

Mansfield Shire Council

# Citizen Awards 2023

Nominations  
Received



Mansfield Shire

## Citizen of the Year – Cathie Smith

Numerous nominations were received for Cathie by those who have witnessed first-hand her outstanding contribution to the community.

Cathie has provided various noteworthy volunteer contributions to local organisations over the years including:

- ▶ The Mansfield Musical & Dramatic Society where she has held multiple roles spanning decades including President, Vice President, Secretary and as a general committee member. Alongside these roles she has been a costume designer and maker, makeup and front of house coordinator, and has herself appeared onstage many times. She is one of only 12 life members of MMuDS and her involvement has contributed broadly to its continuing success.
- ▶ Rosehaven Hospice where she currently manages the Rosehaven shop located in High Street to support and raise funds for the Hospice service. This is done as we believe on a modest wage associated with many, many additional hours dedicated to this service and its team of volunteers.
- ▶ Bonnie Doon Primary School where she provided ongoing support for both during and around the time her children attended.
- ▶ L2P Learner Driver Mentor Program where she assists and supervises learner drivers under 21 who do not have access to a supervising driver or vehicle, to gain the driving experience required to apply for a probationary licence.
- ▶ and she is a long-standing volunteer for the Uniting Church Op Shop.

On top of the various volunteering roles Cathie has provided hearth and home to several young people in need of care, a safe place, a home. Her 'open door' has existed for decades, and numerous young people in Mansfield over many years have benefited from her generosity and kindness in the provision of a home and family life.

In times of need – for example during and after fires, family breakdown, injury, illness and loss - many community members have benefited from Cathie's generosity where she has provided care, time, food, clothing, childcare, support and mentorship. People have also, many times, benefited from her enormous capacity for referral, resourcing, organisation and coordination of services for anyone – anytime!

Cathie's contribution to the community extends even further to her active and passionate recruitment and encouragement of others to become involved, to contribute and to feel included and that they too, can make difference.

### Nominees:

- ▶ **Allison Walker**, is currently the President of the Mansfield Swim Club and has held a senior role within the club since 2015. Under her stewardship, the club has grown from strength to strength due to her continual strive to learn and up-skill as a coach, mentor and leader. When needed Alli is always supporting others to improve both their personal and competitive swimming by encouraging them to partake in activities that allow not just the overall club, but individual members, to progress and achieve their goals in swimming.

Allison leads the monthly Mansfield farmers markets, is a member of the Mansfield High School Council, runs the 'Mansfield Mum's' Facebook page, and owns her own business (Walker

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## Mansfield Shire Council 2023 Australia Day Citizen Award Nominees

Events), which has allowed our town to hold such gatherings as the Lantern Festival. Alli is a wealth of knowledge and support to local families, and always takes the time to listen.

- ▶ **Nicole Hoebergen**, was nominated for her role as a Maternal and Child Health Nurse at Mansfield Shire Maternal and Child Health Service where she provides information, support, and advice to new parents in addition to monitoring the growth and development of children. As part of her role, Nicole also works as part of the Enhanced Maternal and Child Health program where she assists families with children who require ongoing case management and provides valuable links to Allied Health Services and ongoing specialist treatments. Nicole goes above and beyond for her clients with her compassionate and professional care and provides new parents with sound and practical advice.

## Senior Citizen of the Year – Marie Sellstrom

Marie has lived a life of advocacy for people in need. With her extraordinary energy for a person in her ninth decade, Marie has inspired others to join her causes, working through local groups to bring comfort, financial support and hope to people in our Shire as well as overseas.

She is the co-founder of the Rural Australians for Refugees group's Mansfield branch and was appointed the national president of the RAR group from 2016-2019 where she led deputations to Federal Ministers in Canberra, while at the same time maintaining close personal links with overseas families in danger, waiting for visas to come to Australia.

In recent years this commitment has escalated as the pressure has mounted to support people in life-threatening situations in war-torn countries to find safety and start new lives in countries such as Australia. Her stories of conversations with people in desperate situations are heartrending and at times horrifying.

She continues her relationship with refugees who have successfully settled in Australia and organises activities that bring them to Mansfield such as attending the Tolmie Sports and a recent Mansfield Feast for Freedom.

She has also been heavily involved in the Mansfield Shire community, including serving 3 terms on the Mansfield District Hospital Board, one term as President, and has been a member of the Gadhaba Support Group for almost 20 years.

As a Merrijig resident she has been an active, long-standing member of the Merrijig Hall Committee, while also serving as Secretary of a local philanthropic Trust, the Harry and Clare Friday Foundation and is a member of the Mansfield Ambulance Auxiliary.

With broad interests, her life has been one of a person on a mission with a strong resolve to get outcomes. Marie's' capacity to engage and never give up has changed the lives of many.

