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## Queen's Birthday honours 2021: 19 northern beaches residents named

A football superstar, a women who rescued thousands of homeless pooches and a man who made our roads safer are among 19 northern beaches residents on the 2021 Queen's Birthday Honours list.

Jim O'Rourke and Julie Cross

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Owner of Monika's Doggie Rescue at Ingleside, Monika Biernacki, has been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her service to animal welfare. Picture: News Corp

An international football superstar, a woman who saved the lives of thousands of homeless dogs and a man who worked to make our roads safer feature in the 2021 Queens Birthday Honours list released today.

The other 16 recipients — many of whom are not well known to the general public — are also everyday unsung heroes who have been recognised for their selfless services to the community.

They include a dedicated medical researcher into kidney disease, a top cop and a volunteer bush firefighter.

Monika Biernacki founder Monika's Doggie rescue at Ingleside in 1993. She has been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her service to animal welfare.



Monika's Doggie Rescue with the dog Oscar whom been rescued from the pound, here pictured with Monika Biernacki.

Since then it has gone to save, and fond homes for than 13,000 abandoned dogs and close to 600 cats.

"I am surprised, I really am, but I'm very honoured," Ms Biernacki said.

"I am also very thrilled to know that I have so many volunteers and supporters because without them, I wouldn't be doing this.

"This honour is a real thank you to them for believing in what I do and following my vision. it's really exciting for everyone else too."

Ms Biernacki, who has also volunteered as a telephone counsellor with Lifeline for nine years, said her late father Stefan was always checking the honours lists to see if her name was included.

"He would be very proud."

Robbie Slater, from Killarney Heights, had a stellar career as a player, starring with a number of big name clubs in Europe and Australia including grabbing a winners medal in the English Premier League with Blackburn Rovers in 1995. He played 44 times for his country.



Robbie Slater at Melwood Ave Oval Forestville. Picture: Adam Yip/ Manly Daily

The bustling midfielder has been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his service to football.

Slater, who is now a respected football analyst and commentator with Fox Sports, is in the Football Federation Hall of Fame and named Oceania's Player of the Year in 1991.

He said being awarded an OAM was "massive".

"It's pretty humbling. It's a recognition. It's great honour.

"Football has been my life and I've been so lucky.

"It's a round ball, my great uncle used to call it a bag of wind, and you get paid, first for kicking it around and now I've been about 25 years talking about it."

Slater said football had given me "everything".

"At a time when a lot of people are looking to take from the game and think the game owes them something, well, the game owes me nothing.

"I owe the game everything."

Michael Henderson, of Church Point has been a leading light in improving the safety of drivers and passengers, both on the road and on the racetrack since the late 1960s.



Dr Michael Henderson. Picture: Supplied

He has been appointed an Officer of the order of Australia (AO) for his distinguished service to motor vehicle and motorsport safety and the prevention of road trauma.

Still an avid race driver himself at 84-years-old, he designed the revolutionary six-point race harness for competition vehicles.

He was a member of the medical advisory panel for the governing body for world motorsport, the Fédération Internationale de l'car (FIA).

Dr Henderson was also the Executive Director of Traffic Safety and Director of the Traffic Accident Research Unit with the NSW Government where he was instrumental in the mandatory fitting and use of seat belts in Australia; the original design development and certification of car child restraints and; the design and introduction of safety helmets for bicycle riders.

He is also the author of more than 100 research papers, monographs and book chapters on road safety as well as penning two research papers on road and racetrack safety.

"I'm particularly honoured and extremely grateful for the honour," Dr Henderson said.

"I'm proud of what we, the teams I worked with, did in both road safety and motorsport safety. It's the teams that makes it great."

PROF. CAROL POLLOCK: Manly



Prof Carol Pollock. Picture: News Corp

Appointed an Officer of the order of Australia (AO) for her distinguished service to medical research, education and science, nephrology, and clinical practice and governance.

Clinical Professor Pollock, a renal medical specialist, is an inaugural Fellow of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences.

She has also been chair, among a myriad of roles, of the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation, chair of the Clinical Excellence Commission, inaugural chair of the Northern Sydney Local Health District Board and current chair of Kidney Health Australia.

