MEDIA RELEASE
26 January 2018

Australia Day in Alice Springs

The Alice Springs Town Council’s Australia Day event commenced with an Arrernte smoking ceremony and conferred 29 new citizens.

Mayor Ryan said “Our newest residents have come from countries such as Brazil, Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, Ireland, South Africa, Bangladesh and the United Kingdom. It is such a compliment to Alice Springs that people from all over the world choose to live here.”

“What makes our Australia Day event special is the representation of the many cultures and backgrounds that make up our community. Today you see some of the oldest culture, represented in the Arrernte smoking ceremony & welcome to country, right through to the beaming faces of some of our newest citizen and that’s what makes today unique.” Said Mayor Ryan

Following the official flag raising, citizenship ceremony and presentation of 2018 Australia Day Ambassador for Alice Springs, Mr George Ellis an award-winning composer, was the announcement of the 2018 Centralian Citizenship Awards winners in five categories.

The 2018 winners are:

- Centralian Citizen of the Year – Debbie Page
- Centralian Senior Citizen of the Year – Celia Otley
- Centralian Young Citizen of the Year – Shaquiena George
- Centralian Event of the Year – The Poppy Project
- Centralian Volunteer of the Year – Jeff Huyben

(individual details on each winner below)

“I congratulate this year’s recipients on being recognised by the community for their significant contribution. Well done.” Said Mayor Ryan.

On completion of the ceremony there was a “26’er” cake for the all those born on January 26 and a free community sausage sizzle. Later today is the Alice Springs Aquatic and Leisure Centre Australia Day Pool Party with FREE ENTRY ALL DAY, facepainting and the new supervolley inflatable.

PTO…
2018 Centralian Citizenship Awards winners

Centralian Citizen of the Year – Debbie Page
Debbie was selected for her outstanding contribution to the Running & Walking Club as well as other sporting events across the region. Debbie also encourages people in the community to get involved and has been involved in raising awareness and funds for various health campaigns and charities. Debbie exemplifies the spirit of community service; she serves as a role model, improves the overall quality of life of others and works tirelessly without recognition behind the scenes.

Centralian Senior Citizen of the Year – Celia Otley
Celia has for many years collected bottles/cans from across the town for recycling. Celia uses the money to support junior golfers and to purchase books for children.

Centralian Young Citizen of the Year – Shaquiena George
Shaquiena recently won a high attendance award, Girls Academy Participation award and completed her cert ll in applied language in Arrernte. She was awarded the highest achiever for this course and has been a great role model to other students in her school and the community. Shaquiena is also involved in community sports and always encourages others to participate. She volunteers in her community assisting in her grandmothers groups, Larapinta Valley town camp events, Akeylerre Arrante healing centre, Girls Academy and many local community events and activities.

Centralian Event of the Year – The Poppy Project
The Poppy Project was started 3 years ago to recognise those in the armed forces who protected Australia and those who still protect Australia. The project makes poppy’s from donated materials and displayed them on Anzac Hill, the Council Lawns and in the gardens on Anzac Hill. Yeperenye also hung Poppy wreaths form their ceiling.

Centralian Volunteer of the Year – Jeff Huyben
Jeff has been involved in many community events and fundraising efforts including Vinnies, the Alice Springs Wig Library, MusiKarma and the Motor Neurone Disease Association. He is a strong supporter of the school nutrition program and has initiated an annual whole school community breakfast. In 2017 Jeff organised a Gala Dogs Dinner to raise funds for the Alice Springs Animal Shelter.

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