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MEDIA RELEASE

WINNERS ANNOUNCED FOR 2019 WESTERN AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

James McMahon DSC DSM has received Western Australia's highest honour, after being named 2019's Western Australian of the Year at a gala dinner at Crown Ballroom on Friday, 31 May.

James has made an outstanding contribution to both his state and his country throughout his life. He served in the Australian Defence Force from 1985 to 2007, including serving as the Commander of the SAS. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) for command and leadership in action Afghanistan and Iraq, and was also awarded the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) for leadership in action in Timor-Leste, the two highest distinguished service medals in the Australian Honours System.

In his post-military life, James has continued to support current serving personnel, returned service personnel and defence families in need, demonstrating his extraordinary commitment to the ADF and its' members.

James was appointed as Commissioner for the Department of Corrective Services in 2013, and set about implementing an agenda of reform. He took a hands on approach to the role, scheduling weekly meetings with prisoners and sitting with them in their cells to gain an understanding of the issues they faced. James focused heavily on rehabilitation in his role as Commissioner, overseeing the establishment of the Youth Justice Board and the Reconciliation Action Plan for Corrective Services.

In addition to his work with the defence force, James is also involved in a variety of community organisations, most notably The Fathering Project. In his role as an ambassador for the Project, he helps raise awareness of the profound impact a father or father figure can have on our youth, and encourages every father to become the best parent they can be.

Twenty-eight finalists were selected across seven categories for the Western Australian of the Year Awards, representing extraordinary achievements in all facets of society.

The individual winners of each category were also announced at the Gala Dinner and are as follows:

- **Aboriginal Award** – *Sponsored by Wesfarmers*
 - Glen Kelly
- **Arts and Culture Award** – *Sponsored by Woodside Energy*
 - Bourby Webster
- **Business Award** – *Sponsored by Perdaman*
 - Dr Erica Smyth AC
- **Community Award** – *Sponsored by Alcoa of Australia*
 - James McMahon DSC DSM



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- **Professions Award** – *Sponsored by APM*
 - Dr Angus Turner
- **Sport Award** – *Sponsored by Channel Seven*
 - Samantha Kerr
- **Youth Award** – *Sponsored by BHP*
 - Harrison Garland

Celebrate WA Chair, Mike Anghie said “James exemplifies the very best of Western Australia, and is a truly deserving winner of this Award. His dedication, selflessness and compassion are values we should all strive towards, and his impact on the community cannot be overstated. I also congratulate all of the category winners, whose outstanding achievements in their respective fields really do represent the diversity of talent present in Western Australia”.

Photographs, biographies and videos of all winners will be available at:
<https://bit.ly/2EBwZFQ>

ENDS

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About Celebrate WA

Celebrate WA is a not-for-profit organisation responsible for promoting and organising the annual WA Day celebrations; promoting excellence and achievement by Western Australians in all fields of endeavour; and encouraging pride in all things Western Australian.



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