

## **BRAVERY MEDAL**

### **Mr Daniel ABOUCHROUCHE, NSW**

On the night of 15 June 2008, Mr Abouchrouche intervened to prevent an armed robbery at a supermarket at Annandale, New South Wales.

A man dressed in jeans, and masked with a scarf, hooded jacket and sunglasses entered a supermarket owned by Mr Abouchrouche's parents. Mr Abouchrouche was suspicious and followed him further into the shop before ordering him to leave. The man then drew a gun and demanded cash from the shop assistant. Mr Abouchrouche jumped between the offender and the counter to protect others in the store and to block the man's access to the cash registers. The gunman aimed his weapon at Mr Abouchrouche, threatening to shoot if he didn't stand aside. Despite the ultimatum, Mr Abouchrouche maintained his ground, believing he might be able to manoeuvre the offender out of the shop. As he did so, the armed robber moved backwards towards the exit and attempted to run, tripping on a bucket of flowers. As Mr Abouchrouche tried to grab the offender, again he was threatened, the weapon pointed towards him at point blank range. The trigger was pulled but the gun didn't fire. In the confusion the offender collided with a bus bench and fell to the ground. Mr Abouchrouche grabbed him as he stood up. Although the offender continued trying to fire the gun, Mr Abouchrouche, his father and a co-worker were able to overpower him and bring him to the ground. Off-duty police officers helped detain the offender until uniformed police arrived to arrest him.

By his actions, Mr Abouchrouche displayed considerable bravery.

### **Mr Ian Robert ARKLEY, Ashfield NSW 2131**

On the morning of 25 April 2009, Mr Arkley rescued people from a burning house at Chippendale, New South Wales.

Mr Arkley, an off-duty fire fighter, rushed to the scene of a fire in a neighbouring property. Flames and smoke were rising from a terrace house as another neighbour repeatedly banged on the front door to try to alert anyone inside. When Mr Arkley arrived he gained access to the building by kicking in the door. Together he and his neighbour made their way into the house to search for occupants. Unfamiliar with the layout of the building and confronted by thick black smoke the two men entered the hallway first, and then a front bedroom, where they found a man. They grabbed him around the shoulders and dragged him out of the house to safety. Learning there were others still inside, Mr Arkley entered the house again. Despite the poor visibility he and another man moved further into the house as the fire intensified. Hearing footsteps from the stairwell, the two located a man and a woman trying to escape and were able to guide them through the building to safety before returning once more to check for any remaining people. Mr Arkley's companion found a fourth person, a disoriented man stumbling about in the smoke who was also able to be led out to safety. As a result of the rescuers' efforts, the house was cleared and no one was injured by the fire.

By his actions, Mr Arkley displayed considerable bravery.

## **BRAVERY MEDAL**

### **Mr Richard Montague BATTERSBY, NSW**

Details not released at the request of Mr Battersby.

### **Mr Michael Bruce BRIGGS, 3 Matheson Street, West Tamworth NSW 2340**

Details not released at the request of Mr Briggs.

### **Mr Gordon BROCK, Newee Creek NSW 2447**

On the night of 3 June 2008, Mr Brock rescued a woman from a submerged vehicle at Newee Creek, Nambucca Heads, New South Wales.

During a severe storm, Mr Brock spotted headlights moving in a peculiar circular motion in the distance. He ran towards a nearby bridge and saw that a car had been swept into the creek. Mr Brock asked another passerby to call police as he shone his torch at the car. He could hear a woman calling for help, trapped inside the vehicle, and saw her poking her hand through a window. Mr Brock strode into the creek without any protective or rescue gear, and swam out to the victim's car. He hung on to the back of the vehicle as the bonnet was entirely submerged. Mr Brock made his way around the front of the car to retrieve the driver, at one point relying on the windscreen wipers as his only anchor. He reassured the woman and encouraged her to climb through a window onto the roof of the car. As Mr Brock told her to jump up onto his shoulders he lost his grip and submerged. The victim was panicking as Mr Brock grabbed onto a mudguard for leverage and edged his way around and away from vehicle, bringing the woman back to the safety of dry ground.

