

MEDIA RELEASE

THURSDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2025

2026 AUSTRALIANS OF THE YEAR FOR VICTORIA ANNOUNCED

2026 Australian of the Year for Victoria - Carrie Bickmore OAM (Melbourne)
2026 Senior Australian of the Year for Victoria - Bryan Lipmann AM (Richmond)
2026 Young Australian of the Year for Victoria - Abraham Kuol (Narre Warren)
2026 Local Hero for Victoria - Linda Widdup (Carlisle River) – *unable to attend event*

Awards event livestreamed via australianoftheyear.org.au

The 2026 Australian of the Year Award recipients for Victoria have been announced at a ceremony in Melbourne this evening.

The Victorian recipients will join those from the other states and territories for the national awards to be announced on 25 January 2026.

The 2026 Australian of the Year for Victoria is brain cancer fundraiser, Carrie Bickmore OAM.

Carrie Bickmore is a radio and television presenter who has changed the way that brain cancer research is funded in Australia. Brain cancer kills more Australian children than any other disease, and more people aged under 40 than any other cancer – including Carrie's late husband Greg, who passed away in 2010. Since 2015, Carrie has raised over \$27 million. In 2021, she established The Brain Cancer Centre to bring together the brightest minds in research to find a cure.

The Brain Cancer Centre has leveraged investment by Carrie's Foundation to secure another \$45 million of research funding. This supports research projects across the country and is delivering specific clinical trials for brain cancer patients that are the first of their kind in the world.

Carrie is striving to ensure that every Australian diagnosed with brain cancer can access the best treatments and has real hope of a positive outcome.

Elderly homeless advocate, Bryan Lipmann AM, is the 2026 Senior Australian of the Year for Victoria.

As a young social worker, Bryan Lipmann witnessed first-hand the appalling conditions in which many elderly homeless people were forced to live. Realising that existing aged care homes were not the answer, he founded Wintringham to provide a safe space where the elderly poor and homeless could live with dignity and respect.

Today, Wintringham supports 3,000 people with accommodation and home care services. At its core, the organisation retains the same values that Bryan instilled in the beginning – respect for the individual, social equality and the promise of 'a home until stumps'.

Through his advocacy, 77-year-old Bryan revolutionised ideas about how to support marginalised elderly people in society by creating safe, long-term homes for thousands of people.

Bryan's devotion to caring for those who do not fit into mainstream aged care epitomises the difference that one individual can make by improving the quality of life for others.

The 2026 Young Australian of the Year for Victoria is mentor and community leader, Abraham Kuol.

Abraham Kuol is a respected youth leader who uses his knowledge of the police and justice system in Victoria to help young people in his community.

Day to day, Abraham devotes his time to mentoring and guiding young people, running sports programs and building community ties – all while studying for a PhD in Criminology at Deakin University where his research is having a real-world impact.

Recognising the important role that sport plays in engaging young people, Abraham co-founded the Black Rhinos, a soccer and basketball club to help mentor at-risk youth. He is also a director at Sandown Lions Football Club, where he creates sporting pathways for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Abraham, 28, has helped raise over \$3.5 million for programs to support African-Australian families and justice-involved youth. A quiet achiever, Abraham is nevertheless a popular public speaker, acknowledged for his ability to inspire genuine social change.

Farming community organiser, Linda Widdup, is the 2026 Local Hero for Victoria.

**Linda was unable to attend the event in person*

Linda Widdup is bringing hope to Australian farmers in their time of need, organising deliveries of invaluable feed in response to drought and natural disasters.

Linda founded Aussie Hay Runners in 2019, starting out with just four trucks delivering hay to help farmers feed their livestock. The voluntary organisation now has more than 70 trucks it can call on, clocking up millions of kilometres and delivering over 90,000 bales of fodder to farmers needing a helping hand.

Linda's drive and energy in raising funds, organising volunteers and managing the logistics of trucks and feed deliveries is an outstanding example of community action. The work of the Aussie Hay Runners volunteers not only provides relief for livestock but also raises morale among distressed communities and families.

Through her actions, 60-year-old Linda is helping her fellow Australians get through the tough times on the land.

National Australia Day Council CEO Mark Fraser AO CVO congratulated the award recipients for Victoria.

"Carrie has made an indelible impact on funding for researchers to do their critical work in finding a cure for brain cancer; Bryan has brought safety and dignity to some of the most vulnerable elderly members of society; Abraham is using sport and leadership to change young lives; and Linda is literally helping to keep farmers and their livestock going in tough times," said Mark.

For more information on the Australian of the Year Awards, visit australianoftheyear.org.au.

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PHOTOS: From the awards announcement event can be downloaded from this link (credit NADC/Salty Dingo):
[VIC Media Distribution photos - High res](#)