

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**31 MAY 2016**

**NOMINATE YOUR LOCAL HEROES AND ADMIRABLE AUSTRALIANS FOR AWARDS**

**Nominations for 2017 Australian of the Year Awards Now Open**

**australianoftheyear.org.au**

Australians are being asked to nominate their local heroes and admirable Australians for the 2017 Australian of the Year Awards.

The Australian of the Year Awards rely on the public to submit nominations for fellow Australians they would like to see recognised by the Awards.

There are four Awards categories:

* Australian of the Year
* Senior of the Year (65 years and over)
* Young Australian (16 - 30 years)
* Australia’s Local Hero

Nominations can be made at [australianoftheyear.org.au](http://www.australianofhteyear.org.au) until midnight 7 August 2016.

Ben Roberts-Smith VC MG, Chairman of the National Australia Day Council, encouraged the public to get involved and nominate people who are worthy of attention.

“Nominations from the public are vitally important – it’s the public who know the people doing great things in our communities,” said Mr Roberts-Smith.

“The Awards recognise 128 people nationally each year – people from diverse backgrounds around the nation who contribute in many different ways. They’re volunteers, charity founders, advocates for those in need, people who’ve overcome their own challenges to help others, pioneers who’ve made a difference, young people looking to create a brighter future and achievers with a sense of community. Most of all, they are one of us.

“Throughout the 56-year history of the Australian of the Year Awards, there’s a wealth of people whose contributions or achievements have been of benefit to others – from humble heroes such as ‘Angel of the Gap’ Don Ritchie and foster mum Lynne Sawyers to high achievers like Ian Frazer and Fiona Stanley whose scientific developments have had global impact.

“The four Awards categories - Australian of the Year, Senior Australian of the Year, Young Australian of the Year and Australia’s Local Hero - are equal in their importance and allow us to honour people across a range of areas.

“It only takes one nomination for an individual to be in the running for the Awards, but they must be nominated. Don’t assume someone you know of may have been nominated already – if we don’t receive a nomination for someone, we can’t consider them for the Awards.”



Nominations can be made online at [australianoftheyear.org.au](http://www.australianoftheyear.org.au).

If you do not have access to the internet, you can call the National Australia Day Council

on 02 6120 0600 for assistance to submit a nomination.

The Australian of the Year awards celebrate the achievements of inspirational Australians.

As Principal Partner, Commonwealth Bank, is proud to have supported the Awards for more than 36 years.

“We are delighted to continue our long standing partnership with the Australian of the Year Awards. We look forward to seeing which remarkable Australians are nominated in 2017,” said Ian Narev, Chief Executive Officer, Commonwealth Bank.

**BACKGROUND ON THE AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS PROCESS**

How the Awards process works:

* Members of the public submit nominations for the Awards – a nomination must be submitted for an individual before they can be considered for the Awards,
* Up to 3,000 individuals are nominated in the Australian of the Year Awards each year,
* Once nominations close on 7 August 2016, they will be sorted into the four Award categories in each State and Territory,
* Up to four finalists are selected in each category, from which Award recipients in each State and Territory are announced in late 2016 (it’s these people who then go on to be considered for the national Awards),
* The national Awards are decided by the Board of the National Australia Day Council and are announced on January 25, 2017.

Who’s eligible:

* Visit australianoftheyear.org.au where you can submit a nomination
* There are four Award categories:
* Australian of the Year
* Senior Australian of the Year (65 years and over)
* Young Australian of the Year (16 to 30 years)
* Australia’s Local Hero
* Nominees must be Australian citizens
* You don’t have to know the person you’re nominating – you just need to tell us why you think they are worthy of recognition and provide brief details of what they’ve done
* You can’t nominate yourself

The Awards judging criteria considers:

* Demonstrated excellence in their field
* Significant contribution to the Australian community and nation
* An inspirational role model for the Australian community
* The Local Hero Award acknowledges a significant contribution at local community level

For more information on the Awards process, visit <http://www.australianoftheyear.org.au/the-awards/criteria/>

**ENDS.**

***For further media information about the Australian of the Year Awards or interviews contact:***

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