

2021 KEN STEPHEN MEDAL

2021 NOMINEES OVERVIEW

Adam Doueih, Wests Tigers, Strathfield Raiders

For Adam, wearing his Wests Tigers jersey on and off the field is a privilege. Always among the first players to volunteer and partake in any club community events, Adam leads by example.

Adam understands the importance of giving back to the community. His focus in 2021 was to inspire and educate school students. Adam taught Primary School students the importance of a healthy lifestyle through the 2021 Wests Tigers Junior League Video. He was a key advocate in the *Wests Tigers Unite Harmony Program*, a social cohesion program for High School students.

As a member of the Tigers Leadership Team, Adam supported the launch of the *Wests Tigers Tails* video series and *The Community Hub*, both designed to help families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Adam's passion for his Lebanese culture drove his interest to lead the *Wests Tigers Beirut Appeal*. Adam reached out for donations from the entire Wests Tigers Community resulting in the appeal raising much needed funds for the Red Cross of Lebanon. Through this initiative Adam was determined to show that Rugby League can unite cultures together in times of need.

Cody Walker, South Sydney Rabbitohs, Casino Cougars

With a passion for going beyond club commitments, Cody is deeply committed to serving the wider community.

Cody has been a fearless and articulate campaigner against racism and bullying while passionate about supporting mental health and inequalities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In 2021, Cody was instrumental in Souths Cares programs. This included his dedication to the *Nanga Mai Marri (Dream Big) Program*, *Aboriginal Employment Program*, *Deadly Youth Mentoring Program* and *Rabbitoh's Wellbeing Program*. Cody provided a video speech at NAIDOC Celebration and promoted the Rabbitohs annual NAIDOC Festival. He was part of the 'I Have a Dream' Indigenous 2007 player photo recreation and led the Rabbitoh's Indigenous jersey design.

Cody promotes social justice issues to a broader audience. He attended the *Change the Date March* bringing awareness of a desire of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to change the date of Australia Day. He has also highlighted the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' objection to singing the National Anthem.

Cody has a passion for the broader community. In 2020 he supported the Bateman's Bay and Bombala areas impacted by bushfires.



In his own time, Cody has collaborated with Indigenous leaders to participate in the Unity Dance, supporting the Sydney Kings Indigenous round, sponsoring the Redfern All Blacks Women's team, volunteering as a trainer for the Redfern All- Blacks Junior Teams and mentoring the Bundjalung Baygal Warriors.

Cody utilises his profile to deliver positive community messages. This includes best hygiene and social distancing practice in line to the COVID-19 pandemic, eSafety workshops within schools, and sharing health messages at the South Sydney Rabbitohs Community Carnival to over 4 500 students.

Jamal Fogarty, Gold Coast Titans, Beaudesert Kingfishers

Jamal is a true leader, on and off the field, at the Titans and in the wider community. A co-captain at the Titans, Jamal uses his high- profile positively to contribute the highest number of community hours at the club.

Jamal has a substantial list of contributions to his name, including assisting the launch of *Titans Cultural Collective (TCC)* during Reconciliation Week, running Rugby League training for disabled young adults through the *Titans Leaguability Program*, and mentoring Indigenous students on a trip to Ballina with Preston Campbell and Brian Kelly.

Jamal's community work extends beyond club commitments. Regular trips to his home town in Beaudesert, allow Jamal to give back to his former community as a proud Mununjali man. Together with Mununjali Housing and Development, Jamal launched *Jarjum Gurema*, a book aimed to revive the Yugambah language and encourage early literacy. Supporting NAIDOC performances at Beaudesert High School and mentoring students in the *Pathways to Success Programs* are just some of the ways Jamal gives back to his home town.

Jamal's work as a Youth Worker, before signing full-time with the Titans, has instilled a passion for supporting children, adolescents and young adults, with a particular focus on Indigenous youth which Jamal has continued in his NRL career.

Jamayne Isaako, Brisbane Broncos, Aranui Eagles

2018 Dally M Rookie of the Year, Jamayne Isaako, has shown his passion for Rugby League is matched by his passion for giving back to the community. Always one of the first players to volunteer and partake in any club community events, Jamayne has made a significant contribution to the Brisbane community, especially for women.

