

### Active Participation Award

#### **Drisana Levitzke-Gray, 21, of Balga**

Drisana is a fifth generation deaf person and has contributed an incredible amount to the community. She works in a voluntary capacity to improve acceptance and understanding of deaf young people in Australia and around the world, fighting for deaf people's social inclusion. She is the youngest committee member on the board of the WA Association of the Deaf, and was recently the first deaf Auslan user in Australia to act as a juror in court. Her determination to be involved helped challenge views on deaf people's capacity and their right to serve as jurors. In 2013, Drisana was named the Deaf Australian Youth of the Year.

#### **Rikeisha Voss, 21, of Leederville**

Three years ago, Rikeisha was unable to complete year 12 studies, as a result of exposure to domestic violence at home and falling pregnant. Struggling with her circumstances, she accessed transitional housing through Anglicare WA, and has not looked back since. Now resident at Foyer Oxford, Rikeisha has become a role model for positive parenting and a voice of reason for young residents. She is studying a Diploma in Beauty and is a member of Foyer Oxford's Youth Forum. She has a humorous, vibrant personality and is proof that anyone can overcome challenging circumstances.

#### **Sian Dooley, 17, of Greenwood**

A traumatic event during primary school left Sian suffering post-traumatic stress. She battled anxiety, depression, body image issues and struggled to embrace her Aboriginal culture. Through adversity, Sian developed a remarkable resilience. She is now a youth consumer representative for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, is youth and community presenter for Black Dog, where she promotes mental health to youth across WA, and is WA ambassador of the One Girl Foundation. Her efforts now fund the education of a group of girls in Sierra Leone. Sian was the youngest member selected for the 2013 YMCA Youth Parliament mental health committee. She is proof that perseverance and determination can change lives.

#### **Ehsan Warasi, 19, of Coolbinia**

Ehsan was born in Afghanistan. At the age of six, his family moved to Iran in search of refuge from the war. He lived there without legal status, in fear and uncertainty. At 16, he fled the Middle East, leaving his family in search of a better life. He arrived in Australia by boat in 2010 and spent 12 months in detention before being granted permanent residency. After learning English while in detention, Ehsan completed his high school exams with an ATAR score of 97.85 out of 100 and won a scholarship to study philosophy at The University of Western Australia. He is working as a youth support worker at the Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors and planning community engagement programs for young people from migrant backgrounds.

## **CCYP Participate Award**

### **James Clarke, 17, of Beechboro**

A year 12 student at Lockridge Senior High School, James has displayed outstanding leadership and valour in making a positive change to the community. As a homosexual Aboriginal youth, James has overcome challenges and now speaks out against prejudice to create a stronger, more informed society. He was elected as vice-captain of his school and has been an active contributor and high achiever in the Follow the Dream: Partnerships for Success program. He has participated in a range of community endeavours including reconciliation events and public speaking about climate and equality issues across Australia. He is a young man on a mission to change the world by using his voice to empower others to use theirs.

### **Nicholas Hall, 15, of Karratha**

A student at Karratha Senior High School, Nicholas is an inspiring young person who devotes his time to volunteering and fundraising, including raising funds for Police Legacy since he was 13. Nicholas spent his weekends raising \$10,000 for Telethon by holding sausage sizzles, selling fairy floss and drinks, hosting movie nights and running youth events at the Youth Shed. A quiet achiever, he undertakes these voluntary activities without seeking any formal recognition or praise. He is a positive role model to his peers, with a great attitude and supportive nature.

### **Katie McAllister, 18, of Lower King**

Katie was head girl of Albany's Great Southern Grammar in 2013. Academically talented and a keen participant in sports, it was her contribution to the fabric of the school that was most notable. After graduating, Katie pursued her dream of introducing a speech and drama eisteddfod to the Great Southern region to help develop regional students' communication skills. In September 2014, Katie launched the inaugural Shout Out! Great Southern speech and drama eisteddfod - a two-day speech and debating forum. Students from year 2 to year 11 from across the region participated in the event. Last year, Katie was one of 10 students from WA to be awarded a University of WA Fogarty Scholarship.

### **Florence Baitio, 17 of Quinns Rocks**

Born in Uganda and raised in a refugee camp, Florence's start to life was different to many but it shaped her in a positive way. Arriving in Australia in 2005, she quickly became involved in her local community. Florence now works casually as a youth support worker with the Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors, where she co-ordinates holiday programs for young people with migrant and refugee backgrounds. Passionate about her culture, she also volunteers to run cultural sessions for young people in her community. She has big dreams and hopes to become a social worker with World Vision to help children less fortunate than her.

