



*We gratefully acknowledge the support of our Vice Regal Patron, Her Excellency,  
The Hon Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of NSW*



15<sup>th</sup> November 2020

## What are the Rotary Inspirational Women's Awards?

*The Inspirational Women's Awards (RIWA) have been established to recognise women and young women who best exemplify Rotary's motto of Service Above Self (i.e. the community service the individual performs above and beyond their normal role.) The 2020 Awards are proudly presented by the Rotary District 9675*

### Message from the Governor of NSW

Her Excellency, The Hon Margaret Beazley AC QC

*The Rotary judging panels across NSW have been overwhelmed by the number of nominations, the diversity of engagements, and the capabilities and demonstrated resilience of the women nominated in harmony with Rotary's motto of 'Service above self'.*



### Message from Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women

The Hon. Bronnie Taylor



*The Awards are a fantastic opportunity to shine a light upon the enormous contribution of women in both urban and rural communities across New South Wales.*

*I congratulate all the nominees for going above and beyond to make a difference to the lives of their peers and as a former cancer nurse, I'm particularly pleased to see the new category for healthcare workers.*

The messages can be viewed on the District 9675 Webpage <https://rotarydistrict9675.org/>

Go to Projects – Vocational – Rotary Inspirational Women's Awards

Or YouTube <https://youtu.be/gz8asl7cd2Q>

## Programme

### Master of Ceremonies

*Sue Hayward PDG District 9675*

### Welcome

*Warwick Richardson DG District 9675*

*Her Excellency, The Hon Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor NSW*

### Announcement of the finalists in each category

*The Hon. Bronnie Taylor,  
Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women*

### Announcement of the Awardees of Each Categories

*Louisa Hope, Ambassador for RIWA*

### Announcement of Overall Awardees

*Her Excellency, The Hon Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor NSW*

### Vote of Thanks

*Rae-Anne Medforth – Chairperson RIWA*

#### **Australian Rotary Health**

*In 1981, Ian Scott, a member of the Rotary Club of Mornington, Victoria, envisaged raising funds through Australian Rotarians to provide support for research – initially into Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.*

*This became Australian Rotary Health, a national community service program. It has now allocated more than \$48 million to research, awareness, and education.*

*Other programs:*

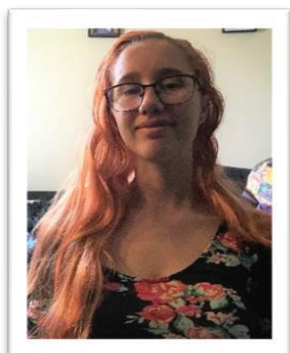
- *Funding Partners PhD scholarships helps to provide funds for medical research in areas other than mental illness.*
- *Indigenous Health Scholarships assists Indigenous Australians who are undertaking a health-related university course.*
- *Rural Medical Scholarships and Rural Nursing Scholarships provide an incentive for students to complete their final years in a rural or remote area.*

***Monies raised through these awards support an Australian Rotary Health Scholarship for a young female GP to assist with expenses during her 12 months placement in a Rural GP practice***



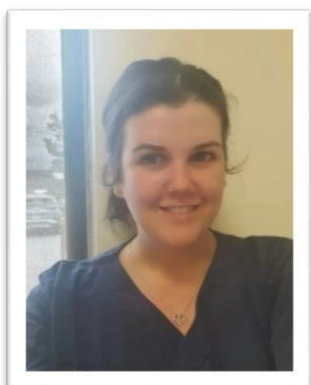
## Young Inspirational Women – Health Care Worker

Faith Irving



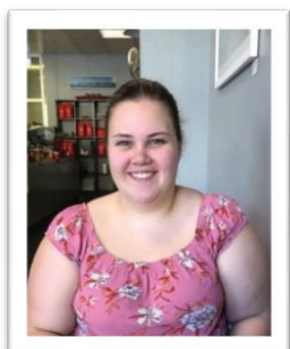
The pandemic, like all major disasters, has brought out real public spirit in people like Faith Irving. Faith completed her HSC last year, with an already impressive record of altruistic service, having joined the RC Wollongong's Interact Club in 2017. She is studying Physics at Wollongong University, but the pandemic crisis so interrupted her course that she had study on-line. She found the Marco Polo Aged Care centre where she had started volunteering for service as a 12-year-old, where the centre was in serious need, being drastically short of staff. Faith deferred her studies to do extra shifts as a kitchen hand and otherwise comfort and reassure the residents.

