

# Media Release

25 January 2024

## Gladstone Regional Council reveals winners of 2024 Australia Day Awards

Gladstone Regional Council has announced winners from the 2024 Australia Day Awards, held during the evening of Thursday 25 January at Gladstone Entertainment Convention Centre.

Nine categories were awarded at the ceremony including Citizen of the Year, Young Citizen of the Year, Sport and Recreation, Young Peoples Sport and Recreation, Arts and Culture, Community Event, Community Volunteer Award, Mayor's Community Champion Award and the newly created Mayor's Young Community Champion Award.

### 2024 Australia Day Awards winners:

- **Citizen of the Year:** Ron Streeter
- **Young Citizen of the Year:** Abiksha Murali
- **Sport and Recreation:** William (Bill) Webb
- **Young Peoples Sport and Recreation Award:** Ethan Sharpe
- **Arts and Culture Award:** Ann Hooper
- **Community Event Award:** Gladstone Combined Services - Combined Services Gladstone Touch Football Day
- **Community Volunteer Award:** Josephine Meng
- **Mayor's Community Champion Award:** Ronald and Patricia Doherty
- **Mayor's Young Community Champion Award:** Sidney Crawshaw.

Gladstone Region Mayor Matt Burnett shared his congratulations and expressed gratitude towards all winners and nominees for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the Gladstone Region.

"I want to thank the winners and all 63 nominees as I know they take a lot of pride in our community and are consistently striving to make our region a better place," Councillor Burnett said.

"It's great that Council's Australia Day Awards and Citizenship Ceremony are held simultaneously as it allows for our newest citizens to mix with our community champions who have given so much to our region and represent everything we value.

"I also want to thank the people who took time out to nominate a person or event for a 2024 Australia Day Award, as without their input we are unable to highlight the fantastic community contributions taking place throughout our region."

Council's Australia Day Awards recognise and reward members of the local community who have a consistent record of excellence, have made outstanding achievements in their field, and/or have contributed significantly to the growth and development of sport, community events, arts and cultural life in the region.

Council also welcomed 42 new Australian citizens from 10 different countries at its Citizenship Ceremony.

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## **Winner Profiles**

### **Citizen of the Year - Ron Streeter**

Ron has been part of the community for over 70 years. Through business and socially, he has continually energised people enhancing their lives. He has influenced many from apprentices through to older workers and community members alike. Ron is president of the Boyne Valley's Community Shed and was a major driving force to have it built. His resilience is valuable to everyone, especially in times of emergency events. This nomination indicates how much he and his family are appreciated, as it recognises his years of tireless work and selfless commitment. His dedication to helping others, his unwavering commitment to making a difference, his infectious smile and sense of humour are qualities that make him an inspiration to all.

**Other Nominees:** Alison Harrington, John Hodson-Gilmore, Natasha Kocks, Amanda Ryan, Kim O'Neill, Patricia Doherty, Debra Chapman, Leslie Diefenbach, Ron Streeter, Jemma Manwaring, Lyndal Hansen and Ronald Doherty.

### **Young Citizen of the Year - Abiksha Murali**

Abiksha has been busy in 2023 through her wide-ranging community involvement. She is a concierge volunteer at the Gladstone Hospital and volunteers at Council events like Ecofest, Luminous and PopCon. She was School Vice-Captain at Gladstone State High School, helping with events such as Shave for a Cure and Relay for Life. Her cultural activities included representing GSHS at Capricornia level for the State Honours Ensemble Program in Rockhampton for violin. She was also a member of Verdi Strings-Puccini winning first place and Best Strings Ensemble at the Gladstone Eisteddfod. Abiksha participated in SPARQ-ed's Senior Research Immersion program run by the University of Queensland at the Translational Research Institute in Brisbane. Working in a biomedical laboratory, she investigated and created a project on DNA sequencing.

**Other Nominees:** Callie McKay, Kasey Pfeiffer, Sidney Crawshaw, Holly Morton, Kayla Chapman, Jaz Girard and Rommiel Lorey Malig.

