

MEDIA RELEASE
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2020 Victoria Australian of the Year Award recipients announced

2020 Victoria Australian of the Year – Archie Roach AM (South-west Victoria)
2020 Victoria Senior Australian of the Year – Dr Raymond Shuey APM (Melbourne)
2020 Victoria Young Australian of the Year – Taya Davies (Barwon Heads)
2020 Victoria Local Hero – Josephine Jones (Mornington Peninsula)

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The 2020 Victoria Australian of the Year Awards have been presented to a musical storyteller, a road safety champion, a youth worker and a tireless anti-litter campaigner.

Announced this evening during a ceremony at Government House in Melbourne, the recipients were presented with their awards by the Governor of Victoria, Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau AC.

The four Victorian recipients will join those from the other states and territories for the national awards ceremony at the National Arboretum in Canberra on 25 January 2020 – the 60th anniversary of the awards.

The 2020 Victoria Australian of the Year is Archie Roach AM. Archie is a singer, songwriter, musician and campaigner for the rights of First Nations Australians. After being forcibly removed from his family at age two, he has overcome teenage alcoholism and homelessness – and the 2010 death of his beloved wife, Ruby – to become an Australian music legend.

In 1992, Archie won two ARIA Awards for his 1990 debut album Charcoal Lane. He also received a Human Rights Achievement Award for his iconic Stolen Generations song, Took the Children Away – a first for any songwriter. He has since released eleven more albums and embarked on nationwide and global tours, exploring issues that affect First Nations people in modern Australia.

The 63-year-old, who lives in south-west Victoria, is a Member of the Order of Australia for his lifetime contribution to Indigenous arts and culture. Today, Archie runs Ruby's Foundation, which looks to improve opportunities for young First Nations people through art and culture. Through his work, Archie spreads a powerful message of love, reconciliation and healing.

Road safety champion Dr Raymond Shuey APM is the 2020 Victoria Senior Australian of the Year. Dr Raymond Shuey is a former Victorian police officer and Assistant Commissioner for Traffic and Operations. His signature achievement was Project Beacon, which trains police in operational safety when responding to mental health and critical incidents. With road safety partners, Ray developed initiatives to increase enforcement and education programs – resulting in a massive reduction in the Victorian road toll.

Following his retirement in 2003, Melbourne-based Ray conducted reviews for Vicroads and Victoria Police, as well as coordinating the police response to the Bushfires Royal Commission. Since completing a PhD in international road safety in 2012, Ray has contributed to WHO Good Practice

Publications and authored many road safety publications providing knowledge and inspiration for others. The 74-year-old regularly consults on road safety and operational safety in Australia and worldwide. Despite suffering ill health, Ray is president of the International Safety Foundation, which facilitates the international transfer of road safety and medical equipment, to save lives in lower income countries.

The 2020 Victoria Young Australian of the Year is 29-year-old youth worker and volunteer Taya Davies. After a very challenging childhood, Taya Davies decided to use her personal experience to help others. In her late teens, she began a career in youth work, providing much-needed love and guidance to troubled youth in residential care. Progressing to management in her early 20s, she has run numerous programs through Geelong City Council, with young people from low socio-economic backgrounds, including asylum seekers.

Now employed with the Department of Education, Taya coordinates high-school programs in the Geelong region to support disengaged youth. She spends much of her spare time volunteering on community projects, like coordinating a six-week surfing and community immersion program with young asylum seekers. The Barwon Heads resident is also passionate about helping young people with disabilities and is a close and caring friend to many.

Taya is an exceptional young woman who inspires those around her with her positivity, hard-working attitude and generosity. Her friendly, caring personality inspires everyone around her to give back and make a difference.

Josephine Jones, an environmental and litter prevention advocate from the Mornington Peninsula, is the 2020 Victoria Local Hero. Each morning, Josephine (Josie) Jones starts by collecting rubbish on the beach. A single mum, since 2006 she has volunteered over 10,000 hours and countless dollars to improve the water quality in Mornington Peninsula's bays – personally collecting over 5.3 tonnes of rubbish from its shorelines.

Josie devotes every spare moment to stopping litter entering Mornington's waterways, and engaging her community to inspire change. Through personal commitment, public speaking, social media, and consulting with local government, community groups, corporations, schools and businesses, she has educated stakeholders and inspired others to take care of the environment.

A graphic designer, the 46-year-old she has used her skills successfully to dramatically decrease cigarette butts on local streets through her 'The Only Butt' campaign. Josie's outstanding work has received recognition through awards including the Dame Phyllis Frost Award in 2016, and 2017 Litter Prevention prize from Keep Victoria Beautiful. Currently the Mornington Peninsula Australia Day Citizen of the Year 2019, she is a much-admired local role model.

National Australia Day Council CEO Karlie Brand congratulated the award recipients from Victoria, noting their outstanding contributions to our country.

"The 2020 Victoria Australians of the Year are inspirational – they combine their talents and experience with their passion to make a difference," said Ms Brand.

State member for Ivanhoe, Anthony Carbinos MP, who represented Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews, said: "The winners we celebrate tonight have all experienced challenges and have dedicated themselves to helping others - they remind us why Victoria is such a special place.

"In caring for and empowering the most vulnerable members of our communities, taking direct action to clean up our state or by making Victoria a safer place, they each inspire us all to be better."

For more information on the Australian of the Year Awards visit australianoftheyear.org.au.

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EMBARGO NOTE: Media attending the awards event may of course report award recipients as they are announced on stage OR follow Australian of the Year Awards on Twitter @AusoftheYear or Facebook for the awards announcements as they happen - once each award is announced, it can be reported.

PHOTOS: From the awards announcement event can be downloaded as available from australianoftheyear.org.au.

For more information on the Australian of the Year Awards visit <https://www.australianoftheyear.org.au/nominate/frequently-asked-questions/>

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