



Dr Craig Challen SC OAM
Australian of the Year 2019

In July 2018, respected cave diver and retired vet Craig Challen was about to go on a caving holiday in the Nullarbor Plains, when he was called to help on a rescue mission in Thailand. Craig was part of the international team that successfully rescued 12 boys and their coach from a flooded cave in Chiang Rai, Thailand.

Craig, who has dived some of Australia's deepest wrecks and has set depth records in diving, was chosen for the mission based on his technical expertise. Working 10 to 12 hours a day in extremely dangerous conditions, Craig repeatedly risked his life as the children were swum, one-by-one, through the dark and narrow flooded caves.

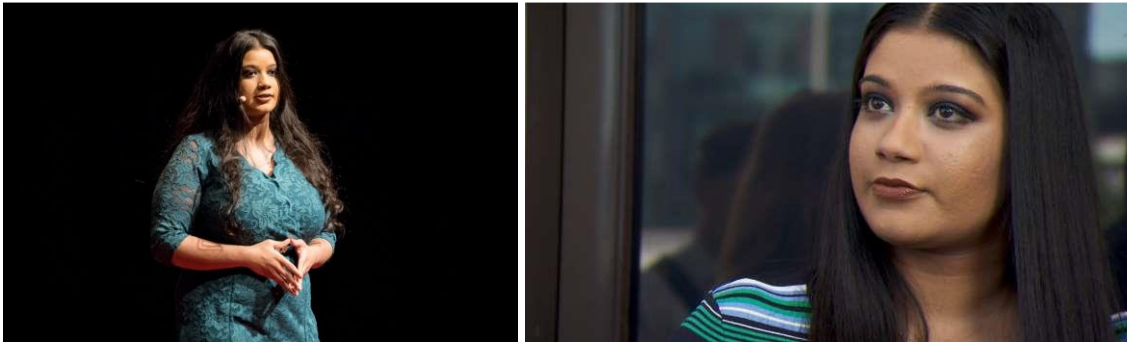
Despite admitting he initially thought the rescue would be too difficult to accomplish, he played a leading role in this successful and heroic mission. Dr Challen was awarded the Star of Courage for his unwavering and selfless bravery following the successful rescue of the trapped soccer team.

Together with his dive partner Richard Harris, Craig was named as the 2019 Australian of the Year.

THE events of the Thailand cave rescue captured the world and could well be plucked from a Hollywood script — they now appear destined for one — so it is fitting that Craig Challen, a former veterinary surgeon, boasts the resume of a modern-day G.I. Joe.

He flies planes and helicopters. He climbs mountains. He jumps out of planes. He explores underwater caves. He saves animals and, as of July 2018, he rescues kids.

But cave diving, piloting a helicopter and packing a parachute are not skills acquired during a lazy Sunday afternoon. They take practice and commitment and the resolve to get started in the first place.



Noelle Martin

WA Young Australian of the Year 2019

At the age of 18, Noelle Martin, now aged 24, discovered that sexual predators had stolen images of her from social media, editing them onto pornographic images and videos, adding her name and details of where she lived. The feminist, law graduate and activist has courageously taken action, helping provide avenues for justice for victims of image-based sexual abuse.

Despite the abuse escalating after she shared her experience publicly and being told that nothing could be done about the images, Noelle continued to speak out. Her actions were a major factor in new laws being introduced and passed in New South Wales in 2017, in 2018 at the Commonwealth level and in Western Australia, making it a criminal offence to distribute non-consensual intimate images.

An inspiring and courageous speaker and expert on image-based sexual abuse, Noelle regularly speaks to the media, and travels the country as a TEDx speaker, educating people on the harmful impacts of this type of abuse.

Being in the spotlight was the last thing Noelle Martin wanted when she became a victim of revenge porn, but the Nedlands activist used her situation to make a change for good.

Ms Martin fought to criminalise image-based sexual abuse in Australia after she discovered altered images from her social media accounts were turned into pornography.

It took her more than three years to speak out about her abuse, which started when she was 17. "There was no help for me in the system and essentially I had to deal with it myself," she said.

"I wanted to speak out because I wanted to raise awareness about what was going on because I wasn't the only one it was happening to."

In June, laws were passed making it an offence to distribute non-consensual intimate images. The 2019 WA Young Australian of the Year said the ordeal changed her but she refused to let it destroy her.