



Media Release

26 May 2024

Cockburn's most dedicated recognised at 2024 volunteer awards

Main points:

- The winner of the 2024 Volunteer of the Year title is **Jean Coles** from Feed It Forward Inc
- The Volunteer Organisation of the Year award was presented to the **Returned Services League City of Cockburn Sub-branch**
- The winner of the Mayor's Volunteer Award for 2024 is **Maureen Fisher-Sim** of Friends of the Community.

Proving that volunteering does offer 'something for everyone', Cockburn's Volunteer Awards for 2024 have honoured another selection of local legends who make it their business to selflessly help others.

Held to coincide with National Volunteer Week 2024, the Cockburn awards recognise a Volunteer of the Year, a Volunteer Organisation of the Year, plus a Mayor's Volunteer Award, with 45 organisations represented among 74 nominations.

Described as an inspirational person with a big heart, the winner of the 2024 **Volunteer of the Year** title is **Jean Coles** from local food charity Feed It Forward Inc.

Over the past two years, Jean's calm nature has helped Feed It Forward provide consistent help to up to 160 families every weekend.

The passionate advocate purchased a van at her own cost to help the food charity complete its vital work, and donated more than 20 hours a week of her spare time to the community organisation.

She spends up to nine hours each Saturday and Sunday setting up and packing down the charity's Hamilton Hill open pantry and sorting donated produce and pantry supplies.

Jean also monitors the service's social media platform ensuring people in need receive help and arranges the package and collection of donations.



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Second place was awarded to **Patrick Allieux** from Marine Rescue Cockburn and in third place was **Leanne Stickland** from Salvation Army Emergency Services.

The **Volunteer Organisation of the Year** award was presented to the **Returned Services League City of Cockburn Sub-branch**.

Cockburn's RSL sub-branch has been established for more than a century with a mission to support veterans and current serving members and their families.

Providing a safe welcoming space for Veterans and First responders to regularly meet, the sub-branch helps with compensation claims, emergency financial support, links to other support services, support to transition to civilian life and annual ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day commemorations.

One of these is the successful ANZAC Youth Parade which is attended by students from more than 26 local schools.

The **Friends of the Community: Youth Volunteer Program** was awarded second place, followed by **Cockburn Toy Library** in third place.

The winner of the **Mayor's Volunteer Award** for 2024 is **Maureen Fisher-Sim** of Friends of the Community.

Maureen has dedicated her life to volunteering, 44 years in total and 13 of those in Cockburn where she is well known for her passion for helping her community.

She has a knack for connecting people and fostering a sense of unity and belonging while encouraging others to join in.

Over the past eight years, she has enabled Friends of the Community to provide substantial financial assistance for a variety of causes including migrants learning to swim, student scholarships, children's medicines, meals for people experiencing homelessness, people with disability, junior sporting clubs, local schools and community groups.

Amounting to hundreds of hours in a variety of roles, she also actively champions Hamilton Hill Community Group, Cooby Cares, Hamilton Hill & Surrounds Pets



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Facebook Page, Hami Helps Inc and Cockburn 4WD Club.

Second place was awarded to **Peter Hodgson** from the Rotary Club of Cockburn and third place was presented to **Bradley Nicholas** from Marine Rescue Cockburn.

Mayor Logan Howlett said he was impressed by the 2024 recipients and runners-up of the award, which never failed to attract a crop of worthy nominations.

“Volunteers are the backbone of the community, without them these enriching opportunities, services and programs would not be possible in Cockburn,” Mayor Howlett said.

“I never fail to be impressed by individual’s desire to help others, and their drive to make Cockburn the best place it can be for people from all walks of life. Every nominee should be very proud of their efforts.”

Learn more about this year’s deserving winners –

Volunteer of the Year, 2nd place, Patrick Allieux from Marine Rescue Cockburn:

Described as ‘keeping the propellers running’, Patrick dedicated an impressive 531 volunteer hours to planned shifts in 2023.

He also dedicated countless hours behind the scenes managing all-important maintenance along with a Risk Management Policy review.

The Skipper spent 269 hours at sea on standby, training crew and patrolling, and 54 hours at sea in active search and rescue incidents, often at night and in rough seas, helping bring 218 people safely home to loved ones.

Volunteer of the Year, 3rd place, Leanne Stickland from Salvation Army Emergency Services:

As an emergency services volunteer, Leanne responds to emergency callouts 24-hours a day in Cockburn and further afield when needed.

She provides a range of skills and services from shift manager to providing meals for



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teams of fellow emergency volunteers often working in high intensity situations in places as varied as a paddock to a city fire station.

Leanne also established the Cockburn Pets and Wildlife Facebook group to assist with wildlife rescue, and volunteers with Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Conservation Centre and the Cockburn Youth in Emergency Services Cadet Program as group leader and chairperson.

Volunteer Organisation of the Year, 2nd place Friends of the Community: Youth Volunteer Program:

This organisation supports youth to take an active interest in their community by helping to promote and raise funds to create social change.

The young volunteers learn new skills, make new friends and establish networks while under the mentorship of experienced volunteers, with eight youngsters registering in 2023-2024.

This year they have attended committee meetings, completed educational certificates, and helped with event set-up and pack-down duties, food preparation, customer service, health and safety, while taking on leadership opportunities.

Volunteer Organisation of the Year, 3rd place Cockburn Toy Library:

Providing Cockburn families free access to high quality toys and educational resources, Cockburn Toy Library provides more than 2,200 toys from its Coolbellup and Atwell locations.

Open four times a week and providing for more than 400 children from more than 200 families, the library supplied more than 1,130 toys in February 2024 alone.

The service, which understands that play is essential to the development of all children, is a core of 14 volunteers include two young men with disability and their support workers, while another 100+ volunteers help out during opening times, cleaning and repairing toys, and providing administration support.

The committee comprises 10 busy mums who juggle work, family and childcare



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commitments to ensure the library runs smoothly for the Cockburn community.

Mayor's Volunteer Award, 2nd place, Peter Hodgson from Rotary Club of Cockburn:

Active in the Cockburn community for more than 21 years, Peter Hodgson is a past president and president-elect at the Rotary Club of Cockburn.

He helped develop and now facilitates the club's fun quiz, coordinating monthly quizzes, including questions, with funds raised donated to Cockburn organisations via a grant program.

Peter established the grants program three years ago, helping in the donation of more than \$40,000 to community projects, and has helped other Rotary clubs adopt the fundraising model.

He is also a past chairperson of Cockburn Community Mens Shed and has often provided free Disability Awareness Training to local businesses.

Mayor's Volunteer Award, 3rd place, Bradley Nicholas from Marine Rescue Cockburn:

An integral member of Marine Rescue Cockburn since joining in June 2012, Bradley has served in various roles including Radio Operator, Crew, Skipper, Deputy Commander, Commander, and currently as IT/Media Officer on the committee.

The organisation joined the Department of Fire and Emergency Services in 2015 and while in his role as Deputy Commander and Commander, Bradley helped safely steer the volunteer organisation through a time of significant cultural change.

His leadership in the digital transformation of the service enabled it to quickly adapt to new regulations and methods, ensuring it remained at the forefront of rescue operations.

In his current role, Bradley oversees all digital assets while playing a crucial role in developing and maintaining Crew and Radio Operations Training manuals and online modules.



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Winners were announced at a special awards evening at the City's Administration Centre on 26 May.

All nominations were submitted by members of the community.

Find out more about volunteering in the Cockburn community on the City's [website](#).

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