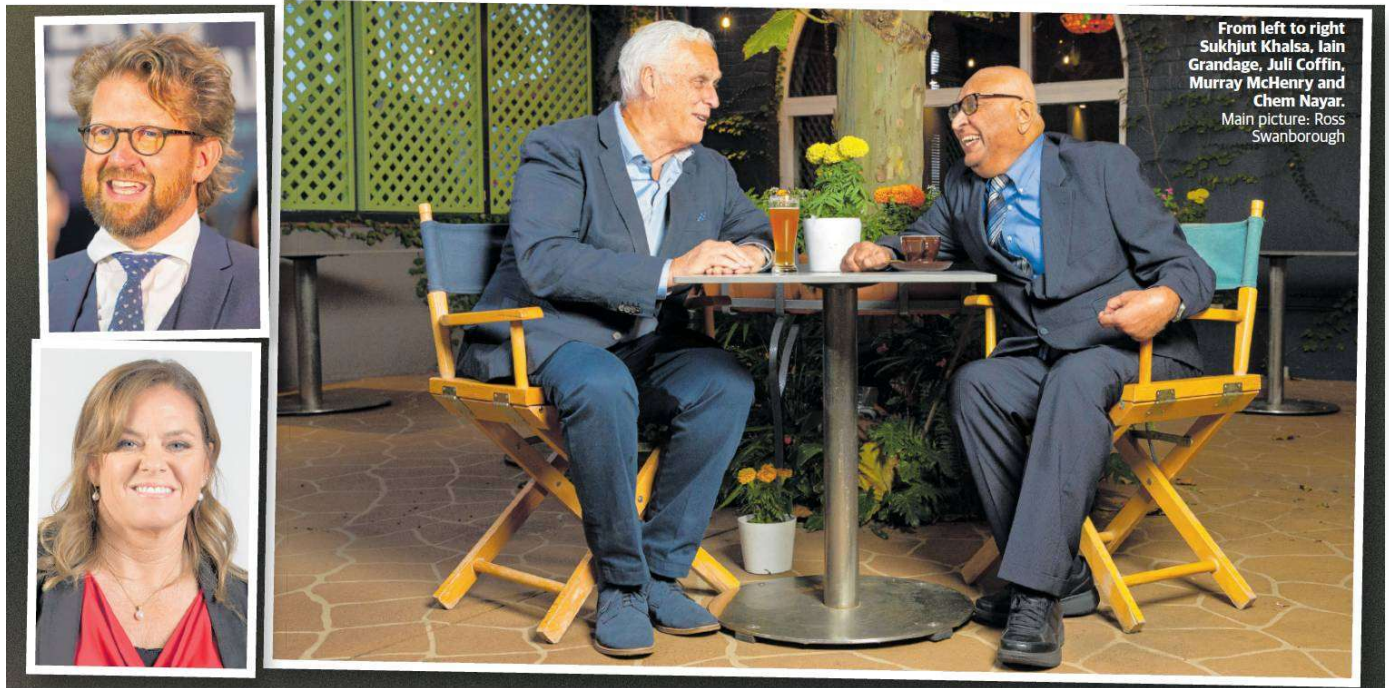


# Great minds map out the State's future

## West Aussie of Year nominees have their say

KATE EMERY



What is the one thing WA's best and brightest would do to improve the State?

A tourist train in the South West? Making it easier to capture and store solar power? Or how about simply convincing West Australians to swap screen time for face time?

Ask five finalists for West Australian of the Year that question and you will get five different answers.

The West Australian asked Murray McHenry, Juli Coffin, Iain Grandage, Chem Nayar and Sukhjut Khalsa to write about the one thing they would change about WA. Their answers will run each day this week in the lead up to WA Day.

It was Ms Khalsa, the youngest of the five, who had a plea for more interpersonal interaction. The Australian Sikh performer and poet, who is nominated for the youth award, urged her fellow West Australians to "use those hands to touch not type or 'like'".

"You'll feel the love and compassion that no text can provide," she wrote.

Former WAFC chairman and businessman Mr McHenry, who has been nominated for the sport award, set his sights on the South West and a tourism opportunity.

"I'd like to see WA develop a high-quality tourist train, loaded with our sensational food and wines," Mr McHenry wrote. "It should depart Bunbury and stop in towns from Dunsborough

"If this rail experience extended to Perth, then travellers and locals in the South West could enjoy the train to the city to attend the football and other events at Optus Stadium."  
Professor Nayar, of Curtin University's school of electrical engineering, wrote about the potential to allow households to more easily tap into renewable energy.

"A co-ordinated approach to solar energy generation and battery storage is one way to accomplish this," he wrote.

"More than 30 per cent of houses in WA already have solar, and batteries are critical to store our excess solar energy for use at peak times, and to connect Western Australia to a more sustainable energy future.

"While we have a lot of work to do in renewable energy generation and storage, WA can be proud of how far we've come in a short space of time."

This year's West Australian of the Year awards will be held on Friday, with each of the seven category winners and one overall winner to be announced.

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