

In respect of rights December 2020



From the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner

There is something so bitter- sweet working in the field of rights protection. Bitter, due to the fact that we still need laws to protect people's basic right to be treated fairly, equally and with respect. Sweet, because every now and then you see the law in action righting wrongs and making a positive difference at an individual or collective level.

A utopian time may come when Anti-Discrimination laws are no longer necessary. However as things stand many members of our community need rights protection laws.

We should also never lose sight of how fortunate and privileged we are to live in a country that has anti-discrimination legislation. Without it, life could quickly take a very backward turn. Gender equality could slide back decades, children with disabilities may be ostracised and institutionalised. Mandatory retirement may be reintroduced, same sex relationships could be criminalised. An increasingly Orwellian society devoid of rights protection could quickly see segregation on the

basis of colour, religion and gender identity become mainstream.

Tasmanians should be proud to know they have rights which mean they are able to live freely from prejudice, assumptions and poor treatment because of who they are or how they choose to live, and that if someone breaches these rights, they have the ability to use the process set out under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* to try and resolve the issue.

No society is without its critics. There are critics who speak in whispers and others who express their views at full volume. Anti-Discrimination laws are not immune from censorious opinions.

Everybody has the right to criticise and question the law. However, before critiquing the Act, I encourage critics to take the time to understand its intention, provisions and processes while keeping in mind that one day they, a friend, family member or colleague may need its protection.

On another note, the curtains are closing on 2020 and what a roller-coaster of a year it has been. One I am sure will find its place in the history books. From the calamity of extreme weather events, the angst and heart break caused by a virus, and the almost surreal theatre of an American election.

It sounds a little odd, even to me, when I say that strangely and rather unexpectedly I am looking forward to 2021. The world stage will no doubt continue to intrigue and mystify us with happenings beyond our control.

On the home front I am pleased that we at Equal Opportunity Tasmania, have some new initiatives and collaborations in the wings which I hope will enhance community connectedness, equality and respectfulness.

In the meantime, I take the opportunity to thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. Finally on behalf of all of us at Equal Opportunity Tasmania we wish you a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Sarah Bolt
Anti-Discrimination Commissioner



Tasmanian Human Rights Week Awards 2020

It can certainly be said that globally and nationally 2020 has been a kaleidoscope of extraordinary and disconcerting events. Over recent times Australia had its share of devastation, anguish and grief produced by drought, bushfires and floods. Then, before we had time to draw breath we were caught up in the unexpected, unpredictable and unprecedented impacts of a pandemic.

Throughout the year we have seen the very best of human behaviour and we have seen the worst. There is little doubt that the emotional and financial heartache and loss that comes with turbulent times can be softened through acts of kindness and compassion.

Accordingly, Equal Opportunity Tasmania determined that this year's Human Rights Week Awards should be presented to Tasmanians who demonstrated acts of kindness and compassion towards fellow Tasmanians.

The reality is that if more people acted with kindness and compassion towards others the need for organisations like Equal Opportunity Tasmania would be greatly diminished. Virtues such as kindness breeds respect. When respectful attitudes and behaviours prevail there is no room for discrimination.

An independent panel of four judges was convened to consider the Award nominations.

The Attorney General, the Honourable Elise Archer, MP presented Awards to twenty two (22) recipients at a

ceremony held on Thursday 10 December 2020 in the Premier's Reception Room. The Awards recipients included individuals, community groups and organisations that have each made a positive difference in the Tasmanian community.

Sarah Bolt

Anti-Discrimination Commissioner

Human Rights Week 2020 Awards Recipients



Human Rights Week 2020 Tasmanian Awards Recipients

Theme: Acts of Kindness and Compassion

Izzy Elliott

When Izzy's uncle Brodie was not much older than she is now, he sustained a brain injury. Brodie died 15 years later. Izzy remembers her uncle and wants her Tasmanian community to remember him too. She wants them to understand more about brain injury. Izzy learnt to make hair scrunchies and founded an enterprise, Scrunch-Iz, to sell the scrunchies and raise funds for the Brain Injury Association of Tasmania. Izzy raised \$1000! In 2020, she turned her hand to making face masks and pencil cases and kept raising money for brain injury awareness. This young lady cared for her uncle. Her care has motivated her kindness to the whole community. We thank her. We think she is just great.

Josh Phillips

Josh is a chef who set up an innovative food van to offer gourmet meals showcasing Tasmanian ingredients to tourists. He'd just bought his van when the pandemic came down like the wolf on the fold and devoured his plans. It could have broken him – but he saw the bigger issue. Josh reached out to his community and used his new bus to transport vulnerable community members to and from the supermarkets for the elderly shopping hour between 7.00 and 8.00 a.m. What he did was inspirational kindness. When he could have been absorbed by his own challenges, Josh used what he had in his power and reach and acted with goodness to others. We give him so much thanks. We honour the beautiful strength of his transforming acts.

