

# Media Release



**Embargoed until 3pm Wednesday 28 August 2024**

## **Mount Druitt human rights advocate named 2024 Outer Western Sydney Volunteer of the Year**

UTS Honours student and human rights advocate Patricia Tolentino from Mount Druitt has been named the 2024 Outer Western Sydney Volunteer of the Year for her exceptional contributions across various community-focused volunteer roles.

Patricia was recognised today at St Marys Band Club as part of the 2024 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards. Recipients in other Outer Western Sydney regional award categories were also announced, including young, 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.

### **Outer Western Sydney Young Volunteer of the Year: Patricia Tolentino from Mount Druitt**

Patricia has leveraged her expertise in research to provide skilled volunteer support to organisations such as The Big Lift, Amnesty International, Yung Prodigy, the SOUL Accelerator Program at UTS and the Australian Red Cross. Patricia volunteers with The Big Lift, a program which mobilises university students to undertake community assistance projects across NSW. As a campaign support worker at Amnesty International, she has played an active role in assisting refugees in need of support.

### **Outer Western Sydney Adult Volunteer of the Year: Kittu Randhawa from Glendenning**

Kittu volunteers with the Indian (Sub-Continent) Crisis & Support Agency at Glendenning, where she provides guidance to vulnerable individuals facing barriers such as cultural differences, language challenges, social conditioning, family pressures, and mental health issues. Her experience in writing reports for courts and immigration services, along with her multilingual background, equips her to understand and help distressed members of her community to find suitable assistance.

### **Outer Western Sydney Senior Volunteer of the Year: Derek Whorlow from Kings Langley**

Over decades of dedicated volunteering, Derek has made substantial contributions to the safety and well-being of the Outer Western Sydney community. His skilled support and leadership across various organisations, including Marine Rescue NSW Hawkesbury Unit, NSW Rural Fire Service Kenthurst Brigade, St John Ambulance NSW, Blacktown Scouts, and Probus, have left a lasting impact.

#### PRINCIPAL PARTNERS

**Your local club**



#### AWARD SUPPORTERS



#### REGIONAL AWARDS SPONSOR



### **Outer Western Sydney Volunteer Team of the Year: Foodbank Warehouse Volunteers**

The Foodbank Warehouse Volunteers team contributed over 4,500 workdays during 2023, playing an essential role in delivering food services to communities across NSW and the ACT. Their efforts have helped Foodbank to provide more than 20 million meals to a growing number of community partners and schools, while staying active and connected to like-minded individuals in a supportive team environment.

#### **The Centre for Volunteering CEO Gemma Rygate said:**

“These awards recognise the exceptional effort of volunteers across Outer Western Sydney. 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 Outer Western Sydney 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 Outer Western Sydney 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 Outer Western Sydney 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](mailto:media@volunteering.com.au)

#### PRINCIPAL PARTNERS



#### AWARD SUPPORTERS



#### REGIONAL AWARDS SPONSOR



## About the NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards

2024 marks the 18<sup>th</sup> 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.

### PRINCIPAL PARTNERS

Your local club



### AWARD SUPPORTERS



### REGIONAL AWARDS SPONSOR

Beyond Bank  
AUSTRALIA