

Let's celebrate
what's great!

Australia Day

Awards 2024



EMERALD, COMET
GEMFIELDS & GINDIE



Central Highlands
Regional Council



Emerald Botanic Gardens

PROGRAM OF EVENTS

Citizenship Ceremony and Australia Day Awards

25 January 2024 Emerald QLD

4.45 pm Citizenship Ceremony

Welcome and Introduction

Acknowledgement of Country

Minister's Message spoken by Mayor Kerry Hayes

Preamble

Pledge 1 & 2

Unfurling of the Flag and National Anthem

Presentation of Certificates

The Affirmation

Photos and Barbeque Dinner

6.30 pm Commencement of Australia Day Awards

Guest Speaker

Presentation of Awards

Community Event of the Year Award

Arts and Cultural Award

Junior Sportsperson Award

Senior Sportsperon/Administrator Award

Young Citizen of the Year Award

Citizen of the Year Award

Cutting and Serving of Cake

End of Ceremony



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AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM

Advance Australia Fair

Australians all let us rejoice,
For we are one and free;
We've golden soil and wealth for toil;
Our home is girt by sea;
Our land abounds in nature's gifts
Of beauty rich and rare;
In history's page, let every stage
Advance Australia Fair.
In joyful strains then let us sing,
Advance Australia Fair.

THE AFFIRMATION

As an Australian citizen,
I affirm my loyalty to Australia and its people,
Whose democratic beliefs I share,
Whose rights and liberties I respect,
And whose laws I uphold and obey.



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WELCOME TO THE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS 2024!

On Australia Day we celebrate all the things we love about Australia: land, sense of fair go, lifestyle, democracy, the freedoms we enjoy but particularly our people.

Australia Day is about acknowledging the contribution every Australian makes to our contemporary and dynamic nation. From our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have been here for more than 65,000 years, to those who have lived here for generations, to those who have come from all corners of the globe to call our country home.

Tomorrow, the 26 January is an important date in Australia's history that has evolved over time. Starting as a celebration for emancipated convicts, it is a day to acknowledge past wrongs and show respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' survival, resilience and enduring culture.

It is also a day we pay respect to the stories, histories and contributions of the Australians who lived, worked and fought for the values and freedoms we often take for granted.

And it is a day we celebrate the diversity of this nation's people with our various cultures, traditions and belief systems.

Australia Day continues to be hugely popular, with 3 in 4 Australians believing it has a bigger meaning beyond being just a day off.

More than half of all Australians participate in Australia Day activities on or around the 26 January, organised by State Governments, local councils, community groups or by getting together with family and friends. In addition, over 16,000 new Australians become citizens on Australia Day.

AUSTRALIA DAY AMBASSADOR DR DIMITY DORNAN AO

Dr Dimity Dornan

**Founder, Hear and Say
Founder and Chair, Bionics Queensland**

Dr Dimity Dornan AO is a social entrepreneur, bionics advocate, speech pathologist and researchers.

In 1992 she established Hear and Say as a leading not-for-profit for deaf children learning to listen and speak, particularly with surgically implantable hearing technology like the bionic ear.

She is currently sharing her experience for the benefit of the stakeholders in the wider bionics industry. As Founder and Chair of Bionics Gamechangers Australia, Dr Dornan is aiming to bring outcomes similar to those legendary ones possible for many people who use the bionic ear to other new spin-off devices like bionic senses, mobility, brains, and organs. She has been working to promote the bionics industry and help bring new bionics solutions to market for the benefit of people with previously untreatable medical problems. These include not only hearing but also visual, neurological, limb, organ and other conditions.

Dr Dimity Dornan was awarded the Queensland Senior Australian of the Year in 2018.



COMMUNITY EVENT OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

Gindie Ashes and Country Fair (Gindie State School P & C)

Gindie State School P&C hosts an annual cricket day, a vital fundraiser for the school with around 30 students. The 2023 Gindie Ashes and Country Fair, held on August 6, raised an impressive \$18,000. The event featured a cricket tournament, a country fair, rides, information tents, live music, petting zoo, face-painting, fashion parade, line dancing, raffles, auctions, and unique activities from organisations like Freshwater Fishing and Stocking Association QLD, Remote Area Families Service, JCU, and Springsure Fire and Emergency Services. The funds contribute to enriching the students' experiences, bringing activities like Boots 'n' All Line Dancing and Little Gem Yoga to the school. Over 50 local businesses and companies supported the fair, fostering community connections amid the predominantly Primary Producer Gindie community.

