



2024 Lord Mayor's Australia Day Awards

Dedicated to a better Brisbane

The 2024 Lord Mayor's Australia Day Awards recognised Brisbane's unsung heroes and paid tribute to the people in our community who have gone above and beyond to help improve the lives of others and make the Brisbane of tomorrow even better than the Brisbane of today.

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Winner profiles

Citizen of the Year - John James Melandri

John is an Army and Air Force veteran who served in the Vietnam War. He was not only a leader in the Boys' Brigade, but alongside his wife, led on the HMS Lady Nelson, guiding and mentoring young people through numerous voyages over the years.

John and his wife were committed foster parents and care openly and deeply about young people. John's compassion extends further, ensuring his neighbour receives consistent support by regularly taking him to his medical and hospital appointments and is the only person who is frequently in contact with him.

John is dedicated to his local church and undertakes various acts of service - mowing the lawns each week, managing the donation bins and hosting a weekly Men's Meet Up each Tuesday at his own house. Additionally, both John and his wife actively engage in their local community - sharing garden produce, meals and chats with their neighbours along with willingly assisting with odd jobs.

"John is a man of many talents - a man of huge love always giving to his community, a man of faith who puts others first daily. He is a humble man who has battled his own challenges, but deserves every recognition for this contribution to Australia and to his community."

Senior Citizen of the Year - Betty Jennings

Betty has devoted 23 years as a Diggers Dozen volunteer at Greenslopes Private Hospital, serving as President for the past 7 years. Her unwavering commitment and dedication to helping those in need in the community makes her an inspiring role model.

Betty's remarkable leadership and fundraising efforts for the Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation (GMRF) deserves merit recognition alone. She diligently works on the information desk directing visitors to wards and doctors' rooms.

Amongst other activities, Betty organises bookfests, trash 'n' treasure events and raffles at the hospital, which has raised over \$300,000. This substantial sum has been donated back to GMRF to support the efforts of researchers in finding cures, medications and treatments for veterans and the broader community.

"Betty gives her time and passion to the community with such a generous spirit."

Young Citizen of the Year - Dig In

Dig In is a not-for-profit charitable organisation that was established in 2017 by a group of university students, with a mission to combat meal insecurity in Brisbane. Their aim was to create the most inclusive and accessible charity in Brisbane, serving food 'made with love by Nonna' to those experiencing food scarcity.

Operating across 2 locations in Fortitude Valley and West End, Dig In serve 300-350 meals every Saturday. Witnessing a growing need for meal support each week (especially during

the period when coronavirus impacted the sector), Dan and Curtis (Co-Founders) began devising alternative ways to ensure their vital meal services reached those in need.

Their innovative solution was a hot food vending machine model. This machine is programmed to provide one free hot meal daily via individual PIN codes distributed to recipients. With a simple touch screen interface, users select single-serve ready-made meals that are then heated in an internal microwave. Designed for 24/7 accessibility, minimal operating resources and greater cost-effectiveness compared to traditional food services, the trial vending machine was deployed at St James College in Spring Hill and catered to the refugee student population that the school cares for.

Currently a second vending machine is underway, expanding the distribution of meals. Traditional services have also experienced a surge in meal production, having already delivered over 70,000 hot, nutritious meals to date.

"Dig In is making a huge change to Brisbane, one meal at a time."

Australia Day Cultural/Arts Award - Marie Clark

For more than 30 years, Marie has generously shared her artistic talent with the elderly citizens of Brisbane.

Commuting by bus to Brisbane City Hall 4 times a week, Marie teaches painting and drawing skills to seniors; many of whom might otherwise lack the means or confidence to participate.

Marie began sharing her talents at the 50 Plus Centre in 1988 and has rarely missed a day since.

Over the years, her classes have allowed for wonderful friendships to be forged, artistic skills to be gained and passions to be uncovered.

Many of Marie's elderly students comment that these classes are the only time they get out of the house and socialise in a warm, safe and friendly environment.

