel, a beloved community member, midwife and mother of two, Romany founded *Rachel's Voice*, a social media platform through which she bravely shared her story and provided support to others impacted by domestic abuse.

Alongside her mother's work colleagues, she founded the Rachel Wake Midwifery Scholarship in 2023 and speaks at public rallies and vigils. She has also worked with a range of organisations, government agencies and institutions such as the police, courts and frontline services to improve legislation.

This includes the most recent National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children, guiding the response to domestic abuse and helping to ensure the safety of those affected in the future.



TODD DUDLEY

Conservationist and founder, North East Bioregional Network

Todd Dudley is a veritable titan and stalwart of nature conservation in Tasmania. For over thirty years, he has been committed to conservation at all levels, from on-ground work through to the highest levels of political advocacy.

Todd's excellence and commitment in the environmental field inspired his community's collective conscience. Using his incomparable expertise, he founded and is the president of North East Bioregional Network (NEBN). It has close to 100 members and is considered one of the most effective conservation groups in Tasmania.

Through NEBN, Todd has initiated, negotiated and managed funding for a vast array of complex projects that benefit current and future generations, including the highly acclaimed Skyline Tier Ecological Restoration project.

As the project's manager, Todd achieved the restoration of over 700 hectares of logged pine plantation to healthy and resilient native forests. It's the largest ecological restoration project in Tasmania – and one of the best in Australia.



KEREN FRANKS

Founder, Young Leaders of Tasmania

Keren Franks has firsthand experience of the power of inclusion for people living with disability and those around them. She has touched the lives of countless young Tasmanians by bringing to life her groundbreaking vision.

Through her daughter Bella's experience in school, Keren saw that an inclusive model of education can yield enormous benefits, not only for students with disabilities but for mainstream students, too.

This was the catalyst for the creation of the community not-for-profit organisation, Young Leaders of Tasmania (YLOT) in 2017, of which Keren is CEO. After a successful pilot program, YLOT expanded rapidly to run a range of programs statewide, with the central aim of facilitating social role modelling, skill development activities and facilitating peer-to-peer interaction in support schools and mainstream schools.

YLOT's programs help to change community perceptions around disability, foster inclusion and acceptance, increase workforce participation in the disability sector, and provide opportunities for young Tasmanians.



DAMIEN GREEN

Fundraiser, blood and organ donor advocate

In the wake of the devastating loss of their seven-year-old son, Archie, Damien Green and his family were determined to honour Archie's superhero legacy.

The family consented to Archie becoming an organ donor, saving the lives of five people. It is this powerful legacy that Damien and his wife Hayley have honoured by starting Archie's 100, a fundraiser that benefits the Royal Hobart Hospital's Neonatal and Paediatric Intensive Care Unit.

With their primary fundraising event taking place each year on Archie's birthday, along with other initiatives such as teaming up with Variety to coordinate the donation of toys to sick children, Archie's 100 has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars towards high quality equipment, research and patient care for children at the Royal Hobart Hospital.

Through Archie's 100, Damien also highlights the essential work of emergency services and is a passionate advocate for blood and organ donation.



DJUKER WILLIS HART

Founder, Hart Cultural Connections

A proud knowledge sharer, Djuker Willis Hart is a cultural guide and creative. He has committed himself to learning about all aspects of Indigenous culture so that it may be preserved and passed on to future generations and the broader community.

Djuker, whose name means 'keeper of the tribes', has become a leader in his community through his work as a creator of cultural objects and experienced performer of both traditional and contemporary Aboriginal dance. In particular, he is sharing his cultural knowledge through his work as a tour guide with Hart Cultural Connections.

Djuker is dedicated to growing the presence of Indigenous culture in tourism in Tasmania and Australia more broadly, and empowering his community, inspiring pride in and through culture. He advocates for others through mentorship and employment opportunities and aims to provide a safe space for cultural learning and appreciation, fostering understanding and respect within and between communities.

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 TASMANIA'S 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 Tasmania for the past five years. The full honour roll can be viewed at australianoftheyear.org.au

Australian of the Year

- 2024** Stephanie Trethewey – Rural women’s advocate and founder, Motherland
- 2023** John Kamara – Humanitarian and co-founder, Culturally Diverse Alliance of Tasmania and African Communities Council of Tasmania
- 2022** Craig Leeson – Documentary filmmaker and journalist
- 2021** Grace Tame – Advocate for survivors of sexual assault
- 2020** Dr Jess Melbourne-Thomas – Marine, Antarctic and climate scientist

Senior Australian of the Year

- 2024** Reverend James Colville AM – Founder, Colony 47
- 2023** Dr Frances Donaldson – Doctor, frontline COVID-19 worker, prisoner advocate
- 2022** Bruce French AO – Agricultural scientist and Founder, Food Plants International
- 2021** Brian Williams – Scout leader and mentor
- 2020** Dr Graeme Stevenson OAM – Landcare activist

Young Australian of the Year

- 2024** Naarah – Actor, musician, Indigenous activist
- 2023** Meriem Daoui – Humanitarian and marathon runner
- 2022** Kaytlyn Johnson – Youth leader and singer-songwriter
- 2021** Toby Thorpe – Advocate for youth empowerment & climate action
- 2020** Will Smith – Social justice activist

Australia's Local Hero

- 2024** Clair Harris – Founder, Tassie Mums
- 2023** Keith Parker – Volunteer ambulance officer and ammunition technical officer
- 2022** Kimberley Smith APM – Community volunteer with the Rotary Club of Sullivans Cove
- 2021** Edna Pennicott OAM – Founder of Kingborough Helping Hands
- 2020** Thomas Windsor – Advocate for men’s health

* 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



Australian Government
Department of Health and Aged Care



Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs



The Canberra Times
part of the **ACM** network



Australian National University



MinterEllison

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.

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