### Nominees:

- ▶ **Ann Eldred**, has always been a very caring and supporting person and in 2013 through the 'Friends of Venilale' program she grabbed at the opportunity to visit Venilale (East Timor) and girls' orphanage there. Since that visit Ann has been to Venilale 7 times offering love and support, and each visit taking with her medical items, non-perishable food items, clothing, toys and other items of need. Ann has is active in raising much needed funds by setting up her 'Friends of Venilale' stall at various markets, running activities, and a bric-a-brac stall at the Vintage Emporium. These efforts have raised over \$20,000 to date. Her philanthropic nature has placed Mansfield on the map in East Timor and the friendship base is now much stronger as a result of Ann's efforts.
- ▶ **Ian Archibald**, has been an active member of the community since retiring to Mansfield exemplifies the spirit of Mansfield Shire. He has been involved in many organisations such as U3A, Mens Probus, St Johns Anglican Church and the Croquet Club. Within these organisations he fulfilled many volunteer roles. Ian has been the main coordinator for the High Country Festival parade floats for U3A over many years where he created many of the floats and won best float numerous times.

## **Young Citizen of the Year – Sam Bell**

Sam recently graduated from Mansfield Secondary College where he was awarded the 2022 Caltex All-rounder Award in recognition of his performance in all areas of school life.

Over Sam's years at Mansfield Secondary, he always set a good example to others and shared his musical talent playing guitar in the school band and by entertaining both students and teachers at school assembly with his amazing voice.

While at school and since graduating Sam has worked at MASS helping alongside the teachers and is continuing to make a difference in his clients' lives as they live within our community.

Out of school and when not showcasing his musical talents he played football for the Bonnie Doon seconds under 18s who revelled in a successful season during 2022.

## Community Event of the Year – Mansfield Open Studio Trail (M.O.S.T)

Mansfield Open Studio Trail (M.O.S.T) held their free annual event over the Melbourne Cup weekend which started in 2019 with just 4 artists and in 2022 had over 35 artists participate. The event celebrates community, creativity, and our beautiful High Country allowing visitors to explore Mansfield Shire on a self-guided tour, discovering the artists of our region.

M.O.S.T gives the public an opportunity to gain an insight into the workings of a studio, see practical demonstrations, view, and purchase artworks directly from the studio door and maker.

A wide range of art mediums and practices were represented along the trail, such as painting, drawing, ceramics, mosaic, recycled art, photography, fluid art, textiles, digital art, sculpture, steel art, and print making.

To ensure the event was accessible for all, a free shuttle bus was offered allowing visitors to attend the studios without driving themselves.

### Nominees:

- ▶ **Tour de Trail**, ran for its second year with a 'non-competitive' bicycle event along the Mansfield end of the Great Victorian Rail Trail where around 100-cyclists from all over Victoria participated. 70% of participants were attracted from outside Mansfield Shire (from as far as way as Castlemaine, St Kilda, Moorabbin, Mooroolbark, Shepparton, Benalla, Wangaratta and Wodonga) providing increased awareness of the rail trail and local business with economic stimulus. The event was organised by the Friends of the GVRT, the event was made possible through the generous support of Mansfield Bendigo Bank, Goulburn Valley Water and A Third Hand.
- ▶ **Mansfield Picnic Races**, ran for the 167th year and attracted a crowd of over 1500 and celebrated the long and highly recognised history of racing in the High Country and the tradition of High Country Horsemen and women. The event was run with strict COVID procedures and received commendation from Country Racing Victoria on how procedures were efficiently undertaken. The event supported a number of local community groups and food/drink vendors engaged were all local business.

## **Community Group of Organisation of the Year – High Country Quilters**

The Mansfield High Country Quilters meet weekly in the craft room at the Mens Shed and provide an opportunity for new and experienced quilters to come together creating a sense of community and belonging for its members, while supporting social inclusion.

High Country Quilters was established in 2009 when one of the founding member's children was under the care of the Monash Children's Cancer Centre and saw an opportunity to provide ongoing support to patients with handmade comfort quilts. Since the beginning of the partnership with Monash Children's Cancer Centre, the group has made and donated over 500 quilts comforting sick children as they undergo treatment.

The High Country Quilters also supports additional charitable groups including Southern Cross Kids Camp – High Country that supports disadvantaged children where they made a donation of 16 quilts to their 2022 camp and are on track to donate an additional 25 quilts in time for their 2023 camp.

During COVID the group handmade and sold fabric masks to our community, and also donated masks to the vulnerable and at risk.

In 2022 they were a recipient of the Community Bank Mansfield & District Bendigo Bank Community Grant Program being awarded crucial funds for their Quilts for Comfort Initiative.

The group provides ongoing important social connections and community representation which supports their generous time and skills in creating beautiful comfort for those at a time of need.