Red Cross Emergency Service Volunteers

Did you know that Red Cross volunteers have been making check-in calls to people in hotel quarantine? To connect and chat, to laugh and witness their tears, to enquire how they are coping, provide support and practical help, and connect those in isolation with mental health and financial support. More than 170 volunteers have made more than 22,000 phone calls. They have thought about this hidden-away cohort and then extended themselves to provide connection and care. They've been kind. We offer our appreciation and thanks to the Red Cross and each volunteer for the difference they have made in the lives of isolated people, whose sacrifice of isolation was an essential part of helping us all to be safe.

Kate Sice

Kate Sice is another wonderful human who gives us another example of taking what was in her power and reach and expending herself in mindful care of the wellbeing of others. Kate is the owner of flower shop, Botanical, in West Hobart. When business melted away in March, she used the beauty of her medium – flowers – to send love and kindness all over Hobart. Kate dropped little glass bottles full of flowers in the city and suburbs with notes reading "Take me and smile". The judges just loved reading about Kate's bursting spontaneity and kindness. These living messages of beauty and encouragement were so wholeheartedly given. We thank you Kate. And honour you for every smile you brought, every lightening of heart and expanding of hope.

Grace Williams

Grace is a gentle activist. As Founder of human rights organisation, Citizen Tasmania, she is bringing broad-brush kindness to our world through the awareness she is raising. But she was nominated for this award for a personal kindness she extended to someone having trouble integrating into Tasmania. She invited him to volunteer at Citizen Tasmania and then took personal care to include and support him into opportunities that arose from this. Grace was focused on overarching goals but did not lose focus on the human individual. This is inspiration to do the work in the world that one is called to, but without losing one of those little ones. Thank you, Grace. We thank you and acknowledge your kind work of the heart.

City of Hobart - Hobart respects all campaign

In March 2020, the City of Hobart launched the Hobart Respects All initiative in response to evidence of rising racism. Their messages of kindness, gratitude, and respect appeared on Metro buses, shopping bags, stickers, posters and street banners. The messages empowered bystanders to show kindness to anyone experiencing racism, by supporting them. It is everyone's responsibility to help make our community inclusive and respectful. The judges commend the City of Hobart, and with great honour, that a key agent of government showed the courage to use the language that inspires the deep awareness and tenderness within our beings that dissolves racism – and they did not shrink from calling that empowering quality by its name – kindness.

Laura Blackwell

Laura is one of those people we all need in our life. A devoted and caring friend and colleague who constantly puts the needs of others before herself. She embodies kindness and compassion through every aspect of each and every day. As a Team Leader at Community Corrections Laura is a generous and strengths based leader, who recognises and rewards the efforts of her team. She is the one to remember the birthdays and special occasions of her staff and colleagues and make sure they are celebrated. Within her family she is an extraordinarily kind and compassionate daughter, sister, aunt and granddaughter actively involved in caring and supporting her niece and nephew as well as providing loving care to her grandmother. We thank you Laura for your daily acts of kindness.

Emily Wilkins and Matt Stolp

Emily and Matt are teachers at Sacred Heart College and Guilford Young College who set a great example for their students and all of us this year. Watching the impact of this year's lock down they recognised that there were people in need and others who wanted to give. Together they created the initiative 'Pantry Drive' in support of St. Vincent De Paul, who were struggling to obtain food items due to the panic buying that occurred. Through their networks and social media they encouraged people to leave any extra pantry items on their front porch, then coordinated a team of volunteers to collect and collate the items. They ran two Pantry Drives and filled two trucks with food and other goods at a time when some food items were scarce. We thank you Emily and Mat for your kindness, compassion and support to those in need.

Students Against Racism

This Award recognises the many years of dedicated work by the Students Against Racism in challenging stereotypes and encouraging understanding, compassion and empathy. Students Against Racism (SAR) currently have 30 active members who share their personal stories to various audiences including primary and high school students and police recruits. By telling their stories they help the community understand why people leave their homeland and what it is like to settle in Tasmania as a refugee. Over 13 years SAR have presented to over 14 000 people. This year SAR reached out across Bass Strait to students online in Melbourne who were experiencing an extended lockdown. These connections brought hope, entertainment and inspiration. We thank the Students Against Racism for working toward making Tasmania a place for all.

