

2017 Australian of the Year National Finalists

NSW

At the age of six, Deng Adut was forced to fight in the war that eventually split his homeland of Sudan. Trained to use an AK-47 and expected to either kill or be killed, Deng eventually made it to Australia and is now making a difference as a successful lawyer.

Victoria

A tireless refugee, torture and trauma rehabilitation advocate, Paris Aristotle AM is the Chief Executive Officer of Foundation House, and has helped countless refugees and advised both sides of politics, demonstrating patience, personal integrity and practical skill as he navigates an ethical and political minefield.

Western Australia

With self-made wealth, Andrew Forrest drives hands-on philanthropy, leading global programs to eradicate modern slavery, create Indigenous parity and support 250 Australian community-building causes. He has pledged to give away the majority of his wealth and devotes his energy to helping society's least privileged.

Queensland

A global authority on the biology of nasal cells, biomedical scientist, Emeritus Professor Alan Mackay-Sim led the world's first clinical trial using these cells in spinal cord injury. His research played a central role in the world's first successful restoration of mobility in a quadriplegic man, and has given hope to thousands with spinal cord injuries.

Tasmania

Helping prisoners crack the code of reading, speech pathologist Rosalie Martin has developed a unique approach to literacy. For three years, Rosalie has visited Tasmania's Risdon Prison as a volunteer to deliver *Just Sentences*, a pilot project helping prisoners to open new doors and explore new worlds.

Northern Territory

As the Chief Executive Officer of the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara Women's Council, Andrea Mason brings together Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal thinking to create employment, support health and wellbeing, and tackle domestic violence and other social challenges.

South Australia

A humanitarian, advocate and activist for people with dementia, Kate Swaffer was diagnosed with the disease just before her 50th birthday. Refusing to be defeated by the diagnosis, Kate has transformed tragedy into triumph, and become a voice for 47.5 million people living with dementia.

ACT

After a stellar sporting career, former rugby league Canberra Raiders star Alan Tongue understands how to demand and inspire greatness in others. Since retiring, Alan has used his talents to help others – teaching young people to make positive life choices, tackling domestic violence and helping homeless people.