

## **NESA AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE 2023**

### **ACHIEVER OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

#### **JOSEPH PALEY**

Joseph Paley found himself unemployed and sleeping rough, having been released from prison and estranged from his support network. After one freezing night huddled up next to a wall at a train station, Joseph headed to the nearest Workskil Australia office, remembering their support while he was in prison. While Joseph was full of self-doubt, his determination to change his life was clear. Within 24 hours, Joseph was connected to temporary accommodation, equipped with a new set of clothes, a resume and an interview with a supportive employer to get him off the street as soon as possible. While committing his all to this casual job, Joseph continued his training and development with Workskil Australia gaining several tickets and licenses, eventually earning a permanent role as a commercial building roofer. Today, Joseph's life is dramatically different – he has a car, has moved from shared housing into a stable home and he loves coming home knowing he has done a good days work. He feels respected and valued by his employer and workmates. Joseph says he is in the best financial, physical and mental position of his life and, with prospects for promotion, his future is bright.

#### **NATHAN BELL**

Emerging from a challenging and toxic work environment, Nathan's early experiences in the workforce tested his resilience and determination, though his ambition for independence and success remained unwavering. With the backing of his loved ones and the team at Sureway Employment and Training Wangaratta, Nathan embarked on a transformative journey of self-improvement and development. From the age of 14, Nathan's innate curiosity led him to explore the world of digital tools and techniques. Using YouTube tutorials, he built his skills in video creation and editing, a hobby that was eventually to become his springboard to employment. Today, as an integral member of Edge FM, Nathan seamlessly integrates the skills he honed as a teenager with state-of-the-art equipment, producing high-quality videos for businesses and clients. Just seven months after joining Edge FM, Nathan's dedication and expertise were recognized by the industry, earning him an ACRA for 'Best Newcomer Off Air' in 2022. His journey underscores the power of early passions evolving into professional triumphs.

## **THOMAS WRIGHT**

Thomas Wright was born into the Dunghutti community in Kempsey, regional New South Wales as part of a loving, close-knit family that gave him a sense of belonging. Thomas had ambition and committed to education and training in the hope of a career in landscaping, though fruitless job searches left him disillusioned. Following several tragedies in his life, Thomas fell into a destructive cycle for 12 years, straining his relationships with loved ones and putting him on the wrong side of the law several times. Finally, Thomas made the brave decision to break free and underwent rehabilitation. Thomas later joined a Maritime Operations program through his employment services provider Asuria. The program is a joint collaboration of Asuria, Babana Aboriginal Men's Group, and Tribal Warrior Aboriginal Corporation. Thomas' impeccable punctuality and reliability, ability to motivate others and commitment to excellence earned him respect from all, and he was awarded the TAFE NSW Supply Chain & eCommerce Student of the Year at the Gili Awards. Thomas is now a General-Purpose Hand with My Fast Ferry through the Asuria - NRMA Marine partnership, where he continues to demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment. Thomas says it feels like a new chapter; he loves going to work every day – his job is “just cruising!”