

Media Release

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Million-dollar fundraising teen named 2025 Central Sydney Volunteer of the Year

Eighteen-year-old Tie Dye Project co-founder and cancer survivor Molly Croft has been named the 2025 Central Sydney Volunteer of the Year for her prolific fundraising, inspirational leadership and advocacy for people living with cancer.

Molly, who volunteers for the Kids with Cancer Foundation, was recognised today at Club Parramatta as part of the 2025 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards.

The NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards are hosted by The Centre for Volunteering to help promote and support volunteering across NSW. They are now in their 19th year and celebrate the work of thousands of individuals and volunteer teams from a diverse range of organisations across the state.

Recipients of other individual and team awards were also announced today, including the inaugural Emergency Volunteer of the Year:

Central Sydney Young Volunteer of the Year: Molly Croft from Macquarie Park

Brave 18-year-old Molly Croft turned pain into purpose after being diagnosed at 12 with a rare form of aggressive bone cancer, enduring treatment that removed most of the bone in one leg and part of a lung. Molly has since given her time to raise over \$2 million for children's charities, including \$1 million for cancer research as co-founder of The Tie Dye Project.

She moved from her home in Dubbo this year to study at Macquarie University and is a strong public speaker, championing awareness and funding for sarcoma research and mental health resilience.

Central Sydney Adult Volunteer of the Year: Nivanka Fernando from Carlingford

Nivanka is a former international student and now qualified social worker who began her volunteering journey in Australia as a facilitator with the English Conversation Groups at Western Sydney University, helping overseas students build confidence, connections and resilience through language skills.

She has continued to give her time with the BLAQ Aboriginal Corporation; volunteering as a grief and loss facilitator with the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors; and supporting the Khmer community in Bonnyrigg.

Central Sydney Senior Volunteer of the Year: Vic Calandruccio from Greystanes

Vic is a dedicated and much-loved volunteer at Westmead Hospital, where he drives one of the hospital's volunteer-run buggies.

In just five years, his actions have helped save a life; his kindness so moved a patient over many hospital visits that they donated \$4,000 in his honour; and he has even covered parking costs for distressed visitors unable to pay.

Central Sydney Emergency Volunteer of the Year: David Czerkies OAM from Pemulwuy

Retired Major David Czerkies has been an outstanding volunteer with St John Ambulance NSW for over 43 years and active in building skills for its volunteers since 1985.

David has overseen the development of national training resources for St John Ambulance, played a key role in deploying St John NSW volunteers to natural disasters, and led more than 140 volunteers in St John event teams.

Central Sydney Volunteer Team of the Year: Parramatta Street Side Medics

The 33 members of the Street Side Medics Parramatta crew give their time after hours treating patients who are missing out on essential medical health care due to stigma, trauma, or access barriers.

The group of doctors, nurses, paramedics, allied health professionals, and support staff deliver free medical care to homeless people across Parramatta as well as linking patients to housing, addiction and mental health services.

The Centre for Volunteering CEO Gemma Rygate said in difficult times, volunteers often come forward to meet a crisis with compassion.

“Volunteers are the quiet force, whether helping ease cost of living pressures, supporting those in crisis or responding on the front line of floods, fires and emergencies,” Ms Rygate said.

“Their dedication isn’t just admirable; it underpins a more resilient and compassionate society. These exceptional individuals give selflessly - often while juggling careers, study, and family life - yet they still choose to show up for others when it matters most.”

The NSW Minister with responsibility for Volunteering, Jodie Harrison said:

“Congratulations to the recipients of the Central Sydney Volunteer of the Year Awards. You’ve been recognised as heroes by the people in your communities who know you best.

“Thank you for your ongoing contributions, which make New South Wales the best state to live and work in. These awards are an important way we recognise your passion and dedication to your local communities.

“The NSW Government is continuing to work with The Centre for Volunteering to build a more diverse and inclusive volunteering sector so that all our volunteers feel respected and acknowledged for their work.”

Central Sydney volunteer award recipients will be invited to represent their region at the Gala State Ceremony at the end of the year, where the NSW Volunteer of the Year is announced across each category.



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About the NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards

The NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards are in their 19th year and have grown to become one of the largest celebrations of volunteering across Australia.

They are an annual program run by The Centre for Volunteering to recognise the outstanding work of volunteers and Leaders of Volunteers in every region across NSW.

Individuals or teams can be nominated in one of seven award categories:

- Young Volunteer of the Year – sponsored by the Minister for Youth – Hon Rose Jackson
- Adult Volunteer of the Year
- Senior Volunteer of the Year
- Volunteer Team of the Year
- Emergency Volunteer of the Year – sponsored by the Minister for Emergency Services – Hon Jihad Dib
- Not-for-Profit Voluntary Governance Award
- Volunteer Leader of the Year

Twenty-five regional ceremonies are held in towns and suburbs throughout NSW from mid-August until November.

The regional finalists will be invited to a Gala State ceremony in December in Sydney where the NSW Volunteer of Year is announced. Recipients for the NSW Volunteer of the Year are also announced across the seven categories.

The Awards are run by the Centre for Volunteering. The NSW Government are the principal partners for the awards.



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