



**MEDIA RELEASE
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WOOLWORTHS PROUD TO SUPPORT GREAT YOUNG AUSTRALIANS

The National Australia Day Council is proud to announce Woolworths as a sponsor of the Young Australian of the Year category in the Australian of the Year Awards.

The Young Australian of the Year category recognises the achievements and contributions of Australians aged 16 to 30 years.

Introduced to the Australian of the Year Awards in 1979, the Young Australian of the Year Award has recognised a diverse range of young leaders and achievers from areas such as medicine, advocacy, arts, business, Indigenous affairs, community relations and sport.

Among the roll call of great Young Australians are Olympic legends Cathy Freeman and Ian Thorpe, anti-poverty campaigner Hugh Evans, entrepreneur Poppy King, round the world sailor Jessica Watson, conductor Simone Young, Indigenous youth advocate Tania Major, palaeontologist Scott Hucknull and anti-violence campaigner Jonty Bush.

National Australia Day Council Chairman, Mr Ben Roberts-Smith VC MG, welcomed the new partnership with Woolworths.

“Woolworths has a long and proud history in Australia and is respected as a corporation which supports innovation, diversity and our youth – values reflected in the Young Australian of the Year Award recipients and finalists each year,” said Mr Roberts-Smith.

“Woolworths has a long track record of supporting young people who go on to play leadership roles at a senior management level within its own organisation and at a national level. There’s a great culture of supporting the potential in people.”

Woolworths Director Corporate and Public Affairs, Peter McConnell, said the sponsorship of the Young Australian of the Year Award is a great way for an iconic Australian company to give back to the community.

“Woolworths is proud to be associated with an Award that recognises the achievements of our young people. As one of Australia’s largest employers and with young people making up such a large proportion of our workforce we’re delighted to be a part of the Young Australian of the Year awards,” he said.

As part of Woolworths’ new partnership with the Awards, an afternoon tea will be held in Canberra in the lead up to the announcement of the 2016 Australian of the Year Awards. The event will bring together the 2016 Young Australian of the Year Award national finalists from each State and Territory and the 2015 Young Australian of the Year, Drisana Levitzke-Gray to share her experiences over the past year.

The finalists for the 2016 Young Australian of the Year Award are:

- New South Wales - Melissa Abu-Gazaleh (Young men's health advocate)
- Victoria - Robert Gillies (Social enterprise founder)
- Queensland - Nic Marchesi and Lucas Patchett (Social entrepreneurs)
- Western Australia - Catherine Hughes (Immunisation champion)
- South Australia - Arman Abrahamzadeh (Domestic violence campaigner)
- Tasmania - Zac Lockhart (Mental health advocate)
- Australian Capital Territory - Nipuni Wijewickrema (Social entrepreneur)
- Northern Territory - Benjamin Masters (Musician and impresario)

The National Australia Day Council is proudly supported by the Australian Government - Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister Senator James McGrath thanked Woolworths for their recent commitment to support the Young Australian of the Year Award for the next three years.

"The support of corporate Australia is central to ensure the Young Australian of the Year Awards is a success. It shows great community spirit and helps recognise those Australians who have helped make Australia the great place it is" Senator McGrath said.

The announcement of the 2016 Australian of the Year Awards, including the 2016 Young Australian of the Year, will be held on the lawns outside Parliament House in Canberra on Monday 25 January 2016. The Awards announcement will be broadcast live on ABCTV from 7:30pm local time around Australia.

Woolworths is the category sponsor for Young Australian of the Year, while the Commonwealth Bank is the principal partner and continues its 36 year sponsorship of the Australian of the Year Awards overall.

The Senior Australian of the Year Award category is sponsored by the Department of Health and the Australia's Local Hero Award category is sponsored by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

For more information about the Australian of the Year Awards, including biographies of the 2016 Young Australian of the Year national finalists, visit australianoftheyear.org.au

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