

# Media Release



Embargoed until 3.00pm Tuesday 22 October 2024

## Emergency responder named 2024 South Coast Volunteer of the Year

Ulladulla SES emergency responder and international volunteer Catherine Craig has been named the South Coast Volunteer of the Year for her dedication to improving and protecting the lives of others across the community.

Catherine was recognised today at a special ceremony at Club Sapphire Merimbula as part of the 2024 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards. Recipients in other South Coast regional award categories were also announced, including 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.

### South Coast Adult Volunteer of the Year: Bob Turner from Moruya

Bob is a highly dedicated volunteer and leader with PaddleNSW, serving as Chair of the Marathon Committee and previously as Chair of the Board of Directors. He oversees numerous paddling events across NSW and the ACT, handling everything from venue coordination to race management.

### South Coast Senior Volunteer of the Year: Catherine Craig from Ulladulla

Catherine is a deeply committed volunteer with the Ulladulla SES Unit where she coordinates and participates in the team response to emergency incidents. She trains other volunteers to provide lifesaving support to the community during storms, floods, fires and other critical events.

She also gives her time at the local garden club and with the town band. Catherine recently spent three years as an international volunteer, giving her time to teach English to young people in Vietnam, while providing support to the vision impaired.

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## South Coast Volunteer Team of the Year: Bega Community Transport

The 18 team members at Bega Community Transport provide essential transport services to vulnerable individuals, the elderly, the disadvantaged, and people with disability. Their efforts behind the wheel ensured community members can access medical appointments, shopping, and social events, significantly improving their wellbeing while fostering a sense of social connection, independence and dignity within the community.

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

“These awards recognise the exceptional effort of volunteers across the NSW South 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 South 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.”

South 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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