Alysia Regan



Alysia has dedicated over 20 years of her life to supporting her community. She is committed to childhood development and a staunch advocate for the importance of early literacy.

Alysia is the founder and convenor of the local group 'The Literacy Toolkit for Families', which aims to share ideas and encourage parents to develop their children's literacy skills. She is also the founder and convenor of a Dyslexia Support Group where she advocates that children with dyslexia can learn despite having difficulty with reading and spelling.

Amanda Louey



Amanda is a volunteer tutor dedicating her time to teach English through the Melbourne Adult Migrant English Program Volunteer Tutor Scheme. Through this program, she has improved her English language proficiency and provided support to help build confidence and improve settlement outcomes for new arrivals in Kingston.

Amanda also works as a Physiotherapist at Eastern Health, working with people with chronic health conditions. Through her English lessons, Amanda has made a positive impact and helped her students build community relationships.

Amy Salisbury



Amy is the founder of Mordi Sea Dippers, an inclusive community group bringing together a diverse range of people to explore the benefits of cold-water therapy. Through this program, members have built connections and friendships, creating a lasting positive impact on their lives. Amy founded PMDD Wellness Warrior, providing support and coaching to women with Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder. She recently gifted this business to focus on her new passion, Seasoul Sauna, which aims to bring the benefits of traditional sauna and cold-water immersion together in a business focused on connection, self-care, and community. Additionally, Amy mobilizes community resources for volunteer initiatives domestically and internationally.

Carolyn Coxhead



Carolyn is a past president and secretary of the Longbeach Ukulele Club (LUKES) and has been a member and music tutor for the University of the Third Age (U3A) for the past five years.

Carolyn has volunteered in various local and international non-profits and charities throughout her life. During the COVID-19 lockdowns, Carolyn sewed 60 sets of scrubs for donation to nurses in her local area. She has made masks and aprons, donating proceeds to Australian and international charities in Cambodia and Tanzania to improve health and educational outcomes for children.

Eleesha Nesci-Dixon



Eleesha has transitioned from the corporate world as an accountant into a business owner and teacher at Soul Athletic Pilates and Wellness.

As a mother of two children, Eleesha wanted to create a space for parents who felt isolated to be free from judgement. Eleesha has designed, created, and built 5 reformer Pilates studios that offer 230 weekly classes, including mums and bubs and pre and post-natal classes. Eleesha is also a 2XU Triathlon series winner.

Evelyn Townley



Evelyn has led a local patchwork group at Chelsea Heights Community Centre for 23 years. Despite limited funds over the past 6 years, the group has passionately created quilts, teddies, and other items for babies and children in need.

These handcrafted donations, distributed to Neonatal Intensive Care Units across Australia, become cherished heirlooms. Evelyn's enduring commitment serves as an inspiration to the community, where she also supports charities such as Backpack 4 Kids. Additionally, she teaches line dancing. Notably, her leadership has resulted in significant contributions to hospitals nationwide.

Gwyn Nichols



Gwyn is a Director at Community First Responders Australia. She channels her professional life into empowering communities and saving lives.

Focused on breaking barriers to emergency care for diverse groups, she equips them with tailored skills and knowledge. During her time as the Emergency Communications and Marketing Manager, Gwyn's relentless fundraising efforts led to a 400% increase in charity donations. She played a crucial role in COVID-19 initiatives, ensuring responder safety, conducting testing, and fostering community resilience. Recognised with the Public Safety Excellence Award from Zoll, her advocacy extends to promoting public access to defibrillators and education.

Nikki Kaur



Nikki has made a significant impact through community service, philanthropy, and volunteering. She has provided sustenance and support to the homeless, created cultural awareness by teaching Hindu and Sikh cultures to school children, raised funds for Monash Children's Hospital and organised activities for aged care residents.

Notably, she initiated a year-long project delivering food hampers to families with children in Monash Children's Hospital ICU. Nikki's efforts in organising community events and leadership during the pandemic earned her recognition, including The MS Federation of Indian Women Association in Australia (FIWAA) 2023 award.

Kristy Mwaba



Kristy has served as the Mentone Mustangs Basketball Club President for two years. She led and organised the club's first family night, fostering camaraderie and celebrating its 35th birthday. Kristy has played a pivotal role in uniting basketball clubs and enhancing girls' sports experience.

Her dedication extends to community improvement, sponsorship for underserved children, and supporting families in crisis. Her achievements range from successful community events and member engagement to securing grants and forming partnerships, demonstrating her unwavering dedication to community development.

Natalie Charles



Natalie has led Mentone Girls' Grammar School as Principal for the past four years, advocating for girls' education and fostering a positive learning environment. Despite challenges such as the pandemic and changing educational landscapes, Natalie has built an exceptional teaching team, achieved outstanding academic results, and excelled in sports leadership.

As a national advocate for girls-only education, she has tirelessly promoted its benefits.

Natalie's achievements include opening a community-accessible swimming pool and various programs contributing to the local community's health and education.

