



Department of
Primary Industries

A decorative white line-art frame with a scalloped top and bottom, and ornate scrollwork on the sides, enclosing the title text.

HIDDEN
TREASURES
HONOUR ROLL

2020

Celebrating women volunteers
who give so much to their
rural communities.

A decorative pink swirl line that starts from the bottom right and curves upwards and to the left.



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Hidden Treasures is an initiative of Department of Primary Industries, Rural Women's Network.

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Ministers' message

We are proud to present these nominees and honour the contributions they have made through volunteering.

The impact that volunteers have on our way of life is extraordinary. The celebration of these nominees is an important part of ensuring their work is respected as a deeply valuable element in our community network.

This year has tested our Australian spirit as we have dealt with devastating droughts, fires and floods, and a global pandemic that will change the way we live. While we go through this time of change, our country will continue to be held together by our resilient volunteers who dedicate their time to the community.

The theme for National Volunteer Week 2020 was 'Changing Communities. Changing Lives', which highlights the role of volunteers in our community and acknowledges their generous contributions.

In an ordinary year, nearly a third of Australians volunteer their time, contributing 128 hours of their time to the community.

This year however, we have called on our volunteers to go above and beyond in recovery roles across the state. Our small gesture of appreciation through their inclusion in this honour roll is a tribute to these rural and regional women, as we continue to focus on building resilience and a rewarding future for the next generation.

Despite the tough times we find ourselves in, it is important for us to take the time to thank and recognise the volunteers who have stepped in to support their communities.

We encourage you to join these celebrations by reading these stories, and perhaps taking inspiration to start, or continue, your own volunteering journey.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam Marshall".

Hon. Adam Marshall MP
Minister for Agriculture
and Western NSW



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gareth Ward".

Hon. Gareth Ward MP
Minister for Families and
Communities, and Disability Services



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bronnie Taylor".

Hon. Bronnie Taylor MLC
Minister for Mental Health,
Regional Youth and Women



2020 hidden treasures nominees

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| 7 Margaret Allen
[MOLLYMOOK] | 11 Helen Brown
[YAMBA] | 15 Kellie Crossley
[DENILIQVIN] |
| 7 Brenda Armfield
[CASINO] | 11 Donna Burton
[COONABARABRAN] | 16 Dorothy Crouch
[DUNS CREEK] |
| 7 Bianca Armytage
[DENILIQVIN] | 12 Claire Butler
[BALRANALD] | 16 Patricia Crowe
[GRAFTON] |
| 8 Karen Backus
[NORTH STAR] | 12 Janice Cattle
[WEST WYALONG] | 16 Lyn Dark
[TELARAH] |
| 8 Judy Bailey
[COFFS HARBOUR] | 13 Kaye Chapman
[COWRA] | 17 Beverley Davis
[BODALLA] |
| 8 Virginia Beard
[COBAR] | 13 Margaret Clare
[MOONEE BEACH] | 17 Elaine D'Elboux
[KOORAWATHA] |
| 9 Christine Betts
[MURRURUNDI] | 13 Elaine Clarke
[COLEAMBALLY] | 18 Elka Devney
[MOREE] |
| 9 Helen Blackmore-Lee
[JINDABYNE] | 14 Carol Cleary
[ULONG] | 18 Sloane Donnelly
[BARYULGIL] |
| 9 Karen Blandon
[CESSNOCK] | 14 Belinda Colless
[BREWARRINA] | 19 Jennifer Duddle
[YOUNG] |
| 10 Colleen Boucher
[COBAR] | 14 Justine Cooper
[MURRURUNDI] | 19 Carol Fiddes
[BOWLING ALLEY POINT] |
| 10 Margaret Bridgman
[BOAMBEE EAST] | 15 Bec Crawford
[WALGETT] | 20 Cassie Fisher
[SCONE] |

2020 hidden treasures nominees

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 20 Cynthia Foley
[DUBBO] | 25 Nadine Hickey
[CESSNOCK] | 31 Jenny Loasby
[BLANDFORD] |
| 21 Georgia Foster-Eyles
[NYMBOIDA] | 26 Sue Houstein
[GUNDAGAI] | 31 Michelle Loft
[MERRIWA] |
| 21 Ruth Fritsch
[TEMORA] | 26 Wendy Hudson
[KEW] | 31 Peta Luck
[GUNNING] |
| 21 Karon Fuller
[WARREN] | 27 Stacy Jacobs
[RUTHERFORD] | 32 Stephanie Luck
[CORAMBA] |
| 22 Jayde Gardiner
[NORTH STAR] | 27 Barbara Jefferies
[YENDA] | 32 Margaret Matthews
[BLAYNEY] |
| 23 Jane Goldie
[KEARSLEY] | 27 Carole Johnston
[ABERDEEN] | 33 Catriona McAuliffe
[YASS] |
| 23 Kirrily Gould
[COOMA] | 28 Kama Kamphuis
[NORTH STAR] | 33 Dulcie McKenzie
[LOCKHART] |
| 23 Kerrie Gray
[ALSTONVILLE] | 28 Janine Katon
[ABERDEEN] | 34 Narelle McLeod
[SANCTUARY POINT] |
| 24 Lynn Griffith
[COPMANHURST] | 29 Jean Kutchen
[WEST WIANGAREE] | 34 Sue McMillan
[DENILQUIN] |
| 24 Margaret Haddin
[PARKES] | 29 Pauline Levingston
[WALCHA] | 35 Mellisa Meli
[TUMBARUMBA] |
| 25 Lyn Hetherington
[GLEN INNES] | 30 Aninke Lippert
[YAMBA] | 35 Carolina Merriman
[GOOD HOPE] |
| 25 Megen Hibbins
[NEWTON BOYD] | 30 Robyn Livermore
[CLIFTON GROVE] | 36 Trish Moore
[LOOMBERAH] |

2020 hidden treasures nominees

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 36 Robyn Mowbray
[ATTUNGA] | 42 Christine Riley
[CASSILIS] | 47 Fleur Tonge
[CASINO] |
| 36 Claire Mudford
[GILGANDRA] | 42 Marelle Robinson
[WINGHAM] | 47 Janelle Tongue
[LOOMBERAH] |
| 37 Danielle Murphy
[COBARGO] | 43 Narelle Ryan
[RUTHERFORD] | 48 Sally Torr
[BOURKE] |
| 38 Saba Nabi
[WAGGA WAGGA] | 43 Ruth Sandow
[PACKSADDLE] | 48 Judi Unger
[PEAK HILL] |
| 38 Rachel Nicoll
[HAMPTON] | 44 Fay Shaw
[TARANA] | 49 Christine Walters
[COBARGO] |
| 39 Shirley Pankhurst
[WEE WAA] | 44 Edith Shipway
[MERRIWA] | 49 Jessica Wells
[NORTH STAR] |
| 39 Lorna Parnell
[MERRIWA] | 45 Ailsa Sinclair
[TEMORA] | 50 Margaret Whyte
[WENTWORTH] |
| 40 Cheryl Pearce
[KIAMA] | 45 Gwen Smith
[NORTH STAR] | 50 Pamela Wilkinson
[NORTH STAR] |
| 40 Julie Pearce
[COFFS HARBOUR] | 46 Tash Taaffe
[MERRIWA] | 51 Julia Wilton
[MERRIWA] |
| 40 Kay Pellizzer
[YENDA] | 46 Shirley Teague
[COFFS HARBOUR] | 51 Margaret Wood
[EAST MAITLAND] |
| 41 Cheryl Penrith
[WAGGA WAGGA] | 46 Pat Thomas OAM
[TEMORA] | 52 Jill Woodlock
[COFFS HARBOUR] |
| 41 Carol Ray
[SCONE] | 47 Sue Thomas
[WINGHAM] | 53 Volunteer agencies |



The following stories celebrate and acknowledge rural women volunteers across New South Wales—women who are changing communities and changing lives—submitted by appreciative members of their communities.

margaret allen [MOLLYMOOK]

Margaret has volunteered at the Ulladulla & Districts Community Resources Centre since 2001. She has been on our committee and has been offering her time and skills on reception most Mondays. Margaret has volunteered with other services in this area and has always been reliable when we run fundraising activities. She is willing to lend a hand and assist when needed. Margaret is the centre's hidden treasurer with hidden talents, always creating items such as rugs and crocheted baby clothes when needed. she has a friendly nature and loves to chat, welcomes people in, and always finds time to help others.

brenda armfield [CASINO]

Brenda is a well-known identity in the Casino area. She is the voice of Casino Beef Week and volunteers at 2COW FM radio station with her great shows where anything goes and the popular 'down memory lane' segment. She is an absolute treasure to her family, husband Warren, and her many friends. We all love and cherish this woman and I am very proud to nominate her as our hidden treasure.

bianca armytage [DENILIQVIN]

