

Cassowary Coast Regional Council

AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD

WINNERS 2021



CITIZEN OF THE YEAR – TRUUS BIDDLECOMBE

Truus is well-known locally as the 'go to' person for general enquiries, resources, knowledge of activities and events, wildlife enquiries– the list goes on. As a volunteer for Red Cross Emergency Services, committee member for Mission Beach & Burgundy Club, Mission Beach Community Association, Mission Beach Community Support Inc, Patron of Mission Arts and foreshore clean-ups.

Truus is an inspiration to her community and a welcoming advocate for community volunteering. If there is community work to be done, Truus is there with her 'sleeves rolled up'.

In 2020, Truus excelled with her selfless volunteer work in keeping the community connected. This possibly has never been more important than in the year of COVID-19, especially with the loss of one local newspaper and the increase of mental health issues due to the pandemic. Truus continued to volunteer hundreds of hours to produce 118 regular e-newsletters for distribution to approximately 900 subscribers. This dissemination of locally relevant information covers everything from the latest news on the pandemic, cyclone preparedness to Neighbourhood Watch, Council media releases, workshops and so much more.

Truus' commitment and dedication year after year to her community, her environment and the Cassowary Coast at large, helps make this region such a great place to live.

YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR – LORI EDGERTON

Lori's excellence is broad, and includes her pursuit of cultural and sporting interests alongside her academic focus. A highly skilled musician, Lori played alto saxophone in the college concert band, and dedicated months of after-school and weekend rehearsals to school musicals.

Lori is an outstanding sportswoman especially in netball, but is also dedicated to Surf Life Saving volunteering where she has been a reliable and energetic senior mentor to junior members at Etty Bay Surf Life Saving Club.

Staff and students alike recognise in Lori her great leadership strengths, having elected her to the role of Innisfail State College Captain in Year 12. Her oratory skills are outstanding as evidenced by her victory in the Lions Youth of the Year public speaking competition in addition to being announced the overall winner for the Innisfail District in 2020.

Lori has been awarded both a Merit Certificate (for consistently excellent effort and behaviour grades) and an Academic Excellence medal (for consistently excellent academic achievement) every year of her six years of college enrolment.

Lori will commence her study of Bachelor of Global Sustainability at Bond University this year, and we are confident that she will achieve her aspiration to truly make a positive difference on the global stage.

LIFETIME CONTRIBUTION AWARD – ALFRED MACDONALD
LIFETIME CONTRIBUTION AWARD – JAMES BOYD
LIFETIME CONTRIBUTION AWARD – DAVID RYAN
LIFETIME CONTRIBUTION AWARD – CONNIE SYMONS
LIFETIME CONTRIBUTION AWARD – JOHN BEARE
LIFETIME CONTRIBUTION AWARD – LEILA PORTER
LIFETIME CONTRIBUTION AWARD – ESTELLE KOPP
LIFETIME CONTRIBUTION AWARD – NOELENE BYRNE

Lifetime Contribution Award – Alfred MacDonald

Alf has been recognized as a tireless fundraiser for the Tully Tyson Lodge for the past 59 years.

He has a 33rd degree in the lodge – Alf will be seen volunteering at:

- Drive reviver,
- Mowing lawns for the elderly (Considering he himself is close to 80 years old)
- Delivering school packs to disadvantaged students
- Supporting all local schools in a variety of ways.

Alf is a wonderful example of community volunteering.

Lifetime Contribution Award – James Boyd

Jim has been a rower since his school days and in 1987, Jim joined the Innisfail Rowing Club – he has competed at Regional, State & National Championships with great success.

Jim has also competed at International Comps - Pan Pacific Masters & World Masters. In addition to competing as a rower, Jim has also been involved in mentoring and coaching for more than 30 years – and has filled a number of club positions where he has been head coach and club captain.

Jim has been Club Patron for the past 15 years and is also a life member of the Innisfail Rowing Club thanks to his significant contribution over many years.

Lifetime Contribution Award – David Ryan

David is long time secretary and welfare officer of the Tully RSL Sub-Branch, he is also a Vietnam Veteran. He is well-known for looking after anyone in need.

David's roles have included:

- Co-organizing of ANZAC Day and other Commemorative services.
- Treasurer of FNQ Legacy
- QLD representative for 'Quilts for Valor'
- David also assists at Mission Beach School and the Information Centre.

David has excelled in his commitment to all things RSL.

Lifetime Contribution Award – Connie Symons

Connie is the daughter of a pioneering family of the area and works tirelessly for Cassowary Coast region. Connie has provided her skills and passion over multiple decades as a volunteer at the Tourist & Information Centre and Innisfail Nursery.

