



# Walgett Shire Council

ABN 88 769 076 385

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### RADIO

- ABC Western Plains
- ABC New England
- ABC National
- 2WEB
- NOW FM/2VM
- Opal FM

### PRINT MEDIA

- Walgett Spectator
- Lightning Ridge News
- Mungindi Matters
- Daily Liberal – Dubbo
- Western Magazine
- North West Magazine
- Sydney Morning Herald

### TV

- Prime (Dubbo)
- WIN (Dubbo)
- Southern Cross 10
- Imparja
- NBN

**DATE: 28 January 2022**

**EMBARGO: NIL**

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### WALGETT SHIRE AUSTRALIA DAY 2022 AWARDS

A huge congratulations to the nominees and recipients of the Australia Day 2022 Awards. This year's Awards were planned to be celebrated at the Collarenebri Bowling Club. However, due to changes in COVID guidelines around venue size and attendees, a change to an outdoor fun filled family day at the Walgett Pool was made; kick starting with an 8am breakfast provided by Walgett PCYC. On the morning of the event Mother Nature had other plans delivering steady rainfall, the night before, hindering the morning proceedings. After much deliberation and ensuring we provided a COVID safe environment, abiding with COVID regulations, the 2022 Australia Day Citizenship and Awards Ceremony was held at the new multi-million dollar PCYC complex giving many of the community their first look inside the new facility.

The day began with Manager Community Development and MC for the event, Mr George McCormick, delivering a smooth transition to the new venue with the help of Council staff and community members. This ensured all award recipients, nominees and distinguished guests arrive with plenty of time for a catered breakfast before the official proceedings got underway.

Local Elder Doreen Peters conducted the Welcome to Country; acknowledging the people, Elders, Traditional Custodians and First People of the land, its waterways and the continuing spiritual connection to the land on which we were all meeting on. Paying respects to the Elders past, present and future of the Gamilaroi nation. Mayor Jane Keir OAM then welcomed and introduced our Australia Day Ambassador for this year, renowned children's author, Ms Susanne Gervay OAM.

The day witnessed over 150 plus Shire residents and some visitors engage in a well-received awards and citizenship ceremony.

This year Council had 19 nominations in the following categories: Health Award, Business Award, Volunteer of the Year, lifetime Achievement Award, Young Citizen of the Year and Citizen of the Year.

#### **HEALTH AWARD:**

The aim of this award is to recognise the achievements of a professional, working in the local health industry who has made a significant contribution to the local community in the fields of nursing, medicine, allied health or health research. There were 3 nominations received for this category. Elizabeth Williams, Sue Jenkins, (Group) Biggest Loser Challenge Lightning Ridge; *Elizabeth Williams was named winner of the Australia Day 2022 Health Award.*

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Betty, has worked at Walgett Health Service her entire nursing career, where she is currently working as an Aboriginal Health Worker. This role sees her involved with the Renal Dialysis, Palliative Care and Respiratory Clinics and Programs.

During Walgett's COVID 19 epidemic, Betty worked tirelessly and made herself available 7 days a week to the entire community, to ensure that their mental health and wellbeing needs were being met. Betty is a true gem of our Shire.

### **BUSINESS OF THE YEAR 2022:**

This award recognises a business in the Walgett Shire area, which has made a significant contribution to the local economy and community. This can extend to local employment initiatives, driving innovation, support for development and social enterprises and contributing to the local economy. There were 4 nominations received for this category. Opal Street Café, Outback Opal Tours, Walgett RSL and DTK Security. *The winner of the Business of the Year 2022 Award was Outback Opal Tours.*

Outback Opal Tours offers a variety of products and services in Lightning Ridge, from private and group tours, to retail and soon adding a variety of workshops and community craft meetings.

This business has received TripAdvisor certificates of excellence for the past 5 years, bringing visitors from far and wide to the region. Their love, passion, knowledge and enthusiasm for the town and the opal mining industry has created a business which has drawn much interest from major business' and corporations around Australia; including Channel 10's Off Road Adventures and R.M. Williams to name a few.