Halloween on Mayfair (CH Social Events)

CH Social Events has orchestrated remarkable events for our community, with the recent Halloween on Mayfair standing out as a memorable night. Their commitment goes beyond event planning, involving countless volunteer hours to ensure success. Going the extra mile, they've not only promoted local businesses through social media but also emphasised the significance of youth mental health. Their efforts have brought economic advantages to local businesses, facilitated events with over 80 stalls, and spotlighted the diverse services Emerald provides. By uniting the community in a single space, they've fostered awareness and appreciation for the offerings that make Emerald unique.

Pasifika Vybez (Central Highlands Junior Rugby Union)

Pasifika Vybez 2023, a pioneering event in Emerald, showcased the rich cultural tapestry of the community, featuring diverse backgrounds such as Tongan, Samoan, and Māori, among others. The talented youth performers, affiliated with Titans Rugby, learned traditional dances and songs from community members who generously volunteered their time and knowledge. The event became a platform for intergenerational knowledge exchange. The impressive turnout underscored its success, sparking discussions about the prospect of next year's edition. Notably, all food and beverages were locally sourced from establishments like Coles, Pias Place, Fair Dinkum Meats, Bidfoods, and BWS. The venue, McIndoe, was chosen to host this cultural celebration.



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ARTS AND CULTURAL AWARD NOMINEES



Gypsi Brunker

Gypsi, a skilled musician, has dedicated years to the arts, performing at community events and delivering national anthems. Engaged in three school bands and two choirs, she stands out for her musicality, earning respect as a standout student. Gypsi's commitment and talent, reflected in countless hours of practice, make her a role model, inspiring peers to pursue excellence. Beyond music, she excels in national singing competitions and volunteers at charity events, garnering recent achievements such as Gold Awards, inclusion in the State Honours Ensemble Program, and the Central Highlands Community Spirit Award. Gypsi is a true young leader, embodying talent, empathy, and dedication to art and community.



Daniel Hand

For six years, Daniel's dedication to Emerald Little Theatre has been remarkable, with 15-20 hours weekly and 45+ hours during show weeks. Serving as treasurer, secretary, and president, he actively participates in set building and maintenance. Beyond the theatre, Daniel mentors students, repairs school equipment, and supports music teachers. Known as "Dan the go-to man," his problem-solving skills and sound management expertise contribute significantly to the theatre's success. Daniel holds Trinity College London certifications, a Diploma in Live Production, a bachelor's degree in Physiology and Performing Arts, and extensive production and event experience.



Riley Neill

In six vibrant years at Emerald Little Theatre, Riley has excelled as President, Vice-President, and performer in 13 productions, showcasing remarkable versatility. Beyond the stage, he directed "War of the Worlds" and served as a 'roadie.' Riley was actively involved in Open Mic Aussie Isolation - Reunion Facebook page and led a face-to-face event at Fairbairn Dam. His dedication to Emerald High students and staff expands skill sets and boosts confidence, inspiring involvement and nurturing young talents for success in Little Theatre, both on and offstage.



Leanne Rae

Leanne, a devoted music teacher with the Education Department, has significantly impacted local children's lives in the region. Her passion for music breaks barriers, ensuring accessibility for all. Actively involved in cultural groups and committees for 12 years in Emerald, Leanne selflessly dedicates hours to community events like carols, town band, festival of bands, and eisteddfod. Her commitment extends through the Education Department, where she shapes the musical journeys of hundreds of young musicians. Leanne's school band frequently spreads joy at community events, reaching local kindergartens and aged care centers.



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JUNIOR SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



Douglas Bennett

Douglas, recipient of Emerald High's 'Senior Sportsperson of the Year' award, showcases exceptional sporting achievements and innate talent. Dominating cross country, swimming, and athletics, he broke records and represented Central Highlands and Capricornia. Recognised as a gifted cyclist, Douglas secured a spot for track cycling-endurance at the 'YOU FOR 2032' session in Rockhampton. With a dedicated coach, he excelled in road racing, velodrome, and MTB endurance events across Queensland, achieving notable wins like the Mackay Road Series and Bundy Cycling Spectacular. Accepted into the Defence Force, Douglas leaves in February or April, serving as an inspiration for dedication, fair play, and sporting excellence.



