



Australia Day

Reflect. Respect. Celebrate.

Tablelands Regional Council
Australia Day Awards 2024





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PROGRAM

Welcome

Official opening and housekeeping
Acknowledgement of Country
Mayor's Welcome Address

Didgeridoo performance by Graham Chapman

Australia Day Awards Ceremony

Sports Supporter Award
Junior Sports Award
Sports Award
Junior Cultural Award
Cultural Award
Inclusion Award

My Island Home performed by Off The Wagon

Community Service Award
Community Event of the Year Award
Young Citizen of the Year Award
Citizen of the Year Award

Home Among The Gum Trees by Off The Wagon I Am Australian performed by Off The Wagon

Light lunch

SPORTS SUPPORTER AWARD

Recognises the significant contribution and leadership of an individual in a coaching, refereeing, administrative and/or voluntary role in supporting sport within the region.

Helen Nawaqa

Helen has been part of Junior Cricket and Atherton Basketball Association for several years, supporting both the players and their parents. Helen works in the canteen, scoring, refereeing, coaching and transporting players, and ensures everyone has a chance to play. Helen encourages players and focuses on the inclusion of everyone, regardless of abilities, especially at wheelchair basketball games on Wednesdays. Helen is a mentor, creates a trusting and welcoming environment, and treats everyone equally.



Netta Stringer

Netta is an honorary life member of the Atherton Tablelands Dressage Club (ATDDEA), a long-standing Atherton resident and exemplary community figure. Since 2007 she has contributed significantly to judging, coaching and mentoring Tablelands dressage riders. She is a mentor to regional judges and has been ATDDEA's treasurer for 11 years. Netta is passionate about horsemanship and has effortlessly volunteered an enormous amount of her life to ensuring riders in the north understand the principles of the sport and appreciate the art of riding.



JUNIOR SPORTS AWARD

Recognising young members of our community who have made outstanding achievements as a competitor and contributed positively to sport in our community.

Bronte Grose

Bronte has achieved success in cross country, netball, volleyball and athletics at events in Queensland and interstate. She secured first place in the district and fourth in the Peninsula Region for cross country, excelled in various netball championships and was awarded Most Valuable Player. She became a Queensland Academy of Sport beach volleyball athlete and earned accolades in athletics, including ranking second in Queensland and fourth in Australia for the U15 400m. Bronte was awarded the Unsung Hero Award at the State Netball Championships, and received the joint Junior Sportsperson of the Year at Malanda High.



Erika Koelman

Erika represented her school, district and state in athletics and cross country, and secured second in the 3000m and sixth in the 1500m at the Australian Athletics Championships. Erika finished ninth in the Australian Cross Country Championships and was the second Queenslander to cross the line. She has set records for 1500m, 3000m and 4km cross country at multiple levels. Erika displays dedication, commitment, sportsmanship and humility, and her consistent improvements exemplify persistence and the impact of small efforts leading to significant successes. Erika is a role model in athletics and in character for her peers and the community.



JUNIOR SPORTS AWARD

Recognising young members of our community who have made outstanding achievements as a competitor and contributed positively to sport in our community.

Grace Grandcourt

Grace is a two-time U16 Australian champion in Practical Shooting and represented Australia at the International Practical Shooting Confederation World Shoot in Thailand, ranking twentieth from 450 competitors. Her 2023 achievements include first place at Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland state titles, and second place at the Australian titles. Grace's unparalleled commitment involves range training five days a week, dry fire training, and tailored gym sessions. She received the Sporting Excellence Award at the North Queensland Sportstar Awards. Grace aims to represent Australia at the Australasian Games in Bali and 2025 World Titles in South Africa.



Jackson Kennedy

Jackson has excelled in local basketball as part of the winning grand final team and earned the Most Valuable Player in both U18s and men's divisions. He played representative basketball for Mulgrave and participated in the State Championships in the U16s. Beyond his on-court success, Jackson's willingness to lend a hand showcases his admirable character. He contributes significantly to his club and serves as a role model for younger players. Jackson's dedication and sportsmanship have a positive impact on the sport and youth in the community.



