

Australia Day Awards

2021 Program

Glasshouse Theatre | Tuesday 26 January

Ceremony to commence 9.30am

Proudly presented by Port Macquarie-Hastings Council



**Peta
Pinson**

Mayor

Welcome to the official Port Macquarie-Hastings Council Australia Day Awards presentation. I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to meet and share time with some of the Port Macquarie-Hastings' most respected citizens.

All our nominated citizens and community groups are actively living the values of what it means to be Australian. This is what makes our region such a strong, resilient and caring community.

On behalf of the Port Macquarie-Hastings Australia Day Working Group, I wish to thank each and every one of you for your contribution to our community.

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AWARDS PROGRAM

- > Theatre doors open from 9.00am
- > Event commences at 9.30am
- > MC for the event – Mrs Lynn Lelean
- > Welcome to Country by Birpai Elder Uncle Bill O'Brien
Song: *I am Australian* performed by Olwen Williams

Australia Day addresses by:

- > Peta Pinson - Mayor of Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- > Honourable Leslie Williams - State Member for Port Macquarie
- > Paralympian Tiffany Thomas-Kane – 2021 Australia Day Ambassador
- > First Category to be awarded – **Community Group of the Year**
- > Second Category to be awarded – **Environmental Citizen of the Year**
- > Third Category to be awarded – **Senior Citizen of the Year**
- > Fourth Category to be awarded – **Young Citizen of the Year**
- > Final Category to be awarded – **Citizen of the Year**
- > Citizenship ceremony to commence

AMBASSADOR TO PORT MACQUARIE-HASTINGS



Ms Tiffany Thomas-Kane

At the age of 13 Thomas-Kane was the youngest Australian swimmer selected to compete at the 2015 World Championships in Glasgow. Bursting on the international swimming scene in her first outing, she won a gold medal in the Women's 100m Breaststroke (SB6) in world record time. Training in NSW under Jon Bell at Monte, Thomas-Kane recently won gold as part of the 4x100m freestyle team at the 2018 Pan Pacific Para Swimming Championships in Cairns, while also taking home a gold in the Women's 50m Breaststroke Multi-Class event at the 2019 World Para Swimming World Series.

PARALYMPIC GAMES (Rio, Brazil 2016)

- > Won gold in the Women's 100m Breaststroke (S6) (PR)
- > Won bronze in the Women's 50m Freestyle (S6)
- > Won bronze in the Women's 50m Butterfly (S6)
- > Won bronze in the Women's 200m Individual Medley (SM6)
- > Placed 6th in the Women's 4x50m Freestyle (20 points)
- > Placed 6th in the Women's 100m Freestyle (S6)

COMMONWEALTH GAMES (Gold Coast, Australia 2018)

- > Placed 4th in the Women's 50m Freestyle (S8)
- > Placed 4th in the Women's 50m Butterfly (S7)

NOMINEES - COMMUNITY GROUP OF THE YEAR



Fellowship of Australian Writers Port Macquarie-Hastings Group

The Port Macquarie Fellowship of Australian Writers community group is a not-for-profit organisation that works to encourage people to write about the world, through all different genres and styles. Established in 1978, the group is always encouraging, promoting and supporting the local cultural scene. The writing group lends a hand in writing plays for the local theatre, and poetry and stories for the radio stations. In 2017, the group launched the 'Heartbeat of the Hastings', a written record of interviews conducted by Port Macquarie's community volunteers. The project was launched by Leslie Williams MP. The FAWPMH works on a volunteer basis for the NSW Government's Seniors Card, where they have produced numerous volumes of the amazing 'Seniors Stories'. The group members encourage seniors to write and the top 100 stories are selected for the annual publication. Congratulations FAWPMH on your worthy nomination for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2021 Community Group of the Year award.