### **Sport and Recreation - William (Bill) Webb**

Bill has administered and coached sport in the Gladstone Region for many years. He was on the board of Meteors Sports Club when it was \$90,000 in debt, three years ago. He volunteered as functions and marketing manager and was acting groundsman at Meteors for 10 hours a week. Bill created a home for the Special Olympics at Meteors and started the Free Sports for Kids campaign to assist disadvantaged children. There are now 110 children enjoying free uniforms, coaching and free Football Queensland fees. He has numerous coaching certificates and is the Football Technical Director at Meteors Football Club. He is an Australian PGA member coaching 130 junior golfers in the region and has introduced golf to Kin Kora State School and Calliope High School. Bill is passionate about helping kids reach an elite level in sport. In the past year, he has attended the Asian Pacific Golf Teaching Conference and PGA seminars in Melbourne, Sunshine Coast and Brisbane.

**Other Nominees:** Katrina McDonald, Kylie Cameron, Rebecca Desertiaux, Jack Smith and Molly Black.

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## **Young Peoples Sport and Recreation Award - Ethan Sharpe**

Ethan was the 2023 Australian All Around Level 9 Open Champion in Men's Artistic Gymnastics and the national champion on rings and floor. He won gold for Queensland in the team event and bronze on vault. To qualify for nationals, Ethan was all around State Champion and won gold on pommel and rings, silver on floor and vault and bronze on high bar. Becoming the Gladstone Region's first men's artistic national champion was remarkable after he tore a wrist ligament in 2022 and could not train for six months. As Gladstone Gymnastics Club Men's Captain, Ethan encourages and supports young gymnasts through coaching, showing them how to train to succeed at the highest level. He qualified as a Men's Intermediate Bronze Judge in 2023 and can now officiate at State and National level. When not competing, he supports all regional events by judging or volunteering so they can proceed. Ethan encourages young gymnasts to become well-rounded individuals with a good work ethic and respect for others.

**Other Nominees:** Ethan Sharpe, Linzi McBean, Tom Crawshaw, Felicity Webb, Milly Sharpe, William (Billy) Price, Hayden Tabone, Sidney Crawshaw, Kayden Gibson and Talon Egan.

## **Arts and Culture Award – Ann Hooper**

Annie has been involved in Gladstone musicals for many years in roles such as rehearsal pianist and as part of the pit crew (orchestra). She has worked on shows such as Little Mermaid, Grease, Legally Blonde, Wizard of Oz and Anything Goes - to name a few. She is the bass clarinet player for the Gladstone Adult Concert Band, First Alto Saxophone in Lost for Words Stageband and in the Gladstone Carols by Candlelight band (either on Saxophone or piano as required). Annie regularly volunteers to play piano/organ for the Catholic Church masses. She is one of the organisers of the Boyne Island Carols by Candlelight and is often seen accompanying students at Eisteddfod or volunteering in other roles there. Annie has been a tutor at the Gladstone Independent Schools Music Association music workshops and is very giving of her time to help the younger generation develop their musical skills.

**Other Nominees:** Kerry Birt, Jennifer Ryan and Leslie Gordon Lister (Waraba)

## **Community Event Award - Gladstone Combined Services - Combined Services Gladstone Touch Football Day**

Gladstone's community spirit and pride was on show in June 2023 when 30 local Touch Football teams came together to raise money for the Arnold McCrow fund. The fund was set up to support the families of the police officers killed on duty at Tara in south-west Queensland just before Christmas 2022. The Combined Services event included teams from the Gladstone Police, Gladstone Ambulance, Gladstone Firefighters and Young Veterans (combined services teams) as well as Rio Tinto, McCoskers, Gladstone Ports Corporation, Woolworths, Coles, Youth Justice, Ship and Sail, Aurizon, Alpha High Purity Aluminium and InTo Jobs. Each team played four games against other local businesses and emergency services. All funds raised went to the not-for-profit COGSY (Community of Gladstone Supporting Youth) who run a job ready program and assist local youth (17-25 year olds) gain employment in our industry sector. COGSY received almost \$15,000 to help increase awareness of its role in the community. \$12,000 was raised for the Arnold McCrow Fund.

