

## Queens birthday honours Father Chris Riley AM

Father Chris Riley was today appointed as a Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2006.

Father Riley was recognised for his service to disadvantaged youth through the establishment of the not-for-profit organisation, Youth Off The Streets.

Through Youth Off The Streets, Father Riley has developed a range of programmes that provide services including supported accommodation; counselling; detoxification; education; outreach and mentoring to disadvantaged youth in Australia.

The recognition came with special mention of the humanitarian assistance efforts he has implemented through Youth Off The Streets for the welfare of children in Bandah Aceh and East Timor.

Father Chris was working in the orphanage he established in East Timor as the awards were announced. Upon being notified of his appointment he commented:

"I am filled with an overwhelming sense of gratitude at the way the community believes in what I do and supports me.

Because of that trust, we have become known as an organisation that can get things done quickly and this is crucial when kids' lives are being affected.

An honour such as this will help profile the work of Youth Off The Streets and therefore, help me to reach more young people.

Someone asked me recently, why I don't give up my work as I have done my share. I was quite shocked by this as my life has no meaning except working for young people and they are in major trouble in this country at the moment.

I believe I have the best job in the world and feel privileged to be able to help so many people on a daily basis. I don't think I have burnt out after 31 years of working with marginalised kids because I don't get caught up in the negative or pathology. I see strengths and work hard to encourage young people to work on their strengths and contribute to the world. I work with some of the most extraordinary human beings you can imagine - young people who are resilient, energetic and fun.

This award is a recognition of all the efforts hundreds of people have put in at Youth Off the Streets."

Father Chris Riley has previously been awarded the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence and Outstanding Contribution (2004), NSW Australian of the Year (NSW Govt 2003), the Australian Achievers Award (Australia Day National Council 1998), The Vocational Excellence Award (Rotary 1997) and Humanitarian of the Year (Variety Club 1995).

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