Bianca was born in Deniliquin and grew up on a farm. She completed her primary and secondary schooling in Deniliquin before spreading her wings at university studying radiography. After working in regional Victoria as a radiographer she returned to Deniliquin for work and to be closer to family, friends and her partner Rod, who is now her husband. They have since had two amazing children. Bianca lost her mother to breast cancer when she was in her teens, and the family were surrounded by incredible support from family and friends. In 2013, Bianca was diagnosed with breast cancer, and again was blessed to have widespread support, while still caring for two young children. Her experience highlighted the emotional and financial pressure that exists with a cancer diagnosis. Bianca and another friend kick started the Deniliquin Can Assist branch in 2017 which provides financial assistance to community members with cancer. (Can Assist is a volunteer run organisation with branches across rural and regional NSW.) Bianca is the patient liaison officer and has provided support to every patient that comes to Can Assist. Every week she follows up with existing patients, contacts new patients (often in her work lunch break) and liaises with relevant health professionals and support services. Bianca's empathy and listening skills are exceptional and she does her utmost to ensure Can Assist can help in any way to help make a person's cancer journey that little bit easier. This is evident in the patient testimonials the branch receives. The Deniliquin community is incredibly fortunate to have Bianca at the helm.

karen backus [NORTH STAR]

Is it the soft smile that reaches her eyes when she's engaged in purposefully helping others? Or the short memorable warm giggle when she's amused by something? Either way, Karen Backus brings her own intelligent and unique gifts to any community setting. One of three children, to community focused parents, Karen's values of generosity were fostered early on in her life. Examples of Karen's generosity to her communities of Yallaroi and North Star include giving many hours of grant writing for fundraising for the North Star School and its P&C Association. She has had a long involvement as a parent, secretary and president of this organisation. Karen's ability to make sure members are heard, and encouraged to work together, is obvious in all that she does. Her presence at fundraising events, endless cooking and her ability to introduce ideas for fundraising and social cohesion has made an enormous difference at the school and in the community. Through these ideas, academic and sporting resources were accessed easier and the wider community benefited. Karen's artistic creativity and skills have been generously offered for art lessons and 3D sculpture for students at the school, and her artwork has been raffled for P&C High Tea functions. Some of Karen's understated gifts to others are her encouragement, vision and capacity to just do—taking others on a team journey. There is probably so much more no one would be aware of, nor would she tell you. Karen, you most certainly are a hidden treasure. Thank you for all that you do.

judy bailey [COFFS HARBOUR]

Judy Bailey is a passionate volunteer at C.ex Coffs International Stadium. Without fail at every event hosted at our venue Judy has volunteered for a rostered shift. She enjoys being involved in the volunteering aspect at our events and is always providing us with suggestions on how to improve our events and support our volunteers. Judy is an adored member of our volunteering team and has a beautiful personality. She has been a volunteer with our team since 2005 and she is greatly appreciated.

virginia beard [COBAR]

Virginia Beard is the owner operator of the Emmdale Roadhouse on the Barrier Highway west of Cobar. This isolated fuel and food rest stop offers much more to travellers than just a break in their travel. Virginia has operated this roadhouse for more than 10 years, and for most of this time the area has been in drought. She has been fighting for a permanent water supply since 2013 when the Coonavitra Tank went dry. This is how she came to our attention in the Member for Barwon, Roy Butler's office—when she contacted us for assistance in accessing a permanent water supply—bore water. Virginia amazed us with her resilience and persistence to continue operating her business while also providing assistance to truck drivers and travellers who were ill prepared for the rigours of hot summers in the outback and a lack of connectivity on their mobile phones.

Virginia also fulfills a public need for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. She operates and maintains the airstrip for medical emergencies and responds to road accidents that occur on this isolated stretch of road. In this location she is a point of contact for emergency services and is often called on to do community work. The Roadhouse is also used as a community hub for graziers in the area. Virginia has a very strong sense of community and is a highly valued member of the Emmdale community.

christine betts [MURRURUNDI]

Christine Betts is a well-known local in Murrurundi. For the past two years, Christine has volunteered with Doing it for our Farmers Pop-Up Pantry in Murrurundi. Her work has involved dealing face-to-face with farmers, farm workers and contractors, who have been experiencing the worst drought in living memory. Sharing information about available assistance, preparing hampers for delivery and generally making people feel happier are just some of the tasks undertaken. In addition, there have been numerous donations of bottled water and grocery and pantry items to be unloaded into the Pantry, then packed on shelves for collection by Pop-Up Pantry customers. Christine says she enjoys putting a smile on people's faces and her role as a volunteer—contributing no fewer than 16 hours each week. She really is our hidden treasure!

helen blackmore-lee [JINDABYNE]

Helen Blackmore-Lee was born in England and arrived in Australia in the late 1980s for work. She donates her time to our local neighbourhood centre. As a small community, Helen's instigation of the neighbourhood centre, a not-for-profit organisation, and her spirit and determination to keep the neighbourhood centre operational year-round is highly commendable. Helen has also donated many hours as a teacher's aide at the local public school. Helen is a Pink Lady survivor and instigated an annual Pink Ladies Day at Perisher for survivors. A superb celebration of awareness and a day of happiness for 'pink ladies' in a regional area. Helen is a humanitarian with a golden heart. She is an inspirational and passionate lady who deserves to have her efforts recognised. Helen's contribution to the Monaro community is beyond words. Thank you Helen!

karen blandon [CESSNOCK]

Karen Blandon grew up in Cessnock and has lived and worked here all her life. She has worked at Mount View High School for more than 20 years where she goes above and beyond each and every day. Karen runs a vast array of charity organisations with countless hours given both inside and outside of school hours. She has played a major role in raising money for Hands of Hope, White Ribbon, Legacy, Relay for Life, and many more. Karen is in charge of the Leo's club at Mount View where they are always at the local Bunnings running the BBQ on a Sunday morning.

Karen is a well-known and respected woman by the community and has been recognised for her commitment and dedication to the community on several occasions. She is not only a volunteer, but a role model that many people look up to. She is always there to lend a helping hand and asks for nothing in return. So many things go unnoticed and she is not given enough credit for what she does. Karen is very deserving of this honour and it would be extremely nice to see her being praised for her time and commitment to our community.

colleen boucher [COBAR]

Colleen Boucher was born in Cobar and still resides there today. Growing up, she spent her time in the War Memorial Hostel. Colleen attended school until Year 10 and at the same time joined the Girl Guides, later becoming a leader. Colleen's husband was the battalion leader in Cobar for Cadets and Colleen left Girl Guides in 1996 to become the commander of the Army Cadets. She has three daughters and all of the girls were in the Cadets with her. Colleen has volunteered many hours to Cadets and has supported hundreds of children who have then gone on to the armed forces. She has dedicated many hours to encourage young children, who may have not been as fortunate as others, to commit themselves to this worthy cause. Colleen says she has received a great satisfaction in watching these young people develop into adults and make good choices in life. Colleen spent many voluntary hours taking the cadets away when needed and organising ANZAC day ceremonies. She is a well-deserved volunteer, and hidden treasure,

who is also on many other committees in Cobar including President of the local Country Women's Association, Administrator for the Battalion, Treasurer of the RSL Sub-Branch, Legacy, and the Treasurer for the local aged housing facility, the Brennan Centre, in Cobar.

margaret bridgman [BOAMBEE EAST]

Margaret Bridgman was born in Melbourne and left school to pursue a passion for nursing. She moved to Coffs Harbour in the mid-70s with her husband, their three small boys and a cat. After retiring from paid work, Margaret volunteered as the manager of the Coffs Harbour Salvation Army store. Her planned retirement was cut short when she was snagged as a new member of the Boambee East Community Centre (BECC) Management Committee. This role grew into an active volunteering partnership with Margaret as the driving force behind many of the centre's most successful events—Seniors Week activities, Aboriginal Elders luncheons, Winter Solstice and Carols on the Green. During the drought Margaret mobilised the seniors of the centre to fundraise and organise food drops for farmers in partnership with Nambucca RSL. Margaret's most outstanding achievement at BECC is the creation of AVACHAT—a weekly social and informative gathering for isolated seniors in our community. Margaret, in recognising the need for social support, established the group that now has over 75 members. When COVID-19 restrictions began, Margaret began publishing a weekly newsletter to keep the group connected. She also volunteers at the Emergency Department of the Coffs Harbour

Health Campus. Words cannot fully describe the value of Margaret to the East Boambee community.

helen brown [YAMBA]

Helen Brown was born in the eastern suburbs of Sydney, and when she was just six years old, she and her five siblings were separated from their parents and 'farmed out' across NSW. When Helen she was in her 20s she managed to track down her siblings with the help of the Aboriginal Legal Service. As a member of the stolen generation she has experienced great injustice in her life which underwrites the infinite compassion she has. Helen overcame adversity to graduate university and become the matriarch of four generations of strong, educated women. She has an impressive history of work including her current positions as Director on the board of the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Ltd – North Coast Region, and Committee Member on the board for Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre. Helen also finds time to volunteer for the Justice Advocacy Service and attends the Police Aboriginal Consultative Committee, Aboriginal Community Consultative Committee with Acmena Youth Justice Centre, and Clarence Valley Community Drug Action Team. In addition to her formal roles, Helen can often be found transporting people to appointments, advocating for community members and spending hours helping with resumes and job applications. One of Helen's most significant achievements was in her capacity as the Aboriginal Community Development Officer for Randwick City Council

where she coordinated a Diploma of Business Governance course. The participants of that course have created a lasting legacy by going on to achieve amazing things in the governance of Aboriginal organisations all over NSW.