SPORTS AWARD

Recognising members of our community who have made outstanding achievements as a competitor and contributed positively to sport in our community.

Graham Haren

Graham is a former Australian BMX Champion and head coach of the Malanda Gymnastics Club and BMX Club. He has exhibited exceptional dedication and leadership in fostering a positive sports environment within the local community. As the founder of the FLICK Sports Academy, the only multi-sports program on the Atherton Tablelands, Graham engages weekly with over 350 children, promoting youth fitness and encouraging sports participation. His commitment extends to developing teamwork, discipline and healthy living. Graham's sustained efforts and consistent involvement exemplify his dedication to the sports community and the overall wellbeing of the youth in our region.



Karli Duesbury

Karli won gold at the Australian National Finals for weightlifting in August, showcasing her prowess with a personal best of a 95kg clean and jerk and a combined total weight of 167kg. Her dedication to training has positioned her to meet her goal of representing Atherton and Australia at the Commonwealth Games. To qualify for the Pan Pacific Games and Oceania Games, Karli aims to surpass a total combined weight of 170kg. Karli's strength, stamina and determination serve as inspiration for the community. Her commitment to pushing boundaries and adhering to a rigorous training schedule has propelled her success.



JUNIOR CULTURAL AWARD

Recognising a young member or group in our community who have made an outstanding contribution in the arts and to the cultural life of our community.

Madison Stansby

Madison has been an active member of the Tablelands Dance community since prep and has excelled in dance competitions and world-standard examinations across various dance styles. In 2023 she qualified for the Australian Teachers of Dancing (ATOD) Queensland State Championships in jazz (second place) and contemporary dance (first place). Madison advanced to the ATOD Australian Championships in Sydney, and won the National Senior Contemporary Championship. She is a role model and inspires younger dancers to exceed expectations. Madison has been accepted into full-time training at Brent Street Studios in Sydney.



Tahalia Durrand

Tahalia is an emerging visual artist who displays unwavering commitment and dedication to achieving artistic excellence. Representing the Tablelands in local, state and national competitions, she advocates for community involvement and has supported over 15 local events. Acknowledged by institutions like the Queensland College of Art, Brisbane Art Society, Emerge and the National Gallery, Tahalia's dedication extends beyond regional boundaries. She has become a role model for young artists, emphasising the value of arts in the community.



CULTURAL AWARD

Recognising a member or group in our community who has made an outstanding contribution in the arts and to the cultural life of our community.

Khalida De Ridder

Khalida has worked tirelessly to arrange classical music events of international significance since 2016. She is an astounding mentor and coach, and drives projects that provide employment and encourage professionals to remain in and return to regional areas. Khalida has brought artists from interstate, collaborated successfully with existing musicians in the area, and assisted in youth training. A talented violinist, she has performed in the area since the age of four, and now runs the Atherton Tablelands Chamber Music Festival and other projects. Khalida performs in Europe throughout the year and reached the final of the Churchill Fellowship Trust.



Lachlan Szery

Lachlan is an instrumental music teacher and is involved in community musical events and groups. He directs both secondary and primary concert bands and organises major fundraising concerts, competitions and showcases. Lachlan has created a range of ensembles, including concert bands, flute choirs, clarinet ensembles, wind quintets and brass bands. He regularly nominates students for statewide programs and volunteers at community events and for the Malanda Theatre Company. Lachlan's outstanding contributions to arts and culture in the community, spanning teaching, directing, volunteering and performing, are evidence of his dedication to enriching the cultural life of the region.



CULTURAL AWARD

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Tai Ah Gee

In 2023 Tai engaged in a range of events to promote various causes, including the Great Endeavour Rally and Cairns2Karumba bike ride. He has contributed to community wellbeing by spreading musical joy at local community events and markets as well as Harmony Day and NAIDOC Week. Tai's commitment to music extends beyond performances, as he dedicates his free time to support the local music scene. Tai's teachers have mentored him throughout his musical schooling and recognise his outstanding dedication and professionalism in the arts.



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INCLUSION AWARD

Recognising the outstanding achievements of a business, organisation or individual who has contributed positively to an inclusive community for all.

