



The Centre for
Volunteering

Media Release

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Respected Elder awarded the 2025 Mid-Western Sydney Volunteer of the Year

Respected Elder Gail Daylight has been named the 2025 Mid-Western Sydney Volunteer of the Year for her support for young First Nations people at risk of homelessness throughout the Inner West region.

Aunty Gail was recognised today at Club Burwood RSL 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:

Mid-Western Sydney Young Volunteer of the Year: Nour Arabi from Roselands

Nour is an outstanding volunteer, role model and advocate for young people and those in need through her work at Muslim Women Australia.

The Year 11 student gives her time alongside her studies, running programs to help empower young girls from CALD communities, preparing and distributing nutritious meals and care packages to women and families experiencing hardship; and running holiday activities.

Mid-Western Sydney Adult Volunteer of the Year: Anmol Kamath from Marrickville

Anmol shares his time studying for his nursing and commerce degree, part-time work and a plethora of volunteering at UTS.

He provides practical and mental health support to international students as an Activate UTS Wellbeing representative, a leader of Random Acts of Kindness, and UTS Bluebird Pantry volunteer.

Anmol speaks 12 languages which helps his disaster relief volunteering with Sewa Australia, which also saw him travel to the Northern Rivers region to work on flood rebuilds and counselling.

Mid-Western Sydney Senior Volunteer of the Year: Gail Daylight from Lakemba

Aunty Gail gives her time with youth homelessness service Stepping Stone, providing support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness.

She is a respected Elder and mentor who has also volunteered with The Jimmy Little Foundation, the Cancer Centre at Dubbo Hospital, the Youth Koori Court, the Surry Hills and Parramatta courts as an Aboriginal Elder, and as a member of the Aboriginal Medical Service Redfern.



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Mid-Western Sydney Emergency Volunteer of the Year: Dr Elizabeth Lobb from Newtown

Elizabeth has been a vital part of Lifeline's suicide prevention support services, helping shape its community of volunteers through her dedication, wisdom, and compassion.

As a crisis supporter, she provides comfort and often life-saving support to people in distress.

Mid-Western Sydney Volunteer Team of the Year: The Cottage Kitchen Volunteers

Every Monday, the 12 members of The Cottage Kitchen Volunteer team in Burwood provide around 150 free three-course meals to those in need.

The service, which runs out of the Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of Burwood, provides meals to the frail, aged, homeless, those with serious health issues, or anyone facing food insecurity.

The team is made up of volunteers of all ages, from high school students to senior citizens, who prepare, deliver, and serve meals, as well as provide welfare checks and social contact for their clients.

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 Mid Western 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."

Mid-Western 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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