

Media Release

Thursday 4 December 2025

Cancer campaigner and million-dollar fundraiser named 2025 NSW Volunteer of the Year

Cancer awareness campaigner and inspirational fundraiser and mentor, Molly Croft, has been named the 2025 NSW Volunteer of the Year.

The Dubbo teenager received the award at a special ceremony in Sydney today honouring her work to fund research into rare cancer, and for her support and care for young people battling illness and adversity.

Molly turned pain into purpose after being diagnosed at 12 years of age with a rare form of aggressive bone cancer, enduring treatment that removed most of the bone in one leg and part of a lung.

She gives her time to the Kids with Cancer Foundation, as an ambassador for national mental health charity Stand Tall, and with The Tie Dye Project, which she helped establish with Australian netballer Amy Parmenter.

Molly has since helped raise over \$2 million for children's charities, including \$1 million for The Tie Dye Project.

The NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards are run by The Centre for Volunteering to celebrate the work and impact of volunteers across all corners of New South Wales.

The Centre for Volunteering CEO Gemma Rygate said the awards shine a light on the efforts of all volunteers, as well as those that go above and beyond to help others.

"Molly sets an incredibly high bar by giving so much of her time, ideas and energy to helping others and motivating people of all ages to be their best," Ms Rygate said.

"Her volunteering is so exceptional that it earned her this year's Young Volunteer of the Year Award.

"Molly is an inspirational young person who stands tall over adversity and is also a deserving recipient of the 2025 NSW Volunteer of the Year Award."

Award winners across seven award categories were also announced today at the NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards in front of more than 300 community, business and political leaders.

The awards included the inaugural NSW Emergency Volunteer of the Year award, supported by NSW Emergency Services Minister Jihad Dib.

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The NSW Minister with responsibility for volunteering Jodie Harrison said today's award recipients were a testament to the commitment and spirit of volunteering across the state.

"Congratulations to all the winners, and to Molly especially, for being named the NSW Volunteer of the Year for 2025," Ms Harrison said.

"It's fantastic to see a young volunteer like Molly turn adversity into an opportunity to do something meaningful to help others.

"Volunteers give so much back to our communities, and this is one of the ways we recognise their valuable contributions. Each and every one of them are incredible role models and an inspiration to all of us. Thank you for all you do to make NSW the best state to live in."

NSW Minister for Emergency Services Jihad Dib said the selfless and brave efforts of the state's emergency service volunteers are celebrated in this year's awards.

"Volunteers responding to emergency events and disasters across NSW put their lives on hold to help their communities during floods, fires and storms," Minister Dib said.

"I would like to congratulate all of the finalists and the inaugural winner of this year's Emergency Volunteer Award, Southern Tablelands NSW Rural Fire Service Captain Richard Alley.

"This outstanding group of finalists and the winner deserve our thanks and represent a small number of the extraordinary volunteers that I have the privilege to meet in my role as Emergency Services Minister."

"Richard demonstrates the commitment, bravery and selflessness that we see every day in so many emergency volunteers across NSW."

Awards Sponsors: Principal Partner the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, Minister for Emergency Services Jihad Dib, Minister for Youth Rose Jackson, Regional Awards Sponsor Beyond Bank, and supporters Etchcraft and SIXT.

* More information on each NSW Volunteer of the Year Award winners is listed below

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2025 NSW Volunteer of the Year and 2025 NSW Young Volunteer of the Year: Molly Croft from Dubbo and Macquarie Park

- Kids with Cancer Foundation, Stand Tall and The Tie Dye Project

Molly Croft turned pain into purpose after being diagnosed at 12 with a rare form of aggressive bone cancer, enduring treatment that removed most of the bone in one leg and part of a lung. Molly has since given her time to raise over \$2 million for children's charities, including \$1 million for cancer research as co-founder of The Tie Dye Project.

She moved from her home in Dubbo this year to study at university and is a strong public speaker, championing awareness and funding for cancer research and mental health resilience.

2025 NSW Adult Volunteer of the Year Award: Kamala Wheeler from Moree

- NSW State Emergency Services Unit, Moree

Kam has been a leading Moree SES rescuer, trainer and leader for almost 40 years across the North West region of NSW.

She is now the Deputy Unit Commander at Moree SES and has led flood recovery operations in Moree and Garah, supported frontline crews during Cyclone Alfred, and been a role model to young and female volunteers in the service.

2025 Senior Volunteer of the Year: Kristine Simeon from Black Head

- Justice Advocacy Service - Intellectual Disability Rights Service

Kristine gives her time with the Justice Advocacy Service through the Intellectual Disability Rights Service, where she supports people in need to navigate the court and justice system in the Forster and Tuncurry region.

She attends court two to three times a week to ensure all people can get support within the justice system.

2025 NSW Emergency Volunteer of the Year: Richard Alley from Murrumbateman

- Southern Tablelands Zone of the NSW Rural Fire Service and Murrumbateman RFS

At 19 years of age, Richard Alley became the youngest Brigade Captain in the Southern Tablelands Zone of the NSW Rural Fire Service. He's packed in an extraordinary amount of service into a decade of emergency volunteering, including training, mentoring and emergency response.

Richard is a skilled chainsaw operator, winning 1st place at the 2024 RFS State Championships, and also gives his time playing the euphonium with the Yass Valley Concert Band.

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2025 NSW Volunteer Team of the Year: Birds in the Bush Team from Orange

The nine members of the Birds in the Bush Volunteer Team create safer communities for women and children in rural and regional areas by advocating for better services and raising community awareness about the impact and causes of domestic and family violence.

The group shares a large volunteering workload including organising events, fundraising, community collaboration, designing and selling merchandise, and social media advocacy - helping to raise \$422,000 to support domestic violence prevention initiatives across the region.

2025 NSW Volunteer Leader of the Year: Marian Casey

- St John Ambulance NSW, NSW State Emergency Service, Warrior Woman Foundation, and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)

Marian has held senior leadership roles with St John Ambulance, championed diversity and inclusion within the NSW SES, supported emerging female leaders through the Warrior Woman Foundation, and serves as the inaugural non-clinical member of the steering committee for the RACS TIPS course, which trains surgeons in communication and problem-solving to improve patient outcomes.

2025 Not-For-Profit Voluntary Governance Award: Women's Justice Network Board

The six volunteer members of the Women's Justice Network (WJN) Board play a pivotal role in guiding one of Australia's only community organisations supporting women and girls impacted by the criminal justice system.

Through their leadership, WJN has strengthened its programs, expanded its impact, and delivered life-changing support that helps women leaving prison to rebuild their lives and reduce reoffending.