

Australia Day Award Winners

Source: Northern Beaches Council

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It's no surprise there were so many great achievements among the winners for this year's Australia Day Awards.

Well-deserved Locals Honoured in Australia Day Awards

Recipients included a passionate wildlife rescuer, environmental warrior, founder of a youth suicide prevention charity and a representative of the Australian Wallabies squad.

Northern Beaches Mayor Michael Regan said our community is full of outstanding contributors and it is wonderful to honour the award winners in this year's Australia Day Awards.

"While none of the recipients seek recognition or praise, this is a great opportunity for us as a community to acknowledge their great contributions to our community as we celebrate Australia Day.

"It's such a privilege to meet these amazing people and on behalf of the community we thank you for your outstanding work and achievements. We all know the Northern Beaches is a great place to live, but it is people like you who make it even better.

“Congratulations to the twenty overall winners and all the nominees - keep up the fantastic work!” Mayor Regan said.

The Winners Are:

Citizen of the Year: Graham Whittaker of Narrabeena for dedicating most of his life supporting others, particularly young people across the Northern Beaches as mentor of the RAISE program at Northern Beaches Secondary College (Cromer Campus). He has also been an on-call support person for juveniles in custody needing assistance.

Senior Citizen of the Year: Maureen Rutledge of Elanora Heights is the Coordinator for the Sunday Activities Program for Adults with Special Needs at Northern Beaches Creative Leisure and Learning INC. For over 25 years she has been delivering a high level of service, creating opportunities and new learning experiences in a fun environment for the attendees.

Young Citizen of the Year: Paris Jeffcoat of Avalon is founder and director of the youth suicide prevention charity, *One Eighty Avalon Inc.* The youth driven charity is working toward a future free from youth suicide by designing, implementing and funding programs on the Northern Beaches that promote open communication, mental health management strategies and the prevention of suicide.

Sportsperson of the Year: Reece Hodge of Manly has played 42 Super Rugby games and 33 test matches. His junior years were spent with the Harbord Harlequins, then the Manly Marlins and in 2016 he signed with the Melbourne Rebels and the Australian Wallabies where he plays currently. Reece has faced adversity through a debilitating ankle injury but returned to the game to become one of the most influential and for aspiring rugby union players.

Community Event of the Year: The biannual Special Olympics Festival of Sport presented by the Special Olympics Sydney Northern Beaches provides a unique experience for people with an intellectual disability to develop their sports skills, experience fun and fellowship with the focus on their ability and the benefits of working as a team.

Outstanding Community Service Awards:

There were 15 deserving community members which received awards in this category.

Vivian Dunstan of Warriewood - Founder of ADHD Support Australia

Peter Watson of Forestville - Founder of the Forest Men's Kitchen

Geoff McKay of Allambie Heights - Ex Serviceman and President of Balgowlah RSL

Harriet Spark of Fairlight - Started Operation Straw or 'Strawkle'

Helen Pook of Manly - Volunteer at Lifeline's Australia's Helpline

Diana Aitken of St Ives - Volunteer at St Matthews Church Soup Kitchen

Eli Demeny of Manly - Volunteer at Manly Sailability

Mick Miller of Elvina Bay - Raised funds for the Tomorrow Trust charity for post cancer support.

Joan Reid of Collaroy Plateau - Volunteer for Sydney Wildlife

Robert Owen Carlon of Manly - For the last 60 years he has been involved in various roles in five swimming clubs

Ralph Schubert of Belrose - Volunteer for the MULTILIT program for Wakehurst Public School

Peter Dean of Frenchs Forest - Customer Manager at Grace City Foodcare Centre

James Cowan of Collaroy - World War II Veteran

Helen Hines of Elanora Heights - President of Physical Culture Edith Parsons School of Physical Culture and volunteer and

Rowena Graham of Collaroy Plateau - Treasurer, Children's Medical Research Institute Northern Beaches Fundraising Committee.

The awards were presented by the Mayor on Thursday 24 January at Dee Why Civic Centre.