donna burton [COONABARABRAN]

As the daughter of a drover who grew up sleeping under the stars, to having her comet discovery imaged by NASA, Donna Burton is accustomed to overcoming challenges. A philosophy of 'it doesn't matter who you are, where you're from or what you do—you can be anything you want to be', this is reflected in Donna's passionate and motivational support of others. From her drive to self-educate—leading to her pioneering the availability of science studies through distance education for those isolated from campus—to her renown as a gifted presenter who gives active encouragement to young people (particularly young women) to seek a career in science, technology, engineering and mathematics—Donna has voluntarily influenced the lives of many within and beyond her local community. She has a very special gift in communicating science, with a special emphasis on astronomy, and its history (especially the often ignored place of women) across the age groups—Girl Guides, Senior Citizens and U3A. Additionally, in her volunteer position as Manager for the Community Transaction Centre Donna provides free education to youth and seniors in the use of modern technology. The recognition of Donna's contribution to the community through her nomination and selection to run in the

Commonwealth Games Queen's Baton Relay gave her the opportunity to advocate for increased awareness of Lymphedema. Holding executive positions within numerous organisations including Country Women's Association, Chamber of Commerce, Community Progress Association, and volunteering at numerous community events, Donna is valued as a team player and for her clear minded, intelligent and result driven attitude, leading to great solutions.

claire butler [BALRANALD]

Claire Butler was born in New Zealand. When she was in her primary school years, she and her family moved to Australia to the Moree region so her father could work in the agricultural industry. Claire has been working with the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) NSW branch as a volunteer for many years. Since 2016 she has held various executive roles in the organisation and in 2019 took on the President's role. There is not one day in Claire's life where she would not be working for the volunteer organisation. ICPA advocates for the equity of access for education for all rural and remote students. The local branch has been lobbying to see students of the Yanco Agricultural College return as boarders. Claire's involvement in this has fast-tracked renovations and provided immediate alternatives to get these students back to school when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

janice cattle [WEST WYALONG]

Janice Cattle has spent her life in or near West Wyalong. A dynamic and capable woman, Janice grew up in a farming family where she learnt to have empathy and kindness for others and to be of service to others when needed. After marrying her husband Ross, Janice lived on the family farm at Tallimba and raised three boys, until she and Ross retired to the West Wyalong township. Janice has always worked tirelessly for the local community but after the untimely loss of her son, Janice volunteered her time to improve the mental health of others, or those who have experienced tragic loss, by establishing a community rose garden. Every Thursday for the past 20 years Janice has provided others with a safe place to heal, recover and find a way through their darkest times by digging in the earth, having a cuppa and a chat, and providing a shoulder on which to lean. Janice is a very active member of the community and also volunteers at other organisations such as West Wyalong Garden Club, Lion's Club and, through husband Ross, has an active interest in the local Men's Shed which she does with good humour, diligence and common sense. Janice has very passionately run events, liaised with the community and fundraised, with many people benefitting from her generosity. She is currently writing a book about the people, life and times of West Wyalong and their relationship to the West Wyalong Community Rose Garden. There is no doubt that Janice is a very worthy person to be included in the Hidden Treasures Honour Roll.

kaye chapman [COWRA]

Kaye Chapman was born and worked in Sydney until she and her husband moved to Cowra. Volunteering her time at the Cowra Neighbourhood Centre, Kaye has been supporting people in need who are dealing with grief and loss for more than 16 years. Through her volunteering Kaye identified an urgent need in the community to support locals who needed assistance with medical costs—and so the Cowra Community Chest was formed. Kaye is also involved in the local markets, which were taken over due to their closure and have been built up over time, to raise money for people in need. Kaye works about 20 hours a week, phoning and organising stalls and coordinating all other aspects that go in to running the markets. She has been working for 17 years, volunteering in this important position and has also been the publishing officer for 17 years with the Community Chest. She works tirelessly and goes out of her way to achieve as much as possible for her community.

margaret clare [MOONEE BEACH]

Margaret Clare is a beautiful volunteer to work alongside. During my short time as an intern at Coffs Harbour City Council and my new role as Event Coordinator, I have come across Margaret a few times. Without fail, every time, she has a bubbly and sweet personality which is adored with our Stadium and Major Events Team. Margaret's commitment to volunteer her time to our community should not be questioned. Through injuries and in health she has always

put her hand up and assisted us in the operation of events. She should be commended for her dedication to her community. Margaret has become a volunteer that we would look forward to seeing at each event.

elaine clarke [COLEAMBALLY]

Elaine Clarke grew up in Narrandera where she undertook nursing after leaving school. She and her husband moved to Coleambally when he took a job at the local rice mill. They, and their two sons, became very involved in the community. Elaine was passionate about tennis and volunteered as secretary, treasurer, coach, competition and championship organiser, and became a life member of the Coleambally Tennis Club. In 1995, Elaine was presented with the Sports Achievement Award on Australia Day. In 2000, she was awarded the Prime Minister's Australian Sports Medal. Elaine looked after publicity for Cubs and Scouts and was involved in junior cricket coaching. She has also worked with Home Care. She continues to spend 15 plus hours per week volunteering as Secretary and Fundraising Coordinator for the Country Education Foundation at Coleambally-Darlington Point, Liaison Officer for Red Cross Club, running bingo for the Senior Respite Group, volunteering at Pioneer Park Museum and as a Community Transport Driver. Elaine is very community-minded and her contributions are very much appreciated within our community. She has always been there to help and provide support to individuals and groups. She is a quiet, hardworking achiever and truly a hidden treasure.

carol cleary [ULONG]

Carol Cleary always goes above and beyond for our little community and has put Ulong back on the map. She has organised events to bring the community spirit back including creating the Mountain Logie Awards, better known as 'the Mogies'. The concept behind the awards was to provide an avenue through the creation of short films to showcase the abilities of local students and teachers from Ulong and Lowanna. These awards have helped to bring the communities and their people even closer together. The list of Carol's volunteering goes on and we couldn't imagine our little town without all the effort Carol has put into it.

belinda colless [BREWARRINA]

Belinda Colless was born in Walgett and resides in Brewarrina with her partner John Taylor. She is a high achiever in all she does and her contribution to the Brewarrina community is outstanding. For many years Belinda has been the organizer of Anzac Day and Remembrance Day commemorations in Brewarrina. She is also a local SES team member, Brewarrina Race Club member, member and past secretary of the Gun Club, member and past secretary of Bre Big Fish, member and past secretary of Colgoa Sportsclub, past member of the Regional Development Board, member of the local Country Women's Association branch, member of the Brewarrina RSL Ladies Auxillary, and member and past board member of the Brewarrina RSL Club. Belinda is

the driving force behind 3 Birds 1 Bloke. This group was formed in 2018 after a meeting of three businesses in town felt that they needed to contribute to the welfare of the local farmers suffering from the severe drought. 3 Birds 1 bloke consists of Belinda Colless (Muddy Water Coffee Shop) Ros Press (Macdonald Rural CRT) Max Jefferies (Brewarrina Friendly Grocer) and Richelle Coddington (Schute Bell, Brewarrina). The group regularly runs art and craft workshops and social events, such as the Bre Long Lunch, for the wellbeing of the farmer community, and with the help of many organisations with donations and successful grant applications. Belinda is a prominent and valuable member of the Brewarrina community and she deserves recognition as one of Brewarrina's hidden treasures.

justine cooper [MURRURUNDI]

Justine Cooper has taken on the role of coordinating the 'Doing it for our Farmers' group in Murrurundi who manage the Pop-Up Pantry. Justine has coordinated deliveries and donations from various groups to be distributed to farmers, farm workers and contractors. She has organised the Pop-Up Pantry for drought relief in town, as well as events such as a Christmas event in 2018 for farming families, and a Salsa dance night in early 2020. Justine has coordinated the distribution of hay and feed deliveries, water deliveries, supported Rural Aid volunteers, and provided other assistance when needed across the region, from Cassilis to Caroonna. In November 2019 the Pop-Up Pantry received first place in the

NSW Sustainable Communities Tidy Towns Awards for community spirit and inclusion. In January 2020 Justine was awarded the Murrurundi District Citizen of the Year and the Upper Hunter Shire Citizen of the Year. She makes an amazing contribution to our community.

bec crawford [WALGETT]

Bec Crawford is the lady behind the drought drop campaign. Over the course of the summer, Bec, a school teacher in Walgett, dedicated her summer break to brightening the days of coffee drinking farmers across Australia. The drought drop campaign saw Bec make 1200 pairs of vibrant blue earrings resembling a rain drop. She then anonymously donated the earrings to 50 coffee shops across the country to sell and in turn help shout a farmer a coffee. The success of the campaign saw Bec open an Etsy store to keep up with the demand of the drought drop earrings with proceeds going towards supplies for making more earrings and shouting coffees for those suffering the drought. Bec, along with all those who have supported the drought drop campaign, have really helped ease the daily burden and mental strain of the ongoing drought on farmers across the country. Congratulations Bec, you are a true legend!

kellie crossley [DENILIQVIN]