Friends of Mrs York's Garden

Mrs York's Garden is a beautiful headland garden overlooking the river mouth that has been continually restored and maintained since 2015 by the Friends of Mrs York's Garden community group. Friends of Mrs York's Garden continuously nurture and care for this unique area, providing our community with a safe and unique place to enjoy. The members contribute long hours to maintain the grounds. Weekly working bees, fundraising, removal of rubbish and graffiti, and monitoring of the waterfall is only part of what the Friends of Mrs York's Garden do. Throughout a challenging year, the Friends of Mrs York's Gardens continued to work through drought, bushfires, and a pandemic to plant over 1,000 new tube stock, complete extensive improvements to the grounds, and contribute massive amounts of volunteer labour. Congratulations Friends of Mrs York's Garden on your worthy nomination for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2021 Community Group of the Year award.

NOMINEES - COMMUNITY GROUP OF THE YEAR



Port Macquarie Rotary Club

The Port Macquarie Rotary Club is made up of many volunteers who are extremely committed to giving back to our local community. Formed over 70 years ago, they've contributed to many amazing projects, some including the annual Book fair, regularly tending to the gardens in Rotary Park and Port Hospital Mental Health Garden, and creating and donating knitted and crocheted goods to the homeless. The club collaborates with many groups, lending their support to Liberty Cottage, Port Macquarie Base Hospital, Catholic Care of the Aged, Rotary Youth Leaders, Meals on Wheels, and many more. One of their unique offerings, the Club has a program that aims to subsidise the cost of birth registration for all indigenous members of the community. Congratulations Port Macquarie Rotary Club on your worthy nomination for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2021 Community Group of the Year award.



Lake Cathie RFS Brigade

The Lake Cathie RFS Brigade played a valuable role in fighting the bushfires that devastated our region in early 2020. Their work was instrumental in containing the fire's spread and protecting local homes, lives and the community. The Lake Cathie RFS was so diligent in monitoring and quickly jumping into action, there is no question of the volunteers hard work and commitment to the local community. Stuart Bale, president of the Camden Haven Chamber of Commerce, Tourism and Industry summarised a view that is widely shared by the public, in saying, "these men and women showed extreme resilience, bravery and heroism." The numerous RFS volunteers put their lives, jobs and family commitments on hold to help and protect Lake Cathie and the community is very grateful for their efforts and dedication. Congratulations Lake Cathie RFS Brigade on your worthy nomination for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2021 Community Group of the Year award.

NOMINEES - COMMUNITY GROUP OF THE YEAR



Hastings Education Fund

The Hastings Education Fund was created in 2011 after a group of education, local government, and business professionals identified that there were a number of talented students in region in need of financial help or mentoring support to achieve their goals of entering tertiary education. In the ten years since the group's formation, HEF has distributed over \$476,000 to 219 students to help cover course fees, textbooks, accommodation, computer hardware, tools of trade and schooling costs. The committee raises funds via sponsorships from local individuals, community groups, and businesses and holds fundraising events. Their work provides students with the reassurance that their education is important, and removes roadblocks for some students who have no other means. Congratulations Hastings Education Fund on your worthy nomination for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2021 Community Group of the Year award



Wauchope Show Society

Since 1910, the Wauchope Show Society has delivered a widely-loved country show, and the volunteers of the society are passionate about our local area and go above and beyond to assist community groups, clubs and visitors as best they can. In early 2020, Wauchope Show Society felt the effect that the devastating bushfires were having on our community and were quick to help. Their members set up the grounds as an evacuation centre for any families or individuals to set up camp, and bring along their farm animals. This initiative was highly praised by the community and was an invaluable resource for some local families. The Wauchope Show Society also coordinates the use of the Showground for groups such as BlazeAid, Wauchope Mens Shed, Riding for the Disabled, Apex Cash for Cans, Wauchope Farmers Markets and many more. Congratulations Wauchope Show Society on your worthy nomination for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2021 Community Group of the Year award.

NOMINEES - ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZEN OF THE YEAR



Judith Love

Judy Love can often be found walking the coast of Bonny Hills picking up rubbish and pulling weeds. Her great passion for the environment and our native flora is truly inspiring. Described as being the 'ultimate Eco warrior' she has served as the President of the Bonny Hills Landcare group for 3 years. Judy has led many projects aiming to spread the message of being eco-friendly. Her dedication has led to the permanent removal of weeds on Grants Hedlands, and the annual *Clean Up Australia Day* event in Bonny Hills. Judy has also been instrumental in the identification and removal of the African Tulip Tree which is recognised as being detrimental to the local native bee population. Congratulations Judith on your worthy nomination for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2021 Environmental Citizen of the Year award.