## **ECU Community Leadership Award**

### **Binu Jayawardena, 24, of Woodlands**

A fifth-year medical student, Binu has put a biomedical engineering degree at Harvard University on hold so he can actively participate in community initiatives in WA. He is co-founder of Western Australian Student Television (WASTV) - a community sector organisation that engages young people to develop skills and techniques in film production. WASTV partners with other community groups by producing promotional and sponsorship videos free of charge. It has worked with a diverse range of organisations, including Zonta House Refuge Association, Fair Game and Uniting Care West. As the 2008 Beazley medalist, Binu also mentors other young people to achieve academic success.

### **Brett Hatfield, 22, of Kingsley**

Brett could be described as a born leader. As a year 12 student at St Stephen's High School, he travelled to Malaysia to help educate underprivileged children and, as an undergraduate nursing student, he was one of four nurse trainees who volunteered in Tanzania. Brett is now a registered nurse at Royal Perth Hospital and volunteers at the Starlight Express Room at Princess Margaret Hospital. Brett's greatest accomplishment is the development of a social media awareness campaign about the lack of support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex students. The New Norm Facebook page has more than 1,700 likes and the campaign website is a resource for school and community nurses.

### **Jenna Woods, 23, of Gosnells**

Jenna spent her high school years switching schools, and juggled the responsibilities of young parenthood and caring for her sick mother. After completing a university bridging program, she enrolled in a double major in community development and politics and international studies at Murdoch University. Jenna was recently named NAIDOC Perth Tertiary Scholar of the Year. Her contribution to the community has included involvement in a project exploring Aboriginal young people's street presence on the Perth-to-Armadale train line, and an instrumental role in re-establishing the Murdoch Indigenous Collective. She recently represented WA at the National Indigenous Youth Parliament and is chairwoman of Save the Children Youth Leadership Roundtable.

### **Sacha King, 24, of Greenbushes**

Sacha works as a student assist officer at the Edith Cowan University Guild in Bunbury and has gone above and beyond to ensure her organisation is actively involved in the local community. Her work has seen the guild connect with multiple mental health and welfare organisations, contribute to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people issues and support the development of the Bunbury Youth Amnesty International Group. She planned and co-ordinated the 2014 Drug Aware Community Mental Health Day, an event that raised awareness of mental health in the community.

## Cultural Endeavours Award

### **Connie Yarran, 20, of Kellerberrin**

Connie is a choreographer, event organiser and counsellor and is best known in the Wheatbelt town of Kellerberrin as a born leader. She was ready to leave her home town to pursue employment after completing her studies, until she became involved with Community Arts Network WA (CAN WA). After joining community hip-hop workshops, Connie stepped up to co-ordinate the workshops herself, and from these Static Crew - a dance group of young people aged 11 to 14 - was conceived. On the back of the success of Static Crew, another dance group, Lil Sparks, was formed to engage children aged five to 11. Both groups have performed at events such as NAIDOC Week. Connie now works with CAN WA as a youth arts officer in Kellerberrin.

### **Giselle Ishimwe, 20, of Westminster**

Born during the 1994 Rwandan war, Giselle's family fled to Uganda and eventually arrived in Perth in 2007. She has since contributed much to the culture and the arts in WA. Giselle applied for a grant to fund a project called Teen Stories, which gave young people the chance to share their stories about coming to Australia. The program included acting workshops and then led to the production of a short film exploring the journey of an African family to Australia. Giselle is an African youth ambassador mentor and is studying media and marketing.

### **Golda Signal, 21, of Balga**

Golda has made significant contributions to the WA community through drama, visual arts and literary pursuits since arriving from South Sudan. Having developed a love for the arts at high school, she enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts and Communication. In 2013, Golda took her passion a step further when she began mentoring a culturally diverse group of girls in performing arts and developing confidence. The group was invited to perform its play, Let's Talk, at a World AIDS Day event. Golda also performed a monologue addressing the isolation and stigmatisation faced by refugees and HIV sufferers at the 2014 AIDS Conference in Melbourne. She will be performing at the 2015 FringeWorld Festival in WA.

### **Julian Canny, 24, of Geraldton**

Julian is the founder of The Comedy Emporium in Geraldton. Under his leadership, it has grown to offer a monthly program of performances and capacity-building activities, including workshops and performance opportunities for emerging artists. Many artists had never been on stage and lacked the confidence to perform. Under Julian's mentoring, they are developing skills and confidence and performing successfully, earning accolades from their peers and the broader community. Julian's events attract up to 200 attendees and contribute to the cultural tapestry of the regional community.

## **Organisational Achievement Award**

### **Avon Youth Community and Family Services Inc, Northam**

This community sector organisation was established in 1985 as the Northam Youth Outreach drop-in-centre. It has now expanded to provide a diverse range of services to young people in the Wheatbelt. Recent achievements include delivery of school attendance programs in Moora that have generated almost 100 per cent attendance, and outreach services in Narrogin to more than 400 people each month. In Northam, boys in years 8, 9 and 10 who were persistently truant are now attending school more regularly, with one student going from a 14 per cent attendance rate to 80 per cent.

