

Background on finalists

Bendigo Bank Community Senior Award

Val Firmin (71) from Jurien Bay

For more than 20 years, Val Firmin showed seniors how to stay healthy and active and have fun. Her low-impact aerobics classes in Jurien Bay were the highlight of many Seniors Week events and she showed incredible dedication to her role. When Val recently retired from her fitness role, she made sure there would be a replacement for her classes. The Jurien Bay seniors now take part in a walking group. Val is a much-loved member of the community and she has gained the respect of not only the seniors, but also the many local sporting and recreation groups.

Marie Kormendy (78) from North Perth

Marie Kormendy has made it her life's mission to help people and as a teacher, chairwoman and board member of the School Volunteer Program, she has done exactly that. She has encouraged senior citizens to become mentors for WA's vulnerable and at-risk school students. This, in turn, has given those seniors a sense of feeling involved in something worthwhile and needed by their community. Marie is a selfless volunteer and has been an active Rotarian since 1991. She's supported many campaigns including procuring funding for an Indonesia school for the deaf, organising youth exchange programs and fundraising for cancer research. She's been recognised as a Churchill Fellow, presented with the Australian Centenary Medal; and received Rotary awards. Marie is a testament of the expression 'age is no barrier'.

Irene Thomas (80) from Kalgoorlie

Irene Thomas is a caring leader for seniors in Kalgoorlie. In her role as president of a community centre seniors group, she has encouraged them to participate in activities, socialise and attend talks she has organised on topics like home security, avoiding falls and nutrition. She is a caretaker for the local seniors, cooking meals for members of her church community; co-ordinating hospital visits for members of seniors clubs and acting as a voice for seniors in Kalgoorlie. Irene spent years volunteering for the Active Retirees. She has also delivered Meals-on-Wheels and helped out at local primary schools.

Intergenerational Senior Award

Dr Janet Fletcher (68) from Subiaco

Dr Janet Fletcher is a volunteer coaching convener of Orienteering WA and has had a huge impact on the organisation. Drawing on her psychology and coaching qualifications, she developed a coaching approach that paired senior coaches with junior competitors. The idea helped older orienteers develop their coaching skills and addressed the challenge of encouraging more juniors to get involved in the sport. Members of the coaching group, who are primarily seniors, have risen to the intergenerational challenge thanks to Jan's inspiring leadership, support and strategic thinking. Jan has shown the skill and wisdom seniors can contribute to a sporting community.

Nicolette Pratt (66) from Broomehill

Almost four years ago, Nicolette Pratt received a phone call to ask if she would assume the care and responsibility of her five grandchildren. She learned they had been living in a car with their parents who were using drugs. Despite the fact she was already caring for her chronically-ill husband, Nicolette immediately agreed to care for the children at her home in Broomehill. While it hasn't been easy, the reward has been seeing her grandchildren go to school, play sport and have hope for the future. Nicolette has a huge heart and she has become a formidable advocate for grandcarers.

Alan Salisbury (81) from Bateman

Anyone who has anything to do with the WA Rowing Club knows Alan Salisbury. He's been involved there since 1950 and his achievements include becoming club president, setting a long-running course record and winning a championship in Canada. One of Alan's greatest achievements, however, was forging a bond between the club and non-rowing schools. This opened up opportunities for a lot of young people who, otherwise, might not have been exposed to rowing. Today, the iRow program includes male and female athletes from many different schools throughout the State. While Alan is an inspiration to future champions, he's also shown older members of the club that age is no barrier to enjoying life.

Age Friendly Communities Local Government Award

City of Cockburn

The City of Cockburn prides itself on its commitment to involving seniors in planning an age-friendly community. Over the past 10 years, the city has developed an age-friendly strategic plan, consulted its community for its Seniors Strategic Planning Framework and applied to become a member of the Global Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Network. The city has a Regional Seniors Club made up of representatives of local seniors groups and clubs and, in 2009, opened a Seniors Centre. The city has also supported seniors to remain living in their community for longer with suburban revitalisation projects that facilitate smaller and more affordable dwellings. Community projects also encourage seniors to volunteer and stay active.

City of Fremantle

The City of Fremantle's Age-Friendly City Plan promotes an inclusive and accessible urban environment that promotes active ageing. The plan, written in consultation with local over-55s, led to the activation of a One Stop Shop, located at the Fremantle Town Hall Centre and staffed by volunteers. It has become a drop-in centre for seniors who enjoy refreshments and conversation. The city also runs a bi-monthly over-55s Come and Try program. In the future, the city will continue to provide a range of affordable activities including low-cost bus trips home, social dancing and in-home library services.

