

# LATROBE AUSTRALIA DAY CITIZEN AWARDS 2017

## Presented by Mayor Peter Freshney at Henley-on-Mersey on Australia Day 2017

Each year, Latrobe Council invites you to nominate a resident or organisation of the Latrobe Municipality that has made a significant contribution to our community.

There are three categories that can be nominated -

1. Citizen of the Year
2. Young Citizen of the Year and
3. Community Event of the Year

Latrobe Municipality's **CITIZEN OF THE YEAR** for 2017 is the sort of person that you want around when you need a helping hand.

A hard worker for a variety of causes throughout the Latrobe Municipality over a great many years, she's the sort of person that when she sees someone in need, she is the first to offer support and, on many occasions, has opened her home - and shed.

When she sees something that she could make a difference to, she doesn't sit back and ask "why isn't someone doing something about that". She quickly brings together a group of people to get the job done or tackles it on her own. Woe betide you if you happen to wander into her sights or she knows you have a skill she can use!

I can see that some of you are already looking in the direction of the recipient so please welcome this year's Latrobe Municipality Citizen of the Year - Julie Bissett - to the stage.

While Julie is making her way up here, I'd like to provide you with a little more background about her.

Julie moved to Latrobe from Rosebery just over 25 years ago and raised her four children here. They attended the local primary and high school and, like most parents, Julie would be seen running around after school taking one to football practice or basketball practice. Julie however was not a drop and go parent. Julie knew that for these groups to be able to provide the service that they did for her children, they too needed support. So she set about tackling whatever fundraising opportunity she could and also took on a number of committee roles within those organisations.

Julie became heavily involved in fundraising for SIDS - Sudden Infant Death Syndrome - after one of her girlfriends lost her little boy. This fundraising was typical Julie style - pub crawls and uncooked dinner raffles - which she ran continuously for four years.

When the chance came along to move from the pub to morning teas, Julie jumped at it, with the Cancer Council so appreciative. For 12 years, Julie hosted Australia's Biggest Morning Tea at her home, all with great fanfare and lots of laughter. Julie only stopped this fundraising involvement when her father succumbed to cancer. She just couldn't find the strength to continue in that particular activity.

That's not to say that she's been resting on her laurels though.

As the Secretary of the Latrobe Football Club, Julie was highly involved in all its activities. Her last hoorah in that role being the coordination of *Latrovali* in 2015.

2016 was a huge year for Julie and sharing her empathy and compassion for others, all while dealing with her own personal issues.

In March a local family lost all their belongings in a house fire. Julie coordinated raffles and morning teas to raise much needed dollars as, unfortunately, the bills don't stop coming in just because you are displaced. Not only this, but Julie also opened her shed doors for donated household items for that family until they were able to find alternate accommodation.

Then, of course, Latrobe was hit with massive floods in June. Again, Julie's big heart felt a need to do what she could to help out. Once again she opened her shed for people wanting to donate items such as TVs, couches, fridges, washing machines, beds and bedding for the flood affected. What couldn't be used by the flood affected was sold in a garage sale with the funds going to the Lions Club of Latrobe Flood Relief Appeal. To this day, there is still a storage container of furniture waiting for its family to rebuild.

When do you do this sort of community support activity, it is not without emotion. Julie has been a pillar of strength to many who have lost so much in our community. She talked with the flood affected and lent them her ears to bash around for a while. While visually the town appears to have recovered well, this process is very long. There are some that are still to come to a settlement with their insurers; others that have moved on to other places and a few that are just now starting a new chapter in their lives.

If Julie had been paid for all the volunteer support that she has provided over her 25 years at Latrobe, she would no doubt have been a millionaire.

It just goes to show that "one person can really make a difference in our community".

Nominations for the **YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR** are generally fairly low, perhaps because of the age requiring the nominee to be between 14 and 30 and people don't feel like they have really achieved that young in life. However, if you have the opportunity to visit the Council Chambers and look at the Honour Board of past recipients, you will be pleasantly surprised at just how many of our Young Citizens continue, to this day, to contribute to our community.

This year's successful nominee will be, I expect, a significant leader in the community in the years to come. Whether it is our community or not, I am confident that wherever she goes, she will continue to make a positive contribution.

I am pleased to announce Eve Bell as this year's Young Citizen of the Year.

As Eve makes her way to the stage, you will notice that Eve is quite young; just 16 in fact. So what has Eve done that makes her this year's Latrobe Municipality's Young Citizen of the Year?

The qualities sought in this category are based on the impact of contribution, the level of excellence and time committed to their pursuits.

Eve Bell has represented Latrobe High School and her community significantly over the past four years. Whether training, competing or with her studies Eve always gives 100%.

Late last year, Eve played a main character in the school production and has been in a leadership role through the Leadership Group throughout last year. The latter has included involvement in Anti-Bullying initiatives, coordinating school socials and fundraising for various charities including the Cancer Council through Relay for Life.

As a student leader, Eve has been a hard worker and quiet achiever. One of Eve's most endearing features is her modesty.

At Latrobe High School's Presentation Evening, Eve received the Pierre de Coubertin Award which recognises her sporting achievements and how she has demonstrated those endeavours which are consistent with the aims of the Olympic Movement.

Eve also received an Award for Health and the Zonta Club of Devonport Award which recognises a student who significantly contributes to her school and local community.

Eve is a passionate athlete, making it on to many representative teams, most recently representing Tasmania at the recent State and National U/18 Championships in 200 metres, 400 metres and 400m hurdles.

Additional to this, Eve is an enthusiastic member of the Port Sorell Surf Life Saving Club. In this organisation, Eve is currently Assistant First Aid Officer and a participant in regular patrols and surf competitions. In fact, she is only just back from the Gold Coast where she competed in surf life saving activities.

Eve one day hopes to be a veterinarian, but, if that doesn't work out, she is happy to use that medical experience on humans as a nurse or perhaps join the Army.

Whatever you do Eve, I am confident that you will continue to do it to the best of your ability. Congratulations on your successful nomination.

The **COMMUNITY EVENT OF THE YEAR AWARD** is given to an event that has had a significant and positive impact on the Latrobe Municipality during the last year specifically.

When we think of a community event, we generally think of a festival or celebratory occasion. A time when we have gathered collectively and celebrated; much like today.

Over the past year, there have been many of these occasions but the Community Event of the Year determined by the committee this year is something that while it fits the criteria, is a little different.

This year's Community Event of the Year Award from the Latrobe Municipality is presented to the Lions Club of Port Sorell Inc for the support they provided to effect BlazeAid Flood Assistance.

BlazeAid is a volunteer-based organisation that works with families and individuals in rural Australia after natural disasters, such as the flood we had in June. They work alongside rural families with their volunteers helping to rebuild fences and other structures that have been damaged or destroyed.

While BlazeAid did a fantastic job for many throughout the region, the location of their base camp at Port Sorell and support of the volunteers was significantly bolstered by the Lions Club of Port Sorell Inc.

The club opened its heart and their "fund chest" to provide warm, comfortable facilities to house and feed the BlazeAid volunteers at the Port Sorell Lions Caravan Park. Their "fund chest" equated to around \$36,000 worth of aid with many members helping with meals, providing equipment to run the camp, fencing and much, much more.

It had a significant impact on the community, a high level of involvement with excellence and innovation clearly demonstrated.

Without this assistance, this particular camp could not have been the success it was to the recovery process of the flood affected.

While the Lions Club of Port Sorell continues to support many initiatives throughout the community, on this occasion we specifically acknowledge their contribution to BlazeAid Flood Relief Support and I call on Neil Davidson to come forward to receive this award. Well done Lions!