In her spare time she is involved with – Johnstone River Landcare Inc, Community Gardens, Tropical Froggery, Feast of the Senses, Art Deco Society, Innisfail & District Historical Society to name but a few.

Connie can regularly be found holding the fort at the Innisfail Historical Society Edith Street where she can pass on her extensive knowledge of the regions past.

Lifetime Contribution Award – John Beare

John has been an active member of our community for over 60 years –

- Foundation member of the Master Builders Association and in his own business has trained @ 25 apprentices along the way
- Goondi Scouts - John was a long standing committee member and also held the position of District Leader
- State Emergency member from 1976 to 1986 he was president during Cyclone Winifred and worked tirelessly during this time with his team to make sure of the community's safety
- Fitzgerald Rotary Club – Awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship Award which recognizes Rotarians that have shown they are prepared to go the extra mile in support of people in need – he was also president during his time in Rotary
- Past brothers League Club & Brothers Rugby league Football Club- Awarded Life Membership in 2012 – John has been a key member of the Past brothers Leagues club since 2001 During the last 20 years he has been president for 8 of those years
- Innisfail & District Men's Shed - he was an inaugural member and is now the president.

At 88 years of age John is still giving to the community he grew up in and does not seem to have any intention of stopping.

Lifetime Contribution Award – Leila Porter

Lee joined the Cardwell community in 2002 and straight away took on the role of full time secretary for Cardwell Meals on Wheels. Not long after she assumed the convener role. Both positions are unpaid voluntary duties.

Lee worked with the Salvation Army in the aftermath of Cyclone Yasi – this included delivering meals and washing for people without power.

Lee's other volunteering in Cardwell include, Rockingham Cardwell Care, Cardwell & District Community Association, Cardwell Ambulance Committee, Local Health committee, NQ Sports Fishing Championships and still counting.

Currently, Lee is treasurer for Cardwell Lions since 2019 and continues to donate her time for the betterment of the Cardwell community.

Lifetime Contribution Award – Estelle Kopp

Estelle has been involved in many groups over many years in the Cassowary Coast region - these groups include:

Innisfail & District Netball Association, Innisfail Golf Club, School P & C's, Red Cross, Cancer Council, Disaster Relief and her latest venture is the Innisfail Friends of the Foundation - an organisation which has been set up to purchase vital equipment for our local hospital.

Estelle has been a tireless worker when it comes to taking care of her community and goes well and truly above and beyond what is expected of her.

Lifetime Contribution Award – Noelene Byrne

Noelene has had many year of volunteering in the Tully community – much of her life has been based around delivering service through:

- Australian Red Cross Tully branch
- Queensland Ambulance Services Tully
- Battle of the Coral Sea Committee
- Queensland Country Woman's Association Tully branch
- Queensland Country Woman's Association (Far Northern Division)
- **Secretary** of the Australian Red Cross Tully branch
- **Treasurer** of the Queensland Ambulance Services (Tully)
- **Coordinator** for the Battle of the Coral Sea Committee
- **First Vice President** of the Queensland Country Woman's Association Tully branch
- **Property Convener** of the Queensland Country Woman's Association (Far Northern Division).

Noelene's has been tireless in her contribution to volunteering in the Cassowary Coast recognized from 1985 and continuing onwards in 2021.

COMMUNITY EVENT OF THE YEAR AWARD – SUNFLOWER G'DAY FROM OZ – FREDERICK JAMES

COMMUNITY EVENT OF THE YEAR AWARD - FROM WAR HORSE TO PLOUGH HORSE (100TH ANNIVERSARY OF WWI SETTLEMENT OF EL ARISH - EL ARISH DIGGERS MUSEUM COMMITTEE

Community Event of the Year – Sunflower G'Day World from Oz – Frederick James

Fred created a message to the whole world by planting approximately 45,000 plants to spell out the words G'Day World from Oz with a happy face. Working with immediate neighbours, ten acres was ploughed and seeded. The sunflower project captivated over 5,000 visitors to the region and the unforgettable social media image was viewed globally and picked up by the local television station.

Community Event of the Year - From War Horse to Plough Horse (100th Anniversary of WW1 Settlement of El Arish) - El Arish Diggers Museum Committee

The El Arish Diggers Museum and community commemorated the 100th anniversary of the WW1 Soldiers Settlement of El Arish in August of last year. The event was called From War Horse to Plough Horse.

Despite the rainy conditions and COVID restrictions, there was a large crowd on the Centenary day and since, generated by the Rising Sun Sculpture crafted by master blacksmith Brent Cook. A large Australian Defence Force party was present in the form of current personnel at Townsville, Tully, Cairns, retired personnel from Tully RSL, and from the Innisfail RSL which was also attended by the Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland.