Kellie Crossley grew up on a farm near the beautiful Southern Riverina town of Deniliquin. From early beginnings she has dedicated her life to assisting and caring for others and her community. She is a dietician by profession and a proactive farmer, with her husband Andrew, and a busy parent of three young children. Kellie is one of the younger breed of rural women who multi-task so efficiently, holding down a demanding job as well as actively farming and donating her scarce spare time to her community. She was a major driver in setting up the new Deniliquin childcare centre where she currently works. Kellie has been actively involved for the past two years in the Ricegrowers Association of Australia's leadership program and was recently appointed as a Rice Industry Central Executive as a delegate of the Deniliquin Branch. Last year Kellie was appointed to the community-led Health Action group initiated to ensure our community manages the health and welfare of our area proactively with NSW Health. Kellie is President of Can Assist, Deniliquin, a major player in assisting our more compromised community members to achieve travel and accessibility to services not provided locally among other areas of aide. This is a challenging and busy role requiring fundraising and accountability. Kellie is a wonderfully competent rural woman managing all these extras in her life. She is the epitome of why rural communities just keep on giving and surviving.

dorothy crouch [DUNS CREEK]

Dorothy Crouch OAM has been a member of the Maitland Swimming Club for more than 70 years. An accomplished swimmer, she became an amateur coach at the young age of 16. She has resided in the Maitland/East Maitland area until just recently. She became a qualified teacher, instructor, examiner of Learn to Swim under the NSW Swimming format and conducted free learn to swim lessons in pools and in the river, over the past years until 2006. Dorothy's other volunteer achievements include: member, life member, secretary, treasurer, teacher and coach of Maitland Swim Club, Maitland Citizen of the Year, Freeman of the City of Maitland, awarded an OAM for services to club and communities, Communities of Australia Day celebrations, judge of Australia Day Awardees, Secretary of Australia Day Fellowship, and member of Maitland Boys High School (now Maitland High School) P&F Committee. Although with age and failing health, Dorothy still finds time to catch up with those at the Maitland Swimming Club.

patricia crowe [GRAFTON]

Patricia Crowe joined the NSW SES in 1964 and is the current Unit Commander of the Grafton Capability Support Unit. Patricia's continuous service as an emergency service leader has seen her reach 56 years of active service, supporting rural communities across NSW in times of need—saving lives and protecting communities. Early in Patricia's career she developed her skills working in analysing and collating flood intelligence

and developing communications capabilities in Grafton—one of NSW's highest flood risk environments. Over the years, Patricia has held many positions with SES and participated in several major flood and storm operations. Her current role as the Commander of the Capability Unit sees her managing a skilled volunteer team who support NSW SES operations across the North Zone—from Tweed Heads to Gosford—in operations support, flood intelligence and public information. Patricia has been involved in more than 30 major flood operation events in the Clarence-Nambucca region as well as numerous others across NSW. In recognition of her service and contribution Patricia has received Life Membership to the NSW SES, 55 Year Long Service Award, Clasp 3 of the National Emergency Services Medal, an SES State Medal for the Hunter Storms, and an SES Unit Citation. Patricia is a true hidden treasure who has provided exemplary service to rural communities across NSW for an extraordinary period of time—a contribution that is well worth honouring.

lyn dark [TELARAH]

Lyn Dark grew up at Boolaroo before moving to Maitland in the mid-1970s, where she raised her family and started to become involved in her local community. Firstly, she volunteered in the school canteen and P&C activities. In the early 1980s Lyn joined St John's Ambulance Australia, where she trained and volunteered at community events. As a mature aged student, Lyn studied nursing, working at several local hospitals during her career. Additional studies led to her being

in charge of a Hunter Health Community Based Activity & Respite Centre for frail aged, younger people with disabilities and those living with dementia. On retirement, Lyn used her skills and became a volunteer with Pink Ladies at the Maitland Hospital in the Dementia and Delirium Program. Over the years, Lyn has assisted with the organisation of NSW Cancer Council Relay For Life. She joined Rutherford Lioness Club and became involved in voluntary service work to raise funds for local community projects. Lyn held several committee positions, eventually becoming president. After the closure of the Lioness Club, Lyn, with the assistance of other Lioness ladies, started West Maitland Centennial Lions Club, where she held the position of Foundation Member, Charter Member and President for two years. She has been a very active member assisting with several fundraising activities including trivia nights, Daffodil Day, Maitland Market gates, West Maitland Junior Rugby League canteen, recycling of useable products, and drought relief. Since retiring, Lyn has also joined Maitland U3A, Rutherford/Telarah Probus Club, Maitland Senior Citizens & Pensioners Association, and Great 8 Apex 40. Lyn has always been interested in assisting people in the local community and volunteers several hours each week. Her assistance and friendship is greatly appreciated by many local community members.

beverley davis [BODALLA]

Beverley (Bev) Davis has lived and worked in the Bodalla area most of her life. She has worked for Childrens' Services for the Eurobodalla Shire

Council for many years involved in all centres including Narooma, Moruya and Batemans Bay and goes well beyond being a paid employee. In addition, Bev is a tireless volunteer for several organisations including the Bodalla Volunteer Fire Brigade, Presbyterian Church, and Bodalla Country Women's Association (CWA). Since the January bushfires Bev has spent many hours visiting fire affected families to offer support which has included comfort, hands-on practical assistance, and liaising with agencies to organise services, distribution of donations, and assisting with the various other forms of relief such as special events to raise funds for victims. Bev was also on-hand to help set up the Bodalla Food Hub and spent many hours assisting families there after the fires. She has spent weekends driving to the impacted areas delivering fresh food, produce and home baked goodies to those affected and is now also working with OzHarvest to reach those in need and provide goods. Always willing to assist with CWA fundraising, catering, charitable events and activities (such as Seniors' Week), Bev is not just a hidden treasure—she is an absolute gem and the word 'no' is simply not in her vocabulary. Where there is a need for help in any situation you can be sure that Bev will be the first there, caring, giving and supporting the community.

elaine d'elboux [KOORAWATHA]

Elaine D'Elboux was born at Quirindi. She moved to the Koorawatha district in her teenage years and has remained in the area ever since. She has been happily married to Alan (Bluey) for 58 years, with four children, 13 grandchildren and 10 great

grandchildren. Before retiring, Elaine worked in poultry production at Bendick Murrel and then moved into community care for seniors at Weroona Aged Care Residence in Cowra. Elaine is a farmer's wife and a strong community advocate for Koorawatha, Cowra and Young. She volunteers for Koorawatha Show Society, Koorawatha Press Association (which supports other local charities and not-for-profit organisations), Cowra Meals on Wheels, Young District Antique Engine & Tractor Club, Elmore Driving Club (past) and Koorawatha Senior Citizens Christmas Luncheon (past). Her involvement in all of these organisations is a minimum 15 years for each group. Elaine's greatest personal achievement is her contribution to the Koorawatha Show Society. She has successfully ran the Show Day Canteen for over 45 years. She organises all aspects of the canteen and can be found on Show Day working at the counter. She was awarded Life Membership to Koorawatha Show by the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Michael McCormack MP. All profits made from the canteen are heavily relied on by the committee to help with other expenses of this community event. It is the last historical event held annually for the Koorawatha community. In the past years, Stephanie Cooke MP, Member for Cootamundra, has attended the show and shared a tea towel and conversation over the sink with Elaine. Her dedication to Cowra Meals on Wheels is strong. She volunteers fortnightly to deliver meals and sometimes picks up extra shifts when last minute cancellations occur. She has been a volunteer for 16 years. As per the coordinator (Denise's) words, 'Elaine was always helpful, beautiful and kind to all clients. A true treasure.' Elaine is a true hidden treasure for these

small rural communities. She never backs away from helping—steadfast and guaranteed to give 200 per cent each time she volunteers. Elaine is a most worthy contender for the 2020 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll.

elka devney [MOREE]

Elka Devney is a young lady that has been born and raised in Moree, NSW. She is currently completing her HSC at Moree Secondary College and works at the local Amcal Chemist. Elka has dedicated her spare time to her community and is passionate about ensuring rural youth have the same advantages, opportunities and access to services as youth in metropolitan areas. Some of her achievements include: 2020 Moree Young Citizen of the Year 2019, ABC Heywire National Youth Summit Representative 2019, and the UNICEF Youth Living Drought Summit, just to name a few. Elka volunteers countless hours to other local events, charities and organisations including the local Lions and Rotary clubs and Physical Culture Club.

sloane donnelly [BARYULGIL]

Sloane Donnelly is a Bundjalung woman who was born in Sydney and grew up in Baryulgil in the Clarence Valley. She attended Primary School in Baryulgil and High School in Grafton. Sloane moved to Sydney, then came home and worked for Telstra in Grafton, the Baryulgil Primary School and water/sewage in the Baryulgil and

Malabugilmah communities. Sloane currently works at the New School of Arts—The Hub, and for Baryulgil Square Local Aboriginal Land Council. Sloan has volunteered approximately 20 hours a week over the past few years for the Baryulgil community, especially the Elders. Her biggest achievement is the community centre, The Hub. A committee came together and worked long and hard to put forward a proposal, then rebuild an old abandoned building which was repaired, and a shed and fencing were added. The Hub houses the New School of Arts (NSOA) three days a week, as well as funerals and wakes, and is a meeting place for the community. During the recent fires, the community was evacuated to Baryulgil Primary School. The fire came to Sloane's back steps and the community had no water and no power. Sloane was the only one who knew how the water needed to be refilled into the tanks. She was very involved during, and after the fires, keeping the community informed and organising and distributing emergency food hampers to the Elders and other community members.

