



Celebrating an inclusive community

Nominations are now open under two categories in the South Gippsland Shire Council Achievement Awards. Facilitated by Council's Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee, the awards seek to recognise the contributions made to our community to promote access and inclusion for all people and feature a new category in honour of a local advocate.

The new Achievement Award for Inclusive Community Contribution is also known as the Blair Donaldson Award. Blair was a long-standing member of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee and a committed advocate for social justice and inclusion. He passed away in July this year.

This award seeks to recognise the contribution of individuals in achieving a community which is inclusive of all people. Any person who is involved in creating an inclusive community in South Gippsland, either as a volunteer or worker, can be nominated.

For the Achievement Award for a Person with a Disability, the person must live with a disability, have demonstrated excellence in any field and have made a contribution to their community. There are no restrictions on age or gender. The recipient of this award, with their consent, will be entered into the appropriate category of the South Gippsland Shire Council Australia Day Awards, held in January 2017.

Award nominees for both categories will be honoured at a luncheon in celebration of International Day of People with Disability on Thursday 1 December 2016.

Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee Chair, Darren Bone, said the awards aim to increase the visibility of the contribution made by people with disabilities.

"Just like everyone else, people with disability are part of your workplace, part of your sporting club and part of your community," he explained. "Our Committee wants to highlight this."

The sentiment is the same from Council's Rural Access Project Officer, Alisha Gilliland, who said the changed approach to these awards reflected the growing community awareness of the value of an inclusive community.

"The Inclusive Community Contribution Award allows us to acknowledge a person who may have a disability, but does not wish to disclose or focus on that disability in the context of an awards process. This award is open to anyone, regardless of age, gender or 'ability', to be nominated for the positive contribution they make."

Nominations for both awards close on 21 November 2016. Contact Alisha Gilliland for more information on 5662 9376 or email alisha.gilliland@southgippsland.vic.gov.au.

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