Jamayne has been a fearless and articulate campaigner for women's needs through his involvement in *Share the Dignity*, an organisation which provides sanitary items to women without access to supplies. Through *Share the Dignity*, Jamayne was also able to ensure girls in the *Beyond the Broncos Girls Academy* were provided with sanitary essentials as part of his work in this program with female students across Queensland. His work in this area helped reduce the stigma around the topic.

As an *Act for Kids* ambassador, Jamayne supported and promoted the charity to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect. His desire to support children was also demonstrated through a *Childhood Cancer Support* appearance and a working bee at the Childhood Cancer Support Facility in Herston.



In his own time, Jamayne has devoted countless hours to travelling throughout Queensland to deliver the *Broncos Girls Academy Program* and visited schools who do not have the chance to meet NRL stars. Jamayne also travelled to visit Strong Hearts, an organisation who provide youth with a disability, the opportunity to participate in sport. Jamayne got involved in the sports, making it a memorable day for the children and staff.

Whether it was a school visit, involvement in a disability organisation, visiting a hospital or woman's health support program, Jamayne brought energy, passion and a keen desire to make a positive difference.

Jarrold Croker, Canberra Raiders, Goulburn Stockmen Juniors

The Raiders Captain stands out for his leadership and dedication in helping individuals and communities across Canberra.

For Jarrod, community work starts within the club through nurturing and supporting younger players. With restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Jarrod's strong leadership pastorally supported the young players who are often away from home to pursue their NRL dreams.

The NRL All Star was an active participant in multiple aspects of the Junior Rugby League Community. These included local junior club visits and promotion of registrations for Junior Rugby League clubs in the Canberra region. He was an enthusiastic leader in the delivery of the *NRL League Stars Inspire Program*, and club-initiated school wellbeing program, *ASPIRE*, in local schools.

Jarrold regularly used his profile to help at sponsorship promotions and community events and is actively involved in several local charity events for the Terry Campese Foundation and Ricky Stuart Foundation.

Jarrold's generous nature is extended to his fans, club and Canberra community. Jarrod gifts his headgear to a fan each Game Day, supports local business sponsorship by providing pizzas to his club after training each week and records personalised birthday messages for fans.

As well as his work off-field, Jarrod helped the community through his on-field success. Jarrod's goalkicking efforts raised money for the *Homes for Homes* community project, \$100 per point was donated to assist the charity build housing to help combat local homelessness.

Although, a true role model in the community, Jarrod seeks to serve in a humble manner.

Josh King, Newcastle Knights, Singleton Greyhounds

Hardworking, humble and caring are three words used by the community to describe Josh King. Coming up through the ranks at Newcastle, Josh has never taken his NRL career for granted and is fiercely determined to give back to the community.

While pursuing his NRL dream, Josh worked long hours completing an electrical apprenticeship at the Bulga Open Cut Coal Mine, demonstrating a strong work ethic.



Josh maintains his connection with the mining industry, supporting the 'Voice for Mining' round and being an advocate for workers in the industry. Josh regularly gives back to the community, visiting mining sites to promote resilience, teamwork and commitment while encouraging apprentices to persevere in their chosen profession.

Since 2019, Josh has been an '*Adopted Knight*' at Edgeworth Public School and Ashtonfield Public School as part of the club's *Adopt a School Program*. His friendly nature, leadership skills and professionalism make him a popular asset in each school community.

Josh maintains a strong commitment to the John Hunter Children's Hospital. He visits the hospital each month and ensures he lifts the spirits of the children and their families. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Josh remained in regular contact with the children. He visited their bedside 'virtually' through an iPad ensuring the positive connections and relationships with the children were maintained. Thanks to Josh's leadership, organisation skills, and encouragement, twenty-nine players attended the hospital's 2020 Christmas Party despite the party falling on a rostered day off for the players.

Josh is a role model within his club and the Newcastle community and is a true example of 'homegrown success'.

Nat Butcher, Sydney Roosters, South Eastern Seagulls

A reliable, proactive leader, Nat regularly organises to help in the community beyond his club commitments.