Atherton Tableland Agricultural Society

The Atherton Tablelands Agricultural Society is a leader in hosting inclusive events, including the Agricultural Show and Carols by Candlelight. The society organised a Sensory Session during the 2023 show, featuring performances by Disability Matters Sound Play, sensory activities, and all-abilities competitions. They also extended the show experience to residents at Carinya Home for the Aged, offering entertainment, food and a gnome painting competition. The Society displays ongoing innovation, support, and collaboration with our community to making events in our regional accessible to all.



i'ara Specialist Support Coordination

i'ara Specialist Support Coordination stands out for its proactive approach to promoting and practicing inclusion. They host Disability Provider Network meetings and actively engage in training and advocacy. i'ara volunteered at the Atherton Show's Sensory Night Garden and consistently support initiatives across the region. Their positive attitude creates a supportive and welcoming atmosphere, and they embrace collaboration with competitors for the benefit of clients. i'ara's Atherton team exemplifies inclusivity, sharing and a positive ethos within the community.



INCLUSION AWARD

Recognising the outstanding achievements of a business, organisation or individual who has contributed positively to an inclusive community for all.

John Whyte

Pastor John Whyte, from Atherton Baptist Church, demonstrates unwavering commitment to fostering inclusivity in the community. Working with all ages, abilities, cultures and genders, he helps people navigate challenges and discover self-worth. John also serves as the Local Controller for the Atherton SES and is active in the Atherton Men's Shed. He fosters inclusivity within these organisations and dedicates himself to helping those who may feel displaced. John's selfless commitment encourages mutual respect and inclusion, emphasising the value of every individual within the community.



Lions Club of Malanda

Since 1964 the Lions Club of Malanda has provided affordable housing for aged pensioners, and currently offers 18 accommodation units. The club strives to maintain low rents for the tenants (to just cover costs). Through fundraising activities including monthly markets, sausage sizzles and goose clubs, the club raised over \$15,000 in 2023. This money was donated to Malanda charities and the housing project.



INCLUSION AWARD

Recognising the outstanding achievements of a business, organisation or individual who has contributed positively to an inclusive community for all.

Moyamoya Australia

The Smokey Blue Rally is a treasure hunt that raises funds for Moyamoya Disease awareness. The 2023 rally was all-accessible and was supported by several disability service providers. By creating an inclusive environment, the Smokey Blue Rally provided a unique experience and fostered community engagement. The event demonstrated that inclusivity benefits the entire community, offering valuable opportunities for interaction and learning. It served as a model for promoting understanding and connection within the community while having fun raising money for a worthwhile cause.



Tolga Scarecrow Festival

The Scarecrow Festival stood out as a truly inclusive event. All areas and activities accommodated people of all abilities, and specific categories actively encouraged inclusion. The festival provided a platform for local not-for-profit organisations to raise funds and educate the community. The organisers successfully integrated community groups that support people with disabilities, and their comprehensive inclusivity has set a new benchmark for inclusive community events in our region.



INCLUSION AWARD

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Top Rail Tavern

Top Rail Tavern distinguishes itself by consistently embracing inclusivity, going beyond expectations without overt self-promotion. They exhibit an unwavering commitment to supporting their community and readily adapt to facilitate change. Michelle and Jacob have worked with Spinal Life to enhance accessibility, and made immediate adjustments to their accessible toilets. Their positive attitude is evident through their pet-friendly policies and accommodation of neuro-diversity and diverse mobility needs guests.



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COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Recognising significant achievement and contribution to the community during 2023.

Atherton State Emergency Service (SES)

Atherton SES volunteers exhibit exceptional dedication and support in combating fires and responding to emergencies over the past year. Their unwavering commitment to land searches, rescues, storm damage response, and community event assistance is more than commendable. These selfless volunteers play a vital role in supporting local agencies across our region. Throughout 2023 the volunteers displayed remarkable resilience, and their willingness take time out of the work and personal lives, and to upskill and maintain competencies, reflects their commitment to our community.



