



2023 Lord Mayor's Australia Day Awards

Dedicated to a better Brisbane

The 2023 Lord Mayor's Australia Day Awards recognised Brisbane's unsung heroes and paid tribute to the people in our community who have gone above and beyond to help improve the lives of others and make the Brisbane of tomorrow even better than the Brisbane of today.

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Winner profiles

Citizen of the Year – George Rowlinson

George Rowlinson is a selfless and dedicated volunteer who has played a pivotal role in running and assisting the Everton Park Scouts Group for several decades.

George is currently the group leader and has been involved with volunteering for Scouts Australia for 50 years and has served in various capacities. George has worked with multiple local organisations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a growth in membership at the Everton Park Scouts Group and George ensured the Scouts were able to utilise digital platforms.

George has also played a pivotal role in fundraising for the Group to send three youth group members to the Scouting World Jamboree being held in South Korea in 2023. Additionally, George has been involved with Brisbane Bunya Lions Club Inc. for more than 22 years.

“A key reason why George’s volunteering efforts deserve recognition is his strong stewardship of the Scouting Group. His agility and dedication to leadership has ensured that the Scouts strived to keep this community connected and informed throughout the pandemic.” – Nominator

Senior Citizen of the Year – Jan Kennedy

With 20 years of continuous community volunteering for several groups, Jan is actively involved with the Sherwood Neighbourhood Organisation, the Yeronga Friendship Club Inc. and Tennyson Travellers.

With Jan’s experience in finance and management, her skills are paramount to the success of these groups with her volunteered time. Jan arranges monthly community social outings for seniors who are members of the Tennyson Travellers Club that live independently in the local area. She even drives the community-owned bus as a certified driver to expand social outings to the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Toowoomba areas. Jan is also the Honorary Treasurer of the Yeronga Friendship Club, a Club that meets monthly as a support group for senior citizens living independently. Jan has been involved in putting together these sessions, including discussions on fall prevention, commemorative events for Christmas in July and the Ekka, guest speakers, exercise classes and storytelling.

Jan is considered an invaluable member of the team and within the local community. Her support, ethics and abilities to connect with the community is vital to continuing such important organisations.

“Jan never refuses to give aid or support to anyone who is in need, and she works tirelessly and selflessly for the benefit of others.” – Nominator

Joint Young Citizen of the Year – Chantelle Giles

Chantelle has been a proactive volunteer for the last 13 years, starting at 16 years of age.

Appointed as the Deputy Group Leader for SES Western Group at the age of 21, Chantelle has been at the front of providing new and updated training material for the groups with limited access to training and mentors. Her Operational Plan for Western Group was a key

contributor to the success of the response and evacuation in the February 2022 floods. Chantelle has paved a way to a new generation of training with the use of technology and cultural integration.

In addition to her 10 years of service within the State Emergency Service, Chantelle is involved in other community groups, including Rural Fire Recovery, Scouts, Girls Guides, Australian Army Band and other musical band organisations in Brisbane.

Chantelle's drive and ability to see where change is required is recognised widely and has been a key element to SES Western Group.

“Committed and always the first to put her hand up, her passion for understanding, listening, guidance and helping others and her brilliant drive to rebuild at all stages has been the key to the new era of response and recovery.” – Nominator

Joint Young Citizen of the Year - Tom Price

Thomas (Tom) is a local Year 12 student with an incredible passion to help under privileged people. It started by raising money for those affected by the drought and to help the farmers. From there, he has always thrown himself into areas of society who needed it.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Tom noticed his friends were struggling with mental health and youth suicide rates were increasing. With the support of his school, his project was underway. *You Are Not Alone* was created, a four-minute video featuring community leaders, celebrities and school students with an important and inspiring message. The video went viral and, while originally intended to be used in his school, it is now used at 15 Brisbane schools as well as community organisations, charities and businesses to help start the conversation.

From this, Tom hosted the first *You Are Not Alone* Fun Run in June 2022. Over 2000 participants came, with all proceeds donated to Lifeline Queensland. Raising over \$37,000, LifeLine was overwhelmed by his efforts. Tom also spends his spare time volunteering with Vinnies, Rosies, Emmanuel City Mission, QLD Koala Society and is a Surf Life Saver at Ballinger branch.