Rebecca Lewis



Rebecca Lewis would never be accused of not knowing the direction she was going to take in life. In 2009 she volunteered for service in St John's Ambulance Australia and remained with it for eight years, serving as a cadet leader in the Randwick and Wollongong branches. She competed in First Aid competitions, finishing first in the regional competition and third in the state. Rebecca did a nursing degree, then took a position in the surgical ward at Shellharbour Hospital. Well known now for her focus on best practice and the example she has provided for colleagues, Rebecca is now working towards a Clinical Nurse Specialist qualification and is currently the Nurse Unit Manager of the COVID-19 clinic.

Katie Newcombe



From her work in an aged care facility, Katie Newcombe is well versed in helping people, supporting her father, and in her spare time performing in an exemplary fashion on the NSW north coast with the Harrington SES. She documents and relays storm and flood intelligence, and is hands on with property damage, protection, and chainsaw jobs. While deployed to help the Rural Fire Service during the recent bushfires, her maturity and judgement helped to save firefighters. When several teams were trapped by fast-developing fires, Katie kept a clear head, and radioed for help, thereby leading them to safety.

Ellen Wearing



Crises like the present pandemic always brings the best people forward and Ellen Wearing, a registered nurse in her second year out from training, is one of those working in a COVID-19 clinic at St George's Hospital, Kogarah. Ellen faces many challenges every day but unfailingly greets patients cheerfully and puts them at ease. She has shown the ability to be flexible and professional, exceeding what would be expected from someone so young and has had a positive effect on the patients and staff around her. Ellen is considered by her peers as a clinical leader and through her interactions with patients an asset to the nursing team.



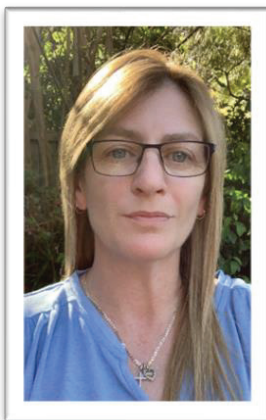
## Inspirational Women – Health Care Worker

Kathleen  
Boman



Kathleen Boman went to Norfolk Island in 2017 to become Manager of the Norfolk Island Residential Care Aged Service. As a Registered Nurse and Manager, Kathleen has responded to the unique and demanding role in a very dedicated way, guided by the principle that Norfolk Islanders should have the same standard of health care as mainland Australians. In the past three years, she has supported the introduction of many services, including Breast Screening, a beach access program for the elderly and disabled and an annual Health and Wellbeing Expo. She has created new positions, including GP Practice Manager, ICT Manager and Dental Assistant, most of these positions being filled by locals.

Christine Cleary



The present pandemic has had widespread effects, but how many have thought of the most vulnerable, the homeless fending for themselves when community services that have supported them have also stopped operating? Christine Cleary is founder of StreetMed, a charity established in 2014 to provide street-level mental health, first aid and advocacy for the homeless across western Sydney. In the past 12 months, she has seen 4,000 street people provided with street-level care. When the COVID-19 lockdowns started, Christine alone ensured that all the homeless she had taken responsibility for, and their pets, had continuing medical care, constant COVID-19 checks, proper food and secured funding to be able to provide a hot food service every Thursday night.

Trudy Coffey



Having led the Social Work Department at Liverpool Hospital for nearly 30 years, Trudy Coffey might be said to have seen it all. She has trained her staff to deal with all manner of crises and among many other things has set up 24-hour sexual assault service. Also, the Director of Social Work for the South West Sydney Local Health District, Trudy manages more than 350 social workers across five hospitals. She has served as the Health representative on the Department of Housing Appeals Tribunal. Trudy is a key member of the Social Work in Teaching Hospitals Group and has convened the Social Work Hospital Manager's Group.





