

# Media Release



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## Volunteering Superstar named 2024 Central Coast Volunteer of the Year

Volunteering superstar Paula Hardwick has been named the 2024 Central Coast Volunteer of the Year for efforts supporting the homeless, disadvantaged, and people in need across the Central Coast.

The award was announced today at Mingara as part of the 2024 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards. Recipients in other Central Coast 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.

### Central Coast Young Volunteer of the Year: Roan Brown from Copacabana

Roan gives his time at Camp Quality where he provides support at family camps and family fun days, both locally and inter-state. His own personal experiences living with cancer have helped him to make connections with other campers at six Kids Camps over the past two years.

### Central Coast Adult Volunteer of the Year: Paula Hardwick from Blue Bay

Paula volunteers with Meals on Wheels, Orange Sky and Because We Care Boutique, supporting the homeless, disadvantaged, and people in need across the Central Coast. She helps with fundraising, delivering meals, helping women prepare for jobs or court appearances, and supporting clients using the mobile laundry.

Not content with her already large volunteering workload, Paula recently joined Marine Rescue Norah Head as a volunteer radio operator, helping to keep people safe on the waters across the Central Coast.

### Central Coast Senior Volunteer of the Year: Duncan Bennet from Davistown

Duncan is a dedicated member of the North Avoca Surf Life Saving Club. He's undertaken a variety of roles over two decades, including as Vice President and Patrol Captain, and he regularly takes part in beach patrols, fundraising and community engagement.

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## Central Coast Volunteer Team of the Year: 3 Villages Community Group

The 3 Villages Community Group works with local organisations like the Green Point Avoca Lions Club, Kincumber Rotary, and others to deliver community projects. They work closely with residents, schools, businesses, and local authorities, applying for donations, funding, and grants to revitalise old amenities and create great public spaces.

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

“These awards recognise the exceptional effort of volunteers across the Central Coast.

“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 Central Coast 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.”

Central Coast 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)

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## 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.

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