

Friday 7 January 2011

2011 CITIZEN & YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Australia Day Ceremony, Wednesday 26 January, Ryde Civic Centre

A special group of people who have earned the admiration of the community will be honoured on Australia Day when the 2011 City of Ryde Citizen and Young Citizen of the Year are announced.

The 17 nominees, from teens to octogenarians, represent the high values and diversity of our community, and include humanitarians, educators, health professionals, artists, students and volunteers. Some are quiet achievers, while others are natural leaders
www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/citizen.

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Artin Etmekdjian said: “The quality of the nominees and the broad range of their achievements made this year’s selection very difficult.

“One thing is clear – a strong commitment and community spirit is thriving in the City of Ryde.”

The Citizen of the Year Awards recognise those who have shown strong community commitment and whose dedication in their chosen field has made a positive and lasting difference to our community.

The special Australia Day event also includes an address by the City of Ryde’s Australia Day Ambassador, Tracy Bevan (Executive Director - The McGrath Foundation).

Fifty new Australian Citizens, all local residents representing countries from around the globe, will also be welcomed as part of the Australia Day ceremony.

The day will end with the annual Australia Day Family Concert and Fireworks at North Ryde Common (5.00 – 9.00 pm.) For full details go to www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/australiaday

Attachment: Nominee Biographies, Ambassador Biog + photos
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2011 CITY OF RYDE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

Rayegh Akopian

Having worked very hard all his life and cared for his family, Rayegh developed his volunteering capacity in retirement. People easily sense his compassion, modesty and down to earth approach. As a volunteer for North Ryde Community Aid he uses his own car to assist local Armenian Seniors. A neighbouring family is very grateful for his much needed care and assistance.

Dr John Clayton Beattie

A practising cardiologist, physician, educator and mentor for over 30 years, Dr Beattie's skill and dedication has impacted countless people both locally and in the wider community. He is regarded highly by his peers for his problem solving knowledge and is president and the driving force behind the local medical association and a dedicated family man.

Stephen Conway

To his family he is a doting husband and model father, to his friends and neighbours he is an unsung hero who cares for the community and the environment with a passion. Whenever he learns of someone's need, he helps without being asked. The extent of his contribution to the community is hard to gauge since he does not talk about it and one has to 'catch him in the act'.

Maria Carnivale

Hundreds of patients of Ryde Hospital have received hand made 'get well' cards from Maria who is both a volunteer and employee at the hospital. Her volunteer duties include patient visits and observation, as well as entertainment with games and videos. She also helps boost patients feeling of wellness with exercises to regain their fitness.

Malcolm Donnelly AM

His distinguished career as an opera singer saw Malcolm Donnelly perform at the Scottish Opera, Royal Opera Covent Garden, English National Opera, The Bolshoi, The Metropolitan and ultimately with Opera Australia. Despite the onset of Parkinson's disease he continues to support young students as a mentor and adjudicator and is a board member of the Joan Sutherland Society.

Judy Harris

A member of Lions Club for two decades, Judy's association includes multiple times as Club President and other senior roles. Her fund raising activities have benefited countless members of the community to lead more active and fulfilling lives. Other voluntary roles include the Ryde Crime Prevention Committee, Red Lantern, Eastwood Community Aid, Farrar School for the Deaf, Weemala and Scouts.

Betty Hungerford

An active supporter of public education and wildflower enthusiast, Betty contributes to the community through many service organisations. Her five decade association with the Flower Club has seen the club, whose motto is

'Friendship through flowers", raise over half a million dollars for charity. Betty was invited to do the flowers for the Queen when the Opera House opened.

Karen Laing

Karen Laing works tirelessly in the community through her involvement with the elderly and children. Outside of her profession of funeral director, Karen sponsors activities and entertainments for the enjoyment of the elderly in numerous local nursing homes, fund raising events for kids' charities and also offers after-hours grief counselling to families. She is on 24 hour call for anyone doing through a major crisis.

