

**MEDIA RELEASE
18 JUNE 2009**



**AUSTRALIANS OF THE YEAR COMING TO ADELAIDE
Prof Mick Dodson, Jonty Bush, Pat LaManna, Graeme Drew
Visits to Schools & Community Organisations
23-25 June 2009**

Australian of the Year Professor Mick Dodson, Young Australian of the Year Jonty Bush, Senior Australian of the Year Pat LaManna and Australia's Local Hero Graeme Drew will visit schools and community organisations around Adelaide from Tuesday 23 June until Thursday 25 June.

The visit is part of the Australian of the Year Awards program's Tour of Honour, which brings the recipients of the nation's most respected honour into contact with school students and community members to share their inspiring stories.

During the tour, the award recipients will be special guests at a Premier's Reception and will share a busy schedule of appearances, speaking engagements and community visits. *(see separate schedule attached)*

Australian of the Year Professor Mick Dodson said he was looking forward to the Adelaide tour, particularly the school visits which will allow him to meet students and see how different schools are approaching the challenges of education, such as Immanuel College which he will visit on Tuesday 23 June. Indigenous students from Immanuel College wrote to Professor Dodson asking him to visit their school to see how the College is supportive of indigenous students and other cultures.

"I've been really enjoying the visits I've been doing as Australian of the Year but to visit Adelaide with the other major award recipients is a very special opportunity," said Professor Dodson.

"Having chosen education as my main focus for the year, I am particularly looking forward to the school visits we'll be doing in South Australia."

Professor Dodson will also take part in a panel discussion at a Reconciliation Forum hosted by Reconciliation South Australia on the evening of Tuesday 23 June at the Adelaide Town Hall. The forum will consider how Australia moves forward on reconciliation in the wake of the national apology.

For Young Australian of the Year Jonty Bush, the Adelaide tour represents a chance to inspire other young people and to also share her message of positivity and hope in adversity with others. Jonty manages the Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group which helps people deal with the grief and trauma of loss through violent crime. While in Adelaide, Jonty will visit the local Victims' Support Centre to see how the organisation works and share learnings from her own experience and those of the Queensland group.

Jonty who will be visiting Warriappendi School, Golden Grove High School, Le Fevre High School, Immanuel College, Pasadena High School, Northfield Primary School and Ross Smith Secondary School. She will also speak at the Young Australian of the Year networking function at the Gilbert Street Hotel on the evening of Tuesday 23 June.

Australia's Local Hero Graeme Drew became a force for positive change which benefits the broader community after suffering a personal tragedy. After losing his nephew in a surf accident, Graeme has worked tirelessly to improve the ocean and coastal safety in his home state of Western Australia and nationwide. South Australia's dangerous coastal areas could become much safer thanks to this professional fisherman with a vision to help his fellow Australians. Graeme will join Jonty Bush touring schools and will also speak at a Sea Rescue Squadron function on Tuesday night.

Similarly, Senior Australian of the Year Pat LaManna, will be sharing his infectious energy, love of life and endearing warmth with Norwood's Italian seniors community group, La Mensa, and at a National Seniors function at West Lakes Community Centre on Wednesday 24 June.

The Australian of the Year Tour of Honour will take place just one week before nominations open for the 2010 Australian of the Year Awards. Nominations for all four award categories can be submitted at www.australianoftheyear.org.au or via a nomination form available at major sponsor Commonwealth Bank branches from early July.

Professor Dodson said he would encourage all Australians to nominate someone they admired as a great Australian for the next awards.

"As a very humbled recipient of the award, I think the greatest honour in all of this is that someone thought enough of me to nominate me in the awards and for that I am very thankful albeit still a little shy," said Professor Dodson.

"More importantly, that nomination and this award mean that I have a huge responsibility to use this time to make things better in this country and it has given me a great strength and resolve to pursue a better life and a better education for our kids - all our kids.