**Dr Latha  
Nithyanandam**



Dr Latha Nithyanandam, CEO of Alcohol and Drug Foundation NSW (ADFNSW) for eight years, which operates out of Kathleen York House in Sydney (which was awarded the Mental Health Service Award), has successfully reorganised the service and ensured its viability, introducing a best-service model involving a digital programme for women on the waiting list, and also remote treatment. Latha, who holds a PhD in Applied Psychology, believes in early intervention. She has lectured and been reported widely and has held a raft of leadership positions, including foundation membership of WELAST (Women Executive Leaders and Specialist Treatment). She is convenor of the Australian Psychological Society- Psychology and Substance Use Interest Group.



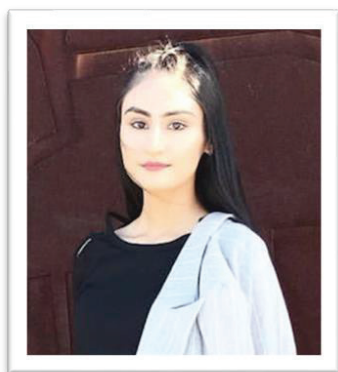
## **Young Inspirational Women – Urban**

**Sarah Bugbird**



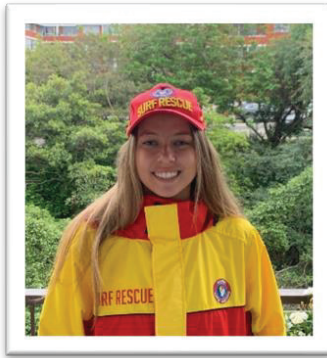
Sarah Bugbird took to surf lifesaving as a nipper, found it agreeable and spent the last 18 years serving on committee and executive positions at club and branch level. She has focused on youth, serving as area manager for the Junior Development Program for Merewether SLSC. She has organised community events such as fun days and has been lead trainer/assessor at Merewether Education Team and Hunter Training branch, reaching out in doing so to the wider community. Sarah has volunteered for a week-long program, “Beach to Bush”, which has extended knowledge of surf and water safety to more than 2,500 students in rural areas.

**Fibha Frameen**



Fibha Frameen, in her altruism, has thought globally, passionately supporting the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals. She has collaborated with NGOs in Somalia and Pakistan to implement food distribution projects for vulnerable people affected by COVID-19. A Global Peace Ambassador, Fibha has also directed her efforts locally, packing and delivering 1,200 meals to health care workers and community members affected by the virus. But the needs of the world at large have been close to her heart. She has been country coordinator for the Global Youth Parliament, represented Australia at the UN 75th Anniversary Youth Day Edition, and attended Tanzania’s Virtual Youth Conference as a special guest.

## Bianca Manuel



Bianca Manuel, who took to lifesaving at the age of seven, has always striven to help others, especially those who have fallen behind. In the Giant Steps for Nippers program, she has achieved extraordinary success, bringing gasps of delight from parents of children with Autism, who had to become accustomed to things like water, noise and strangers. A surf lifesaving patrol captain at the age of 19, looking after Clovelly and Gordons Bay beaches, training adults and sometimes attending to other emergencies such as bushfires, she has fitted in this work with her study for an Honours degree in Social Work.

## Molly Parker



Molly Parker's senior high school years were an obvious pointer to her future. A Duke of Edinburgh Award recipient, school sports captain, rowing captain and prefect, she went on to join the North Steyne Surf Lifesaving club. Since earning a Bronze Medallion, she has operated jet skis, drones and Inflatable Rescue Boats and competed in surf boat racing. She is also currently a State Duty Officer in lifesaving. She does other things such as schoolgirl rowing coaching, playing AFL, triathlon training and working as a pool lifeguard. Having completed a degree in Paramedicine, she hopes to join the NSW Ambulance Service, but in the interim is completing a Bachelor of Nursing.



