

2015 Bega Valley Shire Community Service Medallion

The Bega Valley Shire Medallion is presented for the outstanding work of volunteers across Bega Valley Shire and recognises one of the great strengths of a community, people who are prepared to give up their own time for the benefit of others and the community as a whole.



Medallion recipients and committee members at Wednesday's presentation. They are (back from left) Mayor Michael Britten, Lori Hammerton (committee), Robert Graham, Allen Collins, Ted McKeown, Edna Duncanson (committee), Ian Battersby, Brian Richards and Alan Simpson. (Front) Mary Cocks (committee), Marge Snijder, Jan Ireland, Eileen Cameron, Judi Hearn, Val Little and Norma Allen (committee).

Val Little - Tathra

Val Little has contributed to many aspects of life in the Bega Valley Shire, as a business woman, a sports person, a team leader and mentor.

She was a foundation member of the Tathra Australian Football League and still has a strong association with the club.

She was a leader with the Tathra Cubs and a fundraiser for the Tathra Public School when her children were growing.

When they went to high school, Val was there as secretary of the Parents and Citizens Association at Bega High School and a volunteer in the school canteen.

Val has also been a volunteer at the Red Cross tearoom in Bega and a member of the Bega Quilters and Weavers

She is described by her friends as “a great wife, mother, grandmother and friend who even finds the time to walk the dog each day”.

She has a reputation for encouraging others into many volunteering positions by her own attitude and involvement.

Val is a great example of how important community service is in the Shire.

Jan Ireland - Bermagui

Jan Ireland is the founder and event manager of Sculpture on the Edge, a not for profit event run by volunteers on a small budget in Bermagui.

This is a free, accessible and inclusive annual competition and exhibition that, as well as the sculpture, also includes a symposium, community picnic and Fire Festival, U3A tours and workshops for school.

In 2014, some 8,600 visitors enjoyed the Sculpture on the Edge exhibitions – on the headland, at Horseshoe Bay and in the community hall - and Bega Valley Shire Council acknowledged the importance of the event to the Shire with a three-year acquisition prize.

Jan has called on her many talents and professional experience as a librarian, archivist, researcher, historian and advisor for architects and interior designs to benefit Bermagui over the past 12 years.

She was a member of the Bermagui Seaside Fair for five years, organising arts and crafts exhibitions, pet pageant, Blessing of the Fleet, a sandcastle competition and a sculpture competition.

She also served on the Bermagui Area Committee and was a member of Council's Social and Cultural Planning Committee.

Her other services to Council include the Bermagui Heritage Study, the Bermagui Historical Society the Bermagui Public Fair and the Bermagui Youth Week Living Artists Committee.

She curated the South East Regional Conservation Alliance photography exhibition promoting local artists at the Bermagui Fishermen's Wharf for three months in 2013, has been a judge at the Kings Cross Photographic Prize and the Festival of the Face in Bega in 2014.

Alan Simpson - Merimbula

Alan Simpson has dedicated more than 30 years to the Berrambool Sporting Complex, as a founding member of the committee in 1986 and as president for the past 10 years. He also has donated hundreds of hours to mowing, trimming, cleaning up and maintaining at the complex on a regular basis.

He has been honoured with life membership of both the Australian Rugby League and the Merimbula Diggers Football Club and in 1990 he instigated the Sapphire Coast Umpires Association.

Indeed, in recognition of all his sporting achievements, he was awarded the Australian Sports Medal as part of the commemoration of the Bicentennial of white settlement in 2000.

In 2008 Alan took the world record for Drug Free Power Lifting in his age group with 75kg for a dead lift of 140.5 kg, a record he held for two years. He has also set various national records for power lifting.

In his professional capacity he has twice won Master Buildings Housing Awards and is known as a mentor and advisor within the community.

Ian Battersby - Merimbula

Ian Battersby was nominated for a Bega Valley Shire Community Medallion for the way in which he has improved the lives of many older inhabitants of Merimbula and Tura Beach.

Ian came to Merimbula in 2005 after his retirement as a sound engineer and has been an active member of the local community.

He joined Spectrum Theatre Group in 2008 and managed sound production for eight shows spanning four years.

He also improved the Twyford Hall sound system, recorded and post-produced the soundtrack for the DVD of the Prix d'Amour musical.

In 2012 he recorded the Merimbula Centenary Anthem by local composer Paul Dion and provided CDS for various groups to play during the centenary celebrations.

He has managed the Merimbula Imlay Historical Society's website and recorded many oral history CDs for the museum archives and takes photographs of their displays for posting online.

