

Media Release



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Katoomba High School Teacher Named 2024 Blue Mountains Volunteer of the Year

Teacher and coach Morgan Huxley from Katoomba High School has been named the 2024 Blue Mountains Volunteer of the Year for driving the school's Duke of Edinburgh Awards program over the past 19 years.

The program provides opportunities for students from all backgrounds to develop leadership skills while building their confidence in a community setting.

Morgan received the award today at The Carrington Hotel in Katoomba as part of the 2024 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards. Recipients in other Blue Mountains regional award categories were also announced, including adult, senior and volunteer team of the year.

The NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards celebrate the work of thousands of individuals and volunteer teams from a diverse range of organisations across the state.

The Awards are hosted by The Centre for Volunteering, whose mission it is to promote and support volunteering across NSW.

Blue Mountains Adult Volunteer of the Year: Morgan Huxley from Wentworth Falls

Under Morgan's guidance, Katoomba High School has seen over 80 students complete the Duke of Edinburgh Awards program, helping them to develop lifelong leadership skills. Morgan is also a volunteer coach for soccer, athletics, frisbee and rock climbing.

Blue Mountains Senior Volunteer of the Year: Dianne Strahan from Springwood

Dianne has supported more than 600 girls and young women to develop practical skills and community spirit as a Springwood Winmalee Girl Guides volunteer over the past two decades. She led the local efforts to rebuild the Girl Guide Hall when it was destroyed by the devastating 2007 bushfires.

Blue Mountains Volunteer Team of the Year: Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Volunteer Guides

For visitors to the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, volunteer guides are the public face of the garden. They communicate the scientific work behind its design and explain how the living collections of plants and the surrounding Blue Mountains World Heritage Area are vital to the conservation of plants. Over the past 18 months, volunteers have led more than 100 tours for over 600 people, demonstrating a high level of flexibility when it comes to catering to the needs of visitors.

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The Centre for Volunteering CEO Gemma Rygate said:

“These awards recognise the exceptional effort of volunteers across the Blue Mountains.

“Whether it’s in the local sports club, in health care, education and cultural centres, legal support or emergency response, volunteers are essential for the ongoing health and viability of local communities.

“It’s important for volunteers across the Blue Mountains to know that their commitment is recognised and valued.”

The Awards are supported by Principal Partners the NSW Department of Communities and Justice and ClubsNSW.

The NSW Minister with responsibility for Volunteering Jodie Harrison said:

“Congratulations to the recipients of the Blue Mountains Volunteer of the Year Awards.

“Thank you for the incredible contributions you make to NSW and your local community.

“Volunteers are the lifeblood of our communities, and the NSW Government is pleased to be partnering with the Centre for Volunteering to recognise volunteers and the valuable role they play in making NSW the best state to live and work in.”

ClubsNSW CEO Rebecca Riant said:

“The awards are a tribute to the vital contributions made by volunteers across the state. Volunteers are the backbone of the NSW club industry, and their efforts are crucial in uplifting local communities.

“We’re delighted to have a special Club Volunteer of the Year Award category, and I can’t wait to see who takes home that honour.”

The Blue Mountains award recipients will be invited to represent their region at the Gala State Ceremony in Sydney at the end of the year, where the NSW Volunteer of the Year will be announced across each category.

More information at media@volunteering.com.au

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About the NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards

2024 marks the 18th year of these high-profile Awards, which have honoured hundreds of thousands of volunteers for their community service, while highlighting the value and benefits of volunteering.

Anyone who volunteers in NSW can be nominated for an award.

The Award categories are:

- Young Volunteer of the Year
- Adult Volunteer of the Year
- Senior Volunteer of the Year
- Volunteer Team of the Year
- Employee Volunteer of the Year
- Club Volunteer of the Year
- Not-for-Profit Voluntary Governance Award
- Volunteer Leader of the Year

Twenty-five regional ceremonies are held in towns and suburbs throughout NSW from mid-August until November.

The regional finalists will be invited to a Gala State ceremony in December in Sydney where the NSW Volunteer of the Year is announced. Recipients for the NSW Volunteer of the Year are also announced across the eight categories.

The Awards are run by the Centre for Volunteering and proudly supported by our principal partners the NSW Department of Communities and Justice and ClubsNSW.

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