

Mansfield Shire Council

Citizen Awards 2026

Bio on winners
and nominees



Mansfield Shire

Mansfield Shire Council 2026 Australia Day Citizen Award Nominees

Citizen of the Year

The nominations received for this group of individuals were varied but the common theme was they are all working to ensure that their communities are a better place for all. All provide support and comfort for others, never with the intention of gaining anything personally.

Award Winner – David Mims

For over two decades, David, together with his wife Debbie, has contributed generously to Mansfield, from welcoming more than sixty foster children into his home to supporting local sport, community wellbeing, and countless initiatives.

His personal commitment is evident in his award-winning service to the Mansfield Tennis Club, participation in running events, leadership as CFA Captain, musical contributions to local productions, and his work with the MACE Board.

Though this nomination is for him alone, it is clear that his impact is strengthened by the partnership he and Debbie have built together. His integrity, humility, and dedication continue to enrich our community in lasting ways.



Nominees:

- ▶ **Bess Gillard** – Bess was nominated for her more than 25 year contribution to basketball as MDBA President, as co-founder of the North East Bushrangers, and a mentor to our local athletes. Through her leadership, new facilities have been secured, an inclusive club culture built, and strong pathways created for players, referees, and coaches. Her impact has been recognised with several awards, including Volunteer of the Year. Bess has given regional athletes life-changing international opportunities through the USA tours. Her tireless dedication, vision, and commitment has transformed basketball in Mansfield and across Victoria.
- ▶ **Louise Hopwood** – Louise was nominated in recognition that she embodies community spirit through her wide-ranging and sustained contributions to the Mansfield community. Through LouFit Personal Training, she has transformed local lives with her caring, practical approach to health and connection, leading initiatives such as the Fat Farmers program and annual Women's and Men's Health sessions that make wellbeing accessible and empowering for all.
- ▶ **Linda Terry** – Linda's nomination is in recognition of her outstanding, long-term commitment to the Tolmie community. For more than 20 years, her passion, dedication, and hard work has played a vital role in bringing people together and strengthening the community contributing to its ongoing success. It has been widely acknowledged that without her leadership and perseverance, Tolmie would not enjoy the wonderful community precinct and excellent facilities it is so fortunate to have today.
- ▶ **Haley Tudor-Harrop** – Haley has been nominated for her years of service to Mansfield through her leadership with the Community Bank, financial guidance to local organisations, and her

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commitment to projects like the kindergarten and basketball association. Her efforts have strengthened our community in countless ways. Her broad board involvement, regional representation, and ongoing leadership development speak to your dedication. Haly is an inspiring example of quiet, impactful service, and it is a pleasure to recognise her contribution.

- ▶ **Daryle Williams** – Daryle has been nominated in recognition of his tireless commitment to the Mansfield community. Through his hard work in the bakery, he has supported countless local fundraising efforts through donations and vouchers. His generosity also extends to quietly helping people doing it tough and always making time for anyone who needs a chat or a shoulder to lean on. Despite facing immense personal challenges in recent years, he has continued to put the community first. This nomination reflects deep appreciation for his years of dedication, compassion, and service to the people of the Mansfield Shire.

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Senior Citizen of the Year

The extensive and prolonged community and volunteer work undertaken by our nominees contributes enormously to the welfare, safety and happiness of our community.

Award Winner – Pamela Dalgleish

Pamela was nominated because of the leadership she has shown with the Respond Fresh Food Drive and Chop and Chat at St John's Anglican Church. These services provide vital support to the Mansfield community. It is acknowledged that she coordinates the collection and free distribution of fresh produce, leads volunteers to prepare hundreds of nutritious meals monthly, and has been successful in securing funding to sustain these programs. Her initiatives, which extend to Youth Chop and Chat and Soups for Schools, strengthens community connections, reduces social isolation, and improves health and well-being, making her a highly deserving Senior Citizen of the Year.



Nominees:

- ▶ **Marg Attley OAM** – Marg has been nominated for her continued commitment to our community and her strong sense of social justice about what truly matters. These values and her dedication to our community was formally acknowledged in 2019 when she was awarded an OAM and continue to profoundly strengthen the Mansfield Shire. Her 15 years as a Mansfield Shire Councillor, including three years as Mayor, reflects her longstanding formal service. Marg has instigated many key programs, taken on leadership roles and worked tirelessly at hands on level which has empowered others through her example. As a role model, Marg has made an enduring impact on the social, cultural, and civic fabric of the Shire, embodying the very essence of community spirit and service.
- ▶ **Andrew Merlo** – Andrew has been nominated in his capacity as Captain of the Woods Point CFA, for his work initiating the granting of a new Charter for the RSL Sub Branch and in his role as Secretary of the Order of Buffalo's Woods Point Branch. Andrew is also a committed Progress Association member devoting time to keeping his community maintained and his contribution is greatly appreciated by the whole Woods Point community.
- ▶ **Trish Morris** – Trish has been nominated for the Citizen of the Year Award in recognition of her long-standing commitment to numerous groups and organisations across the Mansfield Shire. Through her many years of voluntary service, particularly her generous support and guidance in the area of computing, she has made a profound and lasting difference to countless community members. The ongoing service Trish continues to offer, delivered with dignity, humility, and a warm friendliness, is a true credit to her and is deeply appreciated by all whose lives she touches.