Prof Pollock also has a number of government advisory roles including deputy chair of the Australian Organ, Tissue and Transplant Authority since 2017.

She also worked on the Project Delivery Board for Northern Beaches Hospital.

CHRISTINE NIXON (formerly of Beacon Hill)



Former NSW Assistant Police Commissioner Christine Nixon grew up at Beacon Hill. Picture: David Geraghty / The Australian.

Appointed an Officer of the order of Australia (AO) for her distinguished service to law enforcement, women in policing and tertiary education.

Ms Nixon, who grew up in Beacon Hill and now lives in Victoria, was a police officer in NSW from 1972 to 2009, rising to the rank of Assistant Commissioner in 1994.

She left NSW to become the Victorian Police Commissioner for nine years and later went on to chair the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority, after the devastating Black Friday fires in 2009.

Ms Nixon is now the chair of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners after a stint as Deputy Chancellor of Monash University in Melbourne,

GEOFF COMBES: Frenchs Forest



Tour de Cure co-founder and organiser Geoff Coombes, left, and Malanda State School principal Mark Allen in Queensland to promote the school's highly successful bike bus program. Picture: David Anthony

Awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his service to the community through charitable organisations.

Mr Coombes, along with Samantha Hollier-James, of Mona Vale and friend Gary Bertwistle, from Bathurst, set up Tour de Cure — which runs fundraising bike rides — in 2007.

They started out with 28 participants who raised \$400,000. Now the charity raises close to \$8 million a year to fund the search for cancer cures.

Mr Coombes was first inspired to start Tour de Cure when he was 26, after cycling across America and “seeing the country at the speed of a bike”.

“I’m a big fan of the Tour de France, so it was the perfect fit,” Mr Coombes said.

JAMES CREE: Davidson



Jeff Cree, second from left with Pip Barnes, Dianne Cree and Barb Cooper in the kitchen at NSW Rural Fire Service headquarters which can dish out 2000 freshly-prepared meals a day. Picture: News Corp

Awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his service to the community through emergency response organisations.

Mr Cree is a popular and respected figure in volunteer bush fire circles, especially in the northern beaches, with more than 50 years service to the community under his belt after starting out with the Berowra Brigade in 1968.

The now retired deputy Group Captain, who still mentors and advises young volunteer firefighters, was named a life member of the RFS in 1995.

JOHN HART: Fairlight



Former CEO of the Restaurant and Catering Association, John Hart. Picture: Jane Dempster

Awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his service to the tourism industry.

Mr Hart, is the current chair of Tourism Training Australia after a long career representing and advocating for the tourism and hospitality industries in Australia.

He is also the current Executive Chair (Tourism) with the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Mr Hart was the longstanding CEO of the peak industry body, Restaurant and Catering Australia, from 1999 to 2017 and former chair of the National Tourism Council and Service Industry Skills Council.

LAURA O'REILLY: Frenchs Forest



Fighting Chance CEO Laura O'Reilly with client Matt Quin. Picture: News Corp

Awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her service to people with disability.

Ms O'Reilly is the co-founder of Fighting Chance, an innovative northern beaches organisation set up by two siblings who saw how hard it was for their disabled, but talented brother to get work after he left school.

Laura and Jordan O'Reilly founded not-for-profit Fighting Chance in 2011, a social enterprise which looks at problems disabled people face in getting into the workforce and then creates social businesses to overcome those problems.

The O'Reillys, who grew up in Forestville, say their brother Shane, who had profound cerebral palsy and a moderate intellectual disability, is their inspiration. He died when he was just 21.

BELINDA TALLIS: Manly



Belinda Tallis. Picture: Oxfam

Awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her service to the community through the not-for-profit sector, Ms Tallis, a lawyer, has been deputy chair of charity Oxfam Australia since 2019 and has worked voluntarily on the Governance Committee of Lifeline Australia.

WALTER (WAL) WILLIAMS: Narrabeen



WWII veteran Walter Williams at the RSL ANZAC Village at Narrabeen. Picture: Tim Hunter.

Awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his service to veterans and their families.

Mr Williams was taken prisoner on the fall of Singapore, interned at Changi Prison, before sent to work on the infamous Burma Railway.