Bree Hargreaves

Bree established the Tablelands Unite Facebook page, which has grown to over 12,200 members. She contributes to initiatives like the Christmas Lights Map, raising \$2650 for the Mayor's 2023 Community Christmas Appeal. In her role at the Atherton Tablelands Chamber of Commerce, Bree promotes local business through the Tablelands Gift Cards project and shares grants and funding opportunities for small businesses and not-for-profit organisations. Bree volunteers at the Barra Bash and sponsors not-for-profit organisations through her business. Bree's multifaceted contributions make her an asset to our community.



COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Recognising significant achievement and contribution to the community during 2023.

David McConnell

David is an exemplary volunteer, dedicating 20-25hr/week to various organisations including the Rural Fire Brigade, State Emergency Service (SES), Coastguard, Red Cross, Salvation Army and Lions Club. He trains new and existing SES volunteers and has served as president on several organisations including the Tolga State School P&C, Tolga Tennis Club and Tolga Cricket Club. David is a quiet achiever whose commitment extends to mentoring younger members and sharing his wealth of knowledge. His selfless dedication makes him an integral member of our community and community organisations.



ECHO Empowering Services

ECHO Empowering Services consistently goes the extra mile to support disadvantaged members of the community. Their initiatives include providing food, fuel and homelessness kits to assist those in need. They organise events throughout the year, focusing on engaging and empowering the community. The dedicated staff and volunteers show compassion and raise awareness about homelessness, encouraging greater community involvement and capacity-building. ECHO's commitment has a meaningful impact on the lives of those in need.



COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Recognising significant achievement and contribution to the community during 2023.

Malanda Chamber of Commerce

The Malanda Chamber of Commerce plays a pivotal role in enhancing Malanda's businesses. They invest in and implement projects that contribute to the community's success. The committee drives initiatives such as free town wi-fi, Moolanda News, Jack May Park Project, Christmas Street Festival, Music in the Streets, gooseclubs and Shop Local Campaign. Their involvement in the Malanda Tourism Brochure showcases their commitment to promoting the region. The chamber's multifaceted efforts foster a sustainable and progressive community for the benefit of all.



Molly Wilson

Molly is a dedicated member of the Red Frog Program and a local school chaplain. She makes significant contributions to the community, particularly with local youth. With Red Frog's backing, she initiated a weekly skate park afternoon in Atherton during school terms, which provides a safe, inclusive and enjoyable space for children to connect, share stories and form friendships. Molly's selfless commitment to the community is evident in her volunteer work, fostering a positive environment without seeking recognition. Her impact on the lives of numerous young people reflects her unwavering support and dedication.



COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Recognising significant achievement and contribution to the community during 2023.

Paul Strike

Paul is a dedicated and valuable volunteer at Carinya Home for the Aged, regularly visiting residents, organising walks and helping with transportation. His commitment extends to monthly trips to residents' old farms and districts, and offering essential support when family or ambulance services are unavailable. Paul helps with appointments and shopping, and contributes to special events and happy hours. His contributions are especially crucial amid challenges in recruiting in the aged care sector.



Ravenshoe Men's Shed

The Ravenshoe Men's Shed has been invaluable to the Ravenshoe Railway Company Limited, efficiently handling repairs and restoration projects. They consistently provide value for money and often go the extra mile to ensure the finished products meet safety standards and community preferences. Their commitment to professionalism, safety and attention makes them a crucial resource for various community projects. The Men's Shed also plays a vital role as a well-managed hub for meaningful activity, social interaction and community connection.



COMMUNITY EVENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

Recognising an outstanding community event held within our region during 2023.

Atherton Maize Festival

The hard work and dedication of the Atherton Maize Festival committee brought back valued community traditions. The Maize Festival Parade contributed positively to the overall atmosphere in Atherton. Shop fronts were decorated and community groups were involved. The benefits were huge for the community as businesses and local vendors sold out of food and drinks, and the Queens fundraised for local charities and community groups.



Malanda Bull Ride

The Malanda Bull Ride has evolved into a signature event, attracting over 4000 attendees. The event's growth is a testament to the dedicated committee's efforts, including collaboration with locals and organisations. This community-driven initiative involves several Malanda groups including Malanda schools P&Cs, Horse and Pony Club, Guides, RSL, Junior Eels and kindergarten. The event also promotes the region to visitors and over 100 riders who travel to participate. This is now a prestigious event in the bull riding scene, offering an exciting and entertaining evening that unites the community.