Kathy Lingard

Kathy is a quiet achiever who has worked for 30+ years in health as a neonatal nurse then a midwife. Her care always exceeds the requirements of her position and she does this with no thought of reward or recognition. She is known for her warmth, her smile and professional attitude. Kathy has cared for Ryde women and their babies for over a quarter of a century and her contribution can be seen everywhere.

Michelle Loxton

Michelle selflessly serves the local community through not only her generosity to the Young Life charity as committee chair and donor, but also opens her family home to young international visitors. She has been a member of the Eastwood Uniting Church for more than 20 years and does community outreaches like the Granny Smith Festival.

Professor Jenó (Ben) Marosszeky

At 71 years of age, Dr Ben Marosszeky has dedicated his life to the care and treatment of the sick and infirm. He is widely recognised through the medical fraternity and academia as a skilled, untiring and caring individual. His contribution to medical research and the education of young students, his humour and vigour both inspires and benefits the community at large.

Anne Pridham

Anne's work as a volunteer gardener and team leader with Easy Care Gardening for the past six years has benefitted many elderly residents as well as younger or inexperienced volunteers hoping to contribute to the community. Anne has been particularly generous with her time and organisation skills as she volunteers every Saturday after a week's paid work.

Karekin Simonian

For more than 50 years Karekin Simonian has dedicated his time and expertise to the betterment of sport in Australia and overseas. He is internationally recognised as a referee in weightlifting and volunteered at the Sydney Olympics 2000 on the weight lifting team. He is an inspiration to those who know him for his generous support of and work as committee member of the PCYC (Police Citizens Youth Club).

Abdul Ghani Sultani

Ryde Hospital could not function as it does without the voluntary work carried out by people like Abdul Ghani Sultani. Originally from Afghanistan, Abdul has helped the community from behind the scenes as an Administration

Volunteer at Ryde Hospital since 2007. He is described as a 'tireless worker' and always eager to help in any way he can.

Verdun Walsh

Described as an 'extraordinary' Australian, Verdun Walsh has many titles – returned soldier, Changi prisoner of war, author, family man, traveller and educator. In 2005, at the age of 88, he drove 13,000 km solo around Australia, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of WWII, to honour his fellow Diggers and to ensure that future generations understood the evils of war.

2011 CITY OF RYDE **YOUNG** CITIZEN OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

James Camilleri

An active member of the Ryde Youth Advisory Council since 2007, James draws on his leadership, social conscience and communication skills to advocate for young people both at school and in the wider community. He was School Captain in 2006 also serves on several school committees and volunteers at a local dementia centre and church. His achievements include a Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award, Silver Excellence and Effort in Science and Edmund Rice Oratory Award. James represented Ryde in the 2010 Shift This Youth Parliament and is short listed to take part again in 2011.

Valiant Warzecha

Valiant has been an outstanding leader and role model at Epping Boys for six years. The culmination of this was his election as School Captain for 2010. With many awards to his name, including Bronze Duke of Edinburgh, 2008 Silver Medal State Debating Championships, and 2008 Chairperson Sydney Morning Herald Public Speaking, Valiant contributes to the wider community through Eastwood Public School before and after care, St Vincent de Paul West Ryde and as a Red Cross blood donor. He is also a keen sportsman involved in hockey and was water polo team captain for several seasons.

2011 City of Ryde Australia Day Ambassador - Tracy Bevan

Tracy Bevan helped set up the McGrath Foundation in 2003 following her best friend Jane McGrath's diagnosis and experience with breast cancer.

In her current role as Executive Director on the McGrath Foundation Board, Tracy spends a great deal of her time travelling around the country speaking at different events to raise awareness about the vital role the McGrath Foundation plays whilst encouraging all women to be breast aware.

Tracy remains one of the driving forces behind the McGrath Foundation and is dedicated to increasing breast awareness in young women whilst raising much-needed funds to place McGrath Breast Care Nurses throughout rural and regional Australia.

Tracy moved to Australia from England when she married cricketing legend, Michael Bevan, in 1997.