

# CASSOWARY COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD WINNERS 2023



## *Citizen of the Year Award - Colin Ritchie*

### **Colin Ritchie**

Colin is a long time volunteer of various community groups including

- Local Ambulance Committee,
- Foundation member of Innisfail/Babinda/Tully Branch of National Servicemen's Association, and does maintenance and installations of plaques at Anzac Park as members who have passed
- Member of Innisfail Probus Club,
- Qld RSL Service Member for over 30 years and currently Innisfail RSL branch committee member as well as serving in Australian Defence Force – National Service 1968 - 1970
- Has volunteered his time with repairs and clean ups following Cyclones Joy, Winifred, Larry & Yasi
- volunteer for local RSL Club.
- He has generously helped for over 20 years the aged and handicapped members of the local community with an extensive range of maintenance/repairs and takes a personal interest in the welfare of members of the public
- Foundation member of the Innisfail Men's Shed 2014
- Received Innisfail Rotary International Pride of Workmanship Award in early 1990's
- Volunteer bus driver for Innisfail RSL, Probus Club, National Serviceman's Social Outings.

With all these accolades Colin has shown outstanding achievement and leadership as well as promoting the welfare and wellbeing of the wider community.

## *Young Citizen of the Year Award (Under 25) - Cameron Anderson*

### **Cameron Anderson**

Cameron is a current volunteer member of the Innisfail Mini Rail in teaching people about train driving and train and track maintenance and volunteers endless hours doing this.

Cameron participates in volunteer cooking duties for the Mini Rail Sausage Sizzle also volunteers at the sausage sizzle for monthly markets in the park to raise funds for Mini Rail Group with setting up and packing down.

Cameron is an achiever in Education accomplishments including joint winner of a Defence Force Long Tan Award for Leadership, Innisfail Music Band Captain, current Innisfail School captain, qualified for League Safe and Referee duties and is now working with Snapping Tours. Cameron is an outstanding young person showing commitment and dedication to the community.

## *Life Time Achievement Award - Sheila Lawler, Joseph Marano and Jo-Anne McElhinney*

### **Sheila Lawler**

Sheila has demonstrated dedication in the local community by

- Being an active member of the Mission Beach Lions Club for over 25 years. Holding the position of Secretary and Treasurer on numerous occasions. Sheila's focus has been on the Vision Screening program for primary school aged children across many schools. Also assists with the containers for change program which generates income for the Lions community donations. Sheila is active in disaster relief and funding and makes herself available when required for Lions Services
- Sheila has been an active member of the Local Ambulance Committee for over 8 years and was instrumental for having AED's (Automated External Defibrillators) placed in strategic places in all villages in Mission Beach and sourcing funding for this vital equipment.
- Sheila has been instrumental in the setting up and now disbanded Mission Beach

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Community Support Office more than 5 years ago, having held the position of either President or Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer.

### **Joseph Marano**

Joseph is a third generation cane farmer from Mourilyan with an unlimited passion for his family and the community and especially the sugar industry.

Joe has been a valuable member of the local community for over 30 years with involvement in groups such as Mourilyan Community Kindergarten, Mourilyan State School, Innisfail Swimming Club, Boogan Soccer Club.

Joe's commitment to the sugar industry being in 1997 when he was elected to the Mourilyan Productivity Board a position he held for 17 years. He was then elected to the board of Innisfail District Cane Growers and from here he has emerged as a respected leader in this industry.

Joe has been chairman of the Innisfail Canegrowers since 2006 and is a member of the Qld Cane Growers Association where he chairs the Environment and Sustainability Committee. Over the last 15 years, Joe has led by example as either a valued member or chairman of the following industry programs

Collaborator – Sugar Research Australia (Australia's specialist sugarcane research organisation.)  
Chair – Wet Tropics Sugar Industry Partnership – industry led extension and training services to growers in the Wet Tropics.

With his passion and selfless dedication makes him a deserving winner.

### **Jo-Anne McElhinney**

Jo-Anne has been a member of the Etty Bay Surf Club for 18 years and has held many roles during this time.

She has been an Age Manager, gained her Officiating award 10 years ago and was recently recognised by SLSQ for her service to the sport.

Jo-Anne gained her observers awards in 2012 which allows to be a valued member on our beaches keeping our communities safe.

Jo-Anne attends all funding raising events, helps in the kitchen for carnivals and provides continuous support to all our committee members.

Even though Jo-anne children have now left the sport she continues to support the club in her role as Treasurer and often works tirelessly to support the community and the Etty Bay Surf Club

## ***Community Event of the Year - Innisfail Game Fishing Club - Sam Pagano Memorial Innisfail Bill Fishing Tournament***

### **Innisfail Game Fishing Club - Sam Pagano Memorial Innisfail Bill Fishing Tournament**

This club was first formed in 1970. The club has had a long and illustrious history in Innisfail. The Bill Fish Tournament has developed into a signature event for the club.