jennifer duddle [YOUNG]

Jennifer Duddle, or Gaga as she is known, has been presenting a music and dance class for pre-school aged children at Young & District Community Hub for more than six years. She always goes the extra mile for children whose artistic input can be somewhat stunted by the distance from a main city. The children are introduced to different types of music, instruments, cultural songs, language, and choreography, that they can follow with ease

and that has important developmental implications, all the while having fun! Gaga's classroom is open to all to have a go including children and adults. She will gently coax shy children into joining in and at the same time help boisterous children find their quiet spot. She is a gentle soul and all of the children adore her. Gaga also offers support to the parents, grandparents, guardians and educators that attend and helps to steer them towards assistance where necessary and she supports and gives practical assistance to students training in childcare. Gaga is a guiding light and a national treasure!

carol fiddes [BOWLING ALLEY POINT]

Carol Fiddes came out from Scotland to work as a backpacker at the DAG sheep station at Nundle from October 2000 to September 2001. She started work for Derek and Shirley Hill at Bowling Alley Point as a farm-hand in September 2001 until 2008, when she moved to Glen Innes to work at Glen Innes West Public School as Canteen Manager and Treasurer for 12 months. She moved back to work for Derek Hill again in September 2013 and took over managing the dairy again. Carol has continued to work there until the present day. She is now caring for Derek and Shirley and doing farm work with sheep and cattle when she can fit it in. Carol joined Nundle District Lions Club in 2018 and has been our secretary since 2019. She is also a member of the local Country Women's Association, Pre-School Liaison for 12 months, and Nundle School P&C Canteen Manager for four years and treasurer for three years. Carol is still in that position even though

her children have left the school, volunteering up to approximately 15 hours per week until recently. She has volunteered her time making and collecting meals for firefighters and then distributing them at the firefront at the big fire up at Hanging Rock, which went for about four weeks in late 2019. Carol is very community-minded, and always gives tirelessly of herself for people and organisations in need. We highly recommend Carol to be a recipient of the Hidden Treasures honour.

cassie fisher [SCONE]

Cassie Fisher is a 23-year-old woman living with Down syndrome. She grew up on Ellerston Station and now lives in Scone during the week with her carer. This enables Cassie to be involved with Showstoppers Ability Services and to actively participate in her community. Cassie has enjoyed work placement with many local businesses but her greatest passion is fashion design. She has enrolled in an online fashion design course and has started her own business called Cassie Fisher Designs. With the help of her support worker, Cassie has a long list of achievements including: completing the 2018 City to Surf, completing a hospitality course, and attending Toogee Martial Arts twice a week. Last October, Cassie competed in the International Special Needs Taekwondo Games, representing Australia. She won both a gold and silver medal and is now a World Champion. Cassie enjoys sewing, designing her own fashion, arts and craft, cooking, singing, dancing and performing. She also loves volunteering and helping older people. She

works very hard to be a mentor to other people with disabilities, showing them that anything is possible. Cassie tries to live a fearless life and would like to make a documentary about making her fashion design dream a reality.

cynthia foley [DUBBO]

Born in 1936 and growing up in Manly, Cynthia Foley is Arana Gardens' nursing home nominee. Married to Pat Foley, they moved to Nowendoc, a remote one-man NSW mounted police station on the foothills of the New England ranges in 1959. There were many hard years but Cynthia loved it and went about organising entertainment for the local rural community. A move to Casino in 1965, a young family, and Mountie husband whose area covered from Kempsey to the Queensland border, meant remoteness of another kind, and Cynthia returned to music lessons. Arriving in Dubbo in 1974 she became involved in school activities; and then later volunteering to support elderly patients at Dubbo Base Hospital, the old Lourdes Hospital, and then Orana Gardens after her husband Pat was admitted in 2014 with dementia. Cynthia sees music as the key to communication with patients who may not be able talk, but who delight in and know all the words of songs from their youth. Her major involvement was starting Dubbo & District Family History including being State President in 1994/1995. Now 84-years-old, Cynthia is still involved with many of the above activities, plus some. Her first love, however, is sharing music

twice a week with those in care, and Cynthia is the first to admit that this is what brings her the greatest pleasure.

georgia foster-eyles

[NYMBOIDA]

Georgia Foster-Eyles was born in Grafton and grew up in the Pillar Valley. She went on to Tucabia Primary School and South Grafton High School. After school, Georgia formed her own business for 13 years as a performer and teacher of hula hoop and fire twirling. Georgia has been volunteering, since the fires, for the Nymboida community. She has been supporting the community to rebuild after the fires and has been helping the community to feel supported and connected so they will want to stay in the area. Georgia has implemented a Tool Library at the Nymboida Canoe Centre and is currently working on a project to build a Mend & Lend workshop space for metalwork, woodwork and creative arts. Georgia's main achievement is being an information service for the community and sharing groups/services that want to assist the community in the bushfire recovery.

ruth fritsch [TEMORA]

Since coming to Temora in 1963, Ruth Fritsch has worked tirelessly to encourage the art of music and singing in Temora and the surrounding areas for more than 50 years—encouraging children—teaching music lessons and singing, and instilling

the enjoyment that music can bring in her students. Ruth organised the annual fundraiser for the Malcolm Sargent Foundation (known as Redkite). A tremendous amount of time goes into organising this event—musicians, advertising, putting the program together. Ruth was a founding member of the Temora Arts Council and has given her time to accompany many people—attending Eisteddfods as choral leader and adjudicator. She has cooked for street stalls to assist local schools and is involved in many groups including: active member of the National Party, Friends of Temora Cemetery, Temora Rural Museum, Open Door Bookshop, Lutheran Church, and many more. Her deep faith is evident in her faithful worship at the Temora Lutheran Church where Ruth has willingly and lovingly given her time to assist in the music of the church, being organist and choir leader for almost all her years in Temora. Many, many hours over a lot of years and with a passion to share music with her community, Ruth was awarded Citizen of the Year in 2012 and more recently received a mayoral citation for her contribution.

karon fuller [WARREN]

Matrville born Karon Fuller, through her association with the AIF Senior Swimming Association, meet her husband Michael (Warren born) at the 1995 AIF Carnival in Grafton. She moved to Warren in 1996 but was not deterred from becoming the AIF Senior Swimming Association's first female Carnival Director, and in the days before Skype and Zoom, she would ring into the meetings in Sydney. Karon ran seven

successful carnivals across the east of Australia for between 500–700 swimmers and brought the Association into the electronic computer age. She was awarded Life Membership in 2013. Around this time her children became heavily involved with Scouts. Karon followed her husband into the fold, joining the NSW Lone Scout Fellowship, then showing an interest in becoming a leader with the NSW Lones Cub Scout Pack completing her basic training in 2012. Now, Lone Scouts are for youth members that don't have a Scout group in their town or are travelling around Australia or overseas. We don't have a hall so everything is done by email and phone calls, and now video calls. This has become Karon's passion with her 'pack' scattered around the state as well as four youth in Vanuatu, one in Timor Leste, and several travellers. She has assisted her husband to mentor a youth member in Norway to gain his Australian Scout Medallion—the highest award in scout section. Dedicated to her pack, in 2015 Karon became the Akela and completed her wood beads in 2016. She continued to work to make the scout better to fully engage her cubs and has mentored more than 10 Grey wolf awards (the highest award a cub scout can achieve) and various other youth in every section of scouts. Karon has been writing the program for the annual weeklong camp for the last seven years. In 2018 she received a Meritorious Service Award and then in 2020 a 10 Year Service Award. She truly is a hidden treasure, quietly working to make a difference in young lives.

jayde gardiner [NORTH STAR]

The Gardiner family of five arrived in our rural community a short five years ago. Private people, they were motivated to settle in to the local high school and primary school. It wasn't long before the ever organised and efficient Jayde became a volunteer at the tuckshop and later sustained the challenging role of canteen coordinator and treasurer at our local primary school. Jayde undertook this role with professionalism, care and efficiency, often going out of her way to make sure it ran smoothly. Her attention to detail, stock and equipment, and her ability to smooth the path for canteen/tuckshop volunteers was very obvious and appreciated. Much fundraising and catering outside the school was achieved successfully, contributed in a significant way by Jayde's succinct attention to every aspect, awareness of organisation and retail structure, along with her caring attitude over a three-year tenure. She is missed dearly now that she is enjoying more family time and has retired from her role. We thank her for the many seen and unseen tasks performed so well. Jayde would not seek notice or accolade, however, she brings a great sense of clarity to any situation and she thoroughly deserves the title of our community hidden treasure.

jane goldie [KEARSLEY]

