



NEWSDESK, EDITORS, COS, SOCIAL AFFAIRS

AUSTRALIA'S COMMUNITY IDOL FINALISTS ANNOUNCED

EAST KIMBERLEY INDIGENOUS GROUP, RURAL YOUTH CHALLENGING HOMOPHOBIA & REFUGEE SUPPORT GROUP MAKE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY IDOL FINAL

The three finalists for **Australia's Community Idol 2006** were announced today along with 10 commendations. The competition is open to Australia's 700,000 community groups and celebrates the best of the best – but not before getting them to compete for the honour.

"We celebrate wannabe pop stars in Australian Idol," says Rhonda Galbally, CEO of Our Community, the award organiser. "So let's celebrate the invaluable work of our community groups."

Selected from over 300 entries, the three finalists all come from regional or remote **Western Australia, New South Wales** and **Victoria**.

1. Way Out Rural Youth & Sexual Diversity Project based in Kyneton, Victoria is a group of young people raising awareness on sexual diversity and homophobia. It works with schools and local health professionals. It prides itself on being youth-driven and open to gay and straight members of the community. <http://www.wayout.org.au/>

2. Sanctuary For Refugees based in Coffs Harbour, NSW sponsors, welcomes and settles refugees accepted under Australia's unfunded Humanitarian Program. It provides interest-free travel loans which are then repaid by refugees to help others in the same situation. Sanctuary's work has inspired 10 new community groups across Australia and receives no Government funding. <http://www.sanctuaryrefugeefoundation.org/>

3. Wunan Foundation, East Kimberley, WA. Wunan supports training, jobs and related activities to the 5000-strong Indigenous community in a region as big as Victoria. It creates sustainable businesses itself, involving local Aboriginal people as well as providing management and governance support to other Indigenous groups to help them be more effective and sustainable in serving their local communities. <http://www.wunan.org.au/>

The three finalists will play off on the opening day of the **Communities In Control Conference** in Melbourne June 19. As with *other* Idol competitions, competitors will have to strut their stuff in front of 1300 conference goers from across the country which will then vote for the winner. **AFL Legend Kevin Sheedy**, coach of Essendon will present the winner with \$3000 from Westpac, the Idol trophy, a range of Our Community services and publications along with priceless Community Idol status.

"Singing and dancing is all fine and well," says Ms Galbally. "But try achieving what these groups do day in, day out on the smell of an oily rag. That's true-dinks idol-worthy."

**INTERVIEWS WITH FINALISTS & RHONDA GALBALLY AVAILABLE VIA PUBLICIST
BRETT DE HOEDT OF HOOTVILLE COMMUNICATIONS. 03 9510 0848 / 0414 713 802.**

The second Australian Community Idol competition is part of the Communities In Control Conference held at Melbourne's Moonee Valley Racecourse June 19 and 20. It is the biggest community sector event of 2006. For more on the Communities In Control Conference visit:

http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/control/control_main.jsp