

PORT STEPHENS ANNUAL AWARDS

GUIDELINES

Port Stephens Council values the outstanding contributions made to the Port Stephens community by various groups and individuals throughout the region.

The Port Stephens Annual Awards provide an opportunity for Port Stephens Council to formally recognise these efforts.

There are seven award categories:

1. FREEMAN OF PORT STEPHENS

This honour recognises a distinguished citizen (or citizens) who have contributed highly distinguished services to the community of Port Stephens over many years. It may be awarded for outstanding achievement in the highest order for service to Port Stephens, Australia or general society.

Council is not obligated to award the Freeman of Port Stephens every year.

Retired Councillors with 10 years or more service (continuous or otherwise) as an elected Councillor are automatically granted the honorary title of Freeman of Port Stephens.

The General Manager (or delegate) shall keep a recorded list called the Freemans' Roll which shall be placed on display in the public area of the Council Chamber.

The Freeman of Port Stephens shall be invited to relevant and/or significant Councils events and functions, including the presentation of the Annual Awards.

The Council will provide a suitable insignia, badge or prestigious identification, which may be worn by the recipient on formal occasions.

2. CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

The Port Stephens Citizen of the Year award recognises the services of an individual citizen (or individual citizens) that have made a significant and demonstrable contribution to the community over the preceding 12 month period. While the focus for this award is on achievements made over the previous 12 month period, Council invites information and achievements of the nominee previous to that period.

The General Manager (or delegate) shall keep a recorded list of Citizen of the Year winners which shall be placed on display in the public area of the Council Chamber.

The Citizen of the Year shall be invited to attend the following year's awards ceremony, as well as to appropriate Council functions as required in the 12 months following their receipt of the award.

3. YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

The Port Stephens Young Citizen of the Year award recognises the services of an individual citizen (or individual citizens) that have made a significant and demonstrable contribution to the community over the preceding 12 month period. While the focus for this award is on achievements made over the previous 12 month period, Council invites information and achievements of the nominee previous to that period.

The Port Stephens Young Citizen of the Year should be aged 25 years or under on the day the honour is awarded.

The General Manager (or delegate) shall keep a recorded list of Young Citizen of the Year winners which shall be placed on display in the public area of the Council Chamber.

The Young Citizen of the Year shall be invited to attend the following year's awards ceremony, as well as to appropriate Council functions as required in the 12 months following their receipt of the award.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

The Environmental Award recognises outstanding efforts by an individual or organisation who has exhibited significant service to the environment of Port Stephens over the previous 12 months.

The local award recipient will be in the running to win the NSW State Environmental Citizen of the Year Award.

5. PORT STEPHENS MEDAL

The Port Stephens Medal is awarded to an individual, organisation or group for distinguished service to the community of Port Stephens over the previous 12 months or a number of years.

6. SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR

The Sportsperson of the Year award is awarded to individuals who have exhibited outstanding service to the sporting community of Port Stephens over the previous 12 months. Service to the sporting community may be via on field pursuits as a participant or competitor, or through the outstanding delivery of administrative functions.

7. CULTURAL ENDEAVOUR

Culture is reflected in our value systems, traditions and beliefs including in arts and creativity, heritage and history, architecture and design, festivals and events. Local culture can also be influenced by aspects of the distinctive coastal and rural environment, education and learning, the media, cultural tourism and accessible leisure activities.

Awarded to individuals who have exhibited outstanding service to the cultural community of Port Stephens or who have attained a high level of achievement in the wider cultural community.

Nomination process

- Nominations can be made by the community at any time of year until the closure date;
- The nomination closure date will be communicated via Council's website and other communications channels at Council's discretion;
- Any nomination submitted after the publicised closure date will be accepted into the following year of annual awards;
- Each nomination will be acknowledged by Council in writing;
- Nominations are to be submitted through Council's website using the online nomination form;
- While nominations may be made in specific categories, the assessment panel is ultimately responsible for matching nominees to categories. Panel members may allocate a nominee to a category at its discretion and without communicating the decision to the person responsible for submitting the nomination.

Assessment process

The assessment of the nominations will be undertaken by an assessment panel made up of the following members:

- The Mayor (Chair);
- The General Manager;
- Three Councillors - one from each Ward - drawn from the Port Stephens Australia Day Celebrations Coordinating Committee;
- Three community representatives drawn from the Port Stephens Australia Day Celebrations Coordinating Committee; and
- One Freeman by invitation of the Mayor each year.

The role of the Panel is to receive and consider nominations in accordance with the community values and demonstrated priorities

The Assessment Panel is responsible for choosing the category for which the individual's or group's nomination will be assessed and awarded.

The Panel reserves the right not to recommend an award in any category in any year. This includes Freeman of Port Stephens.

Final determination of award recipients

The Port Stephens Annual Awards Assessment Panel has authority to determine Award recipients.

- a) The Panel has final authority to determine each Award. In the event a recipient is not unanimous, a vote will be taken, and the Mayor, or in their absence, their delegate, will have a second vote to select the recipient in the event of an equality of votes.
- b) The Mayor retains delegated authority to determine the recipient of the Freeman of Port Stephens award only, on recommendation from the Panel.
- c) The Mayor and Council will be bound by the decision of the Panel, unless the Panel is recalled and agrees to change a recipient.

Assessment Criteria

Outstanding achievement or contribution towards Port Stephens's community values will be the principle basis for the awards. The community values are:

COMMUNITY VALUE	DEFINITION
HONESTY	Foundation for building trust by acting with sincerity, transparency and integrity
SAFETY	A community that encourages openness and expression of ideas without fear of judgement or discrimination
FAIRNESS	Emphasises equal treatment, and ensuring everyone has access to the same resources and rights regardless of their background
COMMUNITY SPIRIT	Belonging to and building community cohesiveness and inclusion, good relationships with other members of the community and collective action for the common good.
FRIENDLINESS	Quality of openness and warmth that makes you feel welcome and at ease
HAVING A SAY	Importance of giving every community member a voice in decision making processes and inclusive participation.
SUPPORT AND CONNECTEDNESS	Experience of belonging to a social relationship or network; may involve building supportive and healthy communities.
TOLERANCE OF DIFFERENCE	Respect and acceptance of diversity allowing others to coexist harmoniously despite differing views, religions, backgrounds or perspectives.
SUSTAINABILITY	Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs
LIFE CHOICES	The decisions we make that shape our actions, and priorities in life.

Award recipients will be individuals, organisations or groups who through their efforts demonstrate these values and show that individually and together we can make a difference. Their contribution may be at a local, national or international level. They will be seen as role models for the community.

The awards will recognise people who contribute in any area of endeavour including social justice and welfare, arts and cultural activities, education and youth development, the environment, business and sustainable economic development, sport, science and technology and academic achievement

Eligibility Criteria

- 1) Nominees must be residents of Port Stephens, except in exceptional circumstances, as determined by the Assessment Panel;
- 2) Awards will not be granted posthumously (following the passing of the nominee);
- 3) Self-nominations will not be accepted;
- 4) Nominations must fit within one or more of the categories outlined above;
- 5) Nominees may be either volunteers or paid employees;
- 6) Awards may be awarded more than once to a particular person or group, at the sole discretion of the Assessment Panel.

Presentation Ceremony

The Port Stephens Annual Awards will be presented annually on Australia Day, 26 January, at a civic function organised by Port Stephens Council.

Contact

Port Stephens Council
Vibrant Places
Tel 4988 0255
council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au

Related policies

Port Stephens Annual Awards Policy
Port Stephens Community Strategic Plan
Code of Conduct

Review date

October 2025