“Tom is a humble individual and does it for a greater purpose than for himself. He is an ambassador for our current youth.” – Nominator

Australia Day Cultural/Arts Award – Paul Jones

Paul is the heart and soul of the Queensland Service Heritage Band Association (QSHBA), managing six bands and more than 80 students of all ages.

Paul tirelessly teaches, trains, recruits and organises a variety of performances, including The Ekka, Toowoomba Flower Festival and the Brisbane ANZAC Day Parade. Paul also organises shows for the local retirement homes. As a dedicated and self-sacrificing volunteer, Paul spends most days in the band room, assisting members with their music studies.

With COVID-19 restrictions, Paul led performances in Queensland via national online competitions, where the band won a gold and silver medal to add to the trophy cabinet. Paul is a model of sacrifice and devotion to QSHBA.

“Paul is selfless and all about spreading the joy of music and making the band a family.” – Nominator

Australia Day Sports Award – Sathish Rajendran

Sathish started his cricket journey in 2011 with an ambition to promote multiculturalism through cricket. He opened Brisbane Super Kings Cricket Club (BSK) with only seven players. Sathish was later appointed as ‘Sports for All Community Ambassador’ by Cricket Australia and Queensland Cricket.

Sathish’s primary goal was helping refugees and providing them with a platform to play cricket. Sathish also assists with improving community cohesion and understanding of the cricket culture. He welcomes all local residents to build healthy relationships to promote multiculturalism in Australia. He is actively involved in organising major sports events, including the Federation of Indian Communities in Queensland’s first multicultural Sports Competition in 2021.

As at 2022, BSK now has 182 junior players and is the second largest community cricket club on the Southside. In addition, BSK has 480 senior players each year.

Sathish has spent half of his life dedicated to community cricket inclusion and coaching new players. His long-term goal is producing young community players to play for Australia.

“Sathish is an outstanding individual and the driving force behind the Brisbane Super Kings Cricket Club.” – Nominator

Corporate Citizen of the Year – Carmela Baxter

Carmela is a true champion for people living with disability and is the founder of Silky Oak Espresso and Silky Oak Support Services.

Carmela is a dedicated, selfless member of the community, volunteering in all capacities to help train and support those living with disability. Carmela is committed to providing career opportunities in a safe and supportive workplace for those living with disability, which includes several of the staff she has employed at the cafe.

Recently, Carmela has dedicated most of her time to Silky Oak Support Services which works to provide customised support networks for clients participating in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Carmela has also volunteered her time at other organisations such as Broken to Brilliant, Meals on Wheels and Uniting Care Community. In 2020, Carmela was the winner of the Ted Tremayne Business Awards and has been a recipient of the Ian Frazer Humanitarian Award, run by Lions International.

In addition to raising a family with her husband, Carmela has also fostered 16 youths of all ages.

“Carmela is a selfless individual who is always looking for ways to help others.” – Nominator

Community Event of the Year – Quota International of Carindale Inc – Brisbane Craft and Gift Fair

Quota International of Carindale Inc. have run the Brisbane Craft and Gift Fair for the past 18 years.

The Fair has since gotten so big it has outgrown its original location and moved to the Sleeman Sports Centre in Chandler. The event showcases stallholders who specialise in crafts like scrapbooking, jewellery, wood turning, sewing crafts and doll making with interactive live demonstrations.

The funds raised from the event go towards Quota charities, which include Mummy's Wish, CleftPals Queensland, Meals on Wheels and many others.

"It is truly an amazing event that has stood the test of time." – Nominator

Joint Green Heart Award - Marion Goward

Marion has contributed to the greening of Brisbane with the Men of the Trees since 1994. She started planting trees with the Girl Guides in the 1980s and has passionately put her spare time and energy into rehabilitating various areas of Brisbane and the Moreton Bay Local Government areas.

Preferring to have soil under her fingernails every Saturday morning, Marion quietly goes about improving the environment without fanfare or thanks. In recognition of her contributions, a spider was named after her in 2020. The Goward's spider is a chocolate brown burrowing spider found on Mt Glorious, Queensland.

"Marion's continuous 40 years of volunteering has improved Brisbane's biodiversity and made our city greener with her commitment to the environment." – Nominator

Joint Green Heart Award - Aidan Ameer

Aidan has been volunteering with the Lugg Street Bush Care Group in Bardon from 2017–2020 and during this time he has educated himself on the native plant species that are endemic to the area.

