



The Centre for
Volunteering

Media Release

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Deniliquin healthcare champion named 2024 Riverina Volunteer of the Year

Deniliquin Local Health Advisory volunteer Lourene Liebenberg has been named the 2024 Riverina Volunteer of the Year, for her dedication, enthusiasm and non-stop support for better healthcare services for her local community.

The award was presented today at the Wagga Wagga RSL as part of the 2024 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards. Recipients in other Riverina regional award categories were also announced today 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.

Riverina Young Volunteer of the Year: Velika Hayes from Wagga Wagga

Velika is a prolific fundraiser and volunteer with the Miss Wagga Wagga Quest, the Country Host Buddy Program, Ronald McDonald House and the Wagga Wagga City Council Australia Day Committee. She was crowned Miss Wagga Wagga for 2024 and has continued to give many hours supporting families and young people living with cancer.

Riverina Adult Volunteer of the Year: Lourene Liebenberg from Deniliquin

Lourene is an occupational therapist and mental health professional who also gives her time supporting better community health and local healthcare services with the Deniliquin Local Health Advisory Committee. She organises local events, drives awareness about healthcare through social and local media, and helps build positive connections between healthcare workers and their community.

Riverina Senior Volunteer of the Year: Noel Porter from Wagga Wagga

85-year-old Noel Porter helps prepare more than 50 delicious and well-cooked meals a day through her volunteer work at Carevan Wagga. The talented home cook and former aged care worker helps provide nutritious meals to people experiencing food insecurity or social isolation.

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Riverina Volunteer Team of the Year: Barellan Working Clydesdales Committee

Every year in October, the 16 members of the Barellan Working Clydesdales Committee bring the Good Old Days Festival to Barellan. The small town of 600 people swells to over 10,000 for the annual celebration of Australia's pioneer heritage. The event boosts local tourism in the Narrandera Shire and has led to improved local amenities for the town.

The Centre for Volunteering CEO Gemma Rygate said:

"These awards recognise the exceptional effort of volunteers across the Riverina.

"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 Riverina to know that their commitment is recognised and valued."

We are grateful that 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 Riverina 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 Riverina 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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