He then survived the sinking of the Japanese ship Rakuyo Maru while en route to Japan as a POW.

He and his two mates were picked up by a Japanese whaling boat and eventually found

themselves in a labour camp in Kawasaki.

They were forced to work 10 days on with one day off, with just boiled rice to sustain them through a freezing cold winter.

Sadly, both his mates died of pneumonia within 24 hours of each other, just before the end of the war.

Mr Williams survived the devastating US air raids that obliterated both residential and industrial areas in Japan and made it back to Australia on his 23rd birthday.

Following the war, Mr Williams was heavily involved in Pittwater Sub-Branch RSL, where he held a number of positions including President from 1992 to 2002.

He is also a life member of the RSL Australia, NSW.

He now lives at the war vets in Narrabeen.

GWEN WINSOR: Northern Beaches



Gwen Winsor, left, and Cathryn Chiddy examining the grass courts at Curl Curl. Picture: Ros Cannon

Awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her service to netball.

Mrs Winsor has been a fixture, as well as a mover and shaker, around the netball scene on the northern beaches since 1969.

She started as a coach with the then Curl Curl Youth Club before taking on roles as an administrator and selector as well as coaching senior and junior representative Manly-Warringah Netball Association (MWNA) teams for 25 years. She was a NSW selector in 1991.

Ms Winsor held the post of MWNA president for four years and was on its executive committee from 1978 to 1998. She is a life member of the MWNA and the Manly Warringah Sporting Union.

**JOY CAMPBELL-STEPHEN:** Killarney Heights



Joy Campbell-Stephen a Volunteer with the Pink Ladies, with Dr Nick Coatsworth, Medical Registrar for Infectious diseases at Royal North Shore Hospital and Vice President Medecins Sans Frontieres Australia. Picture: News Corp

Awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her service to the community of North Sydney.

Mrs Campbell-Stephen has been the president of the volunteer fund raising Royal North Shore Hospital Ladies Committee, known as the “Pink Ladies” since 2008 and has been a volunteer since 2006.

**MICHAEL BROWN:** Manly

Awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his service to rugby union.

Mr Brown has been the secretary of the youth support organisation Creating Chances, which used to be known as The Rugby Youth Foundation, since 2019 and its chair from 2003 to 2019.

He is a former director of the Australian Rugby Union as well as a former chair of the Australian Junior Rugby Union; and former youth director for the NSW Waratahs.

**LYNNE RIDGE:** Northern Beaches

Awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her service to industrial relations and trade unions.

Ms Ridge is a life member of the NSW Nurse and Midwives Association and was that union's senior marketing and recruitment officer for 24 years.

She was also added to Unions NSW's Scroll of Honour in 2017 and has served on the committee of the Union Aid Board.

ALAN WIGGINS: Mona Vale

Awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his service to hockey

Mr Wiggins has been president of the Sydney Indoor Hockey Association since 2004.

He is a life member of the association and volunteer with it since 1993.

FRANCOIS GILROY: Warriewood

Awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her service to the community of North Sydney

The former high school French language teacher, and physiotherapist at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, has been a volunteer with the North Sydney Stroke Recovery Group since the early 1990s.

PAUL DEVANEY: Northern Beaches



Detective Superintendent Paul Devaney. Picture: NCA NewsWire/David Swift

Australian Police Medal

Superintendent Devaney started his policing career as a general duties uniformed officer, working out of Mona Vale and Dee Why police stations, in 1988 before becoming a detective in 1995.

He was promoted to Superintendent in 2009 and took command of what was then the Child Abuse Squad before taking on other leadership roles in the Public transport and Public Safety Command.

He is now commander of the Burwood Police Area Command, but last year 2020 he was seconded to lead the Repatriation Team, which was responsible for the safe return of overseas passengers from COVID-19 hotel quarantine to their final destinations.

