**MEDIA RELEASE 11 SEPTEMBER 2017 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**HONOUR AWARDS FINALISTS HIGHLIGHT**

**LGBTI COMMUNITY’S STRENGTH & RESILIENCE**

Demonstrating the strength and resilience of LGBTI communities, equality champions, community defenders and unsung heroes lead the charge at the 2017 Honour Awards. A diverse and inspiring mix of over 30 people and organisations will be celebrated at the annual LGBTI community awards held in Sydney in September.

Now in their eleventh year, the Honour Awards recognise outstanding achievements within or contributions to NSW’s LGBTI community. The awards are also a gala fundraising event for LGBTI charities Aurora and ACON, NSW’s leading HIV prevention, HIV support and LGBTI health organisation.

The 34 finalists have been selected from over 230 nominations received across eight categories covering the business, health, education, community, legal, political, media and cultural sectors. **(NB! - All finalists are listed on following pages of this media release)**

The winners will be presented with a range of gifts and prizes at a gala ceremony and cocktail party at the Ivy Ballroom in Sydney on Wednesday 27 September.

ACON CEO Nicolas Parkhill says the judges were overwhelmed by the calibre and variety of nominations. “The judging panel noted that selecting the finalists was a difficult process because the achievements and contributions of all the nominees had each been noteworthy in their own way,” Mr Parkhill said.

“However, the judges agreed that the finalists they selected exhibited a truly outstanding commitment to supporting the LGBTI community and deserved to be recognised for their efforts. The calibre of nominees for Community Hero and Young Achiever were particularly outstanding, with judges spending a great deal of time in deliberation.

“I’d like to thank all the judges, including Network Ten presenter, broadcaster, journalist, commentator and *Studio 10* host Sarah Harris for helping to judge the Media Award category. I congratulate all the finalists and look forward to them and other members of our community coming together to celebrate their achievements at the Honour Awards ceremony and cocktail party at the Ivy in September.”

This year’s awards will be presented at a gala ceremony and cocktail party at The Ivy in Sydney on Wednesday 27 September. Four finalists from each category will join a host of government, media, entertainment and community personalities for a fabulous night of fun and festivity.

Guests will also be able to bid on a range of amazing silent auction items including luxury holidays, jewellery, art, furniture, homewares, and 5-star dining, accommodation and entertainment packages.

**HONOUR AWARDS CEREMONY & COCKTAIL PARTY**

* **Wednesday 27 September 2017, 6:30pm - 11pm, Ivy Ballroom, 330 George St, Sydney**
* **Tix: Standard $90 pp (inc. quality wines and beers, delicious canapés & entertainment) / $75 members (ACON, Aurora, SGLBA, SGLMG) / $150 Community Champions**
* [**www.honourawards.com.au**](file:///\\aconfs\davida\2017%20Media%20Releases\Honour%20Awards%202017\www.honourawards.com.au)

**Community Partners:** ACON | Aurora Group | Sydney Gay and Lesbian Business Association | Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras | Stonewall Hotel

**Event Partners:** SBS | Merivale/Ivy | GLYDE Health | CrowdComms | DL Comms

**2017 HONOUR AWARDS: FINALISTS**

**COMMUNITY HERO (Presented by ACON)**

**Roberta Perkins:** For being a staunch trans advocate, fighting for support and equality for transgender people for over 30 years. Roberta founded Tiresias House in 1983, a support organisation for trans people, which would later become The Gender Centre. She is also one of the leading lights of the Australian sex worker movement, advocating for sex workers’ rights in NSW during the 1980s and 1990s.

**Peter De Waal:** For over four decades of pioneering for LGBTI rights in Australia with his late partner of over 50 years, Peter ‘Bon’ Bonsall-Boone. They were the first real-life couple to share a gay male kiss on Australian television, became foundation members of one of the earliest gay rights group in the country (CAMP NSW), helped set up the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service and were active in campaigning for reforms that led to the expungement of historic homosexual offences in NSW.

**Elaine Czulkowski:** For her unwavering commitment to the LGBTI community spanning more than 20 years, which includes various positions at Australian Marriage Equality. In these roles, she has been instrumental in the ongoing campaign for equal rights by building awareness, fostering relationships, establishing corporate links, educating communities, organising events, selling merchandise and fundraising.

**Alastair Lawrie:** For his prolific and tenacious advocacy work on behalf of the LGBTI community, particularly in policy. Over the years, through countless submission to inquiries, letters to politicians, articles on important issues and community education, Alastair has made an enormous contribution to the campaign for LGBTI rights, especially in the areas of anti-discrimination and marriage equality.

**HEALTH & WELLBEING (Presented by GLYDE Health)**

**HIV/AIDS Legal Centre:** For providing legal aid and support to the LGBTI community over HIV-related matters, and tackling HIV stigma and discrimination by providing specialist legal services to vulnerable people living with HIV and those most at risk.

**Professor Kerry Robinson:** For decades of tireless research in gender and sexualities. Kerry has been a leader in the research of gender, sexualities and LGBTI identities, along with her cutting-edge work and publications that informs various fields both in Australia and internationally.