Through her efforts, Marie has significantly improved the lives of countless elderly residents, reducing isolation and loneliness while providing students with a sense of pride and confidence to uncover new hobbies.

"Marie is a kind and patient teacher. Nothing is too much trouble for her and she treats each person as if they are the only person in the room. Marie is humble and never seeks thanks or recognition. Her unending dedication to our community should not go unacknowledged."

Australia Day Sports Award - Ryan Finn

Ryan has been volunteering his time to the Para Sport of boccia for over 7 years. He visits specialist schools across Brisbane, empowering young people with disability to enjoy and engage in sports regardless of their abilities.

As a social, state and national representative player, Ryan tirelessly advocates for the sport's recognition and support.

Despite being wheelchair-bound and facing various challenges, Ryan's disability and illnesses have never hindered his commitment to donating his time to his community.

"Simply determined."

Corporate Citizen of the Year - Paul Spiro

Throughout his impressive 36-year tenure at Gadens law firm, Paul has stood as a leading figure in the arts and philanthropy, significantly influencing corporate leadership in Brisbane.

Within the corporate world, Paul has held and still retains numerous notable positions, including former Chair of Brisbane Festival, former Chair of the Brisbane Institute and former Councillor with Creative Partnerships Australia. He currently serves as a Member of the Queensland Art Gallery / Gallery of Modern Art Foundation, Councillor of the Queensland Futures Council and Chairman of Brisbane Economic Development Agency.

Paul's initiatives at Gadens have driven \$1.2 million worth of pro bono work each year, engaging 50% of staff to participate annually in their pro bono program.

Beyond his professional commitments, Paul helped with the establishment of the Small Steps for Hannah charitable foundation. He has supported Women's Legal Service Queensland, partnered with the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health providing health care services throughout South East Queensland and generously supported the Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust.

"Paul is most respected for this tremendous contribution and support to the people of Brisbane."

Community Event of the Year - Carols in the Park at North-East Baptist Church

For over a decade, North-East Baptist Church has hosted community Christmas carols in Nundah and been the heart of the community. This magical and memorable Christmas event is free for locals to enjoy and is highly anticipated by the community.

With the collaborative efforts of the Senior Pastor and a dedicated team of over 100 generous volunteers, this enchanting event allows more than 1,800 attendees to enjoy carolling and free recreational activities.

The event fosters an inclusive community spirit, encouraging all locals to enjoy the festivities of the Christmas season.

"A much-loved event, enjoyed by the local community, families, young and old alike."

Green Heart Award - Rita Ford

Since 2015, Rita has been an active volunteer, initially engaging when two new estates were developed in Carina. Her involvement began with tending to a small Bulimba Creek catchment waterway and a surrounding public park area, which encompassed a popular bike and pedestrian pathway. Being Brisbane City Council land, the area became part of Council's Habitat Group, which extended support to the volunteers.

Witnessing a decline in the volunteer numbers, Rita assumed leadership shortly after. Before long, Rita was doing the work on her own, from rubbish removal to extensive weeding,

complementing Council's native vegetation planting efforts. In 2017, Rita joined forces with another local resident and together they remove blockages and rubbish on a regular basis.

Rita's commitment and dedication persists to this day. She diligently stores a barrow load of equipment while maintaining meticulous records. Additionally, Rita established and administers a Facebook group for the Stellar-Harrington Habitat Group. On volunteer days, Rita also generously provides morning tea for the participating volunteers. Beyond her immediate efforts, Rita actively engages in community planting days in other local suburbs and has been an integral member of the group since 2011.

"Rita's great community service doesn't go unnoticed."

Australia Day Achievement Award - Joan Coghlan OAM & Paul Coghlan

Over the last 23 years Joan and Paul have been steadfast pillars within the Combined Probus Club of Sherwood Inc., having served from its foundation in various capacities at the club. Both have served as President 3 times. Joan and Paul have both been awarded Life Membership of the club.

