

EMBARGOED UNTIL NOON, 26 JANUARY 2021

Resilience and dedication at the heart of Cook Shire's Australia Day Award winners

26 January 2021
COOKTOWN

Dr Des Hill of Cooktown Medical Centre has been announced as Cook Shire Council's Citizen of the Year at the 2021 Australia Day Awards Ceremony held in Cooktown today.

With a strong interest in rural and remote medicine, Dr Hill first arrived in Cooktown to take on the role as the hospital Doctor. He then went on to build and establish the Cooktown Medical Centre on Helen Street in 1983. His Citizen of the Year Award recognises his 35-plus years of dedication and innovation to the community, as well as his ability to lead his team to adapt to the challenge of COVID-19 while maintaining a high level of medical services and customer care.

"This Australia Day we reflect on the resilience of our community and the spirit of helping, giving and supporting, that defines us as Australians. Dr Hill, through his years of service and commitment to the health and wellbeing of our community, and other communities across the Cape, is the embodiment of this spirit," said Cook Shire Mayor Cr Peter Scott. "It's an honour to be able to present him with an award that recognises his work and dedication to our community."

High-school student Wudarabin Snider, and Lakeland teachers aid, Sam Simmonds have been announced as joint winners of the Young Citizen of the Year.

At just 15 years of age, accomplished Indigenous dancer and award-winning artist, Wudarabin Snider has made significant contributions to her school and the arts through her music, paintings and performances. She was featured on ABC News as an emerging Indigenous leader in her community and, as the eldest of five daughters has demonstrated strength and compassion beyond her years in supporting her Dad and sisters since the loss of her mother just over a year ago.



MEDIA RELEASE

Motivated and proactive, Sam Simmonds, 21, is a well-respected and much-loved teacher-aid by day and in his free time, Sam hosts after-school activities for the Lakeland school children, organises community events, provides support for the Lakeland Progress Association, and volunteers at many community events, such as the Lakeland Photographic Exhibition.

The other Australian Day Award winners included:

Jackson Agale – Sports Award

At just 13 years of age, Lakeland teenager, Jackson Agale started playing Eight-ball at 11. He's since won several state titles and represented Queensland at the national competition in 2019. A proud, young Indigenous man, Jackson looks forward to being able to continue to represent his culture and his community through his dedication to the sport.

Peter Shields – Volunteer of the Year

From helping to set up events, to assisting on the day, and cleaning up afterward, Peter is a long-time member and dedicated volunteer at the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club and Cooktown Horse Sports. In 2020, Peter went above and beyond, spending six months enhancing the Cooktown Race Course despite COVID restrictions and uncertainty about the year's race day events.

The Awards were held at the Cooktown PCYC Events Centre from 9:00am, Tuesday 26 January 2021 and included guest speaker and Australia Day Ambassador Uncle Barry Watson, presentation of the Australia Day Awards and a citizenship ceremony, followed by a community morning tea.

For more information contact Cook Shire Council via email at mail@cook.qld.gov.au or phone on 4082 0500.

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