

Auspire

Australian of the Year (WA) Awards

Address by the Honourable Kim Beazley AC Governor of Western Australia

Thursday, 12 November 2020

I would firstly like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet – the Whadjuk Noongar people – and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Thank you to Wadjuk Elder Theresa Walley together with Jonathan Ford Wadjuk Marman for your welcome.

Ladies and Gentlemen I am delighted to be here today, as the Patron of Auspire – the Australia Day Council of WA, for the announcement of the recipients of the 2021 Australian of the Year Awards for Western Australia.

Let me pause a moment to offer words of recognition for Bradley Wood and Morgan Lewis. We all remember how we were 5-6 months ago. We were confused and nervous. For community spirit and natural resilience it was enormously important that our voluntary agencies and community recognition agencies continued. It required heavy effort and in this important case was well done.

Also, a word of recognition to Al Williams, head of Chevron. All these organisations and agencies feared they would lose sponsorship. Largely that didn't happen. Some indeed like Chevron expanded their base as was done here.

Since its inception in 1960, the Australian of the Year Awards has provided a focal point and forum for the recognition of outstanding achievement.

The award offers an insight into Australian identity and its focus reflects the nation's evolving relationship with its community.

Awardees have been recognised for their contribution to sport, the environment, the arts, Indigenous affairs, multiculturalism, adventure, science and medicine but always with an importance placed on their contribution to our society.

Tonight's nominees are no different and we've already heard eight wonderful stories of Western Australians leading the way in their chosen fields. I, and I'm sure I speak on behalf of us all here tonight, am extremely proud to live in a community where we can recognise such great humans. You're inspiring.

As we move on to the next two categories I'd like to make particular mention of Prof John Newnham AM. John stood before us last year as our WA Senior Australian of the Year and then went on to take out the national honours – I think we all knew he was going to be a very tough nominee to beat. So very well-deserved John and you've carried out the role under such unusual circumstances this year. Thank you for being an exemplary role model and for your life-long contribution to our community.

Nominees in tonight's Senior Australian and Australian of the Year categories bring to the fore an incredible range of expertise. I was thrilled to meet them earlier and look forward to hearing more now as we learn about another eight inspiring Western Australians. Hearing their stories and seeing the impact they have on our nation makes me proud.

They make me proud to be Patron of this organisation whose objective is to recognise inspiring role models making a positive difference to Australia. Auspire champions inclusiveness, respect for others, and active citizenship. And to strive to be an inclusive and supportive nation where everyone feels a sense of belonging.

That can only be done through our people and by championing the ones who do it well. These awards are the most prestigious community recognition we have. They provide a platform to share important messages to enhance our already wonderful country.

Good luck to all our finalists and to those who go on to represent us at the national awards in January.