

Media Release

26 January 2021

Gladstone Regional Council announces 2021 Australia Day Award winners

Gladstone Regional Council has announced winners from the 2021 Australia Day Awards, held on Tuesday 26 January at the Gladstone Entertainment Convention Centre.

Seven categories were awarded at the ceremony including Citizen of the Year, Mayor's Young Citizen of the Year, Arts and Culture Award, Young Sportsperson Award, Sports Official Award, Community Event or Initiative Award and the Community Volunteer Award.

And the winners are:

- **Citizen of the Year:** Liz Cunningham
- **Mayor's Young Citizen of the Year:** Abbi Willis
- **Arts and Culture Award:** Robyn Addison
- **Young Sportsperson Award:** Nicholas Crane
- **Sports Official Award:** Deborah Creighton
- **Community Event or Initiative Award:** Gladstone Hospital Auxiliary Association Inc.
- **Community Volunteer Award:** Bob Pailthorpe.

Gladstone Region Mayor Matt Burnett congratulated the seven winners, including all nominees.

"I congratulate all winners and nominees and sincerely thank them for their contributions to the Gladstone Region," Councillor Burnett said.

"These Awards recognise and reward members of our community who have a consistent record of excellence, have made outstanding achievements in their field, or have made a significant contribution to the growth and development of sport, community events, arts and cultural life in the region.

"While there can be only seven category winners, every person and community group or organisation nominated are winners in my eyes.

"Unfortunately, Council was unable to pick a winner in the Senior Sportsperson Award category, as many sporting competitions were cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19.

"Despite this, it's fantastic to see so many people taking pride in our community and who consistently want to see the betterment of our region."

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Citizen of the Year – Liz Cunningham

Liz has committed her time to the community for many years across a variety of community groups including Calliope Rotary Club, Gladstone Central Committee of the Aging, Boyne Tannum Artscape Committee, Rio Tinto Here for Gladstone, Qld Retired Police - Gladstone Branch, National Serviceman's Association - Gladstone Branch, Gladstone Cancer Council - Relay for Life, Port Curtis Historical Society, Gladstone Chaplaincy.

It is this dedication to multiple groups (and her ability to make a great cake!) which have found her nominated.

Mayor's Young Citizen of the Year – Abbi Willis

Abbi is an inspiring young citizen with a passion for reducing the stigma of mental health and who champions our Region's Youth.

She has been a Gladstone Region Youth Council member for the past two years and this year she holds the position of Deputy Chair.

Abbi has participated in Council's shared initiative with Headspace – the Avenue to Awareness project – for two years in a row and is a Volunteer Leader for the Youth of the CCRDFV (Coordinated Community Response to Domestic and Family Violence).

Abbi has used her experiences, both positive and negative, to mentor her peers with a focus on how to use your strengths for personal and community growth.

Abbi is currently employed at GAPDL Communities for Children while also undertaking a Certificate IV in Youth and Family Intervention.

Arts and Culture Award – Robyn Addison

Robyn is the current vocal coach for the community musical, *Legally Blonde*, and was the vocal coach for the 2020 Combined Schools Musical, *Wizard of Oz* – managing to get more than 80 students to sing in a seven-part harmony.

Robyn has shown great commitment to musicals being involved in the orchestra pit for community and combined schools' musicals for over 15 years.

Robyn is a talented musician on many instruments including the flute, piccolo, trombone and oboe as well as being a talented singer.

There are many in our community whose musical lives are enriched from their interactions with Robyn.

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Young Sportsperson Award – Nicholas Crane

Nick is an all-round sports star as well as an inspirational role model for others.

Nick performs at the highest level in many sports such as tennis, volleyball, touch football and athletics.

In 2020, Nick made the Queensland team for tennis.

This is something that has not been done in Gladstone for several years and is a sensational achievement for someone who is 16 years old.

Nick had to defeat players who were many years older than him to make the team.

Sports Official Award – Deborah Creighton

Deb is currently in the role of Administrator at Gladstone and District Hockey Association.

She has been in this role for several years but has also done a lot of work in other areas, such as coaching, managing representative teams, running and helping in the canteen and much more.

In 2020, Deb was awarded a Queensland Hockey Community Award for her outstanding contribution to the positive culture of hockey.

Community Event or Initiative Award – Gladstone Hospital Auxiliary Association Inc.

The Gladstone Hospital Auxiliary has been working in the Gladstone community raising funds for Gladstone Hospital since 1958.

In that time, they have worked within the hospital environment working with the staff assisting in doing nonclinical, but highly time-consuming jobs that take front line staff away from their roles.

They have also been working within the community, raising funds to purchase essential equipment that is used here in Gladstone.

Since 2011, the Auxiliary has purchased equipment for the hospital valued in excess of \$212,000.

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Community Volunteer Award – Bob Pailthorpe

Bobby has been a volunteer since leaving school more than 50 years ago.

Bobby supports our community by offering his services to speak and announce at events, cleaning up after community activities and by supporting Gladstone News with the delivery of their fortnightly corflutes around the region.

Visit www.gladstone.qld.gov.au/australia-day-awards for more information on Gladstone Regional Council's 2020 Australia Day Awards recipients and nominees.

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