Jane Goldie arrived in the Hunter Valley more than 30 years ago. In the time since, she has dedicated her life to making a worthwhile contribution to the small community of Kearsley, particularly through the local Rural Fire Service brigade. During her 25 years with the Kearsley brigade, Jane has held many volunteer positions, but her prominence has been as deputy captain, a position she has held for more than two decades. Jane's natural leadership skills and ability has ensured she has been a strong mentor for members of her brigade and neighbouring brigades. During the summer months, the local residents of Kearsley often visit Jane to seek her knowledge and advice on how to prepare their properties in the event of a natural disaster. This is particularly beneficial when the area is experiencing bad fire conditions, as has been seen in recent years. Jane's friendly nature, wealth of knowledge and determination to help ensures she calms the nerves of locals, reassuring them that despite the conditions, their safety and the safety of their property is always at the forefront of her mind. In essence, Jane is driven by a desire to help the people of the small village of Kearsley.

kirrily gould [COOMA]

Kirrily Gould is great—we would not have a thriving Pony Club in Cooma without her. Kirrily has integrity, strength and humility, and is one of the few people in the world that actually listens. All of us at the Club wish we had her humour and

dedication. Our brand-new major clubhouse is there because she refused to give up on any detail. Council, planning, tradesmen, volunteer helpers, you name it, she coordinated, cajoled and inspired us all. We would like her to have the recognition we feel she deserves, and this will show her and her family how much we appreciate her.

kerrie gray [ALSTONVILLE]

Kerrie Gray has been a Red Cross volunteer for about 40 years and an Emergency Services volunteer since mid-1981. In 2009 Kerrie became the Red Cross Zone Representative for Zones 2 and 27, supporting a total of 13 branches—she did this until October 2019. Kerrie has been an elected member of the Red Cross Divisional Advisory Board since 2017. In the community, Kerrie represents Red Cross Lifeblood; she works with local schools as a 'Pillowcase' presenter delivering specialised disaster preparation workshops to primary school aged children; she works with local councils, community organisations and state and federal MPs; she is partnered with SES, RFS, R&R, councils and welfare agencies; she is a member of Sanctuary Northern Rivers Inc, supporting migrant and refugee groups; she has a strong connection with local ATSI communities (Aboriginal Education Officers, Bonalbo School, Cabbage Tree Island School and the Saltwater Women Art Group); and she has worked with members of the deaf community (Auslan 1&2). During disaster periods she works more hours than a full-time job, supporting those affected in our community, liaising with volunteers, establishing evacuation

centres and coordinating recovery efforts including ongoing welfare and support. 2019 and 2020 have been particularly busy years for Kerrie with the local bushfire events since February 2019. Kerrie has been fully available and present for every activation and always goes the extra mile. Despite this year's emergencies, Kerrie has continued to support her branches over two zones and has attended branch meetings, AGMs, and has organised and led a very successful combined Zone conference in Wardell.

lynn griffith [COPMANHURST]

Lynn Griffith is the epitome of kindness, care and strength. Raised in a family of nine at Kenthurst, life was not always easy. Learning to work hard from an early age and to care for others, Lynn has embraced this in her life journey. Promoting mental health recovery by facilitating a support group for five years, Lynn provided personal support to people suffering from panic attacks, anxiety and depression. As Country Women's Association (CWA) Kurrajong branch member across 10 years, holding three executive committee positions, Lynn was also actively involved in the re-fit of facilities including kitchen, toilets and flooring, committing time, energy and hard work to save money. Raising funds for CWA, Lynn also coordinated more than 10-years of monthly stalls and prepared and sold countless cakes, puddings, jams, pickles, chutneys and relishes—a testament to her kindness and community spirit. Lynn's expertise in design and building gardens was a talent used in developing plans for a sensory garden at Copmanhurst with a

plan for visually impaired and wheelchair bound and disabled persons to have access to touching and smelling the plants with the gardens winning several awards. During these times, Lynn had personally cared consecutively for four terminally ill family members and provided support to others, yet despite these hardships, she continued to be an inspiring and active member of the community. Moving to Copmanhurst, Lynn joined the CWA Grafton branch for five years, holding two positions, and is involved in Grafton Legacy Laurel Club, Sensory Garden Group and Copmanhurst Bush Fire Brigade.

margaret haddin [PARKES]

Margaret Haddin grew up in South Sydney. After marrying her husband Rob, they moved to Georges Hall and in 1979 made the move to Parkes and established an engineering business. Rob and Margaret raised four children in Parkes. She has tirelessly supported their local business and Rob on their property at Cookamidgera, which they purchased in 1983. She has selflessly contributed her time to Landcare, both locally and regionally over the past 10 years, through roles of treasurer and chairperson for Central West Lachlan Landcare Inc, and on a district level with Cookamidgera Landcare group, assisting with the treasurer role. Margaret was also a part of the 2011 NSW Landcare & Catchment Management Forum in Parkes, once again taking on the role as treasurer for the event. Recently, through her involvement with Cookamidgera and Community Landcare Inc, improvements have been made to the local hall. Four years ago, Margaret joined

the committee for Parkes Meals on Wheels, once again contributing her time and skills in the role of Treasurer. Margaret has been an active member of the Parkes community for more than 30 years, volunteering her time and knowledge to assist local not-for-profit groups to enable them to support others. She is still contributing endless hours each week to both Landcare and Meals on Wheels. We greatly value her support and her commitment to her roles that enable so many people and further support our local community.

Lyn Hetherington [GLEN INNES]

I have known Lyn for many years, she is a real jewel. She moved to Wyaliba with her three boys after a marriage break-up, building her own home and raised the boys. Always volunteering, Lyn is a fantastic gardener and works to replant the rivers edge, with grants from local Landcare, planting hundreds of native plants. Lyn is a nurse. She is a caring person who is always helping anyone who needs care. She has been a director and secretary of the company Chamba Na Namunga, looking after the community. Lyn is a volunteer rural firefighter and treasurer of the Wyaliba Brigade. She has been in this role throughout the devastating drought and recent fire that destroyed our land, houses and lives. She works tirelessly and unselfishly for the good of the community. Always raising money either through grant writing or cooking for the markets that raise money for the P&C at the school. If anyone deserves some recognition, it is Lyn.

Megen Hibbins [NEWTON BOYD]

Megen Hibbins grew up in Newcastle and moved to the Newton Boyd area onto a 1.5 acre block before marrying her husband Stuart and raising four children, home schooling, and supporting Stuart in his beekeeping business. Megen's passion was to produce amazing organic foods at regular prices to support the health and wellbeing of Australians. She has been growing organic veggies, put in a stone fruit orchard (which burned down in the fires) and makes and sells her jams and sauces at the little honesty stand she made on the side of the road. She now stocks her products in shops, and attends markets. She continues to home school her children as the business grows. Megen tries to support anyone in the community, encouraging them to produce and sell their products through her stall, and making sure that they get the full price of their product (she takes no commission).

Nadine Hickey [CESSNOCK]

A lifelong resident of Cessnock, Nadine Hickey epitomises the notion of service about self. From an early age, Nadine has dedicated her spare time to making a positive contribution to the lives of many within her community. For more than three decades, she has been actively involved in the following groups, with her participation improving the life opportunities of many: Link or Sink Group; Cessnock Relay for Life; Cessnock Public School P&C (Life Member); Cessnock Basketball Stadium (President); Wheeling & Able Cessnock branch (Secretary); and Wheeling & Able Committee

(Member and Secretary). Nadine's commitment and enthusiasm for each of these organisations is inspiring. She will often take time off work to spend countless days working with these groups in a volunteer capacity to assist them in achieving outcomes that improve the life opportunities of those less fortunate. Nadine is always willing to host fundraisers at her house and develop unique activities that highlight the incredible work each of these organisations undertake in the Cessnock community. Nadine's charitable work has also seen her recognised as a local philanthropist, as she has donated extensively to local charities. A quiet achiever by nature, Nadine is certainly a hidden treasure of the Cessnock community.

sue houston [GUNDAGAI]

Sue Houston is an amazing woman who wears her heart on her sleeve. She loves her town of Gundagai and would do anything for anyone who lives or even visits the town. From being a member of the Country Women's Association Eurongilly branch, to the local Gundagai Community Centre. Always putting others first, Sue connects people to make sure they get the best out of life. She has helped feed fires battling blazes, aided families who lost their homes, sewed endlessly for mental health and wellbeing, and organised community days as a thank you to other volunteers. This would be an amazing thank you to her for all that she does.

wendy hudson [KEW]

Wendy Hudson was born in Port Macquarie and raised and educated in Kendall. She worked for a short time with the Westpac Bank (1989–90) before joining the NSW Police Force in 1990 where she now holds the rank of Senior Constable in the Mid North Coast Police District. Wendy has been recognised by the NSW Government, NSW Police Force, NSW Sports Commission, and Tennis Australia, for her work with our local community. She has been on the committee of the Kendall Tennis Club for 26 years and President for the past 12 years, committing more than 25 hours a week to the club whilst also working as a Police Youth Liaison Officer. During that time Wendy has been motivated and inspired to improve the tennis club, and along with the committee, has raised more than \$800 000 in funding to build the town a new tennis centre. With assistance from club members Wendy runs the weekly junior tennis program with over 100 children. She has developed local youth leadership programs and girls mentoring programs. The club is well known, under Wendy's leadership, for developing Ball Kids for the ATP CUP and Australian Open Tennis. Wendy acknowledges that the support and trust of the community has inspired her vision. She has encouraged the community to use the tennis club as a hub for connectivity, community meetings and social activities. Wendy is a member of the Kendall Country Women's Association and has encouraged partnerships between our branch and other local community organisations, and she has always been willing to share knowledge and vision with other sporting clubs and organisations. In our