Joan notably becoming the club's inaugural female president in 2004, among other roles such as Probus Liaison Officer, Club Tours and Activities Officer and Publicity Officer which she still performs today and was chosen as Probian of the Year 2016.

Paul founded the club newsletter and continues to perform in his role today. In addition to numerous Probus activities, Paul has also served as a volunteer with the St Vincent de Paul Society to the homeless.

Their altruism extends far beyond the club's borders. Joan and Paul have generously volunteered for a myriad of initiatives with their extensive contributions including longstanding roles and involvement with the Mater Hospital Auxiliary, Friends Committees of Primary and Secondary Schools, Meals on Wheels and Year of the Family Committee, plus much more.

"Joan and Paul have fostered a sense of fellowship and fun for members and work tirelessly to create an enjoyable atmosphere for retired residents in the local community."

Australia Day Achievement Award

David De Santi

David is a musician who has been an integral part of the folk music community's volunteering scene (including festivals, concerts and sessions) since the early 1990s. His active involvement in several local bands has made him a well-known figure within the local community. He is a volunteer organiser of The Brisbane Unplugged Gigs in New Farm's weekly acoustic/folk music evening; an important performance platform for local musicians. Since 2021, David has secured and arranged for two artists to perform each week.

Since 2017, David has led the informal Good Tunes sessions at The Burrow in West End, fostering a musical space that welcomes individuals of all ages and skill levels. Everyone from teenagers to people well into their seventies join in, and David warmly welcomes them whatever their musical level. Having prepared a different repertoire selection for each week, David provides music books free of charge for the duration of every session and

accommodates various learning styles, with participants able to read the music or learn by ear according to their preference.

Adding another string to his bow, since 2022, David has gathered musicians to perform at Charity Bush Dances in the Australian Hellenic Educational Progressive Association Hall in West End. With musicians and dancers of all ages and backgrounds, David's humble, gentle and confident leadership and organisational skills play a crucial role in the success of the event. Proceeds from The Bush Dances go to a local charity, with beneficiaries including Murri Watch, Micah Projects, Brisbane Rape and Incest Survivors Support Centre, Caxton Legal Centre and LGBTI Legal Service Inc. In the two years they have been running, the Charity Bush Dances have contributed over \$4,000 for local causes, and brought the Brisbane community together for fun, joy, connection and laughter.

"David creates an environment of participatory music making, social connections and strong sense of community."

Diane Gage

Buying collection items for local charities and organising various outings, Diane is considered a local legend within the Central Ward.

Diane introduced a monthly activity for the New Farm National Seniors association, designed to encourage members to use the Brisbane City Council transport system and promoting the use of buses and City Cats as a low-cost, easy to use option.

Diane also organises 'Metro Seniors' encouraging the elderly to be involved in free, local activities and even provides morning tea on longer day trips. 'Diamond Days' exposes elderly attendees to external experiences such as Brisbane Metro and Cross River Rail. 'Rat Days' are a special initiative where Diane takes 4 friends out to ensure they are okay. Diane is a regular attendee at the City Hall Tuesday Concerts and encourages all residents to attend.

Her care extends beyond event organisation. Diane also acts as a carer for many elderly residents, taking them to various appointments and activities. She has been assisting locals who are visually impaired or have early onset dementia, ensuring they are not missing out on the free activities.

"Diane is an ambassador for the local, free activities in and around Brisbane advocating to the senior citizens in her community."

Paige Garland

In 2005, Paige's organisation, Plan-it Life worked pro bono for a Strengths-based Practice conference, offering strategic planning and serving as a guest speaker to support individuals, families, businesses and communities.

Read more

Paige's altruistic and inclusive values have been evident through her many and diverse volunteer activities. She served as a Board Member of Amnesty International Australia, actively participates as a Social and Animal Justice Activist, contributed as a member of

various parent and citizens organisations, volunteered with the Salisbury RSL for many years and was a foster carer.

Paige's most recent success is the placement of the Nyanda State High School Art Collection at Yeronga State High School. Paige persevered for 15 years to secure a home for the collection of esteemed art and only through a determined commitment, recently accomplished it.

