



MEDIA ALERT

Father Chris Riley gets International Lions Award

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AWARD A FIRST FOR AUSTRALIA

***PIC OPP. 11:15 AM, MELBOURNE CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTRE
CNR FLINDERS AND SPENCER ST MELBOURNE – CONFIRM ATTENDANCE HEATHER DEWSON 0458 550 270
FR CHRIS RILEY AND INTERNATIONAL LIONS PRESIDENT AL BRANDEL***

1 MAY 2009 – Father Chris Riley, the founder of 'Youth Off The Streets,' has achieved international recognition as the 2009 recipient of the Lions International Humanitarian Award. The Award is presented annually and comes with a \$200,000 cash prize to assist him to continue his important work.

Father Riley is the first Australian to receive this award in its history. Previous recipients include former U. S. President Jimmy Carter and Mother Teresa and Nobel Prize winning Economist, Muhammad Yunus. Fr Riley will be officially presented with the award in Minneapolis later this year

International President of the Lions Service Club organisation, Al Brandel, first met Father Chris Riley at Lions Conference in Tasmania, where he moved the hearts of the participants speaking about the lives of young people touched by the Youth Off The Streets program. Al Brandel, as a recently retired New York City police officer, is no stranger to dealing with troubled youth, and was so impressed that on his return to the United States secured a small donation for the program of \$12,000.

Al Brandel adds, "Fr. Chris Riley impressed me with a spirit that is much like that of my Lions. He saw a need, he created a plan for change, and he rolled up his sleeves and got down to the job of making the plan a reality."

The Lions Service Club organisation which has 1.4 million members around the world, contributes millions of volunteer hours, and hundreds of millions of dollars each year to medical research, youth leadership and programs, disability support and conquering preventable blindness. The Humanitarian Award was conceived to recognise and support those extraordinary individuals in the world who embody those qualities of selflessness and service that Lions hold dear.

Father Chris Riley was overwhelmed to be recognised in this way and praised the Lions for their support of the program.

"The Lions Club in Australia has long been a valued supporter of Youth Off The Streets. We are exceptionally grateful for this further recognition from Mr Brandel and Lions Club International. There are over 32,000 homeless young people in Australia today*, every bit of support Youth Off The Streets receives helps us to reach more youth in need. I greatly appreciate the support of the Lions Club and your ongoing commitment to help all young people reach their potential."

"I am truly honoured to accept this award."

For more information, please contact:

Rob Oerlemans
Executive Officer
Lions Australia
0409 778 044

Ina Mullin
Media Coordinator
Youth off the Streets
02 8332 5000 / 0412 377 217

**Figures from 'Australia's Homeless Youth 'Report, The National Youth Commission, 2008*

About Lions Australia

Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service organisation with 1.3 million members in 45,000 clubs in 205 countries. Lions Australia is one of Australia's largest service organisations with almost 28,000 members and 1,400 clubs across Australia. Lions Australia raises over \$25 million per annum to assist in community and health projects, and funding for Lions foundations and programs