

MEDIA RELEASE



Subject: **Australia Day Celebrations**

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LOCAL Legends are being honoured in Murray Bridge today with two outstanding citizens receiving Australia Day Awards and one Community Group being acknowledged for an exceptional event.

Sandra Walding was named The Rural City of Murray Bridge Citizen of the Year for outstanding contributions to our community through Meals on Wheels volunteering and her involvement with local sporting clubs.

Rockleigh 105 / Gravel Fest was named The Rural City of Murray Bridge Community Event of the Year for the weekend of gravel and mountain bike events that includes a 105 kilometre ride through the outback supporting the Rockleigh Country Fire Service.

The Hub at Darling Avenue received The Rural City of Murray Bridge Award for Active Citizenship for their important work to support food security and enhance social connection within our community.

The Rural City of Murray Bridge Mayor Wayne Thorley presented the awards following a community breakfast at Edwards Square, in Murray Bridge, where a citizenship ceremony was also held this morning.

"I couldn't be more proud of these Local Legends who deserve to be honoured for their exceptional talents and hard work," he said.

"They have all played a pivotal role in enriching our vibrant and thriving communities and their achievements serve as inspiration for the rest of us about what can be achieved when you put your mind to it.

"This year as we Reflect, Respect and Celebrate, the things that we as Australians hold dear: the land, the sense of a fair go, our lifestyle, democracy and the freedoms we enjoy, it's the people who stand out above all else.

"Every single person in this community helps contribute to the proud, thriving and resilient community we are today and it's Legends like these that lead the way for those yet to come."

Twenty-three new residents, originating from a variety of nations including England, Liberia, The Philippines, South Africa, Sudan, Taiwan and the United Kingdom, became Australian Citizens on Australia Day in Murray Bridge.

SUMMARY of Australia Day Award Recipients

Sandra Walding

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Sandra is described as a dedicated and passionate person, who truly cares about the welfare of those around her. This is demonstrated through her very impressive history volunteering at Meals on Wheels and for local sporting clubs.

Sandra started volunteering with Meals on Wheels in 1987, supporting members of the community to live independently through the delivery of healthy, nutritious foods and creating more opportunities for social contact. Now in her 36th year of volunteering at the Murray Bridge branch of Meals on Wheels, Sandra has served in a number of positions and has proven herself capable and caring every step of the way.

Sandra has also made a strong contribution to local sporting clubs in our region. She is a life member of the Rambler Football Club, and over the years has supported the club by working in the canteen during home matches, and helping out with functions. Sandra is still an active supporter of the Club.

Loyalty was another word used to describe Sandra. This can certainly be seen in her commitment to her beloved darts clubs. Sandra has been granted life membership at both the Jervois Ladies Darts Club, and the Murray Bridge Bowling Club Ladies Darts Club. She has held various positions at both of these clubs including acting as Secretary and Treasurer for extended periods of time.

A quiet achiever, but a high achiever, Sandra has made an extraordinary contribution to our community, over a significant number of years. She is highly regarded by her family, friends and all those who know her.

Rockleigh 105 / Gravel Fest

COMMUNITY EVENT OF THE YEAR

The Rockleigh 105 / Gravel Fest is a weekend of gravel and mountain bike events. As the name suggests, the main event includes a 105 km ride through the back hills; with undulations, vistas, ridge tops and valleys – the event really showcases the area's unique terrain. While this is certainly not a challenge for the faint-hearted, the weekend also caters for riders of all skill levels, and includes a number of distances.

Not only does the event provide a physical challenge and stunning scenery, but importantly it also supports the local Rockleigh Country Fire Service.

The event is run by Murraylands Multisports, whose founding member Morgan Coull, is well known in the region for his accessible and inclusive events that promote health, the great outdoors, and giving new activities a go. Well done to the Rockleigh 105 / Gravel Fest event team and volunteers.

The Hub at Darling Avenue

AWARD FOR ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

The team at the Hub at Darling Avenue are the embodiment of 'active citizenship'.

Through their partnership with Foodbank and SecondBite, the Hub provides access to low-cost grocery items and free bread, fruit and veggies. They also run a free café which builds social connectedness – providing a space for people to pop in and have a chat, while enjoying a coffee, tea or toastie. The Hub team and volunteers have seen a significant growth in the number of people accessing this great service, with around 150 people coming through the doors each week. In a time where many are experiencing

the pinch, and indeed feelings of loneliness or isolation, the Hub's work is more important than ever.

In the last year the Hub has gone from strength to strength. In addition to supporting food security and social connection, and providing a range of community programs; the Hub has now established an accessible toilet, shower and laundry facility.

The Hub has achieved some great outcomes, and we cannot wait to see what they do next.