

PILBARA COMMUNITY SERVICES EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Statement

HON PETER FOSTER (Mining and Pastoral) [10.10 pm]: On Saturday, 19 June, I had the pleasure of attending the third annual Pilbara Community Services Excellence Awards in Karratha at the Red Earth Arts Precinct with the member for Pilbara. The event was organised by Pilbara for Purpose Inc, which was able to host the event this year after pausing it in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pilbara for Purpose is a peak membership board for the for-purpose sector in the Pilbara and aims to support innovation and collaboration in the delivery of community services by connecting people and organisations, celebrating and promoting success, advocating and aligning solutions, and providing information and support services. The Pilbara Community Services Excellence Awards forms part of its work. This year's event was promoted by organisers as a celebration of the resilience, creativity and leadership of individuals and organisations who work in the community services sector in the Pilbara. Several awards were bestowed on organisations both large and small, and others were reserved for individuals who have made remarkable contributions to the sector. Thirty-nine organisations and 11 individuals were nominated for the awards.

The Impact Award that recognises organisations in the field of collaboration, innovative thinking, recovery and response, determination and spirit was won this year by Blue Beanie Projects in the small organisation category for its work with youth suicide reduction. According to one judge, these youth would have otherwise fallen through the cracks of a system in which they do not quite fit. Instead of letting this happen, this amazing organisation has now turned them into positive role models and set their feet firmly on the path to self-confidence and positive change in their lives.

The Impact Award in the medium to large category went to Robe River Aboriginal Corporation, an organisation commended for delivering services for young people needing support, such as education and food relief, while also enabling young people to have a leadership role in the wider community.

The Innovation Award celebrates out-of-the-box ideas and creative thinking by an organisation that has led to improved programs, services and initiatives across the region. This year the award in the small organisation category went to Val and Kathy's Crafty Kitchen, which fosters a welcoming and inclusive place for locals to connect over a cup of coffee and to participate in social and crafting activities.

In the medium to large organisation category, the Innovation Award was jointly awarded to Nintirri Centre, a local not-for-profit organisation based in my home town of Tom Price, which successfully adapted many of its programs during the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown so that essential services would still be delivered to people who needed them the most, and to the Youth Involvement Council for its meditation and mindfulness program that is aimed at at-risk youth in Port and South Hedland.

The Partnership Award, which recognises organisations that have found new and innovative ways of working together across the sector, leading to better services, programs or initiatives, went to Pilbara Community Services Ltd in the small organisation category, for its work in creating a better future for ex-offenders. It begins its work in the prison system and provides vital continuity by continuing it on the outside. In the medium to large category, the Partnership Award was won by the Pilbara Aboriginal Health Alliance, which was formed recently on 23 June 2019. Three Pilbara Aboriginal medical services joined together to become one strong voice for the better health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Pilbara.

The Young Champion of the Year Award is given for positive achievements of our Pilbara youth under the age of 26 and was this year won by Kaydn Barrow, who is only eight years of age and suffers from dyslexia, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. Kaydn is leading an entrepreneur program called "She'll be right", making eggshell powder for gardens and donating half of his proceeds to the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

The Community Hero of the Year Award acknowledges the contributions of those who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to bring about positive change in their community, inspiring others in their sector. This year it was awarded to David Heathwood. For over 20 years, David has been supporting, leading and managing various youth and community activities and events through his continual hard work and dedication.

The Community Spirit (Volunteer) of the Year Award recognises the extraordinary work done by volunteers within the Pilbara for Purpose sector in overcoming adversity and demonstrating community spirit. It was won by Val Walker and Kathy Brooker, the founders of Val and Kathy's Crafty Kitchen, which is based in Roebourne.

The Progressive Leadership Award is given to an organisation or individual that has set an example for the community in how to lead through a period of change by challenging traditional leadership models. This year, it was awarded to the Ngarliyarndu Bindirri Aboriginal Corporation, Roebourne's oldest Aboriginal corporation, which is proudly

100 per cent Aboriginal owned and operated. Ngarliyarndu Bindirri empowers Aboriginal people, providing local solutions for local people.

Finally, the People's Choice Award, which was voted on by the entire Pilbara community, was this year awarded to Pilbara Community Services Ltd for its important work in ensuring a collaborative, accessible and responsive system of services and supports to ex-offenders across the Pilbara.

I am very proud to have been involved with several different community organisations as a volunteer, and I have seen firsthand the impact of a strong community sector on people's lives. Those organisations are the glue that binds our regional towns together and many of us benefit from the outstanding work they do.

I was particularly proud to see that the Tom Price Youth Support Association was nominated for the Partnership Award in the small organisation category for its work during the COVID-19 pandemic, including running online programs and games for youth to stay connected during lockdowns, coordinating foodbank and other welfare and justice services for those who found themselves suddenly without work or stranded in town due to the border closures and helping to keep families connected with the assistance of mobile phones.

I congratulate all the recipients and nominees for their contributions and achievements, and the organisation Pilbara for Purpose for founding and organising this great event. Each nominee and recipient is an inspiration to the sector they represent. They have all done their communities proud. I also thank the many sponsors who contributed financially to the event and local Roebourne musician Angus Smith for his stories and songs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has seriously tested the Pilbara community services sector, as it has tested us all. It was an honour to meet the people whose resilience, inventiveness and sheer hard work have made such a difference to so many lives during the toughest of times.

House adjourned at 10.18 pm
