



The Rural City of
**MURRAY
BRIDGE**

Bridge to Opportunity

Local Government Centre
2 Seventh Street (PO Box 421)
Murray Bridge SA 5253

T 08 8539 1100
F 08 8532 2766

council@murraybridge.sa.gov.au
www.murraybridge.sa.gov.au

ABN 90 501 266 817

MEDIA RELEASE

Subject: Australia Day Awards Winners 2021

**Contact: Michael Sedgman
Chief Executive Officer
08 8539 1174
a.atze@murraybridge.sa.gov.au**

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THE RURAL City of Murray Bridge celebrated local heroes this morning with four outstanding citizens receiving Australia Day Awards and two community groups being acknowledged for exceptional events.

John Scarvelis has been named the Rural City of Murray Bridge Citizen of the Year for a lifetime dedicated to community service as a volunteer and throughout his working life.

John developed commercial native plant propagation in South Australia with State Flora, served more than 35 years with the Rotary Club of Murray Bridge, held multiple roles with the Murraylands Multicultural Network and has been an active contributor to many local sporting clubs and organisations over the years.

“John has made a significant, sustained and ongoing contribution to the development of our communities, for the benefit of us all,” said Mayor Brenton Lewis.

“He has dedicated a lifetime to taking an interest in his community, engaging with others and finding ways to contribute and create initiatives that provide opportunities that enrich the lives of others.

“That’s a life well lived and should serve as an inspiration to us all about what we can achieve when we put our minds to it.”

The Young Citizen award went to Sallee Shepherd for her achievements in balancing studies with her service as previous Mayor of the Murray Bridge Youth Council, her own small business and other community commitments.

Volunteer of the Year was awarded to Lauren Salter for her many active and energetic contributions to the Callington community including the annual Callington Halloween Walk, fundraising, committee and community group participation.

Sports Person of the Year was Morgan Coull as founding member and Event Director of non-profit organisation Murraylands Multisports Incorporated, responsible for the creation of local events: Murray Bridge Fun Run, the Federation Ultra Trail, the Rockleigh 105 Gravel Fest and the Murray Bridge Marathon.

Community Event of the Year was awarded to dual recipients RMFL 2020 Finals Series and Murray Bridge Marathon.

Thirteen new residents, originating from a variety of nations including Cambodia, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, Fiji, South Africa, and the Philippines, became Australian Citizens on Australia Day in Murray Bridge.

SUMMARY of Australia Day Award Recipients

John Scarvelis

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR sponsored by The Rural City of Murray Bridge

John is an exceptional community contributor who has led many innovative programs and community initiatives in Murray Bridge.

In 1978 John joined State Flora (then known as Woods and Forests) as Manager Nursery Operations for South Australia, based in Murray Bridge.

He oversaw the production and promotion of Australian Native Plants and their uses, introduced new plant species to horticulture, developed commercial production methods and worked hard to ensure regional accessibility.

John joined the Rotary Club of Murray Bridge in 1985 and has initiated dozens of projects and initiatives during more than 35 years of service with the organisation.

He served as Club President in 2006/2007 and held Director roles in the five service avenues: Publicity Officer, (currently) Vice President, Club Facebook administrator and member of Community and Club Service committees.

John founded Rotary Assisting Local Youth as Youth Director in 1999 after commissioning a Murraylands survey, which led to the establishment of an Interact Club at Murray Bridge High School that generated many important local and international projects.

Youth Opportunities at the High School increased leadership pathways and helped turn around some of the youth issues at the time.

John has been a consistent contributor in the Rotary Art Show since 1985 and is currently Sponsorship Officer.

John has also been a member of Australians Aiding Children Adoption Agency, a support group for Australians adopting overseas children, since 1981.

John has held significant roles with The Murraylands Multicultural Network and has been a driving force for many programs and events including the Murraylands Multicultural Festival, while supporting many cultural and community groups in their own activities.

John's lists of contribution does not end there, as he has been an active contributor to many other sporting clubs and community organisations through the district.

Sallee Shepherd

YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR sponsored by Thomas Foods International

Sallee is the previous Mayor of the Murray Bridge Youth Council, which is a distinguished role in the Murraylands district and Sallee served in this role with passion and dedication. She represented the Coorong District Council at the Youth Suicide Prevention forum and participated in the Coorong Connection Youth Network.

Sallee's clear drive to achieve positive outcomes for the youth in Murraylands and our wider region has been unwavering.

The ongoing balancing act Sallee manages between her studies, the leadership positions, the Youth Council, part time employment, her own small business and other community commitments is nothing short of incredible.