## Inspirational Women – Urban

### Isabel Antoun



The homeless, sleeping on the city's pavements, are easy to walk past, but not so for Isabel Antoun, who through St Raphael's Antiochian Orthodox Christian Mission, established in 2012, has delivered some 62,000 meals to the homeless. The homeless of Martin Place have received a weekly special meal. Services, continuing during the pandemic lockdown, have included the needs of the elderly and of other vulnerable groups such as stranded international students. The group has provided a Christmas feast for the homeless, but Isabel, on her own initiative, has provided Christmas parties, with gifts, for children with physical and intellectual disabilities. Internationally, Isabel has raised \$5,000 for the welfare of babies and children in disaster-ravaged Lebanon.



## Kylee Bentham



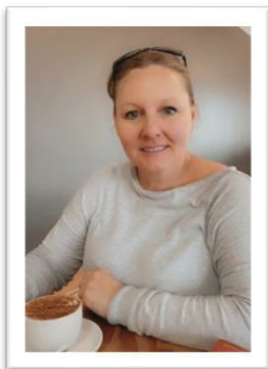
We might say that Kylee Bentham was always intended to help people, starting with Meals on Wheels at the age of seven. She has not stopped helping since, working with the Red Cross and the Campbelltown Community while growing up. In 2015 she started helping the homeless at Campbelltown and Liverpool. She Co-Founded a charity, Shining Stars Foundation, which in five years, has helped deliver 95,000 free meals to the disadvantaged, distributed more than a 1000 survival kits and provided emergency support for domestic violence victims. Kylee has also worked with young children and youth, and during last year's bushfires she helped distribute food, water, and medical supplies.

## Kate Hoang



Kate Hoang, a vice-president of the Vietnamese Community of Australia (NSW Chapter) has dedicated herself not just to the welfare of the Vietnamese community, but to vulnerable people such as refugees and asylum seekers. Within the Vietnamese community, Kate has organised yearly TET festivals, established the Vietnamese Community in Australia Youth for the purpose of engaging Vietnamese youth in their community. She provides support, including legal assistance, to Vietnamese asylum seekers. Further afield, she organised a World Refugee Day vigil in Bankstown each June. Kate has promoted various human rights events and causes and has represented her community in human rights forums and Human Rights Day.

## Sharon Mitchell



Sharon Mitchell has, it might be said, had fallen on the rocks of life. Migrating from London, she divorced and was left with three children, all under the aged of six, with minimal help from her wider family. Sharon handled that, did a course in child psychology, and extended her motherhood over following years to become foster mother to more than 80 children. Taking on children as young as three weeks, she gave them love and a feeling among many that they had a new chance in life. Sharon, who has also worked in America, with both children and the elderly that were disadvantaged, now hopes to become an adolescent psychologist and counsellor.







## Young Inspirational Women – Rural

Rebecca Crisp



Rebecca Crisp, with her record in school leadership, was an outstanding candidate for the 2016 Rotary Daybreak Schoolies Program. Selected, she was sent to Nepal, where those leadership qualities quickly asserted themselves. She organised teams, co-planned activities in schools and ensured that the activities Rotary undertook were compatible with the local culture. She has continued in that spirit since her return, being Coordinator of a Law Reform and Social Justice study tour to Cambodia and Myanmar, and volunteering for Dream Cricket and/or Amnesty International. An Arts and Law student at the Australian National University, she has taken on several more editorial and leadership roles such as President of ANU Women in Leadership and currently State Coordinator for ActionAid Australia.

Reburdah Dennis



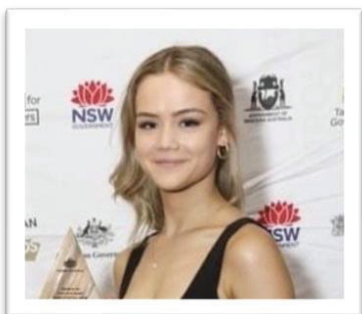
Sport has been a door opener for so many Aborigines, no more so than for Reburdah Dennis, a Gamilaraay girl from Walgett in western NSW who after a troubled upbringing took full advantage of the local PCYC. She was selected in the Gamilaraay Women's Rugby team to play at the PCYC Nations of Origin competition –with teams from 22 Aboriginal nations. She volunteered for PCYC and instigated a touch football competition. Reburdah became school captain, completed the HSC and committed to staying in Walgett. Now 21 years old, she is studying for a Diploma of Community Services and hopes to join the NSW Police Force.

