

STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 8PM FRIDAY, JANUARY 24

Two long-time Cape residents named joint Cook Shire Australia Day Citizens of the Year

January 22, 2020
COOKTOWN

Dedicated volunteers Alan Wilson and John 'Tex' Harrison have been announced as joint winners of the Cook Shire Australia Day Citizen of the Year Award at a ceremony in Cooktown today.

Alan Wilson, of Laura, has been a Cape York resident for almost 30 years, volunteering over the past three decades with the Laura State Emergency Services group, the Lakeland and Laura rural fire brigades, Lakeland and Laura Progress Associations, Quinkan Regional Cultural Centre, Laura Home and Community Care group, Laura Rodeo Association, Laura Turf Club, Laura and Lakeland Horse Sports and Laura Aboriginal Dance Festival. Mr Wilson has also been a Cook Shire Councillor for the past 15 years, including serving as Deputy Mayor. "Alan is a true gentleman and shining pillar in our Cape community," Cook Shire Mayor Peter Scott said. "It is an honour to present him with an award that recognises his years of selfless support for our region."

John 'Tex' Harrison, of Cooktown, has served Cooktown and surrounding communities as a firefighter with the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Cooktown Auxiliary Brigade for 40 years, including 28 years as Brigade Captain. Mr Harrison has also been a coach and umpire for the Cooktown Junior Rugby League Club for 20 years including two years as Vice President, and has been a steward at the Cooktown Races for five years. "Being a firefighter means committing to weekly training and ongoing courses and study, being on call 24 hours a day no matter where you are or what you are doing, and often putting yourself in the line of danger to make sure others are kept safe," Cr Scott said. "Tex has also spent countless hours with the Rugby League Club and the Turf Club and his community spirit and pride is exemplary."

Other award winners included:

Young Citizen of the Year Shaelanee Hegamaea – Shaelanee has made a significant contribution to the community through sports and school, including being the primary

school and junior secondary school captain. She has represented Cooktown in swimming, athletics, football and taekwondo, being an active member of numerous local sporting clubs since she was 8 years old. Shaelanee is a black belt in taekwondo and helps coach lower grade members of the club and is also a volunteer swimming coach with the Cooktown Amateur Swimming Club.

Sports Award Cooktown Amateur Swimming Club – The swimming club has been providing activities and training for children and adults for more than 20 years. It is a volunteer-based club, with several community members helping to keep the club running. Club members compete at Far North Queensland and State level and the club currently has more than 50 members, aged from 4 to 6 years of age.

Volunteer of the Year QCWA Cooktown Branch – The non-for-profit QCWA Cooktown Branch provides a support network for those in need, including helping with flood relief, providing homeless support and assisting with overseas relief projects such as birthing kits. In 2019 the CWA established a soup kitchen in Cooktown, which provides a safe place for people to eat and gather, and also provides toiletries, blankets and pillows.

Arts and Culture Award Harold Ludwick – Mr Ludwick represented Cape York at the Geneva Convention in 2012, was a facilitator for Emerging Indigenous Leaders in 2013 and in 2015 he attended training as a front line defender in Myanmar. For the past three years Harold has been the choreographer and songman for the Hope Vale Dance Team. In 2018 and 2019 Harold has been the Indigenous Project Officer at the James Cook Museum and won a Fellows Scholarship with the National Museum of Australia which took him to the United Kingdom and France to learn curatorial skills. Harold has also co-authored a book, which will be released in June.

Environmental Award Kristina Davidson and Joanne Reuben – Cooktown business owners Ms Davidson and Ms Reuben has developed and maintained a strong commitment to reducing their impact on the environment. In their café they use upcycled glassware, reusable cloth napkins, limited disposable eco packaging and fair trade products.

The Awards were held at the Cooktown PCYC Events Centre from 6pm on Friday, January 24, and included guest speaker and Australia Day Ambassador Gail Ker, presentation of the Australia Day Awards, a free barbecue and a citizenship ceremony.

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