"Paige has a kind and nurturing behaviour paired with unrelenting compassion."

Greg Goebel

After retirement in 2011 from the Australian Red Cross (QLD), Greg took up the Chair position at GIVIT and held influential roles on various boards including the Brisbane City Council Inclusive Brisbane Board, Brisbane City Council Urban Futures Board, Red Cross Advisory Board (QLD), Inala Primary Health Care Board and served as the CEO of the Mt Gravatt Showgrounds Trust and President of the Mt Gravatt Show Society.

Greg's outstanding service to the community earned him several prestigious awards, including the Commonwealth Government Centenary Medal in 2001 and the Emergency Services Medal in 2014. Notably, his significant contributions were recognised with a Life Membership from the Australian Red Cross in 2011.

In his retirement, Greg remains an active volunteer, assisting to manage evacuation centres and training emergency service volunteers in Psychological First Aid. His commitment to serving others continues to make a profound impact on the community.

"Greg is a selfless man who has volunteered for charitable organisations for at least the last 20 years."

Jyoti-Amarjot Goraya

Jyoti-Amarjot has dedicated 28 years as a high school chemistry teacher, having a significant impact on the education of future generations, both inside and outside the classroom.

Her involvement extends far into the community, notably serving as the Cultural Coordinator of the Federation of Indian Communities of Queensland for over 5 years. In this role, Jyoti-Amarjot has played a pivotal role in promoting and preserving Indian culture in the region.

Jyoti-Amarjot has also actively contributed as the Netball Game Coordinator for the past Australian Sikh Games events, is a key team member of the Cultural Committee for the Australian Sikh Games 2023 and participates in events such as BrisAsia Festival and Holi. Through her ongoing efforts, she has consistently showcased her commitment to promoting cultural events and fostering community unity.

Jyoti-Amarjot's decade-long involvement in organising and hosting Punjabi ladies' events, involvement in the Worldly Women Project, as well as her position as former Vice President of Global Organization of People of Indian Origin Queensland, an organisation that arranges the India Day Fair, illustrates her ability to celebrate cultural diversity and empower women in the community.

"The initiatives undertaken by Amarjot underscore her dedication to her community."

Emma Gray

Emma founded The Nurtured Village Hampers (TNVH) in 2019, aiming to revive the concept of a supportive 'village' for early parenthood across Australia. The Brisbane-based charity (which is now nationwide) is dedicated to the advocacy and prevention of maternal mental health disorders by creating and fostering stronger communities for new mums.

Since 2019, under Emma's leadership, TNVH has taken substantial strides. They have delivered thousands of pantry items including baby essentials like nappies and wipes, home-cooked meals and even small gifts to families around Brisbane and across Australia.

The charity has grown from hampers and is now being described as a movement encompassing 12 communities, a podcast, website and blog. These platforms collectively create a space where young families can feel a sense of belonging and support.

"Emma is a selfless individual, giving young families the start everyone deserves."

Beverley Isdale

Beverley epitomises selfless dedication and an unwavering commitment to preserving and enhancing community heritage. Her enduring contributions have been foundational to the growth and success of the Chermide and Districts Historical Society (CDHS). As a founding member of CDHS in 1998, Beverley's passion for community history has been evident through her multifaceted involvement over the past 2 decades.

Beverley's roles in the CDHS have spanned from committee member to archivist to President; each one undertaken with unmatched fervour and professionalism. Such dedication was fittingly acknowledged with the award of Life Membership.

Historical societies play an indispensable role in ensuring that communities retain a tangible connection to their past. In her capacity as an archivist, Beverley has been instrumental in taking meticulous care of our communities treasured records.

Beverley also oversees the preservation of the Lutwyche Historical Cemetery and collaborates with neighbouring historical societies. A testament to her community spirit, she partnered with the local Councillor on a project at the Grange Library, honouring past community luminaries. Beverley also served for decades as a librarian with Brisbane City Council and is renowned for her genuine warmth and ability to make every visitor feel welcome.