Bethany Dwyer



Bethany Dwyer, a Student Learning Support Officer at Mt View High School in the Hunter Valley, has devoted herself in off-duty hours to the promotion and operation of the Rural Fire Service and the PCYC, where she is a board member and “fit for life” instructor. She has also supported the Cessnock Pink organisation, dedicated to fighting breast cancer. Bethany, who has an indigenous background, is a role model and mentor for members of the indigenous community. She supports events at Cessnock High School, where she attended as a student, supports free formal wear events, and is involved with a number of sporting clubs.

Jemasin Joyce



If skills training is the sure-fire formula for success, Jemasin Joyce, the 2019 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year, is the living, breathing example. A runner-up last year in the Australian Training Awards while also completing her HSC, she has plunged into full-time training this year with the ANZ Bank, becoming a stand-out ambassador and role model for young indigenous people. Jemasin has been a mentor and speaker at this year's training awards, done radio presentations, participated in ANZ teleconferences and is advocating for other indigenous people in her workplace. She plans to continue her studies on the development of indigenous communities





## Inspirational Women – Rural

Erin Pogmore



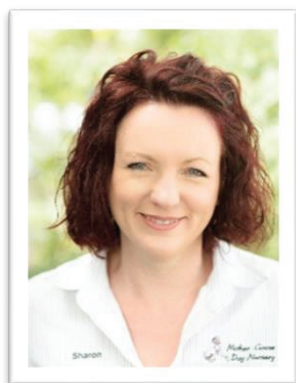
“Work smarter, not harder”, has been a guiding philosophy of Erin Pogmore, an employee of NSW Fire and Rescue and Managing Director of the NSW SES Volunteers Association. Though fully occupied in many roles, she has thought of new ways to deal with problems, such as how volunteers could cope in the present pandemic when there was a shortage of hand sanitiser. Her solution? Find the ingredients herself, make hundreds of litres and find better ways of dispensing it. She has attracted world attention for her contribution to Helicopter Underwater Escape Rescue Training and has spoken to a world conference in the USA on the topic.

Wendy Roberts



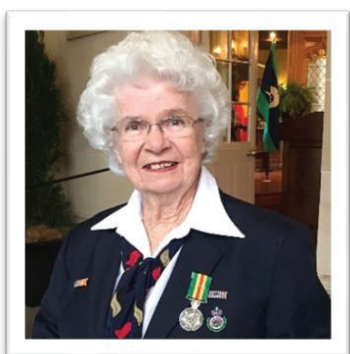
Wendy Roberts, for many years a member of the Erowal Bay, the Cross Roads Brigade of the RFS, could rightly be described as a dynamo in dedication to her community. She has worked with Girl Guides, Camp Quality, War Widows and Meals on Wheels and has helped many local people with personal care, transport and visits to hospitals and nursing homes. She has supported the community through fire, flood, and natural disaster. Her participation has been noted in such areas as brain cancer research funding, the Street Swags program, driver-reviver programs, Clean Up Australia (since its inception) and the Queensland Flood Appeal.

Sharron Thomas



A mother of four boys, Sharron has long decided that parenting does not stop there. She has reached out to children from disrupted home environments and helped both them and their parents. For the last three years, she and her husband have had eight foster children, three of whom are in their permanent care and two who have disabilities. Sharron's other role is running a Mother Goose Day Nursery, as well as training and mentoring staff. For the last 12 years, she has collected and donated Christmas hampers that have gone to families who have experienced domestic violence. At times of need, she has also provided resources such as children's clothes.

