



Media Release – 25 January 2013

## **ABORIGINAL MENTOR RECOGNISED IN 2013 AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

Reconciliation Australia Chief Executive Leah Armstrong has extended her heart-felt congratulations to community leader and Aboriginal mentor Shane Phillips for receiving an Australian of the Year Award.

Speaking at the event in Canberra tonight, Ms Armstrong said Mr Phillips was a very deserving winner of the Local Hero category.

“Shane lives and breathes reconciliation and is an inspirational role model to many Australians—particularly young Aboriginal people living in Redfern,” Ms Armstrong said.

“The work he is doing through the *Clean Slate without Prejudice* program and Tribal Warrior Association is helping to empower young Aboriginal people and build better relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

“I’m thrilled that his hard work has been recognised with such a highly prestigious national award.”

This year, 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were selected as state or territory finalists. Of those, three went through to the national finals:

Dr Tom Calma AO	ACT Australian of the Year 2013
Mr Shane Phillips	NSW Local Hero 2013
Ms Jessica Mauboy	NT Young Australian of the Year 2013

In addition six non-Indigenous Australians were honoured for their work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

Mr Akram Azimi	WA Young Australian of the Year 2013
Ms Caroline de Mori	WA Australian of the Year 2013
Mr Mark Grose and Mr Michael Hohnen	NT Australian of the Year 2013
Dr Sadhana Mahajani	NT Senior Australian of the Year 2013
Mr Peter Fletcher	NT Local Hero 2013

Ms Armstrong also congratulated 25-year-old Akram Azimi, who was named 2013 Young Australian of the Year for his work in mentoring young Aboriginal people in remote and rural Western Australia.

“Reconciliation Australia recognises all of the Indigenous finalists—and those non-Indigenous Australians working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—in this year’s Awards for their deep and diverse contributions to the nation,” Ms Armstrong said.

“Inspirational figures are important for reconciliation—not only do they inspire the nation but they inspire individuals.”

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“Whether you call it Australia Day, Invasion Day or Survival Day, January 26 is a time to acknowledge successful and inspiring Australians and what they add to this nation—and that is very important for reconciliation.”

Reconciliation Australia is the national organisation promoting reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. For more information visit:

[www.reconciliation.org.au](http://www.reconciliation.org.au)