Aidan identified a section of Ithaca Creek that was choked by invasive weeds and in need of significant regeneration and he worked with Brisbane City Council to rectify the issue.

Aidan was granted his own bush care group in 2021 at the age of 14 and he constantly monitors the plant stock of native nurseries across Brisbane. Aidan attends bush care sites regularly after school and on weekends, he also volunteers at two local nurseries and has created an online map and survey for tracking the Richmond Birdwing Vines across South East Queensland.

"I am very proud of the work Aidan has been doing for the community especially when hearing all the positive and encouraging feedback from members of the local community." – Nominator

Spirit of Brisbane - Shelby Robinson

Shelby owns and operates a landscaping business and is well known locally for his community service. In the days leading up to the flood event in 2022 Shelby drove his truck around the areas of Oxley which were most likely to be impacted, and helped people evacuate.

Once the flood waters had receded, with the assistance of other local businesses that provided earth-moving equipment, Shelby spent the whole first week collecting rubbish and taking it to the local Resource Recovery Centre. This allowed residents to finish clearing their homes.

Shelby made more than 60 trips to the Resource Recovery Centre in the first week and, in the weeks after the flood debris had been cleared, he continued to help flood affected families by picking up and delivering items to assist residents with their recovery.

“Shelby, with the assistance of his family, truly went above and beyond to help members of his local community during the Brisbane flood events and the assistance he provided during and after the disaster is immeasurable.” – Nominator

Australia Day Achievement Award

Elizabeth Aston

After 20 years working full-time with Wesley Mission Queensland, Lizzie retired and returned as a volunteer with the Leisure and Lifestyle activities at St Marks Nursing Home, Chermside.

Over the last seven years, Lizzie has dedicated four days a week, sometimes five, arranging activities such as bake drives, sport outings, games days and an all-popular Happy Hour that comes with nibbles, drinks and an activity.

At 95 years of age, there is nothing stopping Lizzie from getting involved from woe to go – sometimes starting at 7.30am and not leaving until after 4.30pm. Lizzie's efforts are incredible and highly regarded by the residents and staff.

“Because Lizzie has had such a long-term connection with St Marks, she knows the place like the back of her hand and knows each and every resident by name, as well as their likes and dislikes. Lizzie is much loved by residents and staff alike!” – Nominator

Helen Beech

Helen is a retired physiotherapist who has dedicated her time to creating Balance Builders, a women's group focusing on the balance and prevention of osteoporosis in women.

Balance Builders started with 10 members and has since grown to between 30–50 attending. For the past 20 years, this group has created a safe place to get together, not only to exercise but to talk about the importance of health and encouragement, with a morning tea to cap it off. Some founding members still attend, and Helen does all of this in her own volunteered time.

This group has grown by word of mouth only and has created a ripple effect in the community. Women who would otherwise suffer from isolation are treated to a caring,

supportive morning with a sense of belonging. Helen also contributes to her local church, helping with activities, events, and encouraging the topic of men's and women's health.

"Helen – the extremely modest Queen of Balance Builders – is certainly an unsung local hero!" – Nominator

Kerry Burns

Kerry is a quiet achiever who has been an active volunteer for the Stafford Heights Neighbourhood Watch (NW) for many years and is currently serving as the Area Co-ordinator.

Kerry plays an active role in the Stafford Heights NW and is involved in setting up meetings, advising local residents of upcoming events and updating the Social Media page and newsletter. Additionally, she plays a key role in maintaining a strong relationship with local police stations and identifying issues in the local community.

Kerry exudes humility, kindness and genuine concern for others and, for International Women's Day in 2019, was recognised as an 'Amazing Woman' by Quest News.

"Without Kerry's selfless dedication of her own time and effort, the Stafford Heights Neighbourhood Watch would not be the community institution it is today." – Nominator

Guillermo Capati PSM

Guillermo, otherwise known as Bill, has always made a significant contribution to the Yeerongpilly/Yeronga community in a voluntary capacity as a member of the St Fabians Conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society of Queensland.

Over the past 11 years as a Vincentian volunteer of St Fabians Conference, Bill has visited people needing food, clothing, furniture, budget support and assistance with utility bills or back-to-school costs.

