

Media Release



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Supporter of local mums named 2024 Southern Sydney Volunteer of the Year

Barbara Jones from Sutherland has been named the 2024 Southern Sydney Volunteer of the Year for her support of struggling mothers through 3 Bridges Community.

With a blend of practical assistance and heartfelt empathy, she helps these women navigate a range of challenges and regain momentum in their lives.

Barbara was recognised today at The Tradies Club at GyMEA as part of the 2024 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards. Recipients in other Southern 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.

Southern Sydney Young Volunteer of the Year: Nellie Ahrens from Engadine

Nellie is a young fundraiser with a drive to make a difference in the world. Having confronted serious childhood health issues herself, she devotes her energies to raising money for the Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation and assisting with other activities for the charity throughout the year.

Southern Sydney Adult Volunteer of the Year: Tanim Banerjee from Penshurst

Tanim brings her background as a scientific researcher to her volunteer work with the Association for Asia-Pacific Countries, where she applies her skills in innovative ways to benefit her community. She has been instrumental in promoting health and wellbeing by offering educational support, organising music fitness classes, providing language assistance, and fundraising for cancer research.

Southern Sydney Senior Volunteer of the Year: Barbara Jones from Sutherland

For over a decade, Barbara has been a member of the 3 Bridges Community volunteer home visiting service. She offers practical and emotional support to mothers who are vulnerable or struggling due to a lack of support, helping them connect with their communities to ensure positive maternal and infant health outcomes. In addition, Barbara volunteers with several other organisations, including Bush Care Bass & Flinders, Knitting-Wrapped with Love, Sutherland Food Services, Relay for Life, and the Cancer Council.

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Southern Sydney Volunteer Team of the Year: Tony and Carol Allen Volunteer Team

When Tony and Carol migrated to Australia from the UK, they became passionate advocates for preserving the natural environment in their new country. For the past 10 years they have volunteered with the Sutherland Shire Council Bushcare program, attending seven different groups per month, and working to protect local ecosystems by removing invasive weeds and rubbish, and planting native species.

The Centre for Volunteering CEO Gemma Rygate said:

“These awards recognise the exceptional effort of volunteers across the Southern Sydney region.

“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 region 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 Southern 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.”

Southern 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

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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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