



# OUTSTANDING CITIZENS RECOGNISED ON DUBBO DAY

Twelve outstanding residents have been recognised for their contributions to community at the Dubbo Day 2021 Awards. The recipients were awarded during a ceremony at the Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre on Tuesday evening. Dubbo Day marks the anniversary of Dubbo's gazettal as a village on 23 November, 1849.

"The awards recognise our remarkable volunteers who are the building blocks of our community," said Dubbo Region Mayor, Councillor Stephen Lawrence. "This year's recipients are a diverse group of people who have made varying and significant contributions to Dubbo, by dedicating their own time and resources to improving the lives of their fellow citizens. I would like to congratulate and thank each recipient of this year's Dubbo Day Awards."

This year's Tony McGrane Award recipient is Ronny Gibbs who, as a former footballer, has dedicated his life to Rugby League. The award is named in honour of Mr Anthony Michael McGrane, who was Mayor of Dubbo from 1991 to 1999, and was later elected as the NSW Member for Dubbo until his death in 2004. Tony McGrane always worked for the

betterment of Dubbo and the surrounding region and the naming of this award is a fitting tribute to a remarkable man.

### **Phil Peak**

Phil is a volunteer driver for LiveBetter. He offers his time to clients in Dubbo and in Wellington, and over the past 18 months has volunteered between one to three days per week. Phil said he enjoys helping clients so they're able to attend important doctor's appointments and as well as shopping. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Phil was involved in the delivery of hampers to those in need.

### **Michael O'Keefe**

Michael has been volunteering for LiveBetter Community Transport for the past five years. He is known for being respectful and caring to all clients regardless of their age, culture or disability. He devotes his time to LiveBetter clients so they have better access to their community and volunteered additional days when there was a driver shortage.

Prior to LiveBetter, Michael was a volunteer driver for the Neighbourhood Centre. He doesn't own a personal vehicle and would often walk or catch public transport to the LiveBetter office to be able to collect a vehicle. Michael has continued to renew his licence every year so he can volunteer with LiveBetter.

### **Brian O'Leary**

Brian donates his time to the Dubbo RSL Sub Branch committee, Dubbo Day Club and the Cancer Council. He is involved in welfare checks on veterans who are in hospital to ensure they are ok, and offers his hobby of mounting military medals free of charge.

He has volunteered with the Dubbo Day Club for more than 10 years and is known to use his own vehicle to pick up members so they can attend club meetings. He is the bingo caller and the BBQ cook.

Brian has been a volunteer driver with the Cancer Council since the Dubbo office opened two years ago, and often donates his time to drive members to medical appointments which are often out of town and some trips are an eight-hour round journey.

### **Karen Pellow**

Karen has been an active member of Parkrun Australia, Dubbo City Swimming Club, Dubbo Rangers Soccer Club and Dubbo Athletics / Little A's. She has been heavily involved in the Dubbo Parkrun event as a run director and committee member organising volunteer rosters, social media and directs the Saturday event once a month.

Karen was involved with the Dubbo Triathlon Club between 2005 and 2015. She was also involved in the Western Region Academy of Sport – Soccer and Triathlon assisting the regional manager by volunteering on training camps, regional or metropolitan events or carnival.

Karen also volunteered her time at school swimming and athletics carnivals by being a marshal, time keeper or coordinating a specific athletics events.

### **David Duffy**

David is the foundational Chair of the Central West Leadership Academy and was the first person to volunteer to help start the school. For the past five years he has spent countless hours on support and development of the school.

During the past 20 years David has been a member of the Rotary Club of South Dubbo and generously donates his time to attend meetings, community activities, cooking BBQs, doing home and garden clean ups and serving dinner at the Macquarie Homestay.

David is also heavily involved in the Rotary Youth Driver Awareness Program, the Newcastle Youth Science Forum and the Dubbo Christmas

Fair.

He was a member of the Dubbo and District Pony Club from 1999 until 2019, on the executive board for 18 years and Vice President for two, building the club to what it is today.

### **Fay Angel**

Fay has been an integral part of the Walan Community Garden for the past four years, and has helped to develop it into a space that is inclusive and accessible for all. Over the past four years the garden has transformed from a bare paddock to a thriving, visually spectacular organic community garden.

Fay is a certified volunteer supervisor for the gardens and is responsible for the supervision of offenders who are required to complete community service hours as part of their sentence. Fay has built a great rapport with these participants.

Fay is also involved in the new wellbeing garden at the Western Cancer Centre at the Dubbo Hospital, which has been receiving wonderful feedback.