Amber Collie

In 2023, Amber showcased her leadership in acrobatic competitions through a partnership, demonstrating versatility as both an independent performer and a team player. Respected as a senior acrobat and mentor, she actively trains and coaches, dedicating two days a week to share her knowledge. Holding a judging accreditation, Amber contributes to the club's success at away competitions. With four years of coaching across various disciplines, she sets high standards for herself and her gymnasts. Selected for the Queensland team, Amber and her partner secured a top-ten placement at the Australian Gymnastics Championships and a podium spot, ranking 3rd overall for level 6 pairs at State Championships in 2023. Her achievements affirm the prowess of athletes from regional areas in competing with the nation's best.



Lani Ellwood

Lani Ellwood, an accomplished athlete, has made significant contributions to her athletic clubs. Representing Emerald at state and national levels in athletics, soccer, and swimming, she holds the 7th rank in Australia for the under-13 3000m speed walk and 10th for the combined girls under 13 and 14. Achieving 6th place in long jump at the national competition, Lani qualified for the Athletics Australia Nationals in April 2024. Topping North Queensland in the 1500 speed walk and pole vault, she's been a school athletics champion since grade one and swimming champion for the last four years. Despite enduring leg and foot pain, Lani remains a positive role model, inspiring younger athletes and persevering in her competitions.



Ava Firth

Ava, part of an acrobat pair at Emerald Gymnastics, stands as a testament to the power of hard work and dedication in achieving remarkable success. Her significant contribution highlights that regional clubs, like Emerald Gymnastics, can compete at the highest levels in Australia. Ava serves as a role model for lower-level acrobats, attending regular training sessions, displaying a strong work ethic, and excelling both independently and as a team player. Selected for the 2023 Queensland team, her partnership secured a top-10 placement at the Australian Gymnastics Championships and clinched 1st place for their Dynamic Routine at State Championships. Ava's journey exemplifies that with perseverance, hard work, and belief, one can accomplish great feats.



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Bailee Kemp

At Emerald Gymnastics, Bailee is a source of encouragement for her teammates, demonstrating both teamwork and individual prowess. Her skill level serves as inspiration for fellow acrobats, motivating them to aspire for greatness. Bailee's captivating performances consistently leave audiences of all ages impressed. In 2023, she represented Queensland at the Australian Gymnastics Championships in a partnership, securing a top 10 placement nationally. Additionally, at the State Championships, her partnership achieved a commendable 3rd place overall for level 6. Bailee's dedication, versatility, and achievements make her a standout figure, setting a high standard for her gymnastics peers.



Ariana Stewart

Ariana, the base in an acrobatic pair at Emerald Gymnastics, showcased her skills at the state and national levels in 2023. Her journey underscores the impact of dedication, hard work, and self-belief in achieving significant success, demonstrating that regional athletes can compete at the highest echelons in Australia. Beyond being an athlete, Ariana embarked on coaching in 2023, sharing her knowledge and becoming a role model for lower-level gymnasts who aspire to emulate her. Selected for the Queensland Team, her gymnastic pair secured a top-10 placement at the Australian Gymnastics Championships and claimed 1st place in their dynamic routine at State Championships.

SENIOR SPORTSPERSON/ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



Troy Harris

With two decades of commitment, Troy's plays diverse roles at the Emerald Touch Association—serving as president and committee member, coaching at club and representative levels, tending to grounds, and overseeing as junior coordinator. His dedication extends to inspiring a healthy lifestyle among seniors and juniors, championing volunteerism at the local club. Troy efficiently managed a minimum of 700 participants over two nights annually for the past 20 years, showcasing exceptional multitasking and organizational skills. His enduring contributions reflect a passion for fostering community well-being and ensuring the success of the Emerald Touch Association.