Kendall Community Hall there is a sign that says 'Do what you can for your community', and Wendy is the ultimate example of that statement

stacy jacobs [RUTHERFORD]

Stacy Jacobs grew up on the Central Coast but has called Maitland home since 2000. She is the student support officer at Cessnock High School. Stacy organises free formal wear for Year 12 students, organises Bunnings BBQs on weekends, and continues to mentor alumni in her own time. Above and beyond this role, Stacy is a Rotarian at Cessnock Rotary, leads the Cessnock Interact team, is president of the advisory board for Cessnock PCYC, on the management committee for Cessnock Family Support Service and a volunteer driving instructor. Stacy finds and creates opportunities for all people in Cessnock, including encouraging students to participate in a global UN conference during COVID-19. Stacy coordinated Pink Up the Town in Cessnock last year and has cooked for Hunter Hands of Hope (a homeless service). Stacy helps every person she comes in contact with.

barbara jefferies [YENDA]

Barbara Jefferies was born in Leeton, the daughter of a shearing contractor. As such, the family moved around a lot. She attended school at Yoogali Public School, finishing her schooling at Griffith High. After leaving school, Barbara met and married her husband. Their friendship initially

grew after a series of learn to drive lessons. They have now been together for 63 years and raised three daughters. Now with nine grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren, their family has grown. Barbara has spent the majority of her married life in Yenda and her dedication to the community has spanned more than 45 years. Barbara has always had the community at heart. She is a proud member of Country Women's Association, which has exceeded 50 years. After her youngest daughter enrolled in the Yenda Public School, Barbara's interest and passion in the school motivated her to accept the position of Yenda P&C secretary. In the late 70s Barbara and a friend, Jane Udy, started Meals on Wheels in Yenda, however, this has since folded. For 34 years, Barbara was secretary of the Yenda Retirement Village. Through dedication and hard work they raised funds to build units for elderly and vulnerable members of Yenda. Barbara continues to support the Yenda Progress Association and is President of Fellowship of the Uniting Church at Yenda. Barbara has loved working with people but is now stepping back to care for her ill husband.

carole johnston [ABERDEEN]

Carole is a well-respected member of the Aberdeen community. She has been a volunteer with the Aberdeen Treasures Op Shop for 20 years. She is secretary/treasurer and coordinates the rosters. Every Thursday Carole works in the shop, happy to have a chat, offer advice, and a helping hand. All profits are given back to the Aberdeen community. Carole and her husband Bob are the founders of the Aberdeen Care Package Cadets, a community

group that packs and sends packages to Australian Defence Force personnel serving overseas. Every Tuesday afternoon you will find them working in the shed with young people, packing up parcels of goodies for our Australian troops. The contents of these packages are items donated by members of the local community. Every Tuesday morning during the school term you will see Carole volunteering to serve breakfast to the students of Aberdeen Public School as part of its breakfast club program. Quite often you will see her reading stories to children at Aberdeen Preschool. In her spare time Carole and her mother-in-law, Joan Johnston, can be found putting together twiddle muffs. Joan does the knitting while Carole does the decorating. These are donated to local nursing homes for use by the dementia patients.

kama kamphuis [NORTH STAR]

Kama Kamphuis has a quick mind and unforgettable warmth and laughter. Originally from New Zealand, Kama, her husband and their three beautiful children, arrived in North Star a few short years ago. Shortly after, Kama joined the P&C Association of North Star School (the local primary school, volunteering her commitment of time, interest and insight as a cooking canteen Mum, vice president and ultimately president of this association. Kama is a fair, intelligent and thoughtful community member/citizen, she has contributed in many valuable ways during her tenure in leadership roles in this small rural school community. The North Star branch of Country Women's Association of NSW is enriched for Kama's membership over several years and

her role as treasurer was greatly appreciated. Kama is never shy in offering to lend a hand, assistance, and to offer well considered balanced opinions, embracing the wellbeing of the whole situation or group of people involved. Her sense of social justice, fairness and courage to assist others makes her a worthy hidden treasure.

janine katon [ABERDEEN]

Janine Katon is a highly respected lawn bowler who has been a member of the Aberdeen Bowling Club for eight years. She has been district president for three years as well as holding a position as match committee member for four years. During this time, Janine has coached other women bowlers and helped coach the juniors at St Josephs High School. She has shown that it doesn't matter what club or event she attends, she will always umpire at a moment's notice. Janine has competed for many years at different levels, achieving a win in 2018 at state level in the Country versus City Bowling championships. Her list of achievements continues with pennants at club and regional levels. In the Aberdeen Club championship Janine won singles nine times, pairs 12 times, triples eight times and fours six times. Janine also dedicates her time to organising community events such as the breast cancer fundraiser, funeral wakes at the Aberdeen Bowling Club, and other functions. She is also the secretary/licensee for the club.

jean kutchen [WEST WIANGAREE]

When Jean Kutchen decided to move to the country with her husband, there were two things she wanted to do: join a community choir and join the Country Women's Association (CWA). Jean joined the choir and the CWA, and within a year she had become branch secretary, a position she has held ever since. Branch secretary is the most labour intensive job of all office bearers, and Jean has volunteered hundreds of hours of her time with the CWA. She is at every meeting, cake stall, and open rooms cafe we hold each month. During the Black Summer, Jean was instrumental in the jobs our branch had of both feeding evacuees at the evacuation centre, and then feeding Rural Fire Service volunteers from the eastern side of the Woodenbong Trail fire, when the fire crossed the highway and it was no longer possible to get supplies to them from Woodenbong. For a month, our branch made lunches and dinners for up to 90 firefighters. On the first night, Jean and one other volunteer made 'the best tasting hamburgers, ever' for 50 fires, in a tiny, ancient kitchen with haphazardly assembled equipment. Jean is a tiny wonder, who puts so much of herself into her volunteer work. Of all members of our branch, Jean deserves this kind of recognition.

pauline levingston [WALCHA]

Pauline Levingstone's commitment to the Walcha community can be traced back many decades. Along with raising five daughters with her husband Lloyd, (a massive feat by anyone's standards), Pauline has worked as a volunteer for most organisations in town. Her work has not only reached into every part of our community but it has extended into state organisations. Working with the Royal Far West from 1973, Pauline also found the time to help run both indoor and field hockey, be a very active member of the Walcha Central P&C and serve in the school canteen. She led the Brownies scouting group for 10 years, and as her girls grew older followed through with Girl Guides and assisted the local Scouts catering at many events. Being a sporting family, both Pony Club, and the local swimming club, benefitted from Pauline's talents at organising. As her family grew older, Pauline turned her talents to become secretary of the Walcha branch of the Children's Charitable Organisation and our Australia Day and debutante ball committees. She has been a passionate helper of Lions Club for 30 years and can still work a 10-hour shift in their BBQs at any event, while making sure the men are kept in line and moving briskly. Always with a smile, honest advice and a quick wit, any interaction with Pauline leaves you with a smile on your face. Small communities such as Walcha rely so much on volunteer workers and it is invariably the hardest workers that go unrecognised, and feel they have done nothing special. Pauline's tireless and selfless dedication has made our community a much richer place.

aninke lippert [YAMBA]

Aninke Lippert was born in South Africa and immigrated to Australia in 2009. She is a dentist with a burning passion for kids and oral health education. In 2018 she started an oral health education outreach to schools in the area, aiming to improve oral health in the area. She's also written a kids' dental book, demystifying dental visits. This was taken up by Community Oral Health, NZ, and she got to present it earlier this year in Waikato. The book, 'The African adventures of Dr. Rodney the tooth mouse', has been animated and is freely available on YouTube. With the COVID-19 pandemic she once again wrote a kids' book to help kids deal with this unique experience and it has been well received. Aninke is constantly trying to improve oral health in our community; at this stage trying to organise theatre admissions rights for dentists to work in our public hospital, so that paediatric patients don't have to travel all the way to the city to get the help they need. She is a remarkable person and a role model for our community.

robyn livermore [CLIFTON GROVE]

Robyn Livermore's passion over the years has been working with the mentally and physically disabled and disadvantaged. Robyn grew up in Manildra and attended Manildra Central School and Marsden College. She was a Girl Guides leader for five years. After her marriage to Alex, they moved to Dubbo, then Parkes, where their children, Mark and Louise, attended school. Here she helped with many school activities—canteen,

fetes, remedial reading. While working in Parkes, Robyn did crisis work for families in need. In 1981, the family moved to Orange and Robyn worked for five years after school hours at Croagh Patrick Orphanage with the Sisters of Mercy in the crisis centre. Robyn is a very talented pianist. She has played at school functions, restaurants, weddings and nursing homes. In 1986, Robyn started work at Anson Street Special School as a teacher's aide, working with children with special needs, both physical and mental disabilities. She learnt sign language. At Anson Street, Robyn wrote the school song which is still in use today. She would organise the annual concerts and still attends and assists with these after her retirement. Ten years ago, along with Alex, they became volunteers at the Riding for the Disabled in Orange and for the last two years she has been president of the association. One of her greatest achievements at the Riding for the Disabled was coordinating the students for the statewide Musical Ride competition. The children have won the state competition on many occasions, and recently came second in the world competition. Robyn gives many hours of her time and gets such a thrill seeing the joy it brings to those accessing the service. She is a very capable cook, a keen gardener, a poet, a member of Probus and is very committed to her family, having attended almost every school concert and many assemblies for all of her grandchildren. She is proud of her Scottish heritage and a keen family history buff. A true hidden treasure.

