



2023 South Gippsland Australia Day Awards

South Gippsland Shire Council would like to acknowledge and thank all of this year's award nominees and congratulate our 2023 Citizen of the Year Max Wood, Young Citizen of the Year Kira Waldron and Community Event of the Year Fish Creek Tea Cosy Festival.

Max and Kira were recognised for their significant community achievements along with three other Citizen of the Year nominees – Ben Ellis, Clive Hope and Janine Alexander – and one other Young Citizen of the Year nominee – Abbey Nicholls - at an awards ceremony held at the Meeniyah Hall on Wednesday 18 January.

Max is originally a dairy farmer from Welshpool who is always happy to lend a helping hand. Raising five daughters with his late wife Rosemary didn't stop him from being involved in various committees including the Welshpool Hall, Welshpool Tennis Club, Port Welshpool Museum, Welshpool CFA and Welshpool Golf Club. He later moved to Leongatha where he once again proved himself a valuable member of his local community, volunteering his time and significant skills.

Seven years ago, he had a car accident that sadly took his wife of 52 years, which has limited his mobility and caused the loss of an eye, but that has not deterred him. After two months in hospital and rehabilitation, Max returned to his community – his Men's Shed and the Woorayl Golf Club. He is well loved and described as an inspiration.

Kira Waldron is described as a bubbly and supportive Mary McKillop year 10 student. With community minded parents, Kira has followed in their footsteps getting involved in a number of community organisations include the Meeniyah Stony Creek Fire Brigade, Korumburra Gun Club and Korumburra Scouts as a Venturer.

This eloquent and confident young lady a future in emergency services is where her heart lies due to her volunteering with the local CFA. The world is truly her oyster.

The Community Event of the Year category made a return after a two-year hiatus and was hotly contested with seven nominees.

The Fish Creek Tea Cosy Festival brings together a series of events over nine days to promote Fish Creek as a vibrant, creative and hospitable community. The highlight of which being the tea cosy competition, which in 2022 saw over 174 entries from across Australia and overseas.

Approximately 5,200 people were in attendance across the nine days, with over \$4,500 raised and given to the Fish Creek Community Development Group to put towards upgrades in the town.

To read the achievements of all our nominees and to see upcoming Australia Day events near your please visit www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/australiaday

Quotes attributable to South Gippsland Shire Mayor Nathan Hersey:

“Congratulations to our 2023 Citizen of the Year Max Wood, Young Citizen of the Year Kira Waldron and Community Event of the Year Fish Creek Tea Cosy Festival, and to all our award nominees.”

“Passionate people are the lifeblood of our communities. South Gippsland is fortunate to have so many people who are passionate about our region and are willing to dedicate their time to make it the best it can be. The South Gippsland Australia Day Awards are the perfect opportunity for us to acknowledge and hear more about these exemplary people.”

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