Emily Howkins

Emily, a female bronc rider in the community, extends her impact beyond the arena by coaching and supporting new riders in bronc riding basics. She offers free mechanical bucking horse lessons, reviving women's bronc riding absent since the 1960s. Emily proudly represents Emerald, breaking gender barriers and inspiring women in this male-dominated sport. Leading in points for the women's ranch bronc riding Australian title, she eyes a spot on the 2024 Australian Team for the World Finals. Victorious in open ranch bronc events in the USA and a winner in Australia's inaugural All Women's Rodeo, Emily's commitment to physical and mental well-being shines in and out of the rodeo arena.



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Yash Kapoor

Yash has volunteered and dedicated numerous hours to sustain and enhance the Emerald Magpies Cricket Club's operations. Currently spearheading fundraising efforts, his commitment ensures the club's smooth functioning and continuous enjoyment for all participants. Yash actively promotes the club, consistently seeking new members to enrich the community. His genuine endeavours, both within and outside the club, support local community activities. Serving as an official, coach and administrator, Yash has not only represented but also competed against other cricket clubs in Mackay. Yash's involvement is an invaluable asset appreciated by the entire club for his outstanding commitment to community service.

YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



Madison Powell

In 2023, Madi excelled as School Captain at Emerald State High, showcasing remarkable academic prowess. She earned the JCU Shield for highest achievement in both Years 11 and 12, the 2023 AMPOL All-Rounder Award, and the Royal Australian Chemical Institute Excellence in Chemistry Award. Madi secured top subject awards in specialist mathematics, chemistry, and literature. Recognized in public speaking, she won the CH Zone Lions Youth of the Year and became a finalist in the Emerald District Lions Youth of the Year. As Emerald State High's Symphonic Band Player of the Year, Madi demonstrated exceptional maturity, responsibility, and leadership, inspiring her peers and younger students in both the school and the wider community.



Kiarra Toole

Kiarra emerged as a dedicated community leader in Emerald and surrounds in 2023. She spearheaded and co-hosted numerous local events, tutored students at Denison State School and Saint Patrick's Emerald, and volunteered at the Saint Patrick's Emerald Community Fair. Despite facing trochlear dysplasia and undergoing three leg reconstruction surgeries, Kiarra remains resilient. Revered for her academic excellence at Marist College Emerald, she serves as an inspiring role model, having delivered a poignant speech at ANZAC Day 2023. Kiarra excels academically, socially, and in community service. Currently a junior pharmacy assistant at Direct Chemist Outlet Emerald, she aspires to become a local General Practitioner upon graduating from James Cook University Medical School.



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CITIZEN OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



Mitchell Brown

Mitch, president of the Rubyvale Progress Association, stands out as a devoted community contributor. Amidst a major dispute with the State Government Resources Department, Mitch goes above and beyond, investing 150% of his time and energy. As a small-hand miner, the community owes him gratitude for his tireless efforts. Mitch effectively communicates and negotiates, creating a working group to address departmental concerns. Through organized meetings and calls, Mitch successfully navigates negotiations, earning the support of his family and the community. He's not just a do-gooder; Mitch is a dedicated force behind preserving the Gemfields, ensuring its resistance against new departmental ideas.



Fiona Hardgrave

Upon completing her psychology honours degree at CQ University, Fiona spearheaded the creation of psychological services at CQ Rural Health, overcoming limited resources and support. Collaborating with Kristy Briggs, Fiona established a vital local service and played a key role in securing funding for HeadSpace Emerald, providing critical support during a crisis. Despite changes in management, Fiona's vision for a mental health service, in partnership with JCU, is underway, offering free psychology services to the community. Her relentless advocacy, including initiating medication reviews at the hospital, showcases a commitment that has undoubtedly saved lives and positively shaped the community.



Jim and Anne Hatte

Jim and Anne, community leaders on the Gemfields, go the extra mile for Anakie. Forging a difference, they operate behind the scenes, ensuring seamless events without seeking recognition. Their impactful initiatives encompass the Anakie Australia Day BBQ, Anzac Day Dawn Service, Festival of Gems, Christmas Carols, and regular tennis tournaments. Dedicated to community assets, they support the Anakie School of Arts and Railway Station building. Despite managing a cattle property, Jim facilitated the local school bus, and Anne, for 35 years, has been a Religious Education teacher. Their altruism and modest lifestyle make them indispensable to those in need. Other community members both commend their extraordinary contributions, and a community Christmas tree built in 2016 stands as a testament to their enduring legacy.