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Young Citizen of the Year

This year's nomination has shown that with a lot of dedication and by following her passions, outstanding results can be achieved. The outcomes from this resolve include leadership development, mentoring other young people, providing inspiration for others through diversity and resilience and also overseeing projects for the benefit of others in our community.

Award Winner – Jessica Andrews

Jessica was nominated for her accomplishment in equestrian sports and for her role as a Racing Victoria Junior Ambassador. Jessica is also a valued Board Member of the Mansfield A&P Society, where she has played a key role in revitalising the Horse Section of the Mansfield Show and her contribution to the Tolmie Sports Association.

Further accomplishments include being the Rural Ambassador in the Regional Finals, continued studies in agriculture, and working full-time in the sector. Jessica's outstanding leadership, commitment to community service, and dedication to both sport and rural industries make her an inspiring role model and a truly deserving Young Citizen of the Year.



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Community Group or Organisation of the Year

So much is achieved by often small, but truly passionate, groups of people who form some of the wonderful organisations we have within our community.

Award Winner – Mansfield and District (MAD) Potters

We received numerous nominations this year for the MAD Potters which highlights the fact that there is very strong support and appreciation within our community for the organisation. A very important factor in all nominations is that the Potters have created a warm, creative and welcoming space that enriches the lives of newcomers and long-time residents alike.

The community pottery studio has become a vibrant hub where people share stories, learn together, and build friendships, and its impact is reflected in achievements such as the Mansfield Pottery Festival, the establishment of the studio itself, and the Tidy Towns Award recognising MAD Potters' contribution to sustainability and creativity. This group embodies belonging, support and shared artistic passion, welcoming all skill levels and abilities making it truly worthy of recognition.

Camile Murphy and Karen Pirie accepted the award on behalf of the MAD Potters.



Nominees:

- ▶ **Goughs Bay Progress Association (GBPA)** – The GBPA has been nominated for this award following nearly two decades spent volunteering tirelessly to improve and unite the diverse Goughs Bay community. As the Association approaches its 20th anniversary, its long-standing service is evident in the many projects it has delivered varying from obtaining successful grants for community events right through to post-COVID recovery activities and the substantial development of the new Community Hub. The Association fosters inclusion and connection through activities that include the whole community. This small but deeply committed group continues to help Gough's Bay "punch above its weight", making it a truly worthy candidate for formal recognition.
- ▶ **Mansfield Armchair Cinema** – The Cinema has been nominated in recognition of the community banding together and identifying the need for Mansfield to still have a movie theatre following the closure of the Star Cinema in 2009. As a result, the MAC was born and continues to support the Mansfield community through advertising, providing fundraising and employment opportunities and social events that bring people together to enjoy the art of film.
- ▶ **Mansfield and District Basketball Association** - The MDBA has been nominated for its

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outstanding contribution to local basketball and recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. The MDBA continues to go from strength to strength and in 2025, expanded its Aussie Hoops program, introduced domestic training sessions, and increased school holiday camps and clinics. With 14 representative teams, four nights of domestic competition, and plans for inclusive programs like all-abilities and walking basketball, MDBA continues to engage and inspire its 380-strong membership and the wider community.



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Community Event of the Year

Events take a lot of work and dedication and as a Council, we acknowledge the importance of such events and how they contribute to our community's wellbeing and economy.

Award Winner – Mansfield Agricultural Society Show

This year's Mansfield Agricultural Show has been widely acknowledged as being one of the best yet. The Show, held on 15 November 2025, drew over 3,200 attendees for its “**Spotlight on Youth**” theme.

The day featured motorbike stunts, an expanded horse show, pavilion competitions in art, craft, photography, cooking, and produce, plus fun children's activities, school exhibits, and a popular animal nursery. Offering something for everyone, the Show brought the community together in a vibrant, inclusive celebration which was enjoyed by locals and visitors of all ages.



Amanda Swanney accepted the Award on behalf of the A&P Society.

Nominees:

- ▶ **Jamieson Autumn Festival** – The Autumn Festival ran throughout an entire weekend, celebrating music, local talent, fresh produce, crafts, traditional skills, wood carving, delicious food vans, and provided outstanding family entertainment. Drawing over 3,000 attendees, the event injected a significant boost to the local economy while offering both residents and visitors a wonderful opportunity to come together for a weekend filled with fun, community spirit, and memorable experiences.
- ▶ **Opera on High** – On 25 April 2025, Mansfield's main street came alive for an open-air concert bringing together families, friends, and visitors to enjoy local wine, craft brews, gourmet food, and world-class performances by BravOz Opera which captivated everyone. This free event, hosted by Mansfield Winemakers, provided an opportunity for all attendees to enjoy world class talent whilst enjoying food, conversation and a sense of connection. The event showcased not just incredible talent, but also the passion and generosity of Mansfield's local producers, winemakers, and volunteers who made it all possible. Together, this resulted in a magical and inclusive evening that attendees described as “uplifting” and “pure Mansfield”.