By his actions, Mr Brock displayed considerable bravery.

### **Miss Natalie Cherie DOVE, Burleigh Heads Qld 4220**

On the afternoon of 16 September 2008, Miss Dove protected students from youths armed with a knife at Marymount Catholic College, Burleigh Heads, Queensland.

Miss Dove, a teacher at the college, was rostered for lunchtime playground duty when she noticed a large body of students moving towards a corner of the college's main oval. She conferred with another teacher and quickly pushed her way through the students where she saw five young males, who were not students of the college, gathered together. One of the offenders had grabbed a student and had a knife pointed at his head. Two other offenders were punching a second student. Fearing for their safety in a volatile and unpredictable situation, Miss Dove alone took responsibility. She moved forward and grabbed one of the students, pulling him away from the armed offender. Standing her ground, she confronted the attacker, defiantly ordering him and his companions to leave the school grounds. Simultaneously Miss Dove instructed the large body of onlooking students to remove themselves from the scene, signalling them to move away from danger. As she tried to contain the situation by herself, she was joined by two visiting tradesmen whose presence also helped convince the offenders to leave the school grounds.

By her actions, Miss Dove displayed considerable bravery.

## **BRAVERY MEDAL**

### **Ms Sachelle Rosalie DRAPER, Wannanup WA 6210**

On the night of 13 October 2007, Ms Draper rescued two men from drowning at Avalon Bay, Falcon, Western Australia.

During a visit to her parents' house which overlooks Avalon Bay, Ms Draper heard screams for help coming from the direction of the ocean. She ran to the boardwalk but in very poor light wasn't able to see anyone, so made her way through vegetation, out on to the beach and to the water's edge where she called out for a response. She saw the outline of a head in the water about 40 metres from shore. Although Ms Draper had only limited swimming ability, she jumped into the water and located the victim. The man was struggling to keep afloat as she grabbed him by the hand and instructed him to hold on to her shoulders. With considerable effort Ms Draper dragged the man back to shore. On the beach the victim struggled for breath, telling Ms Draper that his brother and a friend were still in the water near their capsized boat. Sapped of energy and fearful for her own safety, Ms Draper nevertheless returned to the sea and swam in darkness to a reef some 40 metres off shore. In waist-high water she sighted two men further out. Ms Draper swam to the men, one of them in grave trouble barely able to stay afloat. Grabbing him by the shoulders, she swam the victim back to the reef where the group was able to rest for a short while. Ms Draper and the other man linked arms with the victim and, together, swam him back to the beach to wait for paramedics.

By her actions, Ms Draper displayed considerable bravery.

### **Mr James Marius GRIFFIS, 6/32 Anzac Parade, Teralba NSW 2284**

On the morning of 17 June 2008, Mr Griffis rescued a man from being stabbed at Teralba, New South Wales.

Mr Griffis was at home and could hear the sounds of a disturbance coming from another unit in his complex. He had heard similar noises in the past but on this occasion he believed items were being smashed and thrown around. He went to investigate and found two of his neighbours wrestling in the hallway. Both men were covered in blood, and one of them yelled that he had been seriously stabbed as he continued to struggle with his attacker. Fearing for the victim's life Mr Griffis lunged at the attacker, grabbed him and locked his wrist while yelling at the victim to get free. While restraining the offender, Mr Griffis demanded that he let go of the knife. The attacker at first complied, but as Mr Griffis attempted to remove the weapon, the offender grabbed the knife. Mr Griffis immediately applied pressure to the man, disarmed him and retrieved the weapon. He informed police about the incident and the whereabouts of the offender who was then arrested.

By his actions, Mr Griffis displayed considerable bravery.