"Beverley remains and has always been a cornerstone of CDHS and of her community."

Syl Johns

Syl has dedicated more than 30 years of his life to volunteering with young people and their families in Bracken Ridge and the Greater Brisbane area. He has crafted a safe and supportive space that promotes health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on boxing and contribution through Kurbingui Youth and Family Development.

His impact reaches far and wide, touching the lives of many vulnerable people. Although Kurbingui is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander club, all nationalities are welcome and encouraged to participate. The club prides itself on operating at low-cost, relying on limited donations to ensure people from all backgrounds can access their facilities. There is a

powerful sense of family, unity and connection at the club which has provided a lifeline to many individuals.

Syl is a great mentor and leader, providing a safe space for those who feel disconnected from their communities.

"Syl deserves to be thanked for his selflessness, time, energy and guidance for those who cannot access it any other way."

Mary & David Kearney

Mary and David hold esteemed roles within the Karana Downs Rotary Club, having served as both members and past presidents. David, as a foundation member since 1989, has been President on 3 occasions and is currently the Coordinator of the Annual District Tree Planting initiative while also contributing greatly as the acting Area Governor. Mary's dedication as a Youth Protection Officer earned her the prestigious Paul Harris Fellow award by the Rotary District Governor.

Their joint commitment spans over a decade with The Community Chronicle, a community-focused magazine that, across 128 issues, raised over \$100,000. Funds raised are invested directly back into the community through grants and Rotary projects.

In their time at the Karana Downs Rotary Club, Mary and David have been involved in many community support projects both locally and overseas. Recently they have started hosting Australia Day Citizenship Ceremonies for new citizens, a collaborative effort through the Lord Mayor's Community Fund, and Australia Day Celebrations in conjunction with Rotary and the local sports club. Their engagement extends far beyond Rotary, as long-term members of the Brisbane Citizens Concert Band. Both Mary and David have actively contributed to several district committees over the years, spanning Youth, Rotary Health, Opera in the Gardens and Domestic Violence, maintaining their dedication and involvement in community work.

"Mary and David's contribution to the community has been second to none. Keep up the wonderful work!"

Jeff Kruger & Mitchell Rowing

Jeff and Mitchell have pioneered a safe, simple and effective way for hundreds of local men to speak about their feelings and improve their wellbeing. Co-founded by Jeff (Treasurer) and Mitchell (President), the Men's Walk and Talk is a not-for-profit group that holds weekly gatherings at Minnippi Parklands and the Manly Boathouse.

Jeff realised the value of going for a 'walk and talk' when one of his own mates was experiencing a difficult period. Over 750 men have connected over the last 2 years with approximately 60 men participating weekly.

In addition, Jeff and Mitchell host monthly Men's Healthy Mind Workshops at the HOPE Hub in Westfield Carindale, which led to Jeff being awarded the Westfield Carindale Local Hero award in 2023.

Their dedication extends beyond gatherings, they also connect members with expert partners that provide Mental Health First Aid Training. Those in need are also referred to counsellors and psychologists that provide professional support.

Furthermore, Mitchell spearheads additional initiatives, organising weekly trauma informed yoga classes at the Carindale PCYC, running monthly boxing classes at the Clem Jones Boxing Club, and arranging weekly catchups at Backstreet Espresso, Carina.

"Jeff and Mitchell's efforts assist local men and help those struggling with their mental health."

Andrew Lescesin

Andrew is a quiet achiever within the community, generously dedicating his spare time volunteering at the local animal shelter and nursing home whenever possible. Well known in his area for helping those wherever he can, Andrew takes pride in their community and often takes it upon himself to clean rubbish, mow lawns and tidies up the plants along the street near his workplace. Residents in surrounding properties are always extremely grateful for the time and effort Andrew puts in to helping everyone maintain their community.

Andrew is considered a humble host by everyone he encounters at his workplace and is regularly praised for his hospitable and caring nature which is continually reflected in his daily actions.