City of Melville

Population forecasts indicate that, by the year 2020, 30 per cent of the City of Melville's population will be seniors. With this in mind, the city's Strategic Community Plan, written in consultation with senior members of the community, focused on developing an Age-Friendly City that encouraged active ageing in an inclusive and informative way. Some initiatives under way include a digital hub where seniors can take part in a range of computer, iPad, social media and mobile phone lessons; seniors forums covering topics like housing, transport and health; a hardcopy seniors directory which lists aged care facilities, local clubs and emergency numbers; and a Seniors Assistance Fund to help seniors in financial hardship.

Age Friendly Organisation Award

Bicycle Transport Alliance

This not-for-profit, volunteer-run community advocacy organisation supports seniors and the wider community to ride safely. The group works with government and planners to promote best-practice cycling infrastructure. It has campaigned on the issue of safe speeds, putting the issue on the political and public agenda. The Bicycle Transport Alliance was awarded an Outstanding Achievement Award from the Road Safety Council in 2012.

Older Women's Network Theatre Group

A key objective of the Older Women's Network Theatre Group is to promote positive ageing in our community by challenging the stereotypes of seniors. The group achieves this by communicating positive messages through songs and onstage performances, writing their own songs and scripts. The group keeps the minds, bodies and spirits of its members alive. It also shares important messages with its audiences about what it's like to be older and how seniors expect to be treated, and it's all delivered with humour.

Seniors Social Space Ellenbrook Seniors Inc

Established in 2011 with help from the City of Swan, the Seniors Social Space at the Woodlake Community Centre in Ellenbrook has a big impact on the community. The group, which recently became self-funded, provides a safe, welcoming place that seniors can call their own. Open three times a week, it provides information on services, events and activities, and connects seniors with local interest and hobby groups. They organise intergenerational activities and run workshops and hosts guest speakers. The space has brought friendship, fun and hope into the lives of many seniors who might otherwise feel lonely and isolated. The group takes referrals from the City of Swan and Ellenbrook Library. It has about 100 members.

Seniors Advocate Award

Maureen Angus (62) from Ardyaloon

Maureen lives in Ardyaloon, a remote indigenous town in the State's North-West. As a senior who was taken care of by her family and who had regular visits from the Kimberley Aged and Community

Services, Maureen thought she was lucky. But she knew other seniors in her community weren't so fortunate. So she investigated how she could set up a support service in the town. Today, the Ardyaloon Community Care Service supports local seniors by helping them with organised care and support with transport, shopping, cleaning and paying bills. The service has helped seniors stay at home rather than moving to residential care in Broome. Maureen's commitment and passion has helped seniors in her community feel less isolated.

Mary Kepert (77) from Booragoon

Mary has helped the frail and vulnerable make positive changes in their lives. The executive officer for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, who previously worked with Advocare, has dedicated her work and free time to achieving better outcomes for seniors in WA. She has aimed to empower older people, give a voice to seniors' issues on a broad national stage and recognise the contribution seniors make to the community. Mary assisted with the Elder Abuse Protocol which has helped government and non-government agencies develop policies and procedures. She increased awareness of the issue by delivering community speeches.

Arthur Ventham (63) from Clarkson

Arthur is a devoted advocate for the members of the Veteran and Defence Community. He has fought to ensure those who return home injured from service get the support they need. Arthur suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. He knew he wasn't the only veteran suffering and worked to getting funding and support to open a Veterans Centre in the Northern Suburbs. In 2011, the City of Wanneroo provided an office for his work. Since then, Arthur has supported veterans' young and old and saved lives. His next mission is to raise \$250,000 for a new building where they can take courses in meditation, tai chi and anger management.

Deborah Kirwan Media Award

Print

- *Pleas sway developer* written by Rashelle Predonik, *Echo Newspaper*
- *Storn's a man on a mission* written by Rashelle Predonik, *Echo Newspaper*
- *Teaching children to be kind* written by Rashelle Predonik, *Echo Newspaper*

Broadcast

- 'Roo dog and his mates', reported by Jasmine Homer, GWN7
- 'Seniors with strength', reported by Cassie Silver, Channel Seven
- 'Wheelchairs for the world', reported by Cassie Silver, Channel Seven

Photography

- 'Old master gets a kick out of martial arts', photographed by Nic Ellis, *The West Australian*
- 'School superstar', photographed by Bruce Hunt, *Western Suburbs Weekly*
- 'Shark feats no bar to Carbon's new role', photographed by Nic Ellis, *The West Australian*