

Friday 20 January 2023

RYDE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR WINNERS ANNOUNCED

A volunteer sports coach and champion for seniors have been announced as winners of this year's Ryde Citizen of the Year Awards.

Every year the City of Ryde publicly acknowledges and recognises the outstanding accomplishments by individuals in our community who have excelled in their chosen field in two categories – Young Citizen of the Year (12-25 years) and Citizen of the Year.

This year's winners are Maria Gharemanian (Young Citizen of the Year) and Ross Forster (Citizen of the Year).

Maria Gharemanian supports the local Armenian community by volunteering her time and skills at community club Hamazgaine Nairi & Homenetmen Ararat combined community chapters, where she has served as an executive board member since 2019. She has also been involved in fundraising activities and provides care for the local elderly community.

Volunteer coach Ross Forster has worked with Ryde Athletics for over 40 years and still currently coaches three afternoons a week. Over the years he has acted in many volunteer roles within the athletics community and has played a crucial role in setting up Ryde Athletics' fundraising activities to provide travel grants to their athletes who represent NSW or Australia.

City of Ryde Mayor Cllr Sarkis Yedelian OAM congratulated the nominees and winners and acknowledged their service to the community. "Each year I am amazed at the quality of nominees doing so much good in our community, and this year is no exception."

"Thank you to every nominee for working tirelessly and selflessly to help others. From helping protect our environment to nurturing young talent, fundraising for community organisations, advocating for vulnerable people and showcasing different cultures, you make such a difference to so many lives."

City of Ryde CEO Wayne Rylands also attended the awards event. "It has been a tough couple of years as we have faced challenges relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and extreme weather events," he said.

"This has impacted many people's wellbeing and their pockets, resulting in social isolation and financial distress. The programs and initiatives you are involved in address these difficulties and bring people together. I am so pleased that these awards allow us to recognise the tremendous achievements of those citizens that go above and beyond to make a difference."

The Citizen of the Year awards are held under the auspices of the Australia Day Council of NSW and judging is conducted by a local selection panel. For more information visit www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/citizen.

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