During the pre-season the Roosters visited the Northern Rivers region, Nat promoted rugby league in the area and helped increase registrations for the Junior League Clubs. Furthermore, he organised an extra two-hour trip to Casino to promote the game and interact with fans.

Nat was an active participant in *NRL's League Stars Inspire program*, delivering the health and wellbeing program to 120 students at St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School in February. With a passion to help students in his local community, this was not the first time Nat delivered this powerful program.

The Roosters relationship with The Ronald McDonald House at Randwick has been strengthened by Nat's enthusiasm. For many, a monthly commitment might be enough but Nat had a strong desire to do more for the children and their families, Nat organised extra visits to the hospital in 2021 - even on a long weekend.

Since 2018 Nat has passionately supported the small charity *The Boys and Girls Brigade* in Surry Hills, he helped provide a safe and welcoming place for children, youth and their families. Nat supported the children and staff at the charity in a number of ways including Lego building competitions and sports nights.

On the field or in the community, Nat represents the tri-colours of the club with pride and respect.



Nicho Hynes, Melbourne Storm, Umina Bunnies JRLFC

A proud Wiradjuri man, Nicho consistently demonstrates a high degree of enthusiasm and commitment to contributing to both club and NRL community programs, in particular, those which involve young indigenous people.

During Indigenous Round Nicho utilised this passion to fuel his desire to speak in multiple schools about his journey. Whilst doing this he also provided support to the MINGALETTA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation and the Salvation Army, by volunteering time to assist with their events and movements.

Over his three years at the Storm, he has been heavily involved in the NRL School to Work Program, mentoring students through his personal anecdote.

During the COVID-19 lockdowns Nicho continued to send personal videos to the local aboriginal youth of Melbourne. Students began to show signs of disengagement from school and he took it upon himself to be a source of inspiration and encouragement for the students to push through.

Nicho regularly dedicates to the Starlight foundation. He visits sick children at Starlight Rooms in Melbourne hospitals to make a difference to children's life in care.

Nicho has made it his goal to share the message of maintaining a healthy wellbeing and prioritising one's mental health by staying connected and seeking professional help.

Raymond Faitala-Mariner, Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs, Otahuhu Leopards New Zealand

Raymond Faitala-Mariner is a proud Samoan and New Zealand international who has a passion for serving others in his community.

Raymond's interest in striving to give back to his community is focused on those less fortunate. Raymond co-ordinated a team of players, coaching staff and club office staff to create *Hampers for Hope*. This initiative provided boxes of groceries, bread, fruit and vegetables to households across Sydney. Raymond also organised and led a team of Bulldog representatives to provide food for those in need on Christmas Day.

Raymond's work in the community is shaped by his religious beliefs. As well as participating in club-based initiatives, Raymond represented the Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs at the Lakemba ANZAC Day Dawn Service, worked with St Mary's Catholic Primary School to share messages of perseverance and attended St Rita Melkite Catholic Parish Annual Fundraising Dinner.

Raymond stands out amongst others due to the unique way he unites players and staff to become involved with his community service, together. The leadership and positive inclusivity Raymond brought to his community work shaped a shared vision, unity and collaborative approach within the Bulldogs.



Ronaldo Multalo, Cronulla Sharks, Springfield Panthers JRLFC

Ronaldo arrived at the Sharks passionate to play Rugby League and equally passionate to give back to the community. Ronaldo has been an exemplary community volunteer, always involved in every community-based initiative, leading the club community appearance hours two years in succession.

For Ronaldo, playing in the NRL allows him to not only play the game he loves but positively impact people at community and International level. Ronaldo's recent focus was to build a community hall and install a rain water collection system in Papua New Guinea.

Ronaldo delivered *NRL's Voice Against Violence* and *League in Life* in schools in the Shire and focused on supporting children with disability by participating in *Sharks All Abilities School Program* and the *Skillz4me* program.

Ronaldo shows that one person can make a difference, even at club level. Ronaldo has significantly impacted the Sharks community offering groceries, supplies and support to staff members during the COVID-19 pandemic. He has worked tirelessly to support teammate Fine Kula throughout his brain cancer battle, dedicating his season to him and initiating the #FightforFine campaign.