SERVICE TO SPORT AWARD - MICHELLE LLOYD

Michelle is a recognised force in the Mission Beach sporting community volunteering her time in multiple roles of administrator, grant writer, qualified coach/trainer and also participant. As a founding member of Mission Beach Outrigger Canoe Club, Michelle was instrumental in securing funding to construct the 'Vaka Hut' club house used as a community social and sporting facility including the ONA Mission.

Michelle's love of water sports led her to be a founding member of the Australian Rafting Federation and she was a key player with the World Championship bid including the win for Tully in 2019.

Michelle's dedication to the supporting sport has achieved positive legacies for the sport in the region.

YOUNG SPORTS PERSON AWARD – MICHAEL LINDSAY

Michael is a keen competitor in all school sports and athletics and local rugby league club member, but loves his cricket. Michael has represented the far north region through the under 15's Peninsula cricket team and Under 15's Far North Rep team in 2020.

Commencing this year, Michael has secured a cricket scholarship and will attend the Ipswich Grammar School.

CULTURAL AWARD – MARIE CARMAN

As a direct descendent from a WW1 pioneering family, Marie has put her heart and soul into the El Arish community, working to maintain the integrity of the historical significance of the El Arish Soldiers WWI settlement, The Railway Museum, the Farming and the El Arish Community Hall. As a grant writer, researcher, event instigator, Marie helps make things happen. Initiated by the El Arish Sport and Recreation Association Inc, as a founding member, Marie was a key player in the 100th War Horse to Plough Horse anniversary event.

Marie personally presents tours and talks about the historical significance of the El Arish settlement to school children to which the local school has embraced and is now incorporated into their curriculum.

Marie's commitment to our local cultural heritage will continue with up and coming generations.

YOUNG SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AWARD – TULLY STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Tully State High's 750 students have all got behind the Container program – this program has been in place for the past 3 years and environmental programs in secondary schools are sometimes difficult to keep the motivate up – 2020 saw an increase in funds collected which goes back into student programs. These programs are chosen by the Student Leadership team and for 2020 they funded Mental health Week activities.

The Leadership team also met with MAM's to set up a large second recyclable receptacle for this program because of the large volumes they have been collecting.

ACHIEVEMENT AWARD – MELISSA LA SPINA ACHIEVEMENT AWARD – SULLIVANS TRAIL VOLUNTEER GROUP

Achievement Award – Melissa La Spina

Melissa's achievements and accomplishments within the Cassowary Coast Region include her involvement with being:

- Inaugural member of the Tully Hospital foundation where she is currently the secretary and works tirelessly organizing fundraising events
- Member of the Tully Chamber of Commerce
- Tully Christmas Street Party
- Tully Show Society

Melissa gives her time generously to these organisations and to the Tully community.

Achievement Award – Sullivans Trail Volunteer Group

Christine Ihle, Ben DeBruin, Warren Scott, Jeffrey Dickinson, Chris Roy, Gary Nicolson
This group of volunteers have given their free time to re-establish a historical walking trail at the back of Cardwell.

The Trail is located in Girringun National Park linking Cardwell to the Tablelands which was used as an Aboriginal foot trail – The trail 22km of trail was reopened by the Cardwell Scout group in 1988, however Cyclone Larry & Yasi saw the track closed.

The year 2015 saw the Kirrama Range Support Group approach Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service in regards with volunteers to re-establish the trail.

With full time jobs and family this group have selflessly given their time towards this worthy project to re-open the trail. They would also like to acknowledge others that have assisted along the way.

EXCELLENCE & INNOVATION AWARD – SHANE GREENWOOD

Shane, in addition from the valuable work he does in his job with the Tully Support Center, volunteers with many organisations.

The Tully Chamber of Commerce where he:

- Was on the Chambers Subcommittee for the World Rafting Championships held in Tully
- Designed and produced the Tourist Friendly map for the Tully region
- Involved with the successful street parade
- Written successful grants for the local Chamber of Commerce.

Shane is an Integral part of the Tully Christmas Street Celebrations, Gumboot festival, Feluga School P&C, soccer coach and holds numerous other volunteer positions with groups in the region.

Shane was a founding member of the 4852 Looking Forward Group now concentrating of the Tully 100 year Anniversary in partnership with the Tully Chamber of Commerce. In 2020, Shane hosted a Community meeting with in excess of 100 community members to commence the planning of this significant occasion.

Shane is a leader in the community both professionally and through community volunteering.