Susan Baker

Susan Baker's commitment has been integral in the restoration of habitat around the Dunbogan and Laurieton area. As the coordinator of *Clean up Australia Day* in Laurieton for the past 15 years, and founder of the Dunbogan Bushcare Group in 1999, Susan delivers countless projects to improve the area. Some including planting over 4,000 trees, removing weeds, and creating a public access path to Gogley's Lagoon in the hopes of controlling coastal erosion. Susan was appointed as the Coordinator of the National Parks Association's Crowdy Bay Bush Regeneration Project, where she worked on the eradication of Bitou Bush from Diamond Head and Dunbogan. She was recognised in 2009 when she received the Allen and Beryl Strom Award for 'outstanding contribution to conservation through NPA' from the National Parks Association of NSW. Congratulations Susan on your worthy nomination for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2021 Environmental Citizen of the Year award.

NOMINEES - SENIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR



Gordon Wilson Gray

Gordon Gray works tirelessly for his community, without ever seeking recognition or reward. Gordon is currently the secretary and youth protection officer at the Rotary Club of Laurieton. He has also lent his time to the Camden Haven Marine rescue unit, and regularly volunteers at St Peter the Fisherman Church in Laurieton. A life member of the Lake Cathie Bowling Club, he has been described as a multi-tasker and all-rounder who is always available when needed. His dedication was rewarded in 2012 when Gordon was awarded the club person of the year. Following this, Gordon's hard work was recognised when he was awarded the coveted Royal New South Wales Bowling Association Merit Badge for 2013-14, which identifies the 'Outstanding Volunteer Merit Award for the District'. Congratulations Gordon on your worthy nomination for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2021 Senior Citizen of the Year award.



John Eggert

John Eggert, affectionately known as 'Farmer John' is a dedicated volunteer, always lending a hand to those in need. A life member of the Wauchope Tennis Club and Wauchope Football Club, John is often seen helping out in the canteen, assisting players, or conducting maintenance work. John volunteers and fundraises for countless community groups and causes. A few groups include the Ladies Auxiliary at the Wauchope Showground, Blaze Aid, Riding for the Disabled, Beechwood Young Farmers Association, Port Macquarie IRONMAN, and Sing Australia Group, Sydney Running Festival, and Starlight Foundation's 'Trek for Kids'. John also worked at Wauchope High School for 15 years as a farm assistant in the Agricultural Department where he was loved by the students and staff. Congratulations John on your worthy nomination for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2021 Senior Citizen of the Year award.

NOMINEES - SENIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR



Phyllis Hazel Hollis

Phyllis Hollis has a long history of volunteering within her community, and is an impassioned and valued community member. She has lent her time to countless groups, including the Upper Hastings Sporting Group, Hastings Country Music Club, St Cuthberts Anglican Church, Long Flat Football Club, Yarras School, Long Flat rodeo, Ellenborough Hall, Long Flat School, and many more. After the devastating bushfires and drought experienced by the Yarras community, Phyllis and her husband, Reg were ready and willing to help out their neighbours and community in any way they could. The couple began volunteering as distributors for the Dominion Grace Women's Ministry, which helps to distribute clothes, household goods, electrical appliances and food to bushfire-affected families. Congratulations Phyllis on your worthy nomination for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2021 Senior Citizen of the Year award.

NOMINEES - YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR



Luke Meier Smith

At 18 years old, Luke Meier Smith is taking the mountain biking world by storm with his determination to make a career out of the sport. His hard work and passion led him to receive the prestigious Steve Smith award in 2019. Luke received an exemption from the Australian Border Force to travel to Europe in late 2020 to compete, his performances were impressive and he finished 2nd in the final round of Finale Figure in Italy, and 2nd elite field of Crankworx's Innsbruck dual slalom event. Living on an avocado farm in Comboyne, Luke spends his time studying via distance, working around the farm and building mountain bike trails with his brother to practice. Congratulations Luke on your worthy nomination for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2021 Young Citizen of the Year award.