"Andrew is considered a humble host by everyone he encounters at his workplace and is regularly praised for this hospitable and caring nature which is continually reflected in his daily actions."

Jeanette Meyer

From a humble family tradition emerged an extraordinary community experience known as Grandma's Christmas Gardens. Each year, thousands of families from all corners of South East Queensland now visit to experience the magical Christmas display. With very little income, Jeanette continues to build and create her light display, taking months of tireless preparation and unwavering effort.

In 2019, Jeanette entered the annual 4KQ Christmas lights competition and won! However, whether she wins or not, and despite now being in her seventies, Jeanette continues to create an ever-evolving, interactive experience for families to immerse themselves in and is absolutely dedicated to bringing members of her community joy.

"Such a delight for all the families. Jeanette creates a magical display for all the ages."

Craig Moore

Craig has been volunteering for 10 years with Sit N Chat. Sit N Chat is an innovative not-for-profit that has been making a significant impact on the community by fostering meaningful connections and enhancing wellbeing. Volunteers can be found at local markets, community events and even doorknocking residences, all aimed at cultivating genuine interactions.

In collaboration with Brisbane City Council, Sit N Chat has now released 2 'conversation tables' on the Wynnum Esplanade, which display large orange plates on the tabletops reading: "Anyone who sits at this table is open to have a conversation with anyone else who

sits at this table." Sit N Chat has successfully created a space for individuals to engage in open and authentic dialogue, giving anyone and everyone the opportunity to volunteer their time just by sitting at the table and having a chat.

Local companies are now joining the movement by supplying promotional bags, coffee and meal vouchers and safety cards with details for food banks, emergency numbers and charities.

"Craig's efforts alongside Sit N Chat conversation tables are making a significant difference in the community by addressing social isolation, promoting personal growth, fostering community development, and bridging social divides ultimately leading to suicide prevention."

Syed Asghar Nagvi

Syed is the President of the Pakistan Australian Cultural Association (PACA). Under his leadership, PACA has transformed into a proactive community organisation that is serving not only Pakistani persons but extends its support to the broader local community. Syed has been instrumental in raising funds in aid of 4 cancer patients, ranging from \$70,000 to \$150,000. He has also supported 4 homeless community members reintegrate into normal life over a period of 18 months. Incredibly, Syed's fundraising initiatives also resulted in \$20,000 being raised in just 4 days to support a family that had a family member commit suicide.

During the coronavirus pandemic, Syed stepped up, supporting hundreds of international students and community members. During the rapid antigen test (RAT) kit shortage, Syed procured 1,600 tests directly from international suppliers and distributed them for free or at cost value to a range of local communities.

Syed's efforts were duly recognised when he won the ABC Brisbane Community Spirit Award in 2021. Since then, Syed has continued to advocate for the Pakistani community, establishing the Pakistani IT Body and coordinating with the Financial Body to support new and existing migrants and international students.

"Syed's selfless service, leadership and commitment to promoting cultural harmony make him an exemplary figure in our community."

Bruce Riddel

Bruce's dedication to the Annerley Baptist Church spans a lifetime of membership, holding volunteer positions on the Church Council (including Administrator and Treasurer) for the past 15 years.

Three years ago, Bruce established the Community Belonging Programme. This is an initiative that feeds and supports the homeless and vulnerable in the Annerley Community. This is due to Bruce's commitment to fund raising, seeking grants and fostering community partnerships.

Additionally, Bruce has established emergency accommodation at the church for the homeless, providing a safe place to stay coupled with outreach and comprehensive support services. This support includes transportation to critical appointments, assisting with visas, employment, medical requirements and liaison with government agencies.

His involvement extends further as a founding member of the Annerley Men's Shed. Recently, Bruce's commitment led him to be approached by another local church to take on administrator duties following the loss of their Pastor.

"Bruce treats everyone he meets with kindness and respect even when they may be experiencing hardship or difficulties. His work in assisting homeless people in Annerley has been extraordinary and changed many lives for the better."