Panagiota Bollard



Pat is the Chair of Thalassaemia & Sickle Cell Australia (TASCA). With over 30 years of experience as an educator, counsellor, and hypnotherapist, Pat passionately advocates for those affected by genetic blood conditions.
Her personal connection to Thalassaemia, coupled with her dynamic leadership, has led to ground-breaking initiatives, including 'TASCA 4 Kids,' targeting the new generation. Pat mentors, educates, and tirelessly supports patients, exceeding expectations to make a real difference. She has elevated TASCA's profile internationally, received accolades for her achievements, and, in 2023, was nominated for the International Thalassaemia Federation's Board of Directors.

Susan Hyde



Susan is a dedicated leader in the Parish of St Joseph's. As a member of the Legion of Mary, a Catholic lay organisation, she exemplifies passion, support, and empathy. Susan leads the Care and Concern group, reaching out to the lonely and vulnerable, and volunteers with Pregnancy Assistance Frankston, aiding those in need during pregnancy. Actively engaged in the Chelsea and District Inter-Church Council, she organises community events, demonstrating her commitment to fostering connections.

Susan Fowler



Susan has been a vital member of Chelsea Probus for over 8 years as President and Vice President. Beyond her club involvement, Susan has dedicated 5 years as a registered volunteer at the Chelsea Activity Hub, supporting and organising activities for attendees. She serves as the key program volunteer for Cards and Canasta.

She leads the Chatty Café program and Chelsea Probus activities, fostering social connections and reducing isolation. Susan's commitment goes beyond the ordinary, as she provides transportation, checks on the well-being of others, and maintains a cheerful and supportive presence.

Uma Krithika Muralitharan



Uma is committed to community enhancement through her organisation, KRITHA INC Community Service. Her wide-ranging initiatives, including fitness, yoga, meditation, camping, and language instruction, contribute to local families' social and emotional well-being. Uma has been running a weekly hiking club, benefitting over 150 people, with attendees selected as volunteers to guide Parks Victoria Walks. Uma addresses critical issues, supporting victims of family violence and underprivileged children in education while also empowering small businesses.

Vera Rebbechi



Vera has dedicated 13 years to supporting retirees in the community through her involvement with the Dingley Central Probus Club. As the sole editor of the monthly newsletter, she keeps 140 members informed, fostering club growth. During COVID-19, her creative additions sustained the interest of members.

Vera's initiatives, like Christmas cards and calendars, bring joy and commemorate various club activities. Vera's exemplary newsletter sets a model for other Probus Clubs, showcasing her positive community impact.

Hannah Walder



Hannah has served as the Club Secretary for Chelsea FC for four years, demonstrating unwavering dedication to essential club operations. Her volunteer work encompasses overseeing club emails, running the Youth Referee Programme for juniors, and collaborating with Football Victoria on fixtures and referee allocations. Despite being a mother of three, she consistently ensures the seamless functioning of the club's 654 players and undertakes interim roles when needed.

Having moved from the UK in 2019, Hannah's steadfast commitment during the pandemic has transformed the club into her second home, evoking gratitude and admiration.

Kerrie Waworis



Kerrie is a coach at the Peninsula Dragonfly's Dragonboat Club. Her motivational leadership propelled her crew to victory at the 2023 Australian Championships, a testament to her ability to guide members toward collaborative success.

Her infectious passion has driven the Club's recent 300% membership surge. At 66, she is a role model for women over 40 in sports. Kerrie's dedication to dragon-boating was recently recognised by her appointment as President of Dragon Boat Victoria and being awarded the sport's Dragon Spirit Award.

Melissa Cahill

Melissa embodies community spirit and commitment through her 32-year journey at a Bonbeach Dance School. Starting as a student, she became a dedicated teacher and is now the Principal and Owner. Melissa fosters a sense of community, instils commitment, and encourages success among Kingston's women and girls.

As Principal, she prioritizes students' needs over profit, reducing fees and providing support for competitions. Melissa's dedication extends beyond dance, as she has excelled in management, owned Jim's Mowing franchises, and currently owns Dance Extreme Performing Arts.

Rachel Partinson



Rachel has dedicated 18 years to entertaining and educating pre-schoolers through live music, showcasing her talents as a musician, songwriter, and performer. Rachel engages children and adults with interactive and exciting experiences, contributing significantly to the community. She's performed at the St Kilda Festival and Moomba, entertained at aged-care homes and provided music education in local kindergartens.

Despite overcoming health challenges, including epilepsy and subsequent brain surgery, her resilience shines through. Rachel has received recognition in song writing competitions and earned awards for live entertainment. Her music is played extensively, reaching a broad audience.

Dr Carolyn Beaumont



Carolyn embodies entrepreneurial spirit and innovation, transitioning from a piano teacher to a medical doctor and establishing ground-breaking initiatives in tobacco harm reduction. Carolyn founded 'MedicalNicotine' in 2020, and in 2023 she launched 'SmokerHealth Telehealth,' a national service providing preventive care for smokers, especially in disadvantaged areas. Carolyn advocates for reducing smoking harm and pioneers efforts to extend the research and education initiative 'RAISE Australia', which aims to establish an Indigenous community pilot program to reduce smoking inequity. Her achievements span international presentations, media contributions, and educational initiatives for schools and health professionals.