### **Rockingham Youth Advisory Council**

The council is a group of young people who advise community groups and the City of Rockingham on youth issues. The council aims to improve the public perception of young people in the media. Over the past 12 months, it has co-ordinated a photographic exploration of Rockingham, hosted a Christmas party for disadvantaged and at-risk families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and introduced the Million PAWS event to Rockingham. The council hosted a two-day forum for about 200 year 10 students to highlight mental health issues.

### **Seen and Heard, Swan View**

This community development program in the Shire of Mundaring is supported by CREW, a group of young people that acts as the voice of other young people in the area. In 2013, Seen and Heard engaged 4,333 young people in CREW meetings, events and activities. This included volunteering at community events, connecting with residents at local nursing homes and hosting a fun day for families affected by the Parkerville bush fires.

### **Camp Kulin Camp Counsellors**

Camp counsellors are 16 to 25 year olds who make an outstanding contribution to their community and the individuals they work with. Each holiday period, they volunteer for 16 hours a day to make a difference to the lives of children often affected by trauma. The counsellors co-ordinate activities to teach other young people leadership, trust, respect, self-confidence, self-esteem and communication skills. This includes rock climbing, cooking and how to be a positive role model. More than 50 per cent of campers are from culturally and linguistically diverse or Aboriginal backgrounds, including refugees from 18 countries.

### **Wirraka Maya Health Service Aboriginal Cooperation, South Hedland**

The cooperation's Transition to Adulthood program is designed to respond to the needs and issues of Aboriginal young people in the community with programs that help build positive self-esteem and decision-making. About 300 young people have completed the program which includes exercise, building positive body image, self-esteem and peer relationships, and weight loss. The program helps build confidence and resilience, and puts an emphasis on community and personal safety.

### **Oaktree WA, Subiaco**

Oaktree is a group of 16 volunteers from different genders, ages and religions who share a common passion to end extreme poverty by educating young people. This is shown by their co-ordination of the End Poverty Roadtrip. Over the past year, Oaktree has worked tirelessly to recruit volunteers to raise awareness and funding to help tackle extreme poverty. This culminated in 60 representatives travelling to Canberra to meet members of Parliament to campaign for an end to extreme poverty.

## **Minister for Youth's Outstanding Youth Worker Award**

### **Emma Godridge, 18, of Gnarabup**

Emma is committed to improving the lives of young people in the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River where she has been employed as a community development trainee since January 2014. She has exceeded expectations and delivered real outcomes for local young people. She directed a youth-produced drug aware film that focused on the consequences of illicit drug and alcohol use. Emma has helped co-ordinate events such as the National Youth Week Meelup Beach Festival that attracted more than 300 people. She is an outstanding young woman whose courage, leadership skills, commitment and professionalism have enabled her to achieve exceptional outcomes.

### **Matthew Bartlett, 42, of Currabine**

Matthew's community contribution started in his teens when he became a volunteer youth worker at his local church in Mullaloo. Since then, he has been a youth worker in Halls Creek, chaplain at Belridge Senior High School, Connolly Primary School and Ocean Reef High School, and completed a degree in social work at Edith Cowan University, where he topped the class and received the Chancellor's Award. Matt continues to work for Ocean Reef High School as chaplain and is a university lecturer in youth work. He is an activist for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex youth, and their families, and works hard to combat issues surrounding suicide.

### **Jessica Stewart, 17, of Warnbro**

Jessica is committed to improving the quality of life and the education and employability opportunities for disengaged youth in the Rockingham and Mandurah areas. As a youth case manager, she visits local schools to help young people transition into training and education. Her work has seen the academic performance of more than 100 young people improve. She was involved in a Bike Restoration Partnership Program alongside the Dismantle Organisation, which helped young people obtain a certificate in work preparation and resulted in a 90 per cent success rate. Jessica is passionate about helping young people overcome barriers to education, including drug and alcohol misuse, lack of family support, mental health issues, homelessness and learning difficulties.

### **Andy Gray, 45, of Canning Vale**

Andy, a youth worker at Canning Vale College, strives to make communities supportive environments for young people by using the school as a 'hub' for community engagement. Andy works to identify local issues and develop early intervention strategies to address these, such as parenting workshops, mental health awareness activities and multicultural outdoor movie nights. He has developed a holistic school wellness program that includes meditation, yoga and promotion of self-care for staff at the college. The program has helped staff feel supported and better equipped to manage daily tasks and student behaviour. Andy is a mentor and role model for future youth workers by accepting youth work students on placement each semester.