At St Fabians Conference, Bill served as its President for five years, in addition to five years as current Vice President, and three years as ongoing Secretary. Bill spends much of his time contributing to various groups, including the Brisbane Diocesan Central Council and St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland. Not only does Bill contribute to his local community, but he has volunteered overseas for many years. In December 2016, the president of the Philippines conferred the Pamana ng Pilipino Award to Bill for his volunteer work in the Philippines.

"Bill is always happy to contribute to his local community and always gives back to help those less fortunate." – Nominator

Matthew Crossley

At 34 years of age, Matthew has been an active community volunteer for more than 20 years.

Matthew's first community endeavour was being a coordinator for his school's Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal. Matthew's extensive volunteering history consists of being an active member of the Lions Club for ten years and currently serving as the Vice President of the Lions Club of Brisbane

Metropolitan. Matthew is also a volunteer and supporter of Stationary Aid since its creation in mid-2020, a volunteer director of the Australian Lions Wellbeing Foundation, and volunteers as a member of the Advisory Board for Connection Communities Australia.

Matthew has also been a volunteer judge for multiple awards programs including the Queensland Community Achievements Awards and the Queensland Young Achiever Awards. In addition, Matthew has been a significant blood donor, making more than 215 blood donations.

“Matthew has undertaken countless activities to the benefit of the community.” – Nominator

George Hulse OAM

George was a combat engineer, tunnel rat, and served with distinction in Malaysia, Kashmir, Papua New Guinea and Vietnam until his discharge in 1980. George went on to become a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Reserve and in recent years, has published a book about Australian military working dogs, *In Dogs We Trust*.

George has since had many volunteer roles including serving as the President of Toowong RSL Sub-Branch and Vice President of the Australian Defence Force Trackers and War Dogs Association. In 2021, George worked closely with his local Councillor, Councillor James Mackay, in organising the significant commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Nui Le involving the

4th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment/New Zealand. Operation Ivanhoe Garden in St Lucia was dedicated on 28 September 2021 and importantly honours the last battle fought by Australian and New Zealand troops during the Vietnam War.

George has ensured that the Battle of Nui Le will not be forgotten. In proposing and organising this dedication ceremony, George included veterans to participate in the ceremony, allowing them to share and honour those that perished in the battle.

“George is always looking out for ways to commemorate and honour those that have served and those that have fallen.” – Nominator

Norm Jefferies

Norm is the Managing Director for Truis Pty Ltd. and is known for his generosity and kindness. Norm leads his business on a journey of change from embracing sustainability and advising his clients on innovative ways to tread more softly on Earth, to being early adopters of new technologies.

In regards to his business, Norm offers his staff unlimited paid days off to do charity work and ensures the wellbeing of his staff is top priority, offering free yoga, exercise and brain training days, and relaxation sessions. Norm is big on giving back and encourages his staff to be altruistic through his example.

Outside of work, Norm focuses on family and community, from running a local athletics club to being a part of the St Johns School Board. In addition, Norm sponsors local children's sporting clubs and is a regular financial donor to the Centenary Men's Shed.

Norm is always looking for ways to help in his community and, in November 2022, donated 70 iPads to underprivileged schools in Brisbane.

“Norm is an exceptional person, and his time and talent are effectively shared to benefit families and our community.” – Nominator

Sophie Julian

Sophie has created a sense of tribe and community in her neighbourhood, providing 25 years of ongoing volunteer work.

Sophie is recognised most for her community commitment as President for the not-for-profit Sherwood Community Festival. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Sophie was determined to continue community connection, delivering COVID-19 safe events. Her focus was to support local businesses and community groups to connect with locals.

Her passion and positive professional outlook have kept this amazing festival going, with an increase in businesses partaking in this annual event. Sophie is known for her efforts behind the scenes to ensure the longevity of the festival, stepping into other volunteer roles on the committee to ensure every element is considered.

“Sophie is so passionate, committed and selfless, and has the Sherwood Community at heart” – Nominator

Mark Kerle

As a retired police officer, Mark has dedicated himself to a number of volunteer roles within his local community. Mark has served in executive roles over many years with the Bellbowrie Men’s Shed, the Moggill State Emergency Service Group and 4070 Neighbourhood Watch Group.