Velma Walker



Bushfires have always put RFS brigades to the test, and the fact that so many make the grade is because of people like Velma Walker, an RFS volunteer for more than 30 years and vital to the day-to-day running of the Shoalhaven RFS. Velma has received a string of awards, including the Commissioner's Commendation for Service, and the Bronze Shoalhaven Medal. In 2017, she was named South Coast Local Woman of the Year, and last year and was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal. Velma, operating as logistics officer in numerous fire and other emergency events, has spread energies widely, participating in musical theatre and with the CWA.

## Ambassador

### Louisa Hope

**Louisa Hope** was celebrating Christmas with her mother in the CBD, Sydney on 15 December 2014. A decision to enjoy a coffee at the Lindt café at Martin Place – would change their lives forever

During the Sydney siege, Louisa was shot in the foot and abdomen. As a result, she spent three months in recovery, firstly at the Prince of Wales Hospital in Randwick and at a private rehabilitation hospital.



Louisa always wanted to try and get some good out of the tragedy she survived. When opportunity presented itself, she realised she could make a difference to those who treated her every day during her long recovery.

She generously donated the \$25,000 she was gifted after her interview with Channel 9's Sixty Minutes program, to the Prince of Wales Hospital Foundation. A gift given from a heart of gratitude, Louisa was equally encouraged, when it was matched by the then NSW Premier, Mike Baird and the generosity of Australians at large.

In March 2015, the Prince of Wales Hospital Foundation launched the Louisa Hope Fund for Nurses - to help nurses at the hospital have access to 'seed money', via a grant process, for any necessary equipment, research, education that was nurse initiated and that they deem worthy.

Louisa has tirelessly been fundraising and continues to focus her efforts in raising funds for the "Louisa Hope Fund for Nurses at the Prince of Wales Hospital Foundation". In 2017, Louisa also initiated the "Louisa Hope Fund for Nurses at the Nepean Hospital Foundation" and is looking forward to ongoing fundraising with the Communities of both Hospitals.

The local community is important to Louisa where she enjoys playing an active role. She loves the multicultural lifestyle of her inner west suburb, settling down with a great book, and travelling when she gets the chance. Louisa's church and her great network of friends and family bring her joy each day.

These days she devotes much of her time and energy to making a difference with the Louisa Hope Fund for Nurses.

## RIWA Organising Committee

**Chair:** Rae-Anne Medforth  
*RC Sydney Darling Harbour*



*I would like to thank all the members of the committee who have worked hard to make this event a success.*

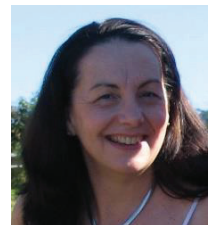
*I also acknowledge the help given us by Peter Townsend and Malcolm Brown.*

### **Members:**

**Sally Dillon**  
*RC Corrimal*



**Joanne Glaser**  
*RC West Wollongong*



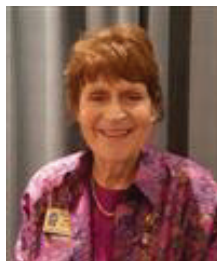
**Janice Hall**  
*RC Hurstville*



**Sue Hayward**  
*RC Sydney Darling Harbour*



**Dot Hennessy**  
*RC Wollongong*



**Vera Liondas**  
*RC Holroyd*



**Judith WARD**  
*RC Kings Cross*

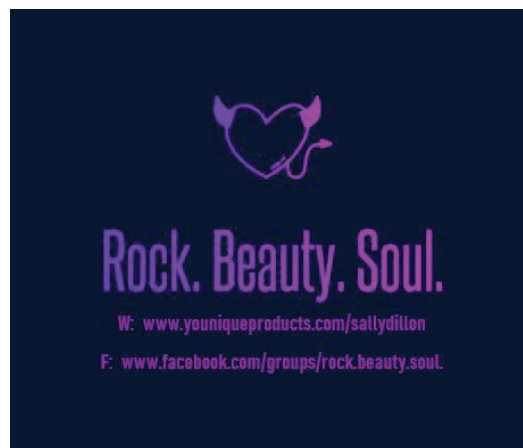


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