## **BRAVERY MEDAL**

### **Mr Robert Arthur LAURIE, Newborough Vic 3825**

On 6 January 2009, Mr Laurie rescued a woman trapped under a capsized catamaran on Port Phillip Bay, Victoria.

Mr Laurie was skippering his catamaran back through Port Phillip Heads with his wife and friends on board. In very choppy conditions the vessel rode the shoulder of a wave but it fell away, dropping the catamaran into a trough where the bow was hit by a water spike. Another wave hit the rear quarter flipping the vessel. In heavy seas, Mr Laurie surfaced from underneath the catamaran and assisted a friend to the relative safety of a float. In succession Mr Laurie swam his wife and another friend to the float, learning then that the fourth passenger was trapped in an air pocket underneath the upturned vessel. Seizing some diving gear which had floated by, Mr Laurie dived down and up into the darkened and confined space of the catamaran where he untangled his friend from rope and assisted her with spare diving gear. Concerned about diminishing air supply, Mr Laurie tried to coax her to dive down and out from the vessel. A couple of attempts were made but she was anxious and unwilling to desert the temporary safety of the air pocket. Water police arrived at the scene and established contact with Mr Laurie through the upturned hull and devised an escape plan. In very unstable conditions and the catamaran lurching in the ocean, Mr Laurie pushed his friend down and away where a waiting officer grabbed the exhausted victim and swam her to the safety of the police vessel.

By his actions, Mr Laurie displayed considerable bravery.

### **Mr Geoffrey Robin MILLS, PO Box 419, Port Hedland WA 6721**

On the morning of 14 June 2008, Mr Mills rescued two men after their trucks were caught in floods near Marble Bar, Western Australia.

Three road trains were approaching a crossing on the Nullagine River some distance from Marble Bar. Water had risen quickly, flowing rapidly across the road. In the darkness, the flooding was not immediately apparent as the first two trucks ploughed into the water, unable to pull up in time because of their momentum. The third road train struck the rear of the second and was prevented from also plunging into the waters, enabling the driver to escape. Mr Mills and his father answered a call from police, offering the use of a mustering helicopter and a jet ski to rescue the drivers of the submerged rigs. Despite the considerable dangers posed by the fast rushing waters, Mr Mills manoeuvred his jet ski out to the submerged trucks, handing a life vest to one of the victims before helping him climb aboard. As Mr Mills attempted to motor through the rushing water, his passenger fell from the ski. While the victim floundered, Mr Mills circled, finding a spot where he could pull the man onboard and motor him to safety. Mr Mills then turned back out into the roughest section of the river, positioning the jet ski up against the second trailer which lay on its side, submerged. He was then able to hand a vest to the second driver and help him onto the ski. However the force and volume of turbulent water rolled the ski, threatening to dump the men into the fast moving current. Fortunately, Mr Mills was able to regain control and transport the driver safely back to shore.

By his actions, Mr Mills displayed considerable bravery.

## **BRAVERY MEDAL**

### **Mr Eruore Ariyeonoga OBOIDHOGO, Melton South Vic 3338**

On the morning of 5 September 2008, Mr Oboidhogo stopped a woman from setting fire to herself and a petrol station at Melton, Victoria.

Mr Oboidhogo was visiting a service station unaware that inside a woman suffering a psychotic episode had poured petrol onto the floor and over the counter. Holding a petrol can in one hand and a cigarette lighter in the other, she menaced the operator, screaming that would was about to blow up the station. Several customers fled from inside while the attendant was left to face the situation alone. Mr Oboidhogo who had been about to leave the station, heard the woman screaming and threatening to ignite the fuel. He went back into the store and attempted to grab the lighter from the woman's hand. A struggle ensued as the offender pulled violently at Mr Oboidhogo's hair, and eventually they both fell to the ground. Mr Oboidhogo successfully manoeuvred the struggle away from the store while continuing to grapple with the woman to remove the lighter. She stepped up her attack on Mr Oboidhogo, wrenching at his hair as she repeatedly kicked and punched him. However he was able to overpower the woman and secure her with one hand on her back as he phoned for help on his mobile phone, detaining the offender until police arrived at the scene minutes later.