During the February 2022 flood event, Mark coordinated emergency efforts when his community was isolated for a number of days. Following the flood, Mark supported Council’s flood review, working closely with Council’s Disaster Operations team to ensure communities are prepared for future weather events.

In Mark’s role with Neighbourhood Watch, he works closely with Queensland Police Service Officers to help reduce local crime rates and communicate key community safety messages. In addition, Mark’s service to the Men’s Shed has helped create a number of opportunities for men to interact and work on a range of community projects, which in turn help address mental health issues among this demographic.

“Mark is always first to put his hand up to help and lead by example. He epitomises what commitment to the local community is all about.” – Nominator

Robyn Porter

Robyn serves as a volunteer in the Quota Club of Brisbane, which she has been a member of for 25 years. Robyn has taken on the leadership role of coordinating fundraising for the last few years to enable the Club to support disadvantaged women and children in the community.

Robyn engages the members of the Club, their family members and friends in a number of events including Bunnings BBQs, carpark fundraisers and an annual Christmas breakfast. A humble and quiet achiever, her achievements have helped other community groups including schools, charities and victims of the floods.

“Robyn has a sense of humour, is down to earth and humble about her achievements.” – Nominator

Gregory Stegman

With 45 years of pool safety teaching experience, Gregory has been providing valuable services to the community—from teaching adults and children how to swim to providing education on how to rescue a swimmer in dangerous situations.

Gregory has a wonderful way with people and endeavours to help assimilate new families into the community. Refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine, as well as migrant children from India and Vietnam have been a few of the recent recipients of Gregory’s lessons.

Gregory also engages in fundraising for various charities, which included a 30 kilometre walk for the 80th anniversary of Kokoda, and has raised money for the charity Orange Sky.

“Gregory is a man of many talents who is community minded and has a generous heart.” – Nominator

Mary-Ann Strelow

Mary-Ann plays a key role in the NOW Business Network group and has worked with this organisation to raise funds for Everton Park State High School.

Mary-Ann volunteers as part of the events team with NOW Business Network and has played a key role in organising a fundraising event in October 2022 at Hillstone St Lucia, which raised \$40,000 for Down Syndrome Queensland. Mary-Ann was the Chair of the NOW Business Network in 2020 and helped guide this important community organisation through the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, helping to keep members connected, informed and involved.

Mary-Ann has also taken on a mentoring and leadership role within Absolutely Positively Women as she works to empower other women by sharing her own experience in owning and managing a small business. Mary-Ann also serves on the Board of The Nest Community, a registered charity in Everton Park that brings together women through a shared love of making handcrafts. It is a space to share, learn and support sustainable living through handcrafts and offers handmade living workshops, a community garden and a haberdashery thrift shop. The profits are used to support an exchange mentoring program for young women.

“Mary-Ann makes it her mission to give back to her local community.” – Nominator

Janette Taylor

For almost 20 years Janette has been the convenor of the annual Brisbane Craft and Gift Fair, ensuring that hundreds of local creatives across the city are able to showcase and sell their precious creations.

Janette has also been a member of Quota International of Carindale since 1995 and a board member and President. Janette not only goes out of her way to help in her own community but in other communities as well. This included organising hundreds of dollars in vouchers for families devastated by the 2011 floods in Condamine to use at the nearest hardware store to aid in their recovery. Janette also organised more vouchers to be delivered from

Quota Carindale to the town of St George in Queensland to help them get back on their feet.

In recognition of her character, Janette was appointed as the Regional Director of Quota International, the parent body of Quota International for Australia and New Zealand.

“Janette lives and breathes servant leadership and will always be caught helping with a big smile wherever she goes.” – Nominator

Shaune Watts

Shaune has been fundraising for the past 11 years for the Mater Little Miracles, which raises funds for premature babies and their families.

Shaune’s fundraising this year alone has raised \$120k for vital Neonatal Critical Care Unit (NCCU) equipment and raised close to \$700k in total. Shaune has also raised close to \$100K for other not-for-profit organisations with causes that have affected his family. This is Shaune’s way of giving back for the care his wife and son received when their son was born prematurely.

“Shaune’s success is that his passion for a good cause resonates with his supporters including 30 businesses from Queensland and further afield.” – Nominator