



Media Release

17.06.21

Australian Humanist Awards 2021 go to Bruce Pascoe and Georgie Stone

Humanists Australia, the national Humanist organisation, has honoured 2 Australians this year for exemplifying the ideals of Humanism in their public lives.

Author and First Nations activist, **Bruce Pascoe**, has received the Australian Humanist of the Year Award in recognition of his outstanding achievements in literature, culture, environmental issues and agriculture, through a First Nations lens.

Actress and transgender activist, **Georgie Stone OAM**, has been awarded Young Australian Humanist of the Year for her outstanding achievements in transgender activism.

Pioneer of second wave of humanism in Australia, **Lyndon Storey**, is the Outstanding Humanist Achiever of the Year 2021, in recognition of his outstanding achievements in the Australian Humanist movement.

In announcing the Award winners, CEO of Humanists Australia, Dr Heidi Nicholl, congratulated Pascoe and Stone for making outstanding contributions to public life consistent with Humanist principles and values.

“Humanism is a framework for living an ethical, meaningful and compassionate life without relying on supernatural forces.

“Both Bruce Pascoe and Georgie Stone have made a tremendous difference in their chosen fields, in the finest traditions of Humanism.

“People may not initially recognise themselves as a 'Humanist'. They're definitely not getting up everyday saying, 'as a Humanist I am going to....!' - but like so many, they are operating as people who are 'Humanists at Heart',” Dr Nicholl said.

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Dr Nicholl said the Humanist Awards were especially important this year because of the approaching Australian Census, which will determine the level of religious belief in Australia.

“We are calling on Australians to respond to the Census with an honest reflection of whether they are religious or not, not just a nominal acceptance.

“In the 2016 Census 29.6% of Australians said they were 'not religious'. We suspect that the true figure now is a lot greater than this (in New Zealand 48.2% of people reported that they were not religious in their 2018 Census).

“We feel it's important to have an accurate figure about the number of non-religious Australians, and we'd like to think that they will come to learn about, and adopt, Humanist principles.

“Just because people are not religious does not mean they can't live a life of meaning and fulfilment according to moral values. Humanism helps people define who they *are* in a positive way (I am a Humanist and I live a value driven life contributing to society), not who they are not (I am not religious).

“Many people don't want to commit to being an atheist because it has negative connotations. Atheists are often seen as being against the Church, whereas Humanism is all about being for values and living a life of positive meaning.

“These awards help to demonstrate just how great humans are... that so much good work is done outside of organised religion and that there are all these great people working for the good of the Australian people,” Dr Nicholl said.

The Australian Humanist of the Year Award has been given every year since 1983. Notable previous recipients include Fiona Patten (2020), Dr Rodney Syme (2017), Geoffrey Robertson (2014), Bob Brown (2010), Peter Cundall (2006) and Peter Singer (2004).

The Young Australian Humanist of the Year Award has only been given once before - to Jason Ball in 2016 for promoting student secular societies and being an activist for LGBTQI issues especially in AFL.

“We think it's really important to recognise the incredible activism being done by so many young people in so many areas - climate change, transgender and LGBTQIA+ activism, and in disability and equity issues including activism on behalf of First Nations people,” Dr Nicholl said.

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Starting in 1983, the Australian Humanist movement has awarded annually the Australian Humanist of the Year award to a person who has made an outstanding contribution to public life, consistent with Humanist principles and values. To be nominated for the award, the person must display a reasoned and compassionate approach to human affairs and be a well-known public figure at either a state or national level.

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Available for interview: Dr Heidi Nicholl, CEO Humanists Australia.

PLEASE NOTE

An online discussion will be held re the work of the Award recipients, featuring Bruce Pascoe and Georgie Stone in conversation with Humanists Australia CEO, Dr Heidi Nicholl, 5pm Monday 21 June:

<https://www.meetup.com/en-AU/Humanists-Australia/events/278336882/>

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