COMMUNITY EVENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

Recognising an outstanding community event held within our region during 2023.

Smokey Blue Rally

The Smokey Blue Rally showcases Tablelands businesses through a treasure hunt, promoting local commerce and raising funds for Moyamoya Disease awareness. The event, open to all ages and abilities, encourages community participation and generates interest, travel and investment in the TRC Region. With attendees traveling from as far away as Melbourne, the rally underscores its broader impact on regional visibility, supporting local businesses and fostering community engagement.



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YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Recognising a lifetime of contribution and achievement by a young member of our community.

Billie Cummings

Billie is a devoted advocate for animal welfare in remote FNQ communities. She works to enhance the health and wellbeing of animals in rural areas, benefiting owners, communities and environments. Billie's compassion, dedication, and innovative spirit make her an invaluable asset to the Tablelands Region. Despite her young age, she has already positively impacted the community, working at a local veterinary clinic, volunteering at a rescue charity and raising awareness about animals in remote FNQ. Billie should be recognised for her commitment to service and her contributions to the community, exemplified by her academic pursuits and volunteer work.



Dexter Geres

Dex has made significant contributions through the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), participating in workshops, consultations and community initiatives. Dex is recognised for his thoughtful and considerate contributions, demonstrating a strategic approach focused on community benefits. He received the cultural award at school and proposed a successful workshop idea that was adopted by YAC in collaboration with Malanda Chamber of Commerce. This workshop involved creating Christmas decorations for the Malanda Christmas Street Festival, highlighting Dex's proactive role in community engagement and creative initiatives.



YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Recognising a lifetime of contribution and achievement by a young member of our community.

Paige Grose

Paige has made substantial and positive contributions to the community, engaging in junior theatre, volunteering for front-of-house roles, participating in the Youth Advisory Committee, and representing her school and region in sports. Recognised for her selflessness, she consistently strives for personal excellence, assisting others, and excelling as a student, friend and community member. Paige demonstrates commitment to giving her best, reflecting on her actions, and continuous self-improvement. She fearlessly embraces new opportunities, works hard, learns, and actively contributes to the community.



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CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Recognising a lifetime of contribution and achievement by
a member of our community.

Bob Walker

Postie Bob Walker is dedicated to delivering mail in Ravenshoe and Mount Garnet and his dedication extends beyond his Australia Post role. Going the extra mile, he assists elderly residents by delivering essential items like bread and milk to those unable to leave their homes. A humble individual, Postie Bob selflessly serves the community without seeking recognition or accolades, embodying a commitment to the needs of others that goes beyond his official duties.



Bree Hargreaves

Bree embodies a selfless spirit, always ready to contribute to her community without seeking personal gain. Her willingness to lend a helping hand showcases her commitment to making a positive impact. Despite encouragement to charge for her services, Bree finds reward in knowing she has assisted others. An unsung hero, Bree does not seek recognition, preferring to work behind the scenes. Her unmatched skills in connecting needs with services illuminate the community, making it a brighter place for all.



CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Recognising a lifetime of contribution and achievement by a member of our community.

Cirsty Kidner-Bonadio

Cirsty is a dedicated member of the Kairi community and president of the Kairi State School P&C. She balances her time between her business, family and community service. Described as inspirational and positive, Cirsty consistently goes above and beyond to assist those in need. Cirsty recently took a leadership role in addressing the speed camera fine issues, working with Shane Knuth to advocate for affected locals. Many see Cirsty as a community superhero.



Kate Stokes

Kate is an invaluable contributor to the Malanda community, playing crucial roles in various local events. Known for her exceptional efforts, she always goes above and beyond to support participants in the Malanda Show, especially first-time exhibitors. In 2020, Kate facilitated a cattle sale by offering access to the showgrounds and making resources available, displaying her commitment to supporting local initiatives. Kate's active involvement in community events, including the Malanda Show and Show Ball, Malanda Bull Ride, and the Christmas Street Festival, demonstrates her many contributions, making her a highly regarded and indispensable figure within Malanda.