In 2022 was one of the prominent tournaments over the history of the club, with competitors travelling from throughout Far North Qld, including as far south as Tasmania participate. This year the club named the event Sam Pagano Memorial Innisfail Bill Fish Tournament in honour of life member Sam Pagano who passed away.

The tournament promoted active participation, inclusiveness, and a strong sense of purpose, with award categories for men, women, children. A total of 60 competitors and 16 boats fished the

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tournament.

Contributing to the environment and supporting sustainable fishing, tagged billfish were only include on official soring with competitors further encouraged to tag and release other species of fish. A total of 48 billfish where tagged and released during the event.

With this event the club and region gained national TV exposure with Australian Fishing Show 'Hook Line and Sinker' attending and participating and airing the show on Channel 7.

Supporting safety at sea, radio schedules were observed 3 times per day, with the club also financially supporting the local Innisfail Coast Guard.

### **Sports Person - Yolanda Jenkins**

#### **Yolanda Jenkins**

Yolanda's sports achievements include competing in her first cross country in 2021 where she was placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the school cross country and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Cassowary Coast District cross country carnival.

From this Yolanda was selected for Peninsula team however did not compete.

Her efforts for 2022 include competing in the FNQ cross country championships in Cairns for the 5000kms and placing first in the open womens division.

Yolanda placed first in the Cassowary Coast District cross country carnival and being selected for peninsula trials where she was placed 5<sup>th</sup>. Yolanda travelled to Brisbane to compete in the 6000km cross country and with an ankle injury managed to be placed 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Yolanda devoted every Tuesday afternoon to coach the Good Counsel College netball team. Along with a playing a role in community netball, she also volunteers her help for many other sporting events both inside and outside of school.

Yolanda has received a letter from Qld Academy of Sports for the YOUFOR 2032 endeavour program which is a pathway to represent the 2032 Brisbane Olympic Games.

### **Young Sports Person - Tiara Herbert and Braxton D'Urso**

#### **Tiara Herbert**

Tiara has a shown to be wonderful role model for the sporting community. Her achievements for 2022 year include:

##### **Rugby League**

- Tiara was selected for Cassowary Coast U12 Girls Team participating in the Peninsula trials in Cairns
- Tiara was selected for the Cassowary Coast U12 Boys Team where she participated in Peninsula trials in Cairns
- From these trials she was selected in the Peninsula team to play at the state carnival in Maroochydore
- Flying Fish Point State School U12 girls age
- Flying Fish Point State School U12 girls age champion Swimming
- Flying Fish Point State School U 12 aged champion Athletics

##### **School events:**

- Champion 2022 Cross Country

Tiara competed in both rugby league carnivals as part of the Peninsula team and is the first student to be selected in both the boys and girls team and play in both carnivals in one year.

Tiara demonstrated great conduct on and off the field and is a shining example of wonderful

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sportsmanship

### Braxton D'Urso

Braxton achievement and contributions in for 2022 include:

Brisbane State Titles Little Athletics for 100m, 200m, 70m being placed in 1st position:

- Townsville Winters Carnival
- School sports day Good Counsel Primary
- District School Sports Day
- Peninsula Trials
- Qld State School Titles
- National Title – Brisbane
  - 1st in 100m, 200m 400m, 800m Long Jump
  - 1st high jump, long jump, 100m, 200m, 800m, cross country
  - District Cross Country – 1st
  - Regional Cross Country – 3rd
  - 1st 100m, 200, 800, long jump, high jump
  - Little Athletics Regional Carnival – 1st 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, long jump high jump
  - 1st 100m, 200m
  - 2nd 800m
  - 1st long jump, high jump
  - 1st 200m
  - 3rd 100m
  - 5th Long Jump
  - 7th High Jump
  - 3rd 200m
  - 2nd 4 x100m relay
  - 9th 100m

Braxtons athletics achievements speak for themselves.

### **Cultural Award - Toshandai Fejo**

#### Toshandai Fejo

Toshandai is a local First Nations Artist and uses painting as a visual story teller with her connection to country, knowledge of stories from elders all expressed through her art.

Toshandai achievements include:

- Holding her first solo art exhibition bringing to life the local Dreamtime stories of the MAMU people
- Named young upcoming leader for Far North Qld Under 20;s
- Painted a mural at a local Kindergarten
- Conducted numerous art workshops within the Innisfail Community
- Has designed custom staff shirts for more than 5 local businesses
- Awarded upcoming Local Indigenous Artist by Blue Print

This year Toshandai will have art Mural work within the Innisfail community and partnering with Goondai Arts conducting Workshops, activities all year round

### **Service to Sport - Brigid Darveniza**

#### Brigid Darveniza

Brigid has been a member of Ettu Bay Surf Life Saving Club since 2006 and has since clocked up 950 patrol hours.