By his actions, Mr Oboidhogo displayed considerable bravery.

### **Mr Nathan RAO, 14 Urquhart Street, Northcote Vic 3070**

On the morning of 1 October 2006, Mr Rao's actions were responsible for the safe escape of three people from a burning boarding house at Brunswick, Victoria.

Mr Rao was awoken by the sound of a smoke alarm in the boarding house where he lived. He raced to the communal kitchen to check whether other residents had been alerted, and was confronted by thick smoke billowing through the corridors. Barely able to see, Mr Rao crouched down on the floor, crawling past each of the other four residents' rooms in turn, screaming out their names and banging on doors to raise the alarm. Unable to hear any noise from two of his neighbours, Mr Rao kicked open a door to confirm for himself that one of them was not home. The outside door handle to the other tenant's room was locked and was so hot that it was impossible to operate. Mr Rao could hear noise developing in the room, and as he peered underneath the door he could see a strong, orange glow as the fire grew in intensity. The smoke was now so thick and visibility negligible that Mr Rao was forced to escape the building. Despite the confusion and the horrifying conditions, Mr Rao remained resolute in helping his neighbours. As a result, four people including a seven year old boy were all able to escape the burning building. Sadly, a young woman and her fiancée perished in the fire.

By his actions, Mr Rao displayed considerable bravery.

## **BRAVERY MEDAL**

### **Mr Helman ROJAS-FORT, Chippendale NSW 2008**

On the morning of 25 April 2009, Mr Rojas-Fort rescued people from a burning house at Chippendale, New South Wales.

Mr Rojas-Fort heard the loud crackling of fire from a terrace house adjacent to his home, and asked his wife to call emergency services. Flames and smoke were rising from the building as he repeatedly banged on the neighbour's door. Unable to raise a response, Mr Rojas-Fort quickly alerted neighbours in adjacent houses. He returned to the terrace and repeated his attempts to stir the occupants. An off-duty fire fighter joined him and was able to kick in the front door. The two men entered the hallway, immediately confronted by thick black smoke. Mr Rojas-Fort and his co-rescuer moved to a front bedroom, finding a victim and dragging him outside to safety. Learning there were others still trapped, Mr Rojas-Fort and the off-duty fire fighter headed back into the house. Despite the poor visibility they moved further into the house as the fire intensified. Hearing footsteps from the stairwell, Mr Rojas-Fort located a man and a woman trying to escape and guided them through the house to safety before returning to check for remaining victims. Mr Rojas-Fort found a fourth person, disoriented and stumbling about in the smoke. He grabbed the man and led him through the burning house to safety. As a result of the rescuers' efforts, no one was injured in the fire.

By his actions, Mr Rojas-Fort displayed considerable bravery.

### **Mr Simon Victor TANTI, Sunbury Vic 3429**

On the morning of 22 December 2007, Mr Tanti rescued a child from a burning house at Sunbury, Victoria.

Mr Tanti was awoken by his neighbours' screams as windows exploded and their house became engulfed in fire. Mr Tanti learnt that three children were trapped inside. He quickly grabbed a garden rake and used it to smash in a front bedroom window which immediately produced a fireball that roared through the opening. As the flare subsided Mr Tanti climbed halfway into the house. Thick smoke created zero visibility, and such was the intensity of the flames and heat, that Mr Tanti was restricted in his movements. Without any protection and using the rake as a probe, Mr Tanti scoured the area as best he could, and by touch was able to find a three year old girl. Mr Tanti gathered up the child and handed her through the window to her mother. He instructed her to immediately douse the child with water from a garden hose, before running to the back of the house to search for the two remaining children. However he was forced to retreat because of the ferocity of the fire. Sadly, two young boys were not able to be rescued and died in the fire.

By his actions, Mr Tanti displayed considerable bravery.