

Friday 25 May 2018

## **VOLUNTEERS RECOGNISED AT CITY OF RYDE AWARDS**

Maryann Webb, the founder of charity Project Kin, has received the Volunteer of the Year award at a special ceremony at Civic Hall last night.

The award was part of the 2018 Volunteer Recognition Awards, which acknowledges the contribution made by local volunteers in the City of Ryde.

Ms Webb created Project Kin just over two years ago as a way of helping women and children who are facing hardship.

From humble beginnings in 2016 in which 10 volunteers met regularly to make Ms Webb's vision a reality, today Project Kin boasts more than 500 volunteers and helps hundreds of women and children in need through the making and distribution of 'Play and Learn' packs. Each pack includes handmade dolls made by Project Kin's dedicated volunteers and hundreds of packs have now been distributed to children in need.

Ms Webb has seen first-hand how dolls impact children living in poverty and knows how each doll made by Project Kin impacts a child far greater than any standard toy would. The benefits for the women who make the dolls also cannot be understated, as this has provided an empowering avenue which instils purpose and hope to those going through hardship.

Karina Dentice was awarded the Highly Commended award for her work at Christian Community Aid. Ms Dentice serves as the organisation's telephone linkage representative and helps provide regular social contact and support for people who are isolated or prefer speaking on the phone rather than face-to-face contact.

The Young Volunteer of the Year award was awarded to Mateen Kholghi for his work with the local Baha'i community both in Ryde and across South Eastern Australia.

Mr Kholghi conducts children classes for the Baha'i community and has assisted families going through hardship. He has also represented Ryde in the annual Youth Parliament of the World's Religious and has participated in local summer camps to motivate local youths to take steps towards uniting the local community.

Environmental crusader, 5 for Ryde, was awarded the Group Volunteer of the Year award.

Established by Jo Taranto and Corina Seeto just over a year ago, 5 For Ryde aims to reduce the amount of waste that goes into landfill in the City of Ryde. The group has signed up 77 cafes in the City of Ryde to its Responsible Cafes campaign, with each member taking steps to encourage their customers to use reusable cups.

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Jerome Laxale, who was a member of the judging panel for the awards, said Ms Webb, Mr Kholghi, 5 for Ryde and Ms Dentice were all extremely deserving recipients of the Volunteer of the Year awards.

“It is terrific that we are able to recognise the achievements of Ms Webb, Mr Kholghi, 5 for Ryde and Ms Dentice because the kindness, generosity and sense of civic duty that each of them has demonstrated through their volunteer work has helped the Ryde community in so many ways,” Cllr Laxale said.

“In congratulating the recipients of the Volunteer of the Year awards, I would also like to give credit to all 34 nominees for the 2018 awards, each of whom are invaluable members of the community.

“Whether it be one hour a week helping with day-to-day duties at a local charity or a full time role raising much-needed funds for those less fortunate or experiencing hardship, these volunteers are the pillars of our community here in Ryde and without them this City would be poorer for it.”

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