

MEDIA RELEASE
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NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN TO FIND THE NEXT AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR
Nominations Open 1 July - 31 August 2009
50th Anniversary of Awards Program

DARWIN 3:00PM (NT TIME): The Prime Minister, The Hon Kevin Rudd MP, today officially opened nominations for the 2010 Australian of the Year Awards.

The Prime Minister was joined by National Australia Day Council Chairman Adam Gilchrist, former Australian of the Year singer Judith Durham OAM (1967) and Catherine Freeman OAM, who is the only person to be named both Young Australian of the Year (1990) and Australian of the Year (1998), in a joint call for all Australians to submit a nomination for someone they admire for their achievements or community contribution.

The 2010 awards will mark the 50th anniversary of the Australian of the Year Awards, with inspirational names such as Prof Fred Hollows, Kay Cottee, Robert de Castella, The Seekers, Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop, Sir Robert Helpmann, Arthur Boyd, Dame Joan Sutherland, Lee Kernaghan, Dawn Fraser, Sir Gustav Nossal and Dr Fiona Wood among the honour roll.

"I encourage all Australians to have their say on who should be our next Australian of the Year by submitting a nomination," said the Prime Minister.

"Your nomination will help find the names to be added to this illustrious list of award recipients."

There are four award categories in which you can nominate a great Australian:

- *Australian of the Year* - open to all Australians who deserve recognition for their extraordinary achievements, contributions to the community and nation and who are inspirational role models to all Australians;
- *Senior Australian of the Year* - recognises those Australians aged 60 years and over who continue to achieve and contribute to the community;
- *Young Australian of the Year* - recognises those extraordinary young Australians aged 16 - 30 years;
- *Australia's Local Hero* - recognises Australians who make a real difference in their local communities and whose outstanding contributions enrich the lives of those around them.

Catherine Freeman made a special entrance to today's launch, jumping from a plane in a tandem skydive to the beach outside the Darwin Trailer Boat Club to deliver the first nomination for this year's awards to Adam Gilchrist.

"I'm very proud to deliver the first nomination for this year's awards and even more proud to say it's a nomination I'm submitting personally for Maggie Blackley from Palm Island," said Freeman.

"For me, it was an amazing honour to be recognised through these awards. It is a great thank you from your fellow Australians, so I want to nominate someone I admire and show her how much I think of what she does for her community.

Magdalena (Maggie) Blackley has been nominated in the Local Hero category by Freeman for her lifetime of community service and leadership in the Palm Island community. She started one of the first small businesses on the island, was a foundation member of the Palm Island Netball Association, has served as a Palm Island Councillor and is on the Palm Island Community Company Board. Maggie has been heavily involved in many community issues throughout her life, including the local child care service, schools and the Palm Island Youth Centre.

The Commonwealth Bank has been the major sponsor of the Australian of the Year Awards for more than 30 years and Commonwealth Bank's Chief Executive Officer, Ralph Norris, says the roll call of names in the awards is a living history of the nation.

"The Commonwealth Bank is proud to continue our support of the Australian of the Year Awards in 2009," said Mr Norris.

"The previous recipients honoured reflect the changing makeup of this great country and highlight those we can all admire.

"I encourage all Australians to be part of the 50th Anniversary of these awards by nominating someone they find inspiring."

Nominating is simple - you can complete a nomination form online at www.australianoftheyear.org.au or pick up a nomination form at branches of the Awards program's Major Sponsor, the Commonwealth Bank or call 1300 655 193 for more information.

Nominations close Monday 31 August 2009.

State & Territory award recipients in each category will be announced in November. These State & Territory award recipients then become the finalists for the national level awards which will be announced on the eve of Australia Day, 25 January, 2010.