

# Media Release



28 January 2024

## Citizen of the Year Award recipients 2025

More than 20 Adelaide Hills Council residents were celebrated for their inspiring contributions to the community at the annual award ceremony on Friday 24 January in Stirling.

The 2025 Citizen of the Year Awards showcase individuals, groups, events and organisations who offer acts of kindness, many hours of hard work, and a commitment to improving the lives of others. In addition, 23 new citizenships were conferred to individuals from around the world at the ceremony.

From customising bikes, baking biscuits, and mentoring others, to attracting visitors through wonderful events, this year's award recipients have significantly impacted the community with their generosity.

Des Chabrel has been named the Adelaide Hills Council Citizen of the Year 2025, recognised for his inspiring voluntary work creating Technical Aids for the Disabled, both locally and beyond.

Des adapts and redesigns bikes for individuals with disabilities, allowing them to experience the joy of cycling.

As a passionate runner, he also dedicates his time with many organisations such as Tribe Triathlon, Charleston Park Run, the Adelaide Harriers Athletics Club, Masters Athletics, and City to Bay events. His ongoing commitment to community service exemplifies active citizenship.

An additional two commendations were presented in the Citizen of the Year category to Deanne Hanchant –Nichols and Rhonda Merrilyn Loechel.

Deanne is a founding member of the Uraidla and Districts SA Country Women's Association, known for her work organising poppy wreaths for local war memorials, supporting community initiatives, and promoting Reconciliation through cultural education.

Rhonda is particularly active in the Birdwood community. She teaches Sunday school, assists the local Primary School and also provides support for those in need, including organising the Birdwood Food Pantry and transport to medical appointments.


Adelaide Hills Garden Affair (AHGA) has been recognised as the Community Event of the Year 2025.


Conceived by a small group of volunteers, the Adelaide Hills Garden Affair (AHGA) attracted over 2,000 visitors in its inaugural year and created connections between horticulture, gardening, and

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conservation enthusiasts. The community event has had a lasting positive impact on the Adelaide Hills through the relationships it fostered.

A commendation in the Event of the Year category was awarded to LIGHT UP & GROW: Electrifying Tales Shaping Community Life in Mount Torrens, an interactive exhibition showcased the town's transformation from pre-electrification days to the arrival of electricity in 1926.

17 Active Citizenship Awards were also presented for outstanding service to the community and we congratulate all the winners for their significant contributions across our district.

The award winners are:

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Citizen of the Year               | Des Chabrel   |
| Commendation: Citizen of the Year | Deanne Hanchant -Nichols  |
| Commendation: Citizen of the Year | Rhonda Merrilyn Loechel   |
| Event of the Year                 | Adelaide Hills Garden Affair  |
| Commendation: Event of the Year   | LIGHT UP & GROW: Electrifying Tales Shaping Community Life in Mount Torrens |
| Award for Active Citizenship      | Heather Hartley   |
| Award for Active Citizenship      | Brenton Heinrich  |
| Award for Active Citizenship      | Pam Heinrich  |
| Award for Active Citizenship      | Kylie Holt  |
| Award for Active Citizenship      | Walter (Corry) Moors  |
| Award for Active Citizenship      | Mell Penno  |
| Award for Active Citizenship      | Dr Mary Retallack   |
| Award for Active Citizenship      | Tim Schapel   |
| Award for Active Citizenship      | Tanya Schroeder   |
| Award for Active Citizenship      | Paul Sinkinson  |
| Award for Active Citizenship      | Lesley Walker   |
| Award for Active Citizenship      | Shirley Warner  |
| Award for Active Citizenship      | Stirling Community Shop (Opp Shop)  |
| Award for Active Citizenship      | The Charleston Emergency Response and Recovery Group (CERRG)                |
| Award for Active Citizenship      | The Gumeracha Fifth Sunday Market   |
| Award for Active Citizenship      | The SA Medieval Fair  |
| Award for Active Citizenship      | The annual Lions Hearing Dogs Open Day                                      |

The Citizen of the Year Awards is a premier award program of the Australia Day Council of South Australia.

**For recipient contact details call:** Jennifer Blake / 8408 0430 | 0437 114 698