### **VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**

The aim of this award is to recognize those who have made an outstanding contribution to our community who, through their volunteer works, have shown a commitment to the growth and prosperity of Walgett Shire. Council received 4 nominations for this category, Lynn Bartleson, George Siegwalt, John Randall and Nicholas Nelson. *The Volunteer of the Year Award was Nicholas Nelson*

In 2014 Nick, with his partner Ana, started the Community Garden under the sponsorship and support of Lightning Ridge Rotary and the Walgett Shire Council.

7 Years on, you will still see Nick tending the gardens every morning in order to provide fresh seasonal produce for the disadvantaged in the community. During COVID 19, Nick was very aware that many people were isolated and unable to get fresh produce and supplies and he worked tirelessly to ensure these people had their fresh fruit and vegetables to help them get by during such a difficult time. Nick puts himself before so many others and, along with his partner, Ana are amazing irreplaceable community champions.

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### LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

This award acknowledges the outstanding achievements of a senior resident who, through their leadership and innovation, have displayed ongoing excellence in their field and in the community. Council received 4 nominations for this category. Nancy Hoare, Robert Yeomans, Jenni McKenzie & Ian John Woodcock. ***The Lifetime Achievement Award winner was Mrs. Nancy Hoare.***

Displaying a lifetime commitment and actively being involved in the development of community and youth within the Collarenebri community; through Education, Sporting and Social Activities, it would be impossible to list all of the associations Nancy has been involved with. Nancy has a wonderful ‘Can Do’ attitude, which has seen her accomplish many varied roles throughout her work life – both as an employee and volunteer. From driving children to various sporting events, co-ordinating the Books in Homes program at Collarenebri Central School, committee participation in such functions as secretary, treasurer and fundraising, to name just a few. Nancy your dedication has been a true asset to our community.

### YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

The aim of this award is to recognize the significant achievements of a young citizen and their impact on the broader community. The winner of this award is an inspirational role model and displays continued excellence in their field and in the community of Walgett Shire. Council received 1 nomination for this category with ***Jack O’Brien being awarded the Young Citizen of the Year for 2022.***

Jack O’Brien is an Australian representative rower and a national champion; having won 2 gold medals at World Rowing Cups and also participating at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics in the Australian Men’s Senior Eight. An accomplished athlete who did not let the remoteness of his surroundings nor lack of prior experience deter him from attaining great achievements in his chosen sport. As an outstanding role model to all young people in the community; while at home, Jack seeks to involve himself in community sporting events and also encouraging others to do so and chase their dreams.

### CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

The aim of this award is to recognize the outstanding contributions made by a citizen to the local community. The award is reflective of quality of service and the individual’s acts of compassion, generosity and citizenship. Council received 3 nominations for this award: Diane White, Barry Henry and Trent Swinton. ***The winner of the prestigious Citizen of the Year was Mr. Trent Swinton***

Inspector Trent Swinton of Walgett Central North Police District was the informative and reliable face of the COVID 19 response throughout the Walgett Shire in 2021. In his role, he informed and supported the community by being accessible and pro-active throughout, thereby creating a connection with the people to allay any fears through the uncertainty of the pandemic. Inspector Trent Swinton carries out his work with great humility and understanding, giving dignity to those within the Walgett Shire community.

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Council congratulates all the nominees and thanks those who made nominations. We encourage many residents to get involved in these awards and contribute to acknowledging those in our community who continuously go above and beyond for others.

Mayor Keir closed the day’s ceremony and thanked all for their attendance. The organisers of the event want to make a special thank you to the PCYC team and Council staff for their huge efforts in making the day such a successful and special event for all.

*Below Left: Mayor Jane Keir OAM with Australia Day Ambassador Susanne Gervay OAM:  
Below Right: Citizen of the Year Mr Trent Swinton with Ambassador*



*Below Left: Newly sworn in Australian Citizens Mrs Olga Babic and Ms Selina Myers and attendees stand for the National anthem.*

*Below Right: Betty Williams accepting her Health Award for Australia Day 2022*



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*Below left: Business of the Year for 2022 Outback Opal Tours owners, Petar Borkovic and Franka Friedrichs-Borkovic, accepting their award*

*Below Right: Lifetime Achievement Award winner Mrs Nancy Hoare accepting her award;*



*Below left*

*Young Citizen of the Year Award winner Jack Obrien's mother, Jane, accepting the award on his behalf.*

*Right : Volunteer of the Year Nick Nelson with his partner Anna at the community gardens with his award.*



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