

NORTHERN TERRITORY AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD FINALISTS ANNOUNCED

The Northern Territory 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 remote area nurse, an AFL player, a walkabout chef and the Territory's first female judge.

There are four finalists in each award category and recipients will be announced at the NT Australian of the Year Awards presentation on Thursday 12 November 2009 in Darwin.

The Northern Territory 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 Anniversary of the Australian of the Year Awards program.

Ms Tam Johnston, Program Director at the National Australia Day Council, said the Northern Territory finalists showed the breadth and depth of talent and skills in Australia's top end.

"The finalists come from a broad range of backgrounds and have had a significant impact on either their local community, the Territory or the regional community," said Ms Johnston.

"Whether they are achieving career landmarks or following a passion, they have all inspired others in some way."

Ralph Norris, CEO Commonwealth Bank, offered his congratulations to the Northern Territory 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 Northern Territory finalists. We wish them all the best of luck in this stage of the awards and in their future endeavours," said Mr Norris.

The Northern Territory finalists are:

NT AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

Dr Paul Bauert - *Paediatrician (Casuarina)*
Associate Professor Sabina Knight - *Remote area nurse (Alice Springs)*
Steve Sunk OAM - *Walkabout chef (Humpty Doo)*
Warwick Thornton - *Filmmaker (Alice Springs)*

NT SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

Jill Jolliffe - *Freelance journalist (Darwin)*
Alan Langworthy - *Technological innovator (Berrimah)*
Brian Manning - *Aboriginal rights campaigner (Darwin)*
Sally Thomas AM - *Legal trailblazer (Fannie Bay)*

NT YOUNG AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

Nathan Frick - *Mental illness campaigner (Nhulunbuy)*
Liam Jurrah - *AFL star (East Bentleigh)*
Jessica Mauboy - *Singer (Rapid Creek)*
Kingsley Murphy - *Youth role model (Maningrida)*

NT LOCAL HERO

Michael Green - *Mental health worker (Casuarina)*
Norma Higgins - *Horticulturalist (Katherine)*
Nina Keener - *Wildlife Carer (Batchelor)*
Imam Adama Konda - *Religious leader (Wanguri)*

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

Ends.

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

For further information or to arrange an interview please contact:

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of the Year

Dr Paul Bauert - Paediatrician

Dr Paul Bauert is Director of Paediatrics at Royal Darwin Hospital and has worked in Darwin and serviced Aboriginal communities for over 25 years. He is President of the Northern Territory branch of the Australian Medical Association (AMA), and is currently on the AMA's Indigenous Health Task Force. He is a strong advocate for justice and improving Aboriginal health. Dr Bauert is passionate about supporting Indigenous people and remote area nurses in their struggle to deliver services under difficult conditions.

Associate Professor Sabina Knight - Remote area nurse

Associate Professor Sabina Knight has spent her life as a remote area nurse and advocate for remote and rural health. She pioneered the nursing stream of the Remote Health Practice program, and now coordinates the Remote Health Practice and Remote Health Management Programs at the Centre for Remote Health in Alice Springs. Associate Professor Knight is a recognised leader in remote health both nationally and internationally. Her professional activities have focused in particular on Aboriginal primary health care and health inequalities.

Steve Sunk OAM - Walkabout chef

Steve Sunk is the Northern Territory's own celebrity chef, dubbed the Walkabout Chef for his cooking classes in remote Aboriginal communities. Since moving to the Territory 15 years ago he has been on a mission to bring nutrition education to Indigenous communities by re-introducing bush tucker to their diet. He has also advocated for healthy foods in school canteens, introduced a Breakfast Program to make sure children have something to eat before school, and taught homeless people to cook.

Warwick Thornton - Filmmaker

Warwick Thornton is one of Australia's most promising contemporary filmmakers, winning numerous local and international awards as a cinematographer, writer and director. Born in Alice Springs, Warwick is a cinematography graduate from the Australian Film Television and Radio School. His debut feature, *Samson and Delilah*, is widely recognised as one of Australia's finest films and was selected for the 2009 Cannes Film Festival where it won the Camera d'or for best first feature. Warwick's passion is to document the stories of his community and share them with us all.

Senior Australian of the Year

Jill Jolliffe - Freelance journalist

Jill Jolliffe witnessed the first incursions of Indonesian troops into East Timor in 1975 and reported on the death of her five colleagues at Balibo. Around 10,000 East Timorese people were taken as political prisoners and many of them were tortured, died or disappeared. In 2001, she instigated the Living Memory Project, a video archive of testimony by East Timor's former political prisoners. Jill also aims to establish a social centre where ex-prisoners can develop a common sense of identity.