"Nominating someone in these awards is indeed a thank you for community contribution, an acknowledgement of achievements and a way to recognise the people amongst us we find most inspiring.

"That every Australian has the chance to have their say about who should be made Australian of the Year or Australia's Local Hero or Young Australian or Senior Australian is perhaps the ultimate expression of how great our country is so don't waste that chance - get your nomination in."

Ends

For further media information on the Australian of the Year Awards or interviews prior to the Tour of Honour contact:

Nicole Browne, Media Opps 02 9954 7677 or 0414 673 762

For information about the Tour of Honour in Adelaide and interviews during the Tour contact:

Matthew Miles, Australia Day Council of SA 08 8410 2626 or 0439 184 020

Editors Note:

Tour of Honour Itinerary 2009 Australian of the Year Award recipients' bios attached with this media release

Contact Nicole Browne 02 9954 7677 or 0414 673 762 if you have not received this information or visit www.australianoftheyear.org.au to download award recipient bios

**ITINERARY
AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS
TOUR OF HONOUR - ADELAIDE
23-25 JUNE 2009**



Time	Activity	Award Recipients Attending	Where
TUESDAY 23RD JUNE			
9.00am-10:30am	Warriappendi School - Presentation and mingling	All recipients	Warriappendi School
11.00am-12:30pm <i>Key media opportunity – Immanuel College students specifically requested visit from Prof Mick Dodson</i>	Arrive Immanuel College - Presentation and mingling - Up to 500 students attending	All recipients	Immanuel College
1.30pm-3:00pm	Arrive Le Fevre High School - Presentation and mingling - Up to 500 students attending	All recipients	Le Fevre High School
5.30pm-7:00pm	Young Australian of the Year Network Function - Speech and networking	Jonty Bush	Gilbert Street Hotel
5.30pm-7:30pm <i>Invitation only event</i>	Reconciliation Forum - "Reconciliation in Post Apology Australia" - Speech and forum discussion	Prof Mick Dodson	Adelaide Town Hall
5.30pm	SA Sea Rescue Squadron Function - Speech and dinner	Graeme Drew	SA Sea Rescue Squadron HQ, West Beach
Time	Activity	Award Recipients Attending	Where
WEDNESDAY 24TH JUNE			
9.00am-10:30am	Northfield Primary School - Presentation and mingling	Prof Mick Dodson Jonty Bush Graeme Drew	Northfield Primary School
10.45am-12:15pm	Ross Smith Secondary School - Presentation and mingling	All recipients	Ross Smith Secondary School
12.00pm-1:00pm	La Mensa, Norwood (Italian seniors community group) - Speech and mingling	Pa La Manna	Don Pyatt Community Hall, entrance off George Street, Norwood
1.30pm-3:00pm	Pasadena High School - Presentation and mingling	Prof Mick Dodson Jonty Bush Graeme Drew	Pasadena High School
2.00pm-4:00pm	National Seniors function - Speech and mingling	Pat La Manna	West Lakes Community Centre
5.35pm-7:00pm	Premiers Reception hosted by Hon Jane Lomax Smith MP and Hon Jay Weatherill MP - Cocktail style function - Speeches, brief Q & A	All recipients	Kerry Packer Civic Gallery, University of SA City West
Time	Activity	Award Recipients Attending	Where
THURSDAY 25TH JUNE			
9.00am-10:30am	Golden Grove High School - Presentation and mingling	All recipients	Golden Grove High School
1.30pm-3:00pm	Victims Support Service visit	Jonty Bush	Halifax St, Adelaide

AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS 2009 BIOGRAPHIES



Australian of the Year 2009 - Professor Michael Dodson AM, Indigenous leader

Professor Michael Dodson is widely recognised as a proud, courageous and humble Aboriginal leader who has spent his adult life trying to explain to people why and how they can help his people. A Yawuru man from the Broome area, the contribution he has made to improving the lives of indigenous Australians is inestimable. He has pursued justice and reconciliation through a process of education, awareness and inclusive dialogue with all Australians. Mick's official roles tell only a small part of the story of what he does. He has served in a variety of challenging and highly sensitive roles at community level, with governments, the United Nations and in academia. In addition he has always actively mentored, nurtured and promoted young Aboriginal leaders, and encouraged respect between people of all cultures. He has described himself as a 'persistent bugger' and is uncompromising in arguing for justice and good sense. He champions the successes of the Indigenous community but also expects accountability for failures. He doesn't shy away from difficult questions or issues. As Co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia, Mick's dream is to achieve reconciliation in this country, and a better future for his people. An outstanding Australian, Mick represents integrity, wisdom and compassion.

Senior Australian of the Year 2009 - Pat LaManna OAM, Entrepreneur and philanthropist

Having come from a poor background himself, Pat LaManna readily relates to the misfortunes of others. He battled racism and economic adversity during the years after his arrival in Australia from Italy in 1948, but he persevered and became a successful entrepreneur. He has used these skills to give back to countless charities in Australia and the Third World. He has been a member of the Lions Club for 40 years and founded the Lions Club of the Melbourne Markets in 1972 which has become the highest fund raising Lions Club in Australia. Due to his commitment, he has been elected president of the club seven times. Pat also started the Hand-to-Hand Appeal for the Bionic Hands Department at Melbourne's Royal Children's Hospital, raising \$198,000, and the Pat LaManna Cancer and Research Stroke Foundation which has raised \$1.5 million to date. He established the annual Melbourne Passion Play in 1997, an outdoor re-enactment of the story of Christ that is funded by Pat and is free to the public. These are but a few of the generous contributions Pat has made to the community, serving it with energy and devotion.

Young Australian of the Year 2009 - Jonty Bush (29), Victim's support worker

In her short life Jonty Bush has experienced more tragedy than most of us ever will. When she was 21 her beloved younger sister was murdered, and then just five months later her father was killed as the result of an unprovoked attack. It is a tribute to her strength and courage that she not only managed to keep going but that she began to help others deal with their grief by becoming a volunteer with the Queensland Homicide Victim's Support Group. The compassion and understanding Jonty showed others brought her recognition among members of the police force and the legal fraternity, and at just 27 she was appointed CEO of the organisation. She has since led the push for a review of the laws surrounding murder and manslaughter, and as a result the Queensland Law Reform Commission is now undertaking such a review. She also developed the One Punch Can Kill campaign, which has been adopted by the Queensland Government in an attempt to prevent further tragedies. In all that she does Jonty shows others how to cope with their day-to-day lives after a tragedy, and helps them build a future for themselves despite their loss.

Australia's Local Hero 2009 - Graeme Drew (Bremer Bay WA), Sea rescuer and educator

A professional fisherman operating from the small town of Bremer Bay, Graeme Drew is the co-founder of the Bremer Bay SES and involved with the Sea Rescue. He and his boat have always been available in times of need. He has searched for lost or disabled vessels, and retrieved the bodies of those drowned while fishing, donating his time and equipment long after official searches have been called off. Graeme has campaigned for numerous causes. One example is that there was no safe anchorage between Esperance and Albany, a distance of 600 kilometres, and Graeme was instrumental in lobbying the government and the local shire council to build a land-backed wharf at Bremer Bay, thus providing safe mooring for boats. In 2003, after Graeme's nephew died tragically after falling into a dangerous rip that carried him out to sea, he established a trust in his memory. This trust has purchased self-inflating buoyancy vests that are hired out from bait shops, installed warning signs on dangerous sections of coast, promoted ocean fishing safety, educated school groups on ocean safety, and built the prototype of a system called the Silent Sentry that has already been instrumental in saving two lives. Graeme loves and respects the ocean and wants to ensure that the community is able to safely enjoy it.