Michelle Johns

Michelle fiercely advocates for Gemfields in Central Queensland, combating legislative threats to the towns. As a volunteer firefighter and active member of various associations, she serves on the CHRC Planning Reference Group. Michelle, with multiple university degrees, applies her legal expertise to diverse issues, from basic matters to complex procedures like conveyancing. Known for redefining terms like "residence" for success, she overturns decisions, earning officials' respect. Her character, expertise, and approachability make Michelle a trusted community advocate, preserving the towns' well-being.



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George Lenardon

George, a dedicated Rotary Club member for 13 years, including a notable 2012-2014 presidential term, actively contributes to the community and charities. His leadership by example is evident through hands-on involvement in organising charity events. A straightforward individual, George is transparent in his commitment to making a positive difference. His unwavering dedication, hard work, and innovative ideas presented at the table underscore his goal to enhance charity work. George consistently invests time and effort, aiming to amplify fundraising for the Rotary Club, showcasing a genuine passion for community welfare.



Amanda Noone

Amanda is a dedicated community volunteer, showcasing her commitment through various roles since 2006. Her contributions include serving as a committee member for the Emerald Amateur Swimming Club from 2008 to 2021 and holding roles such as treasurer and team manager for the Central Queensland Swimming Association since 2015. She has also been a Board Member of the Central Highlands Science Centre since 2019, currently serving as Treasurer. Amanda's expertise in swimming operations and management is commendable, and her passion extends to supporting regional children's exposure to science. Recognized with Life Membership in 2019, she consistently goes above and beyond, embodying the essence of a great committee member.



Lana Powell

Since relocating to Rubyvale in 2022, Lana has become a vital force in our community. Serving as the chairperson, she played a pivotal role in establishing Gemfields Scouts in 2023, dedicating her time to transforming the Scouts Hall into a functional space through multiple working bees. Lana's resilience and resourcefulness were evident throughout this process. When the group leader resigned, Lana willingly stepped up, ensuring the group's continuity. In her current role as group leader, Lana efficiently organizes sessions, manages volunteers, and ensures compliance, vital to the group's operation. Her commitment extends to fundraising, notably raising over \$3,000 during Gemfest. Lana's unwavering dedication makes her a commendable model citizen and leader in our community, inspiring both children and adults in Gemfields Scouts.



June Ryan

June, dedicated president of Central Highlands Wildlife Carers, works tirelessly for the welfare of injured local wildlife. She responds to public calls around the clock, picking up and caring for injured animals. June goes beyond immediate care, taking time to educate the public on assisting wildlife in distress. With years of experience and personal investment in courses and study, she enhances her knowledge. June selflessly funds this endeavour, providing care for animals regardless of the injury or circumstance. Her commitment is indispensable to our community, ensuring the well-being of sick or injured animals, even during late-night hours. June's compassionate efforts are irreplaceable.



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Tracey Stoneman

Tracey has devoted her life to community service. As the program coordinator of 'Braking the Cycle' at PCYC, she surpasses her 15-hour-per-week work commitment, putting in full-time hours to maximize outcomes for young participants. Tracey's efforts have elevated volunteer mentorship and program participation. Beyond obtaining a driver's license, her leadership enhances self-esteem, mental health, employability, and community access for participants. Renowned for her integrity and effective communication, Tracey's passion is reflected in her proactive engagement with external organizations, earning support. Her exceptional commitment has propelled her into higher roles within 'Braking the Cycle'. Tracey's influence and dedication merit acknowledgment and gratitude for her invaluable contributions to the program and the community.



Sue Wright

Sue, a distinguished resident of Emerald, operates Boots 'n' All Line Dancing with a heartwarming and inclusive approach. Known for her holistic style, Sue welcomes all into her classes, offering warm hugs and immediate acceptance. Conducting multiple weekly sessions and encouraging weekend trips for socialisation and competition performances, Sue extends her activities to local schools, fetes, and aged care centres. She organizes fundraisers for community members facing health challenges, demonstrating genuine compassion. Sue goes beyond dance instruction, supporting struggling youth and individuals with varying disabilities. Her commitment, love for the community, and compassionate spirit make Sue Wright an exemplary role model in Emerald.



Emerald Botanic Gardens



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