

Wednesday 22 January 2025

Ryde's 2025 Citizens of the Year announced

The City of Ryde honoured its 2025 Citizen of the Year, Young Citizen of the Year, Sportsperson of the Year, and Environmental Citizen of the Year at a special ceremony held at North Ryde Golf Club on 20 January.

Community leader Nora Etmekdjian was named Citizen of the Year for her more than 20 years of dedication to Ryde, growing community events, preserving heritage, and championing safety initiatives. Young Citizen of the Year Rajmallan Thiagarajan was recognised for raising \$45,000 for leukemia research, promoting diversity, and mentoring peers. Sportsperson of the Year Linda Ham was honoured for her work in transforming community fitness through inclusive programs and award-winning initiatives, while Environmental Citizen of the Year Pamela Ward was celebrated for 35 years of ecological preservation, including co-founding The Habitat Community Nursery and leading bushcare programs.

City of Ryde Mayor Trenton Brown congratulated all nominees across the four award categories.

"We are incredibly proud to celebrate the achievements of this year's Citizen of the Year Award nominees and winners," said Mayor Brown.

"Our winners, Nora, Rajmallan, Linda, and Pamela, have each made extraordinary contributions to our community, embodying the values of leadership, inclusivity, and sustainability that make Ryde such a vibrant and diverse place to live. Their dedication inspires us all, and I thank them for their tireless efforts to make our City a better place."

About our 2025 Citizen of the Year Winners:

- **Citizen of the Year - Nora Etmekdjian**

For over 20 years, Nora Etmekdjian has championed Ryde's community spirit. As Treasurer of the West Ryde Chamber of Commerce, she expanded the Easter Fair into a flagship event. Nora mobilises volunteers as Chair of the Red Shield Appeal and preserves Ryde's heritage through cultural organisations. Nora's dedication to civic engagement and safety initiatives strengthens community bonds, making Ryde a more vibrant, inclusive place. Nora's leadership continues to inspire positive change.

- **Young Citizen of the Year - Rajmallan Thiagarajan**

Rajmallan Thiagarajan inspires through leadership and service. As a school Prefect, Rajmallan led Epping Boys High School to raise \$45,000 for the World's Greatest Shave, uniting peers for leukemia research. Rajmallan's advocacy as a Youth

Ambassador promotes diversity and anti-racism, while their mentorship expanded a cultural exchange program by 50%. From environmental initiatives to cadet participation, Rajmallan embodies inclusivity and civic duty, setting an extraordinary example of youth leadership in Ryde.

- **Sportsperson of the Year - Linda Ham**

Linda Ham has revolutionised fitness and community engagement in Ryde. As manager of Teambros Fitness Club, she fosters inclusivity and well-being, earning national awards for her efforts. A former teacher, Linda introduced innovative sports programs, inspiring students of all abilities. Linda's involvement with initiatives like Clean Up Australia Day and the Biggest Morning Tea, blend health with community spirit. Linda's dedication transforms lives, uniting people through fitness and shared purpose.

- **Environmental Citizen of the Year - Pamela Ward**

Pamela Ward has championed Ryde's natural environment for 35 years. A co-founder of The Habitat Community Nursery, Pamela oversees propagation, bushcare, and education initiatives. Her tireless work with the City of Ryde Bushcare Program and local festivals raises environmental awareness, while mentoring students and individuals with disabilities. Pamela's dedication fosters ecological preservation and inspires future generations to protect Ryde's biodiversity.

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