

# Media Release

8 October 2014



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## Charity boss wins place as finalist in Victorian Senior Australian of the Year

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Muscular Dystrophy Australia (MDA) is proud to announce that the MDA Executive Director, Boris M Struk, has been chosen as a finalist in the Victorian Senior Australian of the Year Award.

There are four finalists in this division and Mr Struk has been chosen alongside three academics with the other finalists comprising of a Neurologist, a Microbiologist and a Bioinformatician.

"It is an absolute honour to be one of four candidates competing for this prestigious award and I am privileged to be chosen in contention with such high calibre finalists in my category, as well as all whom were nominated," said Mr Struk.

A cocktail reception will be held at the RACV City Club in Melbourne on Tuesday 28 October 2014 to announce the winner of the award. The Victorian award recipient will then join recipients from all other states and territories as finalists for the National Awards, which will be held in Canberra on 25 January 2015.

"I am so grateful to be a finalist in this category and would like to acknowledge that this recognition is shared with all those who have been involved with, volunteered for or continue to provide support to Muscular Dystrophy Australia. Without a combined effort from everyone associated with MDA this would not have been possible and for that I am truly appreciative," said Mr Struk.

Boris began working with the MD community over 30 years ago when his son Ryan was just three years old and diagnosed with the condition Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy.

"My passion for helping the Muscular Dystrophy community has stemmed from a personal connection as my son Ryan, 34, has the muscle-destroying disorder which currently affects one in 1,000 people globally," said Mr Struk.

"It was a rude awakening into the world of MD as the doctor just told me to go home and enjoy my son because he'd be gone by the age of 14 or 15. There was no information provided to me, only a two line paragraph describing the disorder from an outdated medical book," said Mr Struk.

"It is sometimes hard to fathom how far MDA has come in helping the national MD community. We provide research, care, services and programs to families with a member affected by the disorder from the second they receive the diagnosis, something I so desperately yearned for my own family all those years ago," said Mr Struk.

Since its inception, MDA has provided more than half a million hours of respite for those in the community affected by MD, as well as over 110,000 hours of the support program Futures and more than 150,000 hours of student placement representing more than 4,500 tertiary education students supporting *CampMDA*.

In total MDA has raised over \$43 million dollars in funding and provided in excess of 1 million hours of care and support for people with MD. In 2006 Mr Struk began the *ChallengeMD!* charity event series which sees groups of MD supporters complete national and international challenges, such as cycling Vietnam or trekking in Nepal, to raise much needed sponsorship. To date the events have raised a combined \$2 million.

For more information on the award visit the MDA webpage: [www.mda.org.au](http://www.mda.org.au) or the Awards website: <http://bit.ly/10CHYZe>.

**To arrange an interview or photo opportunity with Muscular Dystrophy Australia Executive Director, Boris M Struk, please contact:**

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