Ian also provides clerical assistance for the Bega Valley Parkinson's support group by formatting their monthly newsletter and offering technical support for their meetings.

However, it is for his lessons and advice to many seniors in the region that has brought greatest praise.

As one of his nominators said: "Ian has been a wonderful help in assisting me to learn the ins and outs of the computer world. Growing older means a shortening of the list of what we are able to do. Being computer-wise with the wonderful help of Ian has opened up a new world for me and many elderly others."

Eileen Cameron - Eden

Eileen Cameron has been an active volunteer in Eden for many years and a strong advocate for the rights of her Eden community.

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Eden provides food, fuel and or vouchers to those in need, but only on Tuesdays. Eileen goes above and beyond this. She is on call to the community at any time, day or night and everyone knows where she lives or how to access her. And she never lets a person in crisis down.

Not only does she provide crisis support when people are at their lowest, she also advocates for the community and has done so for many years. She is seen at all types of forums and meetings, making sure that the needs of the Eden community are heard.

Eileen's gentle, non-confrontational nature is admired and her patience and caring ways are appreciated by the townspeople.

She has sat with many people, calming and supporting them through their crises, always with a smile and often with a reassuring touch – something so simple that can mean so much.

Eileen's passion is to educate young women about healthy relationships and she models this in her own life. She is down to earth, compassionate and full of knowledge.

She is also a member of the Social Justice Advocacy Group and a volunteer with the Eden Killer Whale Museum.

Allen Collins - Tathra

Allen William Collins has been extremely active in the community since his arrival in the Bega Valley Shire in 2003.

He has a particular interest in health care issues and has served on a range of committees such as the Bega Valley Health Advisory Council; ANU's local Community Consultation Committee on medical training; and was a member of the Tathra Hospital Auxiliary for three years

He has taken a keen interest in the new regional hospital scheduled to open next year and was a member of the Operation New Hospital group which lobbied Federal and State politicians for more than 10 years before the work began.

Allen was the only community member on the Progress Planning Team for the South East Regional Hospital and his interest in health and aged care issues took him on to the board of Imlay House where he served in various capacities, including vice president and treasurer, for four years.

Allen has served as a warden and parish councillor of Saint John's Anglican Church in Bega and as Religious Minister of the Elderly in the parish. After completing courses in pastoral care and trauma care, he visits the Bega District Hospital with the pastoral care and trauma care teams of volunteers.

He is the co-ordinator of the Tathra Carols by Candlelight every year and was on the committee of the Wambiri Youth Centre for six years.

He also serves the committee of the Pig and Whistle Fleet museum that records the days when Tathra Wharf was a busy hub of industry in the Shire and chaired the sesquicentenary celebrations of the wharf.

Edward (Ted) McKeown - Merimbula

Ted McKeown has been involved in tourism in the Bega Valley Shire, particularly in Merimbula, for the past 18 years and stepped up 10 years ago when Council changed the structure for tourism information and promotion.

Ted took on the challenge of opening and running the Merimbula Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and created a voluntary organisation known as Merimbula and Sapphire Coast Promotions that ended up with members from across the Shire and from further afield. He designed the method of operation for the VIC, had it accredited with Tourism NSW as a level 1 information centre and then provided the documents to Bermagui and Eden so that they could do the same.

He established a new tourism magazine that was affordable to its members and established contacts in other parts of NSW, Victoria and the ACT and personally delivered boxes of the magazine for five years. He also arranged stands at trade shows in Victoria and the ACT and manned them on an annual basis with assistance from volunteers.

Ted organised television advertising when the recession hit and successfully promoted Merimbula and the Sapphire Coast for over five years. He contributed hundreds of hours of his own time to fill a critical gap in promoting our beautiful region.

Brian Richards - Bega

When Brian Richards retired from the Bega Tennis Club in January he had completed 62 years of service to the Bega Tennis Club.

He joined the club in 1952 after arriving in Bega with his family as a 16 year old in 1950, and first showed up on the honor board when he became secretary in 1961 and, all up, he spent 13 years in that role.

In 1975 he had his first of three terms as president but it was as treasurer that he demonstrated his mettle – 35 years, and many of them doubling with his role of secretary.

He started playing as a B grader, advanced through the ranks of the fours competition to A grade and was on the committee a year later when the club had just been rebuilt and had five courts.

In 1973 the club relaunched the night tennis competition. Brian built the comp up to four strong divisions played over two nights and soon found himself as the sole coordinator. From 1974 he ran it continuously until his retirement – 41 years.

Beyond running the night competition, Brian was also coordinating the annual Easter tournament from 1966.