**Other Nominees:** Anglican Church Gladstone - Food Centre and Rays Soup Kitchen, Cancer Council QLD - Biggest Morning Tea, Integreat Queensland - The Flourish Festival, Tannum Sands Surf Life Saving Club - Rip Awareness Session and Turkey Beach Progress Association - Turkey Beach 50th Birthday Bash.

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### **Community Volunteer Award - Josephine Meng**

Josephine has been with Volunteer Marine Rescue since 1979 and at Round Hill since 1991. Inspired by her late husband Doug, she has done crew, management committee and radio work. At Round Hill, she has activated boat crews and advised the Water Police and other relevant agencies when required. Josephine has been on Zone and State Council and is a member of the Local Disaster Management Group. She has been there for the boating community during floods, fires and cyclones when communities need to be contacted. Memorable work included the largest east coast incident, the Spirit Fire, with no lives lost and the Dianne's sinking in 2017 where six people died. Josephine's radio work can be enjoyable when someone becomes a dad or grandfather. She has been President of the Agnes Water/1770 Local Ambulance Committee since 1996 and a member of the Queensland Ambulance Service Commissioner's Reference Group since 2005. Through Lions, Josephine helped secure a \$2.1M grant in 2001 to improve the Discovery Coast's medical services.

**Other Nominees:** Alahnie Rozycki, Graham McVean, Lisa Edwards, Alan McKay, Helen Randall, Nicole Allison, Alison Harrington, Isla Osmond, Patricia Doherty, Chloe Sydes, Jakob Humphries, Rachel Smith, Daniel Trainer, Jeffrey Wilkinson, Rommiel Lorey Malig, Dennis Fairbrother, Jessica Toms, Ronald Doherty, Emma Roulston and Tayla Bullen.

### **Mayor's Community Champion Award - Ronald and Patricia Doherty**

Ronald epitomises this award as an individual and volunteer but also a team player in our community. He is always there to lend a hand. His volunteering and leadership has been prominent at the Boyne Tannum Lions Club and the Men's Shed at Tannum Sands. Ron has been instrumental in the ongoing development of these clubs and serves in an executive position for both. Some examples of his guidance in delivering back to the community include the Boyne Tannum HookUp, Under the Trees, World's Greatest Shave, making donations and supporting Strong Communities with their early learning assistance initiative for regional families. He has also helped with BAM barbeques, the Raglan Fly-In and always assists the QCWA ladies.

Patricia is one of the Gladstone Region's most dedicated community champions and volunteers. She dedicates much of her life to ensuring the wellbeing of women and ensuring all community members feel included and have a safe space to join in with community. She achieves this through her tireless voluntary work through the QCWA and Lions. Patricia never shies away from committing herself to leadership positions. She is an incredible mentor and guide in both these organisations. Her dedication to ensuring the values of these organisations are upheld have seen her take on many executive positions in both organisations over the years. Patricia also takes on executive positions at divisional levels as well. Currently, she is president of the QCWA Tannum Sands branch and is also our Country Kitchens champion for Boyne Tannum.

### **Mayor's Young Community Champion Award - Sidney Crawshaw**

Tannum Sands witnessed a young hero emerge from the waves on January 1, 2023. Sidney was then a 14-year-old volunteer life saver who demonstrated incredible courage and quick thinking when the elements were fierce and the sea untamed. That day, Tannum beach was being patrolled by the Tannum Sands Surf Life Saving Club when a man found himself in a treacherous rip. He was desperately trying to rescue his own children caught in the current. Sidney transformed into a fearless warrior of the waves. With determination, he paddled out to the troubled man and his swift response was nothing short of extraordinary, saving a life in the process. What makes this story even more remarkable is this was Sidney's first rescue. His heroic act made everyone proud and served as a great example of selflessness and bravery. Sidney is a young homegrown legend in Tannum Sands and his actions remind us of the importance of having heroes in our lives.

**ENDS**