

The Daily Telegraph

Hills Citizens of the year, Karen O'Neill, Steve Wickman, Graham Rawstron, Hannah Stack recognised

Jake McCallum, Hills Shire Times

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RIDING for the Disabled volunteer Karen O'Neill has been named the joint Citizen of the Year for The Hills, after 36 years of service to the Box Hill-based support network.

The Winston Hills resident, who was awarded the honour alongside Hills Barbarians Cricket Club volunteer Steve Wickerman on Saturday, said she was shocked to discover her nomination.

"RDA is a big part of my life," Mrs O'Neill said.

“I have been able to fit it in with work and family commitments for all these years because I enjoy seeing the pleasure other people get working with the horse and all of the other volunteers involved.”



Riding for the Disabled at Box Hill president Kerry Souter for winning Project Local. (L-R) Hannibal the horse, Nicole King (staff coach), Karen O'Neill (Honorary President), Kerry Souter (Administrator).

The not for profit organisation develops abilities and enriches the lives of people with disabilities through equine therapy and riding programs.

Mrs O'Neill said it was the other volunteers that inspired her to take on the rank of president of the volunteer group for the past 10 years.

“We are always working with a great team of people, I have made lifelong friends that are inspirational because they are there to support others,” she said.

“I would love to encourage others in the community to come out and volunteer, even if you have no skills with horses, you come away feeling good about what you have done for another person.

“We have a photo at RDA where there is an empty wheelchair in the mounting ground, everyone leaves there worries behind and that makes a difference in other people's lives.”

Hills Mayor Michelle Byrne said the award recipients had “made a positive contribution to the lives of others, without asking for anything in return.”



Hills citizens of the year 2019. Announced at the Hills Shire council Australia Day ceremony. Picture: Morris McLennan : Red SquareMedia

OUR BEST AND BRIGHTEST

Joint Citizen of the Year: Steve Wickman has played with the Hills Barbarians Cricket Club since he was 15-years-old and coached junior cricket for 28 years. He was the recent recipient of the Sydney Thunder HomeWorld Community Hero Award.



Steve Wickman is the joint Citizen of the Year. Picture: Morris McLennan : Red SquareMedia

Community Group of the Year: Baulkham Hills Cricket Club has, for a century, fulfilled its role as a sporting club, social outlet and a support base for cricket lovers.

Community Group of the Year: Children’s Medical Research Institute Hills Fundraising Committee raised more than \$100,000 for vital medical research in the past 12 months.

Young Citizen of the Year: Hannah Stack leads the Sydney Hills Business Chamber’s new YoHu (Young and Hungry) initiative.



Hannah Stack is Young Citizen of the Year.

Senior Citizen of the Year: Graham Rawstron has been President of the Friends of Bella Vista Farm Park since August 2015. He is passionate about the enhancement of Bella Vista Farm which is considered to be “the Jewel of The Hills Shire”.



Graham Rawstron was named Senior Citizen of the Year.