

MEDIA RELEASE
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2026 AUSTRALIANS OF THE YEAR FOR NSW ANNOUNCED

2026 Australian of the Year for NSW - Dr Alison Thompson OAM (Sutherland Shire)
2026 Senior Australian of the Year for NSW - Professor Henry Brodaty AO (Double Bay)
2026 Young Australian of the Year for NSW - Nedd Brockmann (Randwick)
2026 Local Hero for NSW - Theresa Mitchell (Banora Point)

Awards event livestreamed via australianoftheyear.org.au

The 2026 Australian of the Year Award recipients for NSW have been announced at a ceremony in Sydney this evening.

The NSW recipients will join those from the other states and territories for the national awards to be announced on 25 January 2026.

The 2026 Australian of the Year for NSW is global humanitarian Dr Alison Thompson OAM.

Dr Alison Thompson has deployed over 30,000 volunteers to the world's worst disaster zones - bringing humanitarian assistance and medical aid to over 18 million people.

It started on September 11, 2001, when as an investment banker, Alison rushed to New York's World Trade Centre with her first aid kit. She stayed nine months, offering disaster relief arm-in-arm with ordinary, like-minded people.

Galvanising grassroots momentum, Alison founded Third Wave Volunteers - a global movement of first responder volunteers who bring relief to the world's disaster and war zones, including Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka. Following the 2004 tsunami, she set up the first Tsunami Early-Warning Centre and education museum, which continues to thrive.

By mobilising everyday people, 61-year-old Alison is building resilience in local communities through sustainable, locally driven disaster prevention and recovery. Drawing from her upbringing as a pastor's child, Alison believes that each person's small skills add up to drive big changes.

Dementia treatment pioneer Professor Henry Brodaty AO is the 2026 Senior Australian of the Year for NSW.

Professor Henry Brodaty is transforming the diagnosis, care and prevention of dementia - improving countless lives, both in Australia and around the world.

In 1972, Henry's father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease at just 52 years old. At that time, dementia was poorly understood and often ignored. People living with dementia and carers had little support and no pathway forward. His father's experience catalysed a lifetime of work that not only revolutionised Henry's own field of psychiatry, but also the lives of people living with dementia and their families.

In 2012, Henry co-founded the Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing and led internationally significant research that enhanced the world's understanding of risk and prevention. His large Maintain Your Brain trial demonstrated that straightforward, cost-effective, targeted interventions can profoundly delay onset and even prevent dementia.

Henry, 78, is a leader who has reshaped dementia care from every angle as he navigates toward a future where dementia is better treated and prevented.

The 2026 Young Australian of the Year for NSW is Nedd Brockmann, ultramarathon runner for homelessness.

Nedd Brockmann, a then 23-year-old electrician from Forbes, had a goal – to run across Australia and inspire people to do more for themselves and the homeless.

Nedd's concern for homelessness was sparked by his journey into TAFE every week where he saw too many people sleeping rough on Sydney's Eddy Avenue. He wanted to do something to highlight homelessness, its complexities and prove that it's solvable.

So, in 2022, he ran from Perth's Cottesloe Beach to Sydney's iconic Bondi Beach, completing a 3,952km journey over 46 days, and becoming the fastest ever Australian to do so. Nedd, 26, raised over \$2.6 million from over 37,000 individual contributors.

He went on to start Nedd's Uncomfortable Challenge in 2024, and with his team, has raised over \$8 million for those experiencing homelessness. He also raises funds for his charity partner, Mobilise, to change lives through innovative programs to reduce the number of people sleeping rough.

Theresa Mitchell, carer for the homeless, is the 2026 Local Hero for NSW.

Theresa Mitchell cares for people who are homeless or in crisis, providing a compassionate lifeline for people who've fallen through the gaps.

Opening its doors in 2009, Agape Outreach Inc began when Theresa found she couldn't walk past homeless people on the street anymore. So, she handed out meals she cooked in her own kitchen.

Today, Agape operates throughout the Northern Rivers and Gold Coast with the support of more than 300 volunteers. Together they provide over 1,500 hot meals every week to vulnerable people on the streets and offer capability-building services such as back-to-work programs, psychology and basic life skills.

With kindness, compassion and practical care, 51-year-old Theresa has changed countless lives in the last 16 years. As well as advocating for the homeless and disadvantaged, Theresa has fostered 37 children.

Agape means 'unconditional love' – a sacrificial love that transcends and persists, regardless of circumstance. This is Theresa's gift to her community.

National Australia Day Council CEO Mark Fraser AO CVO congratulated the award recipients for NSW.

"Alison not only shows us we can all help others, she enables people to help where it is needed most; Henry is changing the experience and treatment of dementia now and for the future; Nedd decided to help people in need and created a movement of care; and Theresa is the embodiment of care, giving dignity and support to vulnerable people," said Mark.

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

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PHOTOS: From the awards announcement event can be downloaded from this link (credit NADC/Salty Dingo):
[NSW Media Distribution photos - High res](#)