Alan Langworthy - Technological innovator

Alan Langworthy established and manages Powercorp, a world-leading and groundbreaking power systems engineering company whose technology is enabling remote communities to have city-quality power almost entirely from renewable sources. In the early 1990s, Powercorp also pioneered high-penetration wind diesel systems that now power remote communities from Antarctica to the Azores. This year Alan won a prestigious Clunies Ross Award for his contribution to science. Alan's pioneering work has significantly impacted the global development of remote renewable energy.

Brian Manning - Aboriginal rights campaigner

Brian Manning was co-founder of the NT Council for Aboriginal Rights and co-founder of the NT Trades and Labour Council. He urged the union to address equal pay in the pastoral industry, and supported the historic Gurindji tribe walk off Wave Hill Station in 1966. He delivered the 6th Vincent Lingiari Memorial Lecture on the 36th anniversary of the walk off in 2002. Brian Manning was a trailblazer and continues to support Aborigines right to self determination.

Sally Thomas AM - Legal trailblazer

During her career, Sally Thomas has racked up an impressive series of 'firsts'. She was the first woman in the Northern Territory to practice as a judge, the first female Territory magistrate, and the first female chief magistrate. After 30 years of service to the community Sally recently retired, however she continues to work as a patron of numerous organisations, including the NT AIDS Council, the Cancer Council NT, and the NT Women's Lawyers Association.

Young Australian of the Year

Nathan Frick, 24 - Mental illness campaigner

Nathan Frick is committed to improving the awareness and treatment of mental illness by breaking down stigmas. A sufferer of bipolar, he is also Chair of the Headspace National Youth Reference Group, a youth mental health initiative. Nathan is currently working on *OpenMYnds*, a documentary about young people's experience of having a mental illness, and is a national ambassador for beyondblue, ensuring that his experiences can educate and assist other Australians experiencing similar challenges.

Liam Jurrah, 21 - AFL star

Initiated Warlpiri man Liam Jurrah is the first player from a remote community in Central Australia to be drafted by the AFL. Liam has not trained with elite training squads, and is the proud product of the red dirt oval of his community. Since he was 16, Liam has been a member of the Jaru Pirrjirdi (Strong Voices) Youth Development and Leadership Project. He also works as a youth mentor with at-risk Warlpiri youth facing serious life issues.

Jessica Mauboy, 20 - Singing star

After being proclaimed runner-up on the 2006 season of *Australian Idol*, Jessica Mauboy released her debut album and was voted Best Aussie at the MTV Australia Awards. She now has a platinum album, a number one single, a tour alongside Beyonce, and an upcoming feature film, *Bran Nue Dae*. Determined to use her high profile to spread goodwill, Jessica has visited Indonesia as a cultural ambassador and is the face of the NT campaign, I'm Smarter than Smoking.

Kingsley Murphy, 18 - Youth role model

Kingsley Murphy is a youth trainee at GREATS Youth Services in the Maningrida Community of Arnhem Land. He created the Strong Young Men's Program to support troubled young men and delivers the Moodiji program to high school boys, a program focusing on life skills and sexual health. Kingsley recently coordinated the official opening of the Youth and Wellbeing Centre and the Maningrida Youth and Cultural Festival. He is a shining role model who is proud of his cultural heritage.

Local Hero

Michael Green, Casuarina - Mental health volunteer

For almost three decades Mike Green has worked as a volunteer and advocate for mental health services. He is a founding member and one of the longest serving members of Mental Health Carers NT. Mike was also the instigator and founding member of the Northern Territory Association of Friends and Relatives of the Mentally Ill. Over the years he has fought long and hard in any way he can for the mentally ill and their families.

Norma Higgins, Katherine - Horticulturalist

Norma Higgins created an opportunity for local farmers by establishing a weekly market in Katherine. It has delivered tangible self-sustaining economic activity, employment, vocational education and training outcomes. Norma has also been involved in the Katherine Horticultural Association since its inception, is actively involved with the Primary Industries Training Advisory Council, and is a founding member of her local group of NT Women in Agriculture. In 2008, Norma Higgins won the NT Rural Woman of the Year Award.

Nina Keener, Batchelor - Wildlife carer

At just 11 years old Nina Keener cared for her first orphaned kangaroo and she hasn't stopped looking after wildlife since. Thirteen years ago she purchased a 320-acre property and set up a wildlife sanctuary to care for orphaned, injured and sick native animals. The sanctuary has affectionately become known as Nina's Ark. Nina's passion and devotion for wildlife is clear in all that she does and her efforts have saved the lives of many animals.

Imam Adama Konda, Wanguri - Religious leader

As an Imam working in Darwin's Islamic community since 1995, Adama Konda has worked to promote harmony among Muslims and those of other faiths. He has been actively involved with Islamic Awareness Week, an event designed to raise community awareness and promote understanding. He has also worked with the Together for Humanity Foundation which presents interfaith cross-cultural programs in schools, and with Project Abraham which explores religious and historic commonalities between Christianity, Judaism and Islam.