Show Hope (Wellspring Anglican Church)

Kindness, compassion, caring and hope are entrenched values of those involved in Show Hope at the Wellspring Anglican Church in Sandy Bay. Show Hope recognised that temporary visa holders (including international students) were overly impacted by the arrival of COVID-19. Many lost work, were not eligible for social support and for a range of reasons unable to obtain financial support from their home country, or return there. In March Show Hope was not feeding anyone. By April they were feeding 30 temporary visa holders per week, and by June were feeding over 600 people per week, such was the

need and their devotion to support the community around them. However Show Hope became more than a food service, it became a leadership program and an employment assistance program with more than 50 volunteers helping to run the program and support the community. We thank you for recognising the need and giving people dignity through your program.

Welcome Back(pack) Project

The Welcome Back(pack) initiative was born as part of the Tasmanian Leaders Program in 2019 and is undertaken with the support of the Tasmanian Prison Service, Dress for Success Hobart, Share the Dignity and the WD Booth Charitable Trust. The initiative provides practical, immediate support to the approximately 300 women who leave the Mary Hutchins Women's Prison each year. It equips each woman with a backpack, a set of clothing and an information card detailing local support services. The project is an act of kindness and extends a welcome to those returning to the community after completing their sentences. We thank you for contributing to providing respect and dignity to those returning to our communities.

Campbell Remess

Campbell is a self-taught bear maker who spends much of his life bringing joy to those who need a pick me up. But not content with just creating bears for children in hospital, or raising money for charity through the sale of bears, or even teaching others online how to sew the bears, this year he created the Whitaker Kids News channel on YouTube with his sister Erica and brother Dylan. The News channel was their response to COVID-19. The three filmed fake news items, with many serial characters, to entertain all of us whilst we were in lockdown. The news items were witty, entertaining and the perfect antidote at the end of a long day locked in your house with the same people day after day after day. With thank Campbell for his endless caring and compassion for those around him and for those he has never met.

Meals on Wheels Tasmania

The wonderful volunteers from Meals on Wheels have been delivering meals to Tasmanians who have difficulty preparing meals for themselves –the elderly, people with disability and their carers – since 1955. But in 2020, these

volunteers, many of them elderly and therefore particularly vulnerable if exposed to coronavirus, could have decided to prioritise their own health and cease their voluntary work. Most of them refused to do so and with profound kindness and compassion, almost 200,000 meals were delivered around the State to needy and vulnerable people – many of them in lockdown and otherwise deprived of human interaction. We thank these volunteers and honour their efforts.

Li Yang

International students lack networks of local contacts and often find it difficult to secure work experience placements during their studies and after graduation. Li, herself a recent graduate, recognized this recurrent challenge and set about changing it. She established her own not-for-profit, the Australian International Youth Association (AIYA) and has worked tirelessly through that platform to provide work experience placements and to help graduates develop contacts and grow in their confidence about the contributions they can make to Tasmanian society. We honour you Li for your hard work and commitment to kindness and compassion for those, like you, who have come from overseas to study amongst us.

Red Cross Tasmania Trauma Teddies

Groups of knitters around the nation make 50,000 teddies for distribution to victims of trauma every year. Since 1990, when the initiative commenced, more than 1,000,000 trauma teddies have been distributed. Right around Tasmania: in Glenorchy, Oatlands, Burnie, Queenstown and St Helen's, dedicated volunteer knitters gather to knit, stuff and sew up teddies to be handed out to children and adults to provide comfort in the face of personal or community trauma – road accidents, youth suicide, major illness, natural disasters. In 2020 many trauma teddies were handed out to communities during and in the immediate aftermath of the bushfires. We thank the amazing volunteer knitters around the State who have worked hard to provide small tokens of kindness and compassion to others in their hours of deepest need.

Will Smith

While working as a police officer Will often found himself arresting the same disadvantaged and disengaged young people again and again. Many of those young people were homeless, living on the streets or in houses that

were unsafe. Will dedicated himself to making a difference and in 2019 established JCP Empowering Youth – to work with young people at risk and/or on the fringes of society to inspire and empower them to reach their full potential. Will mentors many young people - driving them to sporting activities, taking them on camps and exposing them to leadership training. In 2020 Will has now graduated a number of cohorts of young men from JCP's intensive leadership development scheme – the 'BEAST Program'. Thank you Will for your kindness and compassion in reaching out to at-risk young people and to developing and delivering a program to help them.

Kirsten Singleton

Having visited asylum seekers locked up in Pontville, Kirsten Singleton decided to act. In 2017 she took out a loan to buy a shop in Moonah with a long term vision to provide employment and training for refugees and asylum seekers. She has transformed the shop into Zafira Fine Foods providing employment for 25 people, delivering training opportunities and social support and serving delicious Afghani cuisine. Zafira Fine Foods has not only exposed many Tasmanians to some of the riches of Hazara culture but it has also facilitated the integration of many Hazaras into the Tasmanian community with grace and dignity. We applaud your vision and your hard work Kirsten and we acknowledge with profound respect your compassion and kindness to those who have come from afar to live among us.

