

Media Release



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Indian cultural leader named 2024 Orana Volunteer of the Year

Dubbo resident Mano Manorathan has been awarded the 2024 Orana Volunteer of the Year for his tireless work over the past 14 years supporting migrants from the Indian subcontinent, and building a greater understanding and inclusion between cultures across the region.

Mano was recognised today at the Dubbo RSL as part of the 2024 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards. Recipients in other Orana 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.

Orana Young Volunteer of the Year: Anton Dieck from Merrigal

Anton is an apprentice diesel mechanic and volunteer with the Gilgandra SES Unit, where he responds to emergency call outs during storms, floods and other incidents. When he first joined, Anton would walk to the unit headquarters, and has now gained extensive qualifications across a range of emergency response work.

Orana Adult Volunteer of the Year: Mano Manorathan from Dubbo

Mano has been volunteering with the Orana Residents of Indian Sub-Continental Heritage group for more than 14 years, where he has been a driving force behind community, cultural and sporting events. His volunteer work focusses on ways to bridge understanding and inclusion between cultures and support newly arrived migrants throughout the region.

Orana Senior Volunteer of the Year: Bryan Smith from Dubbo

Bryan has devoted 18 years to Meals on Wheels Dubbo, delivering meals, having a chat, and checking on the well-being of elderly residents. He has also given his time as a transport driver taking clients to and from everyday appointments, such as medical visits and trips to the shops and hairdressers. His work ensures the elderly community can remain independent and in their homes.

Orana Volunteer Team of the Year: Warrumbungle Community Care, Community Transport Volunteers

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Warrumbungle Community Care's Volunteer Drivers cover a 12,500 sq km area, contributing 6,852 trips in a single year and providing 4,575 hours of support to members of the community. They transport the elderly and those with disability to medical, shopping, and social services, while also providing essential companionship and support.

The Centre for Volunteering CEO Gemma Rygate said:

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

Orana 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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