### **Natalie O'Brien**

Natalie is the Captain of the Dubbo Volunteer Rescue Squad and is on call around the clock. She is also responsible for arranging training nights for the members under her command. This is so members can attend major accidents and assist other emergency services in preserving life and helping our community.

Natalie has been very active in the squad since joining six and a half years ago. She is a General Land Rescue operator and has been both secretary and events coordinator ensuring vital funds can be raised to purchase the necessities for the VRA.

### **Lyn and John Sykes**

Lyn and John Sykes are an integral part of the Dubbo Community, being involved in the Cancer Council, Rivercare, Dubbo Pink and White Committee and Palliative Care just to name a few.

John donates his time to drive cancer patients to their medical treatments appointments, particularly if they were isolated.

John puts in many hours with Rivercare along the Macquarie River and has established and maintains a stretch of the Tracker Riley pathway between East Street and Sir Roden Cutler Park.

Lyn and John host an annual fundraising event in their beautiful garden with views over the Macquarie River to raise money for the Guide Dog Association.

Lyn is a well-respected speaker at many rural and regional events particularly on family counselling and succession planning for rural families, NALAG and sustainable water use. Though Lyn is often paid for speaking appearances, if an organisation cannot afford to pay she will often do speak free of charge and she has also donated her fees to charities on several occasions.

### **Tsukasa Hiraoka**

Tsukasa came to Dubbo about two years ago and founded a social, community group called See You in Dubbo. In that time it has expanded dramatically to around 600 members in the Facebook group and others engaged across various other platforms.

See You in Dubbo has a variety of events including community sport, trivia nights, social functions, bushwalks, volunteer working bees, multicultural picnic, meet and greet events for new people.

Many of the members of See You in Dubbo are migrant workers in the local construction, meat processing and agricultural industries and for them the value of the community that Tsukasa has built is significant.

Tsukasa has recently founded a new social enterprise called Wilba,

which aims to solve transport poverty and plug the gaps in Dubbo's public transport system by providing reduced cost flexible rideshare travel.

Tsukasa works different jobs and picks up casual agricultural labour so she can continue to indulge her passion of helping the community and making life in Dubbo the best it can be.

### **Izabelle Kelly (Dubbo Day Committee Recognition Award Citation)**

Izabelle is a caring young lady who, in 2020 during the first COVID-19 lockdown started writing and sending her friends letters in the post. Her excitement was tangible when she would send a letter to a friend and especially so if they wrote back to her. Opening the mailbox to discover a handwritten card, note or letter for her was the highlight of her day. During the recent lockdown she was putting her energies into her craft, drawing and painting. Izabelle then started creating cards and letters for her Great Grandmother, who she was unable to visit, and this got her thinking about other elderly people in the community.

Her hand made cards for her Great Grandmother soon turned into a crafting production line and she made over 60 cards initially to deliver to the mailboxes of the residents at Ingenia Gardens in Dubbo. The excitement and joy she experienced while creating and delivering her cards fuelled her to create more.

Residents of the RSL LiveCare – Bill Newton VC Gardens were her next recipients and she is continuing to make more cards and has set herself a target to make and deliver 200 cards in our Dubbo Community hoping to bring a smile to an elderly person's day.

### **Ronny Gibbs (Tony McGrane Award Recipient)**

Ronny Gibbs has dedicated his life to rugby league as a former footballer who played professionally in Australia and England.

Ronny has been working in Dubbo and the outback of NSW since the late 1990's. He has been a volunteer referee, coach, weekend "helper" and constant "ear".

Ronny is very much behind the scenes but is called on informally by police, Aboriginal Liaison Officers, Education Department and Teachers to talk with young people who might need help.

Ronny has directly and indirectly raised thousands of dollars across a wide range of sporting and community causes. He seems to have an endless supply of memorabilia and access to lots of giveaways that he sources across the nation. He donates these to fund-raising events for races and charity auctions. He often arranges packs for kids in vulnerable communities which will include footballs, shirts, shorts and boots.

Ronny is also a frequent visitor to the Barwon Darling region which includes Collarenebri, Walgett, Lightning Ridge, Bourke and Brewarrina as well as the Outback Rugby League area which includes Wilcannia, Menindee and Broken Hill rugby league competitions.

Ronny holds a fundraiser every year as part of the Ronny Gibbs 7s tournament, which was held for 27 years until 2019 and has only not been held the last two years due to COVID-19. The money raised is divided through community needs in Bourke, Far West Academy of Sport and other benefactors.

Ronny has also been instrumental in raising awareness of those with special needs in our community and has assisted in establishing opportunities for Inclusion Football.

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