



Anna Burke MP

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Celebrating Local Volunteers

The Caroline Chisholm Awards, which recognise outstanding volunteers in the cities of Whitehorse and Monash, have celebrated their 10th anniversary at the ceremony for this year's Awards.

The Awards are named after nineteenth century volunteer Caroline Chisholm, who assisted over 14,000 people between the years 1841 and 1844. She embodied all that is noble about volunteering.

"For ten years now, the Caroline Chisholm Awards have celebrated the contribution of outstanding people performing voluntary work in our community. The Awards are about recognising unsung local heroes whose work would otherwise go unheralded," Ms Burke said.

"Over the past decade, hundreds of deserving volunteers who either live or perform voluntary work in the electorate of Chisholm have received Awards for the selfless contributions they make in helping others and ultimately the community," Ms Burke said.

The recipients of this year's Caroline Chisholm Awards continue the tradition of the Award winners in embodying both selflessness and community-mindedness in a variety of ways.

David McMurdie received his Award for over 40 years' of voluntary service to social justice organisations Community Aid Abroad and Oxfam Australia.

Mr McMurdie became a founding member of the Oxfam Box Hill Group which commenced in 1967, and has been an office bearer of the group ever since. An example of David's initiative through this group is his leadership of the group's association with the Schools' Music Festival, a partnership developed to assist Oxfam Box Hill's local fundraising.

Mr McMurdie's passion for social justice has also extended to facilitating the migration of Sudanese refugees to Australia, setting up a fund of approximately \$120,000 to provide interest-free loans which have enabled over 500 Sudanese refugees to migrate to Australia.

Sandra Willis received her Caroline Chisholm Award for her services to the Rotary Club of Mont Albert and Surrey Hills. Ms Willis has generously assisted Rotary over many years in providing extended accommodation for numerous people in the Whitehorse area with particular needs.

Matthew White received his Caroline Chisholm Award for his contribution to assisting youth in our local community.

Only 22 years old, Mr White has enriched the lives of young people, particularly in the area of leadership skills, having been a camp leader at Lord Somers Camp, in 3 Rotary Youth Program enrichment camps, for the Sudanese Australia Integrated Learning Program as well as participating in several Very Special Kids Camps. In addition, Mr White has an ongoing voluntary involvement with the Blackburn North Baptist Soccer Club over 12 years both as a player and a referee, and participates in Melbourne University's Leadership, Involvement and Volunteer Experience Unit which

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provides opportunities in leadership, volunteering and community engagement activities.

“Volunteers play such an important role in strengthening our community, often at great personal sacrifice. It’s important to recognise the vital difference they make in many people’s lives,” Ms Burke said.

“I am very grateful to the Caroline Chisholm Awards Committee comprising of Norm Gibbs, Councillor Joy Banerji of Monash Council and Keyur Kelkar for their oversight of this year’s Awards”, Ms Burke said.

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