

Let's talk...

Inspiring Australians



Reconciliation
AUSTRALIA

Each year the Australian of the Year Awards provide an opportunity to recognise someone who inspires us and makes us proud. Whether you call it Australia Day, Invasion Day or Survival Day, the 26th of January provides an opportunity to acknowledge successful and inspiring Australians and what they add to this nation—acts of recognition such as these are building blocks for reconciliation.

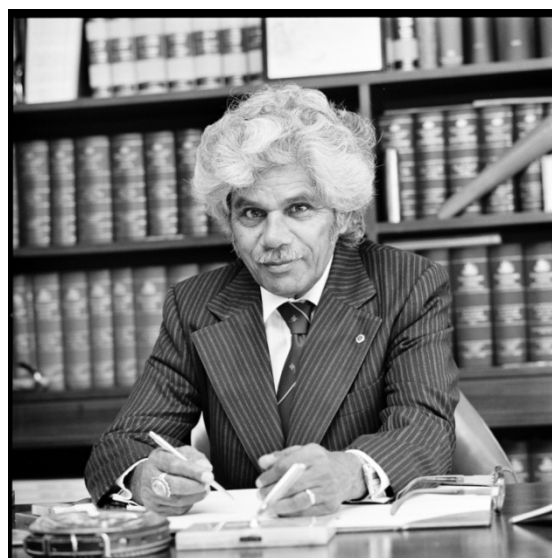
Did you know...?

In 1968, the world champion bantamweight boxer **Lionel Rose** became the first Aboriginal Australian to receive the Australian of the Year Award.

Evonne Goolagong was named Australian of the Year in 1971, on the day that the Aboriginal Tent Embassy was erected in front of Parliament House.

Neville Bonner became Australia's first Aboriginal Senator. He was Australian of the Year in 1979.

Brothers **Galarrwuy** and **Mandawuy Yunupingu** have both won Australian of the Year awards. Galarrwuy in 1978 for his advocacy of Aboriginal land rights and Mandawuy in 1992 for his work as principal of the Yirrkala School and as founder of Yothu Yindi.



Some quick stats

12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were state and territory finalists for the 2013 Australia Day Awards.

Evonne Goolagong won **7** Grand Slam tennis titles.

244 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were nominated in 2013 (over 10 per cent of total nominees) for their contribution to Australia¹.

Neville Bonner served in the Commonwealth Parliament for **12** years as Senator.

¹ Note: This number only reflects nominations received after 1 July 2012 as the application form for nominations made before this time did not have a tickable box to identify Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander nominees. The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nominees in 2013 would therefore be higher than 244.

[Watch a video](#)

In 2012 Laurie Baymarrwangga was awarded Senior Australian of the Year.

In the nine decades since her birth on the island of Murrungga, Laurie has seen the arrival of missionaries, exploitation by Japanese and European fishermen, war and tumultuous change. Undaunted, she has almost single-handedly nurtured the inter-generational transmission of local ecological knowledge through a lifelong commitment to caring for kin, culture and country.

Honour Roll

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian of the Year finalists in 2013

Tom Calma – Australian of the Year (ACT) *Social Justice Campaigner*,
Jessica Mauboy – Young Australian of the Year (NT) *Singer and Actor*,
Shane Phillips – Local Hero (NSW) *Leader*.

Non-Indigenous Australian of the Year finalists nominated for their work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2013

Akram Azimi – Young Australian of the Year (WA) *Mentor*,
Caroline de Mori – Local Hero (WA) *Indigenous Health Advocate*,
Mark Grose and Michael Hohnen – Australians of the Year (NT) *Indigenous Talent Mentors*,
Dr Sadhana Mahajani – Senior Australian of the Year (NT) *Community Physician*,
Peter Fletcher – Young Australian of the Year (NT) *Youth Campaigner*.

Australians of the Year (since 1960)

1968 - Lionel Rose MBE *World Champion Boxer*
1971 - Evonne Goolagong AO MBE *Tennis Player*,
1978 - Galarrwuy Yunupingu AM *Leader and land rights advocate*,
1979 - Senator Neville Bonner AO *First Aboriginal Senator*,
1984 - Lowitja O'Donoghue AC CBE *Leader*,
1992 - Mandawuy Yunupingu *Singer and educator*,
1998 - Cathy Freeman OAM *Athlete*,
2009 – Professor Mick Dodson AM *Activist, academic and barrister*.

Young Australians of the Year (since 1979)

1982 – Mark Ella AM *Australian Rugby Union Captain*,
1990 – Cathy Freeman OAM *Athlete*,
1997 – Nova Peris OAM *Sprinter and hockey player*,
2007 – Tania Major *Youth advocate*.

Senior Australian of the Year (since 1999)

2006 – Sally Goold OAM *Nurse and Mentor*,
2012 – Laurie Baymarrwangga *Community Leader*.

What they said...

“One hundred and eighty-two years ago one of my mob would have been a dead cert for this [the Australian of the Year Award].”

Lionel Rose

“It’s something I’ve always wanted—to be known as an Australian. When I was younger I was always referred to as an Aboriginal tennis player. Now I think the award means that I have been recognised as an entertainer and that makes me happy.”

Evonne Goolagong

“We are at last being recognised as the Indigenous people of this country who must share in its future. This is not a day of national mourning for us. It is a day of rejoicing. We must leave history behind us and look forward.”

Galarrwuy Yunupingu.

“To be able to get Australian of the Year with my brother is something that has never been done before. It’s history for us, something that I am proud about.”

Mandawuy Yunupingu

“To many Indigenous Australians, in fact, most Indigenous Australians, it [Australia Day] reflects the day in which our world came crashing down. I’m sensitive to that, I understand that ... but I think Australia is mature enough now to have a conversation about that.”

Mick Dodson



Take Action

If you live on the mid North Coast of NSW, spend Australia Day at the free [Saltwater Freshwater Festival](#) in Taree

Watch the documentary ‘Lionel’ or the movie ‘Rose against the odds’ which both tell the story of Lionel Rose

Nominate someone for the [2014 Australia Day Awards](#)

Support Shane Phillips’ organisation, Tribal Warrior, by going on [Sydney Harbour’s Aboriginal Cultural Cruise](#)

[Watch a short video](#) of Professor Mick Dodson accepting his Australian of the Year Award in 2009 or read his reflection on being Australian of the Year: titled [Respect. Relationships. We have come so far.](#)

Read previous versions of [Let’s talk...](#) on the Reconciliation Australia website.

Reconciliation Australia would like to thank the National Australia Day Council for their assistance in developing this fact sheet and for providing the images.

This fact sheet is part of Reconciliation Australia’s Let’s Talk... series.

Reconciliation Australia is the national body promoting reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians. www.reconciliation.org.au