SIMMONE LOCKE: Terrey Hills

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Simonne Locke, right, NSW Ambulance. Picture: Supplied

### Ambulance Service Medal

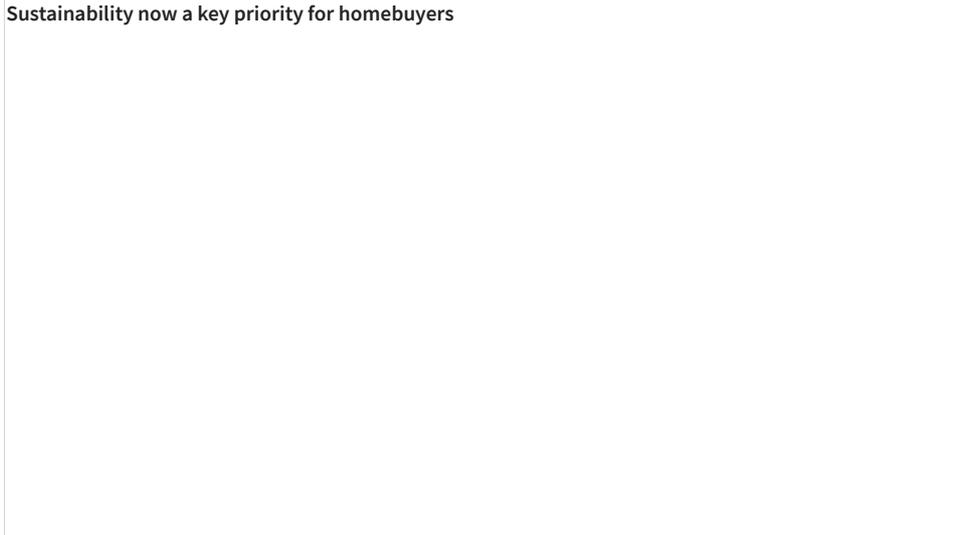
Ms Locke has been in the ambulance service in NSW for 27 years, including working in “frontline” duties until 2025 before taking on a range of operational, clinical and leadership roles.

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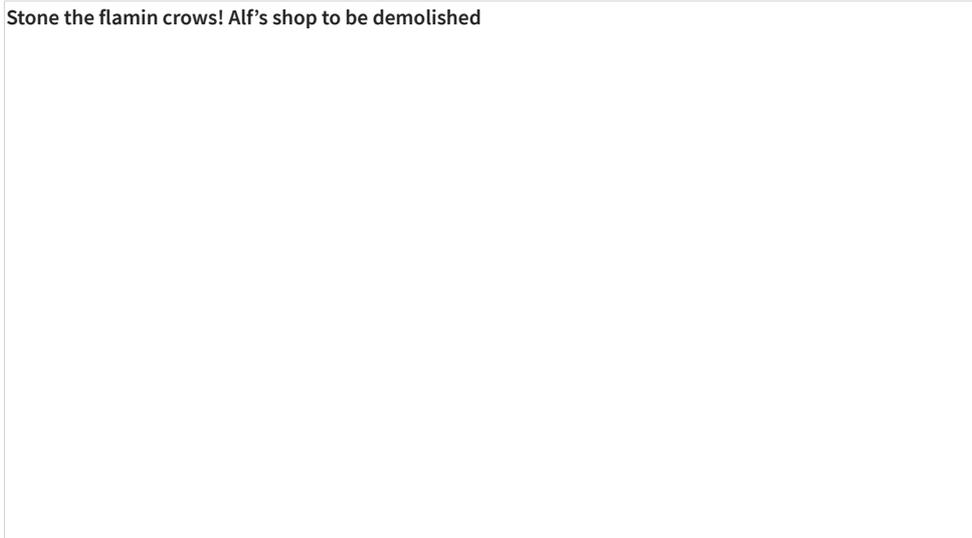
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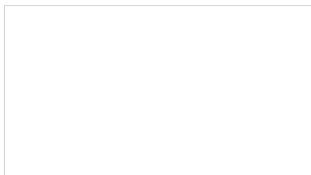
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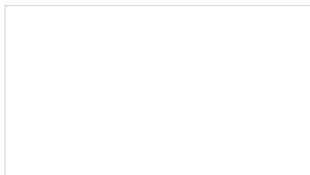


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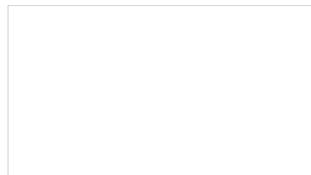
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