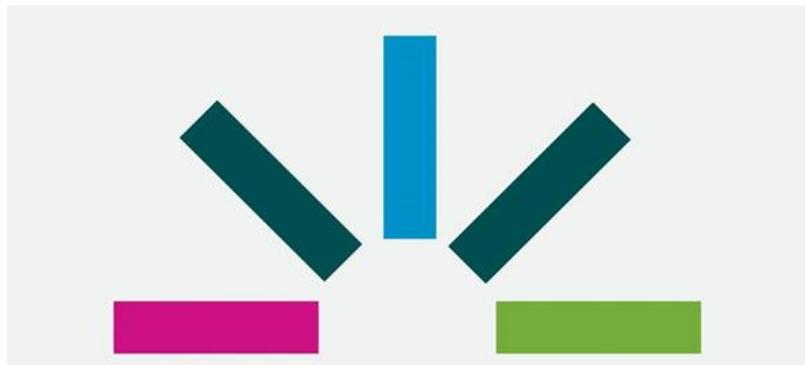
Friends of Zafira

The not-for-profit Friends of Zafira support the efforts of Zafira Café to employ and train members of the local Hazara people and to facilitate their social engagement with and integration into the broader Tasmanian community. Friends of Zafira have established a market garden at the rear of Zafira Café supporting Afghan women to grow vegetables. They also run a community evening every Wednesday where people gather to play board games and practice English. In 2021 the Friends of Zafira plan to open a Men's Shed at the rear of the café and also to start a story telling project within the local community. The judges believe strongly that our ethnic and cultural diversity enriches our communal life in Tasmania. We applaud the kindness and compassion of the wonderful volunteer Friends of Zafira in all they are doing to support the Hazara people and their contribution to Tasmania.

Welcome Gardeners Tasmania

This award honours kindness to community and kindness to our globe. Welcome Gardeners Tasmania welcome new arrivals to Tasmania through a common interest in gardening and growing food. They collect, package and label seeds, produce seedlings, and combine these with other products needed to grow plants in the Tasmanian climate. Then they give their packages away through the Migrant Resource Centre and Red Cross. The work is relational, connected, supportive, caring, and sharing of knowledge and mindful benevolence toward others. Thank you, Welcome Gardeners. You show us all how we might pursue our passions while connecting and spreading kindness. We offer our thanks and gratitude for the work you do to welcome newcomers to Tasmania.

Training Calendar 2021



Equal Opportunity is good for Business

Online Training

Our Trainers are available to do online Training for Workplaces, Community Groups, Schools and Exemptions.

Our Training, Development and Education Officers will consult with you regarding your specific training needs. Programs can be tailored with content specifically catering to the needs of your organisation.

The online training sessions use **Zoom and are live and interactive**, participants require access to a desktop or laptop computer with a good internet connection.

Face - to - face training

To keep our participants safe, we are adhering to Public Health Advice regarding our face-to-face training. We encourage you to contact us to discuss your requirements so we can give you the most up to-date information regarding training.

Upcoming Training Calendar 2021

www.equalopportunity.tas.gov.au/training

Our Training Team is committed to continue to provide support and high quality training. Please contact us to have the conversation regarding your training needs.

By emailing training@equalopportunity.tas.gov.au

website www.equalopportunity.tas.gov.au/training

Or phone us on (03) 6165 7515

Thank you for your support in 2020, we look forward to working with you in 2021.

Training, Education and Development Team



Recently Granted Exemptions

Under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* (Tas), the Commissioner is empowered to grant exemptions that permit a person or organisation to engage in an action or activity that would otherwise be unlawful under the Act. Such exemptions can be granted for up to three (3) years.

Whenever the Commissioner grants an exemption, a notice of this must be published in the *Tasmanian Government Gazette*:
www.gazette.tas.gov.au.

Any person may apply to the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal for a review of the Commissioner's decision within 28 days from the date the notice is published in the *Tasmanian Government Gazette*.

The following exemptions have recently been granted by the Commissioner:

- Cancer Council Tasmania
- City of Hobart & Vibrance Festival Pty Ltd
- Nyrstar Hobart Pty Ltd
- City of Hobart

Further information can be found on our website at www.equalopportunity.tas.gov.au/current_exemptions

Have you liked our Facebook page?

Have you liked our Facebook page?

If you would like more regular updates than our quarterly *In respect of rights* e-newsletter, make sure to like our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/equal.opportunity.tasmania.

You'll see more of what our team is up to in the community; we share news and interesting articles, reminders about upcoming training, links to useful community education and awareness resources, and more.

Contact us

To make a complaint or get information, contact the office or visit the website. Please note, the office cannot give legal advice.

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Please let the office know before an appointment if you need assistance or the services of an interpreter.



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