Rebecca Monforte



Rebecca has swiftly become a driving force for local small businesses. Launching Silver Lioness for marketing services, she acquired Kingston Collective, a networking hub connecting small businesses through collaboration, education, and events. Rebecca's altruistic approach extends to supporting the Parkdale Traders Association amid railway works and devising grassroots marketing plans to help empower locals in business.

Motivating small business owners with her authentic leadership, Rebecca exemplifies resilience and passion in the community as an inspirational, independent Mum and RMIT Degree holder.

Dr Schwetha Shankar



Shwetha, a seasoned leader in not-for-profit and multicultural sectors, is a prominent figure on ZondraTv, ROKU, AmazonFire TV, and Apple TV. Her diverse projects drive impactful change, from leadership programs to health initiatives.

Leveraging sales expertise and mental health advocacy, she collaborates with Bayley House and the Women's Federation for World Peace. Hosting 'Our Everyday Heroes,' Shwetha showcases inspiring stories. With an extensive leadership background and international experience, she is committed to developing highly skilled teams and passionately contributing to positive change.

Odri Fernandes



As an award-winning Business Coach, Odri empowers local business owners through transformative coaching. With 12 years of corporate experience, she champions workplace development and culture building.

Leading Creativ Vision Coaching, Odri excels in implementing Disruptive Leadership - Values Based Culture Framework. Committed to authentic leadership, she collaborates with organizations like Bayley House, supports Destiny Rescue, and is a proud member of the Global Women's Peace Network (GWPN), guiding individuals on impactful journeys in both professional and personal spheres.

Ash McCarthy



Ashlee is an inspiring Science Teacher at Edithvale Primary. She excites students about science by connecting curriculum concepts to students' own interests. Ashlee is passionate about inclusivity and being a positive role model for her students. Ashlee enjoys creating educational video clips and resources and running hands-on experiments to support student engagement.

Her achievements include involvement in The Primary Mathematics and Science Specialists initiative and participation in a Monash University documentary series that highlighted the benefits of student learning through conceptual play worlds.

Dr Dolly Daou



Dolly leverages her 23 years of international experience to connect higher education, industry, and government. She is fluent in English, French, and Arabic and adds a cross-cultural perspective to her multi-disciplinary expertise.

Dolly's approach combines design, science, and business, all rooted in sustainable practices. She has contributed to global sustainability projects and mentored high school and higher education students.

Her impactful, eco-economical projects in interior architecture and food management have earned her awards, including the Al-Safeer Congress Ambassador Award.

Dr Kate Robb



Kate is the Executive Director and Head of Research at the Marine Mammal Foundation, a global leader in marine conservation renowned for discovering and naming the Burrunan Dolphin. Her impactful contributions include legislative development, listing the Burrunan Dolphin as 'Critically Endangered,' and educating communities through the award-winning Marine Litter Project. With over 17 years of dolphin research, a Ph.D. in Genetics, and numerous scientific publications, she mentors future marine scientists through school programs and the Marine Champions initiative. Kate's influence extends globally, engaging over 50,000 individuals, and she has collaborated with major media outlets, including BBC and National Geographic.

Nicola Waldron



Nicola is a marine and coastal science professional dedicated to ocean and environmental sustainability. As an ambassador for the future of oceans, she's part of the Homeward Bound leadership initiative, voyaging to Antarctica with a commitment to empower women in STEMM. With 20 years of experience, Nicola actively contributes to the science-policy interface, shaping marine and coastal policies.

Her mission extends to raising awareness through underwater photography and aiming for sustainable outcomes in Victoria's environment. Nicola's leadership journey inspires the next generation, emphasising diversity for effective climate change solution.

Nimita Bagadia



Nimita has demonstrated excellence throughout her decade long tenure at Telstra. Beginning as a graduate engineer, Nimita actively addressed gender biases and became a champion for diversity and inclusion.

Her project management skills and contributions to energy efficiency and water billing initiatives garnered recognition, earning her prestigious awards. Nimita extends her impact through motivational speaking, mentoring programs, and community engagement, emphasizing her commitment to inspiring others and fostering positive change in STEM.

Women of the Year | Nominee

Sophie Smith



Sophie, Grand Yarra's co-director and lead graphic designer, excels in future mobility and vehicle design branding. In a male-dominated industry, she champions forward-thinking, environmentally conscious design.

Contributing to aesthetic elements for ground-breaking projects like the ammonia-powered semi-truck by AMOGY (USA). Her creative impact extends to the celebrated Nissan Warrior special edition's Navara and Patrol, featuring the iconic 'mountain range' decal and 'Warrior' branding for Premcar, and designs for Mobius Motors (Kenya), resulting in commercial success and accolades.

Sophie's collaborative approach, innovative designs and passion for sustainability drive positive change and highlight women's pivotal role in shaping the future.