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Brigid has held many roles in the club, especially training the youth to compete and demonstrate in the R & R (rescue and resuscitation) and took up the coaching of young members who when on to compete at the State Titles and won a gold medal and put Ettu Bay on the map.

Brigid has gone on to become a trainer and assessor for Bronze Medallion and was recently recognised by SLSQ for her 10 years of volunteer service as an assessor and 15 years National Patrol Service and is now currently chief training officer a role which she has held for 3 years.

Brigid is a deserving member of the surf life saving community and the community all round and has made a significant contribution to sport.

### ***Young Cultural Award - Lily Darvenzia***

#### **Lily Darvenzia**

Lily's achievements in the field of arts and entertainment include

- Travelling to Hobart with Gondwana National Choir and performing at Government House Tasmania as well as performing with Tasmania Symphony Orchestra
- Teaching dance classes from ages 3 to late adulthood with Graham Academy of Dance
- Assistant coach for 3 competitive acrobatic troupes that travel to Brisbane and receiving two first place positions and one second position
- Assists with teaching singing to primary school students
- Receiving multiple first in Innisfail young Performer's and Cairns Eisteddfod
- Being accepted into 2023 Gondwana National Choir, Choral School in Sydney with a New Zealand tour as well as singing with the Voices of Angels concert at the Sydney Opera House

### ***Sustainable Environment Award - Ian Shankly***

#### **Ian Shankly**

Ian has demonstrated an exceptional level of enthusiasm and commitment to achieving improved environmental conditions in both the local area and wider environmental community by:

- Actively involved in revegetation activities in Mission Beach and hinterland area
- Increasing the area and connectivity of habitat for cassowaries and other local wildlife
- Recognising more cost effective reforestation techniques in order to achieve landscape scale results
- Recognising the need for greater uptake of wildlife friendly fencing to reduce the deaths and injuries associated with barbed wire
- Involved in care of injured and orphaned cassowaries in the Garners Beach Cassowary Recovery facility

With this determination, Ian adopts the approach that co-operation is better than confrontation in achieving many environmental goals in the local community.

### ***Achievement Award - Robyn Smith and Zoe Dunne***

#### **Robyn Smith**

Well known Cardwell identity Robyn, is a business owner, president of the local Chamber of Commerce and organiser of the Cardwell Sea Fest.

Robyn supports local clubs in any way she can and sell tickets to their events at her shop as well as donating prizes for raffles.

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Robyn has also created a community garden which has been put together with recycled gadgets and donated plants. Robyn is a keen gardener and member of the Cardwell Garden Club and opens her own garden for monthly members event.

### **Zoe Dunne**

Zoe established the Innisfail Breast Cancer Support Group (after her own cancer diagnosis) and since 2008 has been a tireless fundraiser and supporting others (both females and males) through this.

Amongst other details, Zoe provides support by way of the preparation and distribution of chemotherapy/radiation care packs, as well as post-surgery care packs.

Zoe is an enthusiastic advocate for raising breast cancer awareness and funds to assist those in the local and wider community through a variety of events.

Her initiative taking attitude has established an incredible connection with individuals and businesses in our local community and Zoe always puts others before herself and offers first hand emotional support from beginning to end and beyond to others throughout their journey.

## ***Excellence and Innovation Award - Mark Giffin, Mark and Judy Evans and Randall Russell***

### **Mark Giffin**

In 2006 Mark was able to achieve his dream of opening his own Medical Imaging Practice, providing this service for the Innisfail and surrounding communities to save patients having to travel to have this done.

Mark has put in the long hours over the years for the practice to grow now in 2023 has sites in Atherton, Mareeba, Ingham and of course Innisfail and also having a once per week ultrasound clinic in Tully.

By having Mark and his dedicated team offer this medical service locally over the years is truly an inspiration.

### **Mark and Judy Evans**

Mark & Judy Evans stumbled upon Paronella Park while travelling Australia in a caravan with their young family, they purchased the property and have never looked back.

Celebrating 30 years of operating Paronella Park, and providing not only employment for our locals, as well as giving back to many charitable causes and organisations.

Mark & Judy Evans have expanded with their caravan park located behind the Mena Creek Pub in which they have been innovative in having their own on site sewerage and an open bush kitchen. This remarkable achievement is proof of their commitment and dedication to the region.

### **Randall Russell**

By being an inspirational role model in the community, Randall has achieved excellence in establishing a local walk/run community group.

This is known as Paradise Run which operates 52 weeks a year, rain hail or shine. What Randall does, is raise much needed funds for local charity causes including Paws and Claws Animal Refuge Innisfail, Wild Care Rescue Mission Beach, Innisfail Breast Cancer Support Group, Canteen Australia Cancer Research.

Randall's vision for this weekly event adds and strengthens value with it being an all age and abilities event and seeing the number of children out walking and running with their families on a

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Saturday morning is a joyful experience.

By Randall forming this group it brings together social connectedness, strengthening families and supporting physical and mental health being.