



## MEDIA RELEASE

4 January 2021

### **Northern Areas Council 2021 Australia Day Awards Winners Announced**

Northern Areas Council Mayor Ben Browne is pleased to announce the winners of the 2021 Australia Day Awards. **Citizen of the Year for 2021** has been awarded to **Mr Paul Thomas of Gulnare.**

Paul is a quiet achiever, willingly giving to his community. Paul's volunteering began from his early teens and has continued throughout his life to provide essential emergency services to the community. He has contributed through various fundraising functions for improved facilities in the community including the Gulnare Bowling Club, Gulnare Tennis Club, Gulnare Hall and History Group and the Gulnare CFS.

Paul was the Inaugural President of the Gulnare Cropping Committee from 1980 and a delegate since the Incorporation of the Community Development Board (CDB) and provided voluntary services with plant and machinery, for the yearly cropping of the Parklands, cartage of grain or spraying of crops.

Funds from the cropping are distributed through the CDB to the community clubs, including the combined football and netball clubs, Bowling Club and Tennis Club.

Paul was bestowed with Life Membership of the Gulnare Bowling Club in 2017/18 season.

Paul has appreciated his longstanding position as a Skipper in the Team and has encouraged other members to take on the role of Skipper.

In his role as Green's Manager for 16 years, he dedicated hundreds of volunteer man hours and travel to maintain the high standard of the Gulnare Bowling Club greens.

Paul currently supports the new Greens Manager in an advisory role, as well as volunteering his time to maintain the green.

During Paul's time in the Gulnare CFS he has been a National Farmers Federation volunteers' representative. Paul has been a member of the Gulnare CFS and Gulnare National Farmers Federation since 1970 (50 years) as recorded in the minutes of the CFS.

Paul has been presented with a Service medal for 30 years' service, and a National Volunteers Service medal.

He continues to volunteer his services as a fire fighter, also with his own fire unit, attending numerous local fires and attending fires in surrounding communities. Paul is currently the Brigade Farm Fire Unit Liaison Officer.

During Paul's time as President of the Gulnare Tennis Club and Captain of the Tennis Team he encouraged his team members, enlisted and supported new members, raised money for new tennis courts, and donated numerous voluntary hours of his time to help in the rebuilding of the courts.

Paul continues to provide volunteering services in the Gulnare community whilst providing emergency services within the wider communities.

Throughout his life, Paul has been, and is still, an active member of many groups and organisations within the community.

His lifelong involvement in the CFS has shown his willingness to assist in the fighting of fires, both in close proximity to the township and further afield, helping to keep our local communities safe.

His ongoing contributions to the Gulnare Development Board have seen much needed funds raised for the betterment of the community.

In a small community, it is often the same people volunteering their time and services to many organisations and groups, to the benefit of their local people.

Paul is one of those people that are quick to put their hand up and assist in any situation that his services are required. He never expects anything in return.

**The Young Citizen of the Year for 2020** has been awarded to Will Bray of Jamestown. Will Bray is a strong contributor to the Jamestown and District Community, volunteering many hours for several local groups.

He was a committee member for several years with the Ram and Ewe Rural Ball, as well as being a well known member of the local sporting community being an active football, tennis and cricket player in the Jamestown area.

Will has also spent much time at the Jamestown show over the years, with an eager interest in sheep and wool. He has been a regular with his dad Tony with the shearing section, but with his nature he tends to quietly go about helping out and making sure things go along nicely. He certainly fits in nicely with such a well organised group.

He was recognised for his leadership back in 2016 when he was named the Jamestown Show's Young Rural ambassador, which led to him also being named in the same role for South Australia which culminated in an overseas trip to look at different agricultural practices.

He has been recognised for his leadership in other roles, coordinating the Caltowie Tennis team, previously serving as vice captain of the Belalie Mannanarie Cricket Club in Jamestown and has been a strong contributor as a player and volunteer of the Jamestown Peterborough Football and Netball Club.

**The Community Event of the Year** has been awarded to the Bundaleer Motorcycle Club. The club was formed in 2019 for dirt bike and road bike riders wanting to be able to go on organised motorbike rides, helping to get local community members riding.

Holding their 1st and then 2nd successful Family ride days during August and September 2020.

Family ride days were designed for beginner riders 50 cc motorbikes up to Intermediate and seniors, on three separate all terrain tracks.

The emphasis of the day was being a family day, where parents can spend the day riding with their children.

The first ride day attracted 155 riders (74 under 16 years old and 81 Seniors), with a total crowd of 250+.

The second ride day attracted 186 riders (94 under 16 years old and 94 Seniors), with a total crowd of 250 - 300.

The club was also involved in the organising of a road bike ride, (105 riders), with proceeds going to Mental health awareness.

In an environment with Covid 19 restrictions and difficulty in hosting community events, the Bundaleer Motorcycle Club has truly offered events that have been overwhelmingly supported and offered a chance for families to spend the day together and be involved in a community event.

For the first time, Council allocated a new award the **Award for Active Citizenship**, which has been awarded to Greg Boston of Jamestown.

The award has been established by the Australia Day Council to acknowledge an individual or group within the community who have delivered outstanding work for an event or cause.

Greg Boston has been recognised for his tireless work in the area of Mental Health Awareness and advocacy through the Mid North Suicide Prevention Network. Greg has worked incredibly hard to help remove stigma in the community about mental health and to let people know that there is help available and that it's ok to ask for assistance.

In the short span of time since the Mid North Suicide Prevention Network was formed, Greg has helped coordinate some highly successful events, which have been strongly supported by the local community.

He openly admits there's still a lot of work to be done, but through the leadership which he has shown in the area, he is most certainly a very worthy winner.

Mayor Browne advised that the recipients of the 2021 Northern Areas Council Australia Day Awards will be acknowledged at an Australia Day Breakfast at Gulnare on Tuesday the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2021.

Mayor Browne added "it's great to see four very deserving recipients being acknowledged by the local community for their outstanding contributions. Volunteers are the backbone of country communities and we're certainly very lucky in Northern Areas to have these incredible people."

Council looks forward to celebrating the awards at Gulnare on Australia Day and also acknowledging the wider community and the many volunteers within it.

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**For more information – please contact:**

**Colin Byles**

**Chief Executive Officer**

Email [colin.byles@nacouncil.sa.gov.au](mailto:colin.byles@nacouncil.sa.gov.au)

Phone: 8664 1139