

Media Release

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2017 Australia Day Award Winners Announced

The 2017 Ballina Shire Australia Day Awards were announced at the official celebrations held in Lennox Head on Thursday 26 January 2017.

Forty-four nominations were received across the categories of Sports, Arts Cultural, Young Citizen, Senior Citizen, Community Event and Local Hero. The Awards program celebrates the achievements and contributions that our unsung heroes make to our community.

Mayor David Wright with special guest, and former Winter Olympic Gold Medallist and inspiring guest speaker, Alisa Camplin presented the awards to the all the nominees, category winners and the overall 2017 Ballina Shire Citizen of the Year.

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR – Doug Stinson is a community all-rounder and hasn't sat still since he retired to Ballina Shire over 15-years ago. Aside from his extensive community involvement, Doug's nomination includes his involvement with the Cancer Council NSW's Relay for Life. Aside from establishing the first Relay in Ballina and attending every year since 2003, Doug was also on the original NSW Relay For Life Taskforce Committee. He has also been involved with numerous community groups including the Lions Club of Lennox Head, Lennox Head Surf Club, has been President of Alstonville Tennis Club, Alstonville Soccer Club and the Ballina District Community Services Association. Besides his formal commitments to these and other organisations he is described as a genuinely helpful person and is always willing to "Lend an Ear" and give useful advice as a friend.

SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR – Shirley O'Brien has been coaching netball for over 50-years and was instrumental in the formation of netball in Ballina back in the early 1970s when she and a handful of other locals first began the netball competition at Wigmore Park with just a few teams. More than 40-years later, Ballina Netball is one of the strongest associations on the North Coast and over the years Shirley has coached hundreds of girls and has had many successes, including some who have gone on to play in the national league and others who have become coaches themselves.

SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR – Russell Priddle has held a multitude of roles with the Alstonville Soccer Club including junior registrar, coach, coordinator, groundsman, gear steward, go to man, event organiser and the list goes on. He remains enthusiastic about junior soccer even though his children are now middle aged adults and long left the junior ranks. He has been described as the backbone of the Alstonville Soccer fraternity for decades.

Other nominees for the Sports Award were: Maddyson Lloyd, Eleka Moore and Lilly Hogbin.

ARTS CULTURAL AWARD - Kim Michelle Toft is a talented silk artist who has an outstanding gallery under the Ramada in Ballina called "Seasilks Gallery". She has also written, illustrated and self-published nine beautiful children's books which all contain important environmental messages. Kim won a wealth of children's literacy awards and environmental awards and is a valued and respected public speaker and an incredible ambassador for arts and culture in our shire.

The other nominee for the Arts Cultural Award was: Di Bell.