**Twenty10 incorporating GLCS NSW:** For supporting and caring for young LGBTI people and their families through the provision of a broad range of specialised services including counselling, mental health support, medical clinics, social groups, transitional housing and accommodation.

**Alex Stefan:** For being a passionate supporter for the welfare of LGBTI students at Colo High School in the Hawkesbury. As a teacher, Alex started the school’s first LGBTI group, got the school involved with days such as Wear It Purple Day and IDAHOBIT, fought for Safe Schools and campaigned for marriage equality at local council.

**YOUNG ACHIEVER AWARD (Presented by SBS)**

**Gemma Cowling:** For blazing a trail as a transgender model and becoming a powerful role model for transgender youth in Australia through her prolific work in the media, fashion and modelling.

**Iz Connell:** For her passionate advocacy for LGBTI and disability rights, through various campaigns and workshops, as well as tireless volunteering for a broad range of LGBTI organisations.

**Sheridan Williams:** For being a strong supporter of LGBTI youth in Albury-Wodonga region, empowering local communities to challenge homophobia, biphobia and transphobia through a range of activities.

**Mikhara Ramsing:** For important advocacy for LGBTI people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds through the establishment of various social enterprises and community projects.

**BUSINESS AWARD (Presented by Sydney Gay and Lesbian Business Association)**

**Bookshop Darlinghurst:** For 35 years of providing a safe space on Oxford Street for LGBTI people to visit, find information and other LGBTI resources. Through the years, the Bookshop Darlinghurst has established itself as an iconic LGBTI venue in Sydney, and is a great supporter of many LGBTI charities and causes.

**Gay4Play:** For establishing a successful business and providing a variety of social events which promote diversity and acceptance among the LGBTI community in Sydney. Through its mantra of ‘Beyond the Bars’, Gay4Play enables LGBTI people to come together through wide-ranging supportive and inclusive activities.

**Dowson Turco Lawyers:** For being one of NSW’s most LGBTI-engaged law practices through substantial pro bono work, community partnerships and direct donations to key organisations. The Newtown-based firm are steadfast in their commitment to provide legal services that specialises in the needs of LGBTI people and their families.

**Daly Male:** For its successful retailing business catering to Sydney’s LGBTI community, which has been operating for more than three decades. In that time, the Oxford Street fashion emporium has delivered substantial support to a broad range of LGBTI causes and organisations through sponsorships and direct donations.

**ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT (Presented by Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras)**

**Darren Dale:** For producing the multiplatform event Deep Water on SBS, which shone an important light on the gay and trans hate crimes that swept through Sydney in the 1980s and 1990s.

**Red Rattler:** For nine years of providing an inclusive and affordable performance and events space for the LGBTI community, and for supporting established and emerging LGBTI talent through diverse, creative and inspiring programming.

**Sally Whitwell:** For her outstanding work as an internationally renowned classical music pianist, as well as being an accomplished conductor, composer, arranger and teacher.

**Benjamin Law:** For his acclaimed TV series, The Family Law, which brings to mainstream viewers a real portrait of modern Australia as it explores contemporary issues such as family, sexuality and multiculturalism.

**MEDIA AWARD**

**Monique Schafter:** For her powerful profile on Peter ‘Bon’ Bonsall-Boone and his fight to expunge a second historical homosexual conviction dating back to the 1950s, which later helped to clear Bon’s name just days before he passed away in May earlier this year. The story aired on *7.30* and was just one of Monique’s many outstanding reports that brought LGBTI issues and stories to the fore on the national broadcaster.

**Allan Clarke:** For his commitment to raising the visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the LGBTI community through his tireless reporting and presenting for media organisations including the ABC, SBS, Buzzfeed and NITV. Allan’s work has particularly provided a platform for transgender people to have a voice, and he continues to be an out Aboriginal role model, especially for young people, through media and voluntary speaking engagements.

**NT News:** For actively campaigning the Federal Government to abandon a postal survey and legislate for marriage equality in a full front page – the first major state/territory newspaper to do so. It was seen by an estimated 2 million viewers on social media in 24 hours and became the most retweeted front page in Australia’s history. The print edition, distributed across vast swathes in the Northern Territory and its neighbouring islands, delivered the message of equality to some of the country’s most remote communities.

**Benedict Brook:** For his extensive body of work on Australia’s most viewed news website *News.com.au*, and bringing to the attention of millions of its readers around the country key LGBTI issues such as marriage equality, suicide prevention, inclusion and HIV prevention. Benedict also worked at national LGBTI publication, *The Star Observer*, for a number of years.

**COMMUNITY ORGANISATION (Presented by Aurora Group)**

**Sydney Pride History Group:** For its ongoing commitment to document and record the diverse history of LGBTI Sydney for future generations through interviews, collections, social events and history walks.

**The Flying Bats:** For over 30 years of providing a safe, supportive and social environments for thousands of women in Sydney through football, and ongoing support of a range of LGBTI charities and causes.

**Rainbow Families Inc:** For establishing NSW’s first peak advocacy group for children and families within the LGBTI community, and providing practical support, information and events for rainbow families.

**Trans Sydney Pride:** For providing support, advocacy and visibility for transgender people, and for raising awareness and engagement on key issues through events and activations throughout Sydney.