



The Centre for  
Volunteering

# Media Release

**Embargoed until 4pm Monday 10 August 2026**

## **Bondi lifesaver and terror attack responder named 2026 Sydney City/Eastern Suburbs Volunteer of the Year**

Bondi Beach Surf Lifesaver Robyn Farmer has been named the 2026 Sydney City/Eastern Suburbs Volunteer of the Year, for her decades-long commitment to beach safety and her extraordinary emergency response to the Bondi Beach terrorist attack.

Robyn was recognised today at the 2026 NSW Volunteer of Year Awards at Club York.

The NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards are hosted by The Centre for Volunteering to help promote and support volunteering across NSW.

The Awards are now in their 20th year and celebrate the work of thousands of individuals and volunteer teams from a diverse range of organisations across the state.

Other individual and team awards were also announced today:

### **Sydney City/Eastern Suburbs Young Volunteer of the Year: Ffyon McCabe from Eastlakes**

Teenager Ffyon McCabe is a volunteer at South Maroubra Surf Life Saving Club where she gives around 90 hours of her time each year patrolling beaches and keeping watch over beach goers.

She has also developed her own Beach Safety Awareness Program which is now being delivered by young volunteers to more than 3,500 students across 10 schools throughout the region.

### **Sydney City/Eastern Suburbs Adult Volunteer of the Year: Tanya Coleman from Maroubra**

Tanya is the competition convenor for the Randwick Netball Association where she helps to grade and organise competitions for 280 netball teams, involving more than 10,000 players.

She also mentors youth volunteers from the Duke of Edinburgh Awards and gives her time as coach and umpire for her local club.

### **Sydney City/Eastern Suburbs Senior Volunteer of the Year: Susie Elelman from Chippendale**

Susie is a volunteer donor connector at the Cerebral Palsy Alliance where she builds donor relationships and supports fundraising to improve outcomes for people with cerebral palsy and their families.

She gives her time, ideas and enthusiasm to support event planning, donor engagement and fundraising.



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## **Sydney City/Eastern Suburbs Emergency Volunteer of the Year: Robyn Farmer from Bondi Beach**

Robyn is a patrol leader with the Bondi Surf Bathing Life Saving Club where she oversees rescues and first aid for beach goers, trains lifesavers, develops education programs, and coaches competition teams.

She put her own training into action on the day of the Bondi terror attack, together with a team of trainees, leading triage and providing advanced first aid to victims, helping to save lives and support first responders.

## **Sydney City/Eastern Suburbs Volunteer Team of the Year: COA Bondi Support Meals Team**

The 215 volunteers from the COA Bondi Support Meals Team came together immediately after the December 2025 Bondi terror attack to provide relief and human support for people impacted by this traumatic incident.

They delivered more than 5,350 meals over 50 days for victims, bereaved families, and community members experiencing trauma and acute distress in the wake of the attack.

The team managed logistics, dietary needs, and coordinated with catering partners to provide essential relief to help families focus on recovery and bereavement.

**The Centre for Volunteering CEO Gemma Rygate** said volunteers from across the City of Sydney and Eastern Suburbs give so much to the local community.

“Volunteers help build strong and healthy communities across the state,” Ms Rygate said.

“They are always there when we need them most, giving their time and support across all areas of life including health, emergency services, education and community sectors.

“Volunteers are role models for others, highlighting how volunteering can have such a positive impact on people and places. These awards celebrate the volunteering effort and impact.”

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

“Congratulations to our everyday heroes, the winners of the Sydney City/Eastern Suburbs Volunteer of the Year Awards.

“From the bush to the sea, volunteers are the true heartbeat of our communities. Thank you for your invaluable contributions. You make New South Wales the best state to live in.

“In partnership with the Centre for Volunteering, the NSW Government continues to build a sector that is strong and diverse, and to make sure volunteers like you are recognised for and supported in what you do.”

Sydney City/Eastern Suburbs award recipients will be invited to represent their region at the State Gala Award Ceremony at the end of the year, where the NSW Volunteer of the Year in each category will be announced.



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## About the NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards

The NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards are in their 20th 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 is the principal partner for the awards.



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