Lisa Robinson

Lisa is a dedicated individual unwaveringly committed to advocacy and the promotion of the rights of people with disability who rely upon their assistance animals to access daily life and community.

In 2017, following her own health challenges, Lisa's own journey with assistance dog Lilly began as one dog/one human. A professional background of paramedic, educator and business person alongside lived experience with assistance dog Lilly, created a unique combination of skills and experiences. Several years later and Lisa has become a passionate advocate and change maker, supporting many people to break down barriers and remove discrimination.

At the grassroots level, Lisa advocates and mediates when individuals face direct discrimination and refusals accessing goods and services and community spaces and places. Her creative efforts inspire and empower others with the knowledge to confidently access community and to self advocate when needed. More broadly in her business Assistance Animals International, Lisa works for systemic change – volunteering time presenting at conferences, delivering seminars and writing submissions to raise awareness about the vital role these animals play in the lives of those with disabilities.

Lisa has been instrumental in building understanding and partnerships between assistance animal organisations and local businesses, government and community, leading to greater accessibility, inclusion and support for individuals with disabilities. Her exceptional efforts for people with disability alongside their assistance animals is changing and saving lives, creating a growing positive ripple of change through our community.

"Lisa's exceptional efforts have improved the lives of many individuals and her advocacy for assistance animals has been a shining beacon in our community."

Richard Tanner

After 5 years of dedicated service, Richard has recently retired from his role as President of the Wellers Hill Bowls Club, marking a transformative period for the establishment. When Richard first stepped into the role, the club was in dire need of some tender loving care.

Taking an innovative approach in 2019, a new board headed by Richard began communicating with locals through social media to encourage ideas for bringing the club back to life. Collectively, they decided to establish a community garden, which would require members to invest a small fee. This initiative instantly saw an increase in membership numbers, which enabled the club to install disability access.

Richard's innovation and positive leadership skills also led to the introduction of craft beers and weekly food truck nights. With the onset of the initial coronavirus outbreak, the club

closed for approximately 4 months. During this time, Richard noticed the need for the club to increase community morale.

Richard's ability to think outside the square by turning the club's financial situation around while maintaining a community focus is evident. In his retirement, Richard plans to be an active member of the bowls club, continuing to contribute to the thriving atmosphere.

"A kind, generous and clever man that has grown our bowls club from rubble to the thriving community club that it is today. Your community thanks you for your countless volunteer hours, hard work and infectious, positive leadership."

Don Willsher

Don is an outstanding member of the community, dedicating his time to volunteering on committees and ensuring community organisations thrive under his stewardship.

Driven by his deep passion, Don has served on 3 historical boards, including The Gap Historical Society (TGHS), which he joined in 2017 before becoming the Secretary Treasurer in 2018, a position he currently holds in 2023. His efforts were instrumental in digitalising the history of The Gap and the founding families, in a project titled *Events That Shaped The Gap – The Timeline Project of The Gap Historical Society*. This resource is available for students, residents and historians interested in The Gap, from the suburb's inception in 1851 to present day. They succeeded in publishing this timeline during the coronavirus pandemic to ensure accessibility and the longevity of this precious historical information.

Don's strong interest in military history led him to the position of Honorary Secretary at the Fort Lytton Historical Association, whose dedicated volunteers support the Fort Lytton National Park Staff in the restoration and presentation of the Fort Lytton Historic Military Precinct. Additionally, Don plays a crucial role at The Brisbane Tramway Museum (BTM), where his involvement since 2016 has led to his current position as Secretary since 2021. At its new home in Ferny Grove, BTM is at the heart of history in Brisbane, and Don's ardent interest and passion for this part of Brisbane's transport history ensures that some of the trams that ran throughout Brisbane from 1897 until April 1969 are housed permanently for the public to ride on Sunday afternoons for enjoyment.

"Don is invaluable within the local community, his support for the organisations he serves with is vital for their continuation and he works tirelessly and selflessly to ensure their success and longevity."