Ronaldo's own childhood circumstances drove his interest to become an ambassador for *Stepping Stone House* charity, focusing on providing youth with a safe home and educational and employment opportunities.

Ronaldo has a unique passion for the community, he treats every event like it truly matters and treats people as equals. He strives to make community events memorable for all.

Ryan Matterson, Parramatta Eels, Bankstown Bulls

As an ambassador for *NRL's Voice Against Violence* program since 2018, Ryan is a passionate supporter of NRL and club initiatives.

A committed and passionate community leader, Ryan was instrumental in the research and development process of the new Community Strategy at the Eels.

Ryan visited schools in the Parramatta District through *Eels Community Blitz*, attended Ronald McDonald House and Westmead Children's Hospital for Easter and Christmas celebrations. He supported *Giant Steps* community partner and visited farms and schools in Bega. He played a substantial role in the club's bushfire appeal and led *NRL's Beanie for Brain Cancer* campaign at the Eels.

Ryan initiated the partnership between the Eels and the *Heroes with Ability* – sport programs for people with physical and intellectual disabilities. As an ambassador, Ryan maintains weekly contact with the charity, utilising social media to promote their work.

Ryan loves to give back to the community. He interacts with fans on Game Day, attends the Eels Junior Representative Presentation Night, participates in the annual Eels Stakeholder Event, mingles with fans at the Blue and Gold Army Festival, promotes the club's 5050 Charity Raffle and attends school Gala Days.



During the recent NSW lockdowns, Ryan sent Year 12 students from *SEDA*, inspirational messages, created *Mondays with Matto* recordings to engage students in health and wellbeing and partnered with the Salvation Army to support the *Virtual Red Shield Appeal*. Ryan phoned interstate Parramatta members and checked on the welfare of Eels staff.

Ryan's genuine passion for helping youth in the community has inspired him to undertake a Certificate 4 in Youth Work.

Sean Keppie, Manly Warringah Sea Eagles, Narellan Jets

For Sean, playing in the NRL has allowed him to make a significant impact on the field and within the community, particularly in the disability sector.

Sean was an enthusiastic participant in all the club's community-based initiatives throughout 2021. These included the *Sea Eagle School Blitz* which delivered constructive messages on resilience, positivity and encouragement in Northern Beaches Primary Schools, *Sea Eagles Members and Fans events* in Mudgee and Brisbane and local *Junior Rugby League Come and Try Clinics*.

Sean was also an active participant in community initiatives outside of the club, including weekly visits to *Sunnyfield Disability Services*, becoming not only an ambassador for *Heroes with Ability* and *What Ability* but an integral part of their team. Sean was involved in their fundraising events, participated in their musical, sport and art classes and worked as a carer within the *What Ability* organisation in 2021.

Sean initiated ways to maintain his community work during the recent pandemic lockdown, continuing his visits and commitments via Zoom. As a result, the relationships Sean established with the staff, children and parents at *Heroes with Ability* and *Sunnyfield Disability Services* have continued to foster and grow while Sean makes a positive difference to all.

Tom Gilbert, North Queensland Toyota Cowboys, Norths Devils Brisbane

Playing in the NRL allows Tom not only to play the game he loves but also positively impact the youth in the community through education and health programs.

Tom was an enthusiastic participant in Cowboy's Community programs throughout 2021, including *Adopt a School*, *Club Community Day* and *Try for 5!* - a program encouraging students to attend school five days per week. Tom supported the launch of the health initiative, promoting physical activity, called *10 000 Steps Tournament* initiated by Townsville Hospital and Health Service. He also regularly visits the hospital as part of the *Healing through Happiness* program.

Two charities were enriched through Tom's involvement in the club's *Field of Dreams* program. Selected children from childhood cancer charity, *Golden Octopus Foundation*, and foster children focused *Pyjama Foundation* were welcomed by Tom at Game Day with Tom surprising his guests with a welcome video and opportunities for group photographs.



Tom applies the same discipline and strong work ethic he displays on-field, to his off-field commitments. Wanting to broaden his work in the community, Tom, in his own time, worked directly with *Brighter Lives*, the official charity of the Townsville Hospital and Health Service to co-ordinate visits.

Tom works tirelessly, to make a positive impact in his community.