Brian wanted to see continued growth in the Bega club and took the competition over from the association to ensure the revenue was used locally, as everyone involved was from the Bega Club.

Under his stewardship, the Easter competition had grown to a major yearly event for the club to a point where 250 to 300 players injected more than \$200,000 into the Bega economy based on a survey done by entrants at its peak.

Brian was also addressing shortages in junior development programs in the 1960s and took on coaching on Saturday mornings that lasted almost 40 years.

Judi Hearn - Bermagui

Judi Hearn is an accomplished researcher, author, artist and poet with several historical books to her name.

These include 'Bermagui: a century of features and families' which she wrote with Ron Gaha, 'Bermagui By The Sea', 'Big Game Fishing at Bermagui, 1936-1996', 'Galleries of Pink Galahs', 'Reflections of Ted Taylor - Man of the High Country' and her autobiography of horse trainer Leone Creamer, 'Horse-sweat and Tears.'

She has also written a history of Bermagui with the Bermagui Historical Society.

However, it was her fascination with the Montreal Goldfields near Bermagui and the book she researched and wrote in 2001, 'The Montreal gold rush, Bermagui 1880-1883' that led to the establishment the historic Montreal Goldfields as a major tourism facility in 2005.

The old goldfields have become a significant heritage and environmental eco-tourism site for the Shire.

Judi was an enthusiastic member of the Montreal Goldfield management committee which initiated the community project and has worked tirelessly ever since to increase educational opportunities to develop business relationships with the local Aboriginal community.

It has been said of the project that "the Montreal Goldfields would not be what it is today without Judi's untiring effort and enthusiasm".

Her work with the Bermagui Historical Society and her promotion of the Sapphire Coast and its many attractions make her a worthy recipient of the Bega Valley Shire Community Service Medallion.

Marge Snijder - Eden

Marge Snijder arrived in Eden in 1995 and since then has worked tirelessly for the community in a voluntary capacity.

For the past 20 years Marge has served on the Eden Tourism Committee taking various roles including that of chair.

She has taken the Eden Visitor Information Centre from near collapse in 2000 to a fully accredited Level 1 Visitor Centre that employs a full time manager, an accountant and a part time administrator, along with 30 committee volunteers, many of whom are there due to Marge's passion and tireless work. Marge continues to volunteer at the centre, serves on the committee and takes over day to day operations when the manager is away.

As a member of the Eden Chamber of Commerce for the past 20 years, Marge has been responsible for many developments and successes, particularly surrounding tourism. She was involved in lobbying for the wharf extension project and played a major role in the success of Cruise Eden, both hands on during the visit of cruise ships and in promoting the area as a cruise destination, recruiting volunteers and running familiarisation tours for cruise company executives.

Marge has served as social secretary of both the Twofold Bay Yacht Club and the Sapphire Water Dragons Clubs, organising fund raising events and sponsorship.

She was on the Bega Valley Tourism Committee for 20 years and the Bega Valley Business Forum for seven years as well as the Eden Whale Festival for 15 years the Eden Business Awards Committee for four years, the Eden Community Foundation and Eden Marine Rescue.

Marge also started Eden's Nautical Night each year on 28 December as a welcome party for yachts that had to pull out of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race.

Robert Graham - Wolumla

Shihan Rob Graham of Wolumla has dedicated a lifetime to karate and his students.

After losing a leg in a motorcycle accident at the age of 18 he refused to see his disability as a limiting factor in his life as he learnt, competed in, excelled at and then taught karate to beginners through to champions.

Rob began teaching in 1996 and over the years his students have placed in the National All Styles, the Australian Karate Federation National and State competitions.

He has had two students in the NSW State teams and girls and boys train in the Nationals All Styles and become champions in that.

His family-friendly approach means that in many instances he has trained multiple members of one family.

Rob offers affordable fees and hardship subsidisation which engenders dedication and inclusivity in all his students.

As a founding member of Kokoro Kai Goju Australia, his style of karate teaches those with difficult circumstances, intellectual and physical disabilities as well as ethnic and indigenous backgrounds that "karate is not just a sport, it's a way of life".

In 2010 he formed KKGA with Shihans Allan Guymer and Peter Jackson, seeking to emphasise the human and moral as well as the physical side of karate, promoting fairness, openness and equality. Kokora is Japanese for heart, soul and spirit.

In 2014 he completed his level 2 coaching course, already having held level 1 with the National Coaches Accreditation Scheme, including the study of sports science, physiology and advanced training concepts.

Shihan Rob has now been awarded the rank of 5th Dan, master instructor, which is equivalent to a Masters degree.

Congratulations all!