

Media Release

Embargoed until: 2.30pm on Tuesday 9 September 2025

Macarthur Magic founder wins 2025 South Western Sydney-Macarthur Volunteer of the Year

Macarthur Magic Football Club founder Geoff Golden has been named 2025 South Western Sydney-Macarthur Volunteer of the Year for his decades-long work helping young people with disabilities get on the field to enjoy and participate in sport.

Geoff was recognised today at the 2025 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards ceremony at the Campbelltown Catholic Club.

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:

South Western Sydney-Macarthur Young Volunteer of the Year: Anika Shinde from Glenfield

Year 11 Hurlstone Agricultural High School student Anika Shinde co-founded the MYC Uncensored Podcast which has amassed an audience of 3,800 listeners in Australia and across the world. She has become a leading voice for female students to take on STEM subjects and get access to greater career opportunities.

She also shares stories on women's health, relationships and self-worth, and gives her time at school to support, uplift and inspire other students.

South Western Sydney-Macarthur Adult Volunteer of the Year: Geoff Golden from Narellan Vale

Geoff Golden founded the Macarthur Magic Special Needs Football Club more than a decade ago and it has now grown into one of the largest and most successful inclusive football clubs in the country.

It is entirely volunteer run, with Geoff as head volunteer, giving his time to manage the grounds, programming, volunteer recruitment, branding, uniforms, marketing, grants and sponsorships.

The club provides a weekly, soccer-based program tailored for young people with disabilities. It fosters a non-competitive environment where the focus is on fun and participation where every child is encouraged to join in, express themselves, and enjoy the game at their own pace.

South Western Sydney-Macarthur Volunteer Team of the Year: Community She Shed

The Community She Shed volunteer team has been the driving force to create a welcoming place for women across the Macarthur region to learn, develop new skills and provide a support network to help build confidence and new connections.

South Western Sydney-Macarthur Senior Volunteer of the Year: Dot Lechner from Harrington Park

Dot gives her time at Anglicare Barry Marsh Residential Care Home where she organises events and activities, fundraises, bakes, and builds companionship and connections with elderly people.

Her volunteer duties have included organising visits from local veteran motorcycle groups and fundraising. Her dedication and commitment have had a remarkable and positive impact on the aged care community at the home.

South Western Sydney-Macarthur Emergency Volunteer of the Year: Peter Jensen from Mount Annan

Peter is a camp facilitator and cultural inclusion advisor for Girls on Fire where he helps girls aged 14 to 19 to learn about, and prepare for, fire emergencies.

As a First Nations firefighter with Fire and Rescue NSW, he draws on his deep knowledge and skills to encourage young women to learn more about emergency volunteering and the harsh realities of fire emergencies in Australia.

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 South Western Sydney-Macarthur 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.”

South Western Sydney-Macarthur 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.

The Award categories are:

- 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 the 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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