

## MEDIA RELEASE

TUESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2022

### 2023 QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

**2023 Queensland Australian of the Year – William Barton**  
**2023 Queensland Senior Australian of the Year – Claude Lyle Harvey OAM (Gold Coast)**  
**2023 Queensland Young Australian of the Year – Talei Elu (Seisia)**  
**2023 Queensland Local Hero – Melissa Redsell (Warner)**

Awards event livestreamed via a link available at [australianoftheyear.org.au](http://australianoftheyear.org.au) or on ABC iView

**Tuesday 15 November 2022, 7:45PM (AEST), Brisbane:** The 2023 Queensland Australian of the Year Awards have been announced in a ceremony at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The four Queensland recipients will join those from the other states and territories for the national awards to be announced on 25 January 2023.

**The 2023 Queensland Australian of the Year is multi-instrumentalist, composer, vocalist and producer, William Barton.** (NOTE: *William was unable to attend the presentation event*)

Proud Kalkadunga man William Barton is a multi-instrumentalist, vocalist, didgeridoo player and renowned classical composer.

Growing up on Kalkadungu country, Mount Isa, he learned didgeridoo (yidaki) from his uncle, Arthur Peterson, a Wannyi, Lardil and Kalkadunga elder. William left school at 12 to concentrate on music. By age 17, he had performed with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

William, who holds honorary doctorates from both Griffith University and the University of Sydney and an associate professor at Australian National University, has released five albums on the ABC Classics label including *Heartland* with Véronique Serret featuring the words of William's mother Aunty Delmae Barton.

The 41-year-old was the 2019 artist in residence at Melbourne Recital Centre, a Creative Consultant for Australia Day Live and has won multiple awards, including the 2021 Australia Council Don Banks Music Award for his sustained contribution to music. In 2022 William's 'Of The Earth' opened the new Opera House Concert Hall.

**Child protection campaigner and Bravehearts fundraiser, Claude Lyle Harvey OAM, is the 2023 Queensland Senior Australian of the Year.**

Many would excuse 77-year-old former gardener Claude Lyle Harvey OAM if he put his feet up after a lifetime of hard work.

Instead, Claude is spending his retirement trekking around Australia to increase awareness of child protection and raise funds for Bravehearts, a not-for-profit dedicated to preventing child sexual abuse and assisting survivors.

Over the past 17 years, he has pushed his trusty lawnmower 'Moyra' tens of thousands of kilometres around Australia. He's brought in more than \$1.5 million for Bravehearts, with the aim of hitting \$2 million by the end of 2024.

Claude's commitment came after learning that two girls just three and four years old had been sexually abused by their 16-year-old neighbour.

He keeps walking, saying: "If I can save just one child from this crime, that harms one in five Australian children, I will have achieved what I've set out to do."

### **The 2023 Queensland Young Australian of the Year is community organiser, Talei Elu.**

Talei Elu decided to focus on her enthusiasm for her Torres Strait culture after six years working for the Federal Government.

Talei, 30, is a Saibai Koedal (crocodile) woman from the Torres Strait Islander community of Seisia in Cape York. She used her government experience, knack for media creation and community organisation skills to start initiatives that have had a positive effect in Seisia.

Since returning home during the pandemic, Talei has worked with the Australian Electoral Commission to enrol and educate more Indigenous people about the importance of voting.

She also arranged for local women to receive free feminine hygiene products, baby necessities, and beauty and self-care items. And she started Seisia Sports and Rec, a free sports equipment hire initiative for youth.

Talei regularly organises beach clean-ups and was recently named as the youngest member of the First Nations Consultative Committee and co-chair.

### **Melissa Redsell, Founder of A Brave Life, is the 2023 Queensland Local Hero.**

Melissa had been coping with a dysfunctional family life when she became pregnant at 16. Despite constantly being told her life was over, Melissa finished high school when she was seven months pregnant.

She had very limited family support and struggled to buy essentials but worked hard. Melissa attended university as a single parent with a one-year-old in tow and became a registered nurse and midwife.

Working in healthcare, she recognised the need for better support for teenage and young mothers. She started gifting newborn essentials to young mums who were struggling. Within 12 months, she'd started A Brave Life.

The charity supports young mothers dealing with domestic violence, poverty, trauma, relationship breakdowns, unplanned pregnancy and homelessness. It provides essentials such as baby supplies, emotional nurturing and paths to education and employment. By mid-2022, 45-year-old Melissa had delivered more than 8,000 baby bundle care packages.

The Honourable Anastacia Palaszczuk MP, Premier of Queensland and Minister for the Olympics, said these national awards honoured those Queenslanders who demonstrated tireless commitment and compassion, contributing greatly to their community and the nation.

“We are proud to recognise these extraordinary Queenslanders whose positive impacts are improving lives and society on a daily basis,” she said.

“I would like to personally congratulate each of the 2023 recipients and wish you well for the national announcement on the eve of Australia Day,” Ms Palaszczuk said.

National Australia Day Council CEO Karlie Brand also congratulated the award recipients from Queensland.

“The Queensland award recipients’ achievements and contributions are inspirational – they are people all Queenslanders can be very proud of,” said Ms Brand.

“We look forward to welcoming them to Canberra for the national Australian of the Year Awards to be announced on 25 January 2023.”

For more information on the Australian of the Year Awards, visit [australianoftheyear.org.au](http://australianoftheyear.org.au).

**ENDS.**

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**PHOTOS:** From the awards announcement event can be downloaded as available after approx 9:00pm Brisbane time from this link (credit NADC/Salty Dingo):  
[221115 NADC QLD Media Distribution photos \(high res\)](#)