Sallee's Major achievements included;

- representing Unity College at the 2019 South Australian Schools Constitutional Convention in Adelaide
- Community Service Trip to Pematang Siantar (Sumatra, Indonesia) in 2019.
- Coorong District Council Tour Down Under junior ambassador
- Sallee created a Mem Fox Green Sheep art installation in the Taillem Bend community playground.
- Australian Defence Force Long Tan Youth leadership and teamwork award in Year 10 in 2018.
- Netball - Player, Captain and Umpire 2007-2020
- Mayor MB Youth Council 3 years 2017-2020

- Finalist in the prestigious 7NEWS Young Achiever Awards in two categories Santos Regional Service Award and Scouts SA Leadership Award. Winner of the Scouts SA Leadership Award.
- Unity College Student Leadership 2016-2020
- The Order of Australia Association South Australian Branch - Student Citizenship Award with Distinction
- Unity College - Year 12 Merit Awards - English, Mathematics, Japanese and Food & Hospitality.

Lauren Salter

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR sponsored by Adrian Pederick MP

Lauren Salter is an active and energetic community volunteer who has played a key role in many initiatives in Callington.

She has volunteered on several committees including the Callington Hall Committee, the Callington Primary School Governing council, and as a member of the Callington Recreation Park Inc Committee.

Lauren regularly volunteers for and organises community fundraisers.

She is the driving force and creator of the Callington Halloween Walk - which brings the whole community together. She organises houses to visit (providing maps for people participating in the walk), sets up a meeting place and organises food, games and prizes, then walks with the children and parents and gives thank you certificates to everyone involved. She even takes extra treats along for any houses that may have run out.

She also organises the annual Halloween Disco and every year the funds raised benefit a worthy local recipient.

Lauren volunteers with her local Landcare group and often helps with tree planting, alongside her daughters and husband.

She has commissioned and assisted a local artist paint a mural at Callington Primary School celebrating landmarks and native wildlife in the area, along with the school's core values.

She was also instrumental in creating a new nature garden, with her husband Todd, at the school.

Lauren volunteers at the bar for the Callington Cricket club and at working bees for the local hall and school.

She has driven several community fundraisers for local families impacted by tragedies including health issues and the loss of family members. One event raised over \$10,000! Along with a small group of passionate parents, Lauren has helped raise \$15,000 and counting towards the new Callington Recreation Park building now under construction. As an artist, Lauren has supported the charity Living Beyond Suicide proceeds from the sale of her bone sculptures.

She was also recently awarded a grant to restore the windmills created by local retired farmer Kevin Jaensch.

Lauren is an inclusive, generous, warm and loving person who is passionate about Callington and surrounding communities and takes great pride in seeing them thrive.

Morgan Coull

SPORTS PERSON OF THE YEAR sponsored by Thomas Foods

Morgan is an outstanding sports person and community leader.

He is a Founding Member and Event Director of Murraylands Multisports Incorporated since 2011 – a not for profit organisation.

Morgan has taken on the role of creator and visionary behind multiple Community Events – including the Murray Bridge Fun Run, the Federation Ultra Trail, the Rockleigh 105 Gravel Fest and the Murray Bridge Marathon.

He provides the Murraylands community with accessible, inclusive and affordable events to encourage a wide range of participants.

Morgan is instrumental in the design and mapping of event courses, promotion and participant registration, right through to the conclusion of each event, co-ordinating every aspect of each events administration.

A paramedic by profession, Morgan is passionate about promoting healthy lifestyle choices and improving the health of the region.

He is also an outstanding athlete himself in trail running, mountain biking, adventure racing and recently represented Australia in the World's Toughest race in Fiji.

RMFL 2020 Finals Series and Murray Bridge Marathon (dual recipients) COMMUNITY EVENT OF THE YEAR sponsored by Regional Development Australia

RMFL 2020 Finals Series

River Murray Football League (RMFL) and Member Clubs successfully hosted the RMFL Season 2020 Final Series in a year where COVID affected everyone heavily.

All clubs took the extraordinary step of agreeing to host the series at one location - Imperial Football Club.

All clubs contributed to the running of each final and equally shared in any profits.

The community experienced a highly successful finals series allowing spectators to experience relatively 'normal' finals.

A COVID Management plan was put in place to help keep the community safe, while online ticketing was introduced for contact tracing purposes.

Feedback received was exceptional from not only the community and Clubs but also SA Police.

Murray Bridge Marathon

Murray Bridge Marathon is an exceptional community running event showcasing the Rural City's best views, roads and an iconic bridge crossing.

Distance choices of a 3km and 5km walk/run, plus 10km half and full marathon are designed to attract as many community participants as possible.

Almost 400 entrants (double its inaugural year) from across Australia participated last year.

The pre-race Expo on the night before is a great opportunity for sponsors to showcase products and services to all entrants.

The Marathon provides an opportunity for people to get active in a local and affordable event.