Molly Kemp

Molly Kemp is a valued member of Port Macquarie Life Saving Club. Since working her way through the nipper program and cadets, she is now an official Lifeguard. Molly's positive attitude and hard work led to her selection as a participant for the SLSNSW 'Youth Opportunity Makers Workshop'. Outside of Surf Life Saving, Molly was commended on being a motivator and a team player through receiving the 'Star Award' as she represented NSW in the under 19 Girls Volleyball International competition. The impressive Molly has been awarded both the Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Awards, and is on the way to completing her Gold Duke of Edinburgh award. Congratulations Molly on your worthy nomination for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2021 Young Citizen of the Year award.

NOMINEES - YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR



Blake O'Connor

As a young teenager with a talent beyond his years, Blake O'Connor is a popular local performer who has been entertaining his local community at various Community Events for many years. Blake sky rocketed to the top of the Australian Country Music scene in 2019 and was awarded the 40th Toyota Star Maker Winner. As an amazing singer, songwriter and musician, Blake has since released his debut album 'Everything I Feel' and took home the Golden Guitar for the Qantas New Talent Of The Year Award in Tamworth at the Toyota Country Music Festival in 2020. When he is back home in Port Macquarie, Blake still generously gives his time to perform for his community. Congratulations Blake on your worthy nomination for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2021 Young Citizen of the Year award.

NOMINEES - CITIZEN OF THE YEAR



Ellen Crepaz

2020 was a tough time for the hospitality industry, as businesses were forced to close their doors or adapt to no contact, due to COVID restrictions. Many local businesses in the region really struggled during this time to make ends meet and continue operation. Recognising that struggle, Ellen Crepaz devoted her time and efforts to creating a Facebook page, 'Port Macquarie EaTs'. This page was dedicated to connecting the local community with cafes, restaurants, bars and clubs around the Port Macquarie region in order to promote their business and help during the hard times. Ellen freely promoted different hospitality venues on the site as well as creating videos and helping businesses work through the changes that came from the COVID restrictions. The Facebook page now has over 11,000 members and features over 200 local businesses. Ellen still maintains the popular page and volunteers all her time and efforts into promoting these businesses. Congratulations Ellen Crepaz on your worthy nomination for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2021 Citizen of the Year award.



Lisa Willows

Lisa Willows is a young, inspirational guiding light with her willingness to help others. Lisa is involved in numerous different groups including Port Macquarie Hastings Homeless Committee, Revive Lake Cathie, Life After Suicide Support Group, as well as working as the marketing manager for LifeLine Mid North Coast. Her expertise and experience with helping others enabled her, in conjunction with Lifeline, to develop a psychological first aid program to help the public dealing with emotional and mental stress as a result of the bushfires. She is often juggling numerous community projects at once, engaging with people of all ages and abilities, providing support and care, and is considered by many as an exceptional member of our local community. Congratulations Lisa on your worthy nomination for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2021 Citizen of the Year award.

NOMINEES - CITIZEN OF THE YEAR



Robyn Rawson

Robyn Rawson recognised that farmers were doing it tough in 2020, after the bushfires and drought, and created the 'Port Macquarie, Wauchope and Surrounds Doing it for Our Farmers' group. She set out to make a change and began organising and coordinating collection of food, water, toiletries, pet food. She organised donations for distribution for firstly drought relief, and then later bushfire relief.

Robyn established donation drop off points, collections and the made-up hampers to be dispersed to the farmers, that she would often deliver herself. Her team transported trucks-loads of donated goods throughout the Mid North Coast area, assisting farmers in need, while being mindful and respecting their privacy. She recognised a group that wouldn't ask for help, and her generosity supported this group through an extremely tough time. Robyn Rawson's effort and unwavering commitment to helping our local farmers is greatly admired by the local community. Congratulations Robyn on your worthy nomination for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2021 Citizen of the Year award.



RYDGES

PORT MACQUARIE