jenny loasby [BLANDFORD]

Jenny Loasby is a volunteer with 'Doing it for our Farmers' group in Murrurundi. She is also a volunteer at the Murrurundi Museum where she is secretary and volunteer fundraiser, running weekly raffles for the past few years. At the Pop-Up Pantry, Jenny works tirelessly to maintain stock and open the Pop-Up Pantry doors two days a week to assist farmers, farm families, rural workers and contractors during the prolonged and severe drought. The Pop-Up Pantry was awarded first place in the NSW Sustainable Communities Tidy Towns Awards for Community Spirit and Inclusion in November 2019. In 2020 'Doing it for our Farmers' Murrurundi Pop Up-Pantry received the Australia Day Award for Community Group of the Year for Murrurundi District. These awards were the result of the effort given by Jenny, who gives so much to our community and deserves recognition.

michelle loft [MERRIWA]

Michelle Loft and her husband Chris managed the local swimming pool last season, becoming cheerful lifeguards, often adjusting opening hours for the public to contend with extreme heat. Michelle is vice president and very involved with the Muswellbrook Netball Association and also coaches the under 12 rep team. Seeing that Merriwa was missing a local competition, Michelle organised an open one which comprised of eight mixed teams of ladies, men and junior players. She also made time for meetings to explain the

rules and regulations, for first time players of netball. She often missed out playing with her own team as she refereed most games, such is her passion for the game. Michelle also operates a family day care business in Merriwa and was involved with the running of the Wideland Challenge at the Merriwa Springtime Show.

peta luck [GUNNING]

Peta Luck is a very valued volunteer for the community of Gunning and the wider Southern Tablelands. She is a past president and current member of Gunning District Association. She was the main driver for our projects to get grants to build an outdoor gym and an electric vehicle charging station in Gunning. She was also involved in projects we undertook to build cycling infrastructure in Gunning (bike racks and water bubblers) and played a role in getting grants to plant trees and build a fence around the playground, which will go ahead later this year. Peta has been organising the Gunning Patchwork Weekend since it began over 15 years ago, and is instrumental in this important event for people in the area. She is a strong advocate for young people and has tirelessly campaigned for a youth worker for our Local Government Area for the past three years, as well as going along with young people from the area to Youth Consultation events. Peta was at the centre of a successful funding application for a youth worker for 18 months for the Upper Lachlan Shire area. She and her husband Phil run Dorpers, a choice they made because of the better environmental impact this breed of sheep has on the environment.

Peta is a member of Farmers for Climate Action and is always raising environmental concerns within the community. In her spare time she is a grandmother and a marathon runner! Peta was even asked to open the Spring Walk in Gunning because of this feat. She has been an active advocate for Gunning, having volunteered in many roles for more than 20 years. Peta would devote in excess of 20 hours per week to volunteer duties. Thank you Peta for your devotion to this place.

Stephanie Luck [CORAMBA]

Stephanie (Steph) Luck is part of the backbone of the Orara Valley community. Born and raised on the Coffs Coast, with a stint in Sydney, Steph has brought amazing value to the Orara Valley since she returned and set up her home. Her dedication, can-do attitude, and willingness to be involved, is greatly valued by all parts of the small, rural community. Steph is currently the president of the Orara Valley Progress Association and leads this group as they deliver events and opportunities for the residents of and visitors to the Valley. While raising a family, running three businesses with her husband, and caring for their property, Steph's outlook drives opportunities for the Valley. From organising events, working with external organisations to deliver results for the community, and by being hands on in a variety of working groups and committees such as the school P&C, the local preschool, local sporting organisations and the Progress Association, the Orara Valley is more valuable due to her involvement. During 2019, the Valley was hit by devastating bushfires which destroyed property

and homes. Steph was instrumental, along with other locals, in assessing needs, organising donations and delivering resources to those who had lost physical property. The pub she runs was an instrumental gathering place and has been part of the recovery of many local residents providing a spot to rest, to share and to connect. Steph is one of those people who is not driven by the need for recognition, but instead sees a need and fills it, and in doing so assists a community to strengthen and deliver. She is definitely a hidden treasure of the Orara Valley and wider Coffs Coast community.

Margaret Matthews [BLAYNEY]

Margaret (Marg) Matthews is a well-known, loved and respected member of the Blayney Shire. She was born in Blayney hospital and has lived in the district all her life. Marg has always given outstanding service and been involved with community initiatives and organisations in the Blayney Shire. She has served the community of Blayney throughout her working life. Some 60 years ago Marg's first employment was as a 15-year-old working at James Bembrick and Son General Store. More recently she worked at Blayney Bernardi's IGA until her recent retirement. Marg has given outstanding service to numerous organisations and to the Blayney community. She has been involved in the Blayney Tennis Club and been the treasurer for 23 years. In past years she was integral to running the Saturday Junior Tennis competitions, helping out on the day with anything from, making afternoon tea, cooking the barbeque, running the nominations

or scoring, which, has helped many children and families around the district grow their passion for the sport. Marg is treasurer of Can Assist Blayney but also fulfils numerous volunteer roles within this organisation. She is often found selling raffle tickets, cooking/catering and manning the gates at shows. Marg has been a hugely active and committed member of Can Assist for the past seven years. She is an active member of the Blayney Show Society Committee supporting the cooking section and working on the many barbeques that the Show Society support. Marg gives her time to run friends, family and needy members of the community to their appointments. She also often assists with seeking sponsorship or accessing items for auction for community events where a significant amount of money needs to be raised. Marg is the glue that holds the Matthews family together; insisting on a Sunday night family ritual where all members meet for dinner. She is adored by her family. Well-known and loved by all, Marg's kindness is exceptional despite her own health issues.

catriona mcAuliffe [YASS]

Sometimes you have the incredible fortune of meeting a woman whose energy and resilience is contagious. Catriona McAuliffe is just this person and successfully delivers excellence in any engagement. She is an exemplary Regional Services Manager for NSW Farmers across Regions 5 and 8 supporting an incredibly vast and diverse membership in the Central West Region, from Yass to Canowindra, via Temora and Peak Hill to Hillston. The wealth of knowledge

that Catriona brings is exemplified by her roles at Food & Agribusiness Solutions to an incredible 20 years with the Yass Show Society, and executive committee roles as vice president and former treasurer. Catriona is on the organising committee for the Rural Women's Gathering in Forbes in 2021 and actively mentors and promotes women in her roles. Through her ideas and leadership, she has established programs and events for young farmers, many of which have only happened because of the huge efforts of Catriona, not only through achieving the funding and resources, but also in their high levels of attendance and contribution to the community. What Catriona shares with family, friends, colleagues and customers to ensure they achieve success, is delivered with a generosity and sincerity that is often un-matched, but always with a strength and focus that makes a real difference. She is to all around her, a critical asset regardless of the mission, and for that, we are truly grateful for this hidden treasure.

dulcie mcKenzie [LOCKHART]

Dulcie McKenzie is a hidden treasure; a quiet achiever who works independently and as part of a team in several organisations, while looking for no accolades. She has given decades of service to the Lockhart community through her involvement with several committees, and in her quiet way, has assisted elderly residents to remain living in their own homes by providing unpaid personal care. Dulcie's valuable voluntary contribution, through service clubs and personal commitment, has improved the life of residents and contributed

greatly to the Lockhart community. Contributions to the community include: Inaugural member of Lockhart Lions Club (2003–2020), zone chairman Lions (2007/08), president Lockhart Lions Club (2004/2005 & 2018/2020), secretary Lions Club (2005/2019), Lockhart Lion of the Year (2009), instrumental in setting up the recycling program ‘Mover & Shaker’ in the Lockhart Hospital Auxiliary who provide necessary equipment for patient care at the Lockhart Multipurpose Service, instrumental in setting up the Festival of Sport, and past member of Can-Assist Recycling (begun in Lockhart in 2004 and extended to include Urana Shire two years later). Dulcie has spent 18 hours a week at the recycling depot to sort and pack material before sending on to Wagga Wagga for many years. She has supervised placements at the recycling depot of those who are part of the Work for the Dole and community service programs; collects recycled material from the homes of people unable to deliver to the site, and with the assistance of other members, has collected paper and cardboard from local businesses. Recycling has been proven to benefit the environment and has far reaching benefit for the country.

narelle mcleod [SANCTUARY POINT]

Narelle McLeod is a mother of three, grandmother of two and a Yuin women from the South Coast. She has been heavily involved with Indigenous Football (soccer) on a local, national and international level for more than 20 years. Narelle helped create the Wreck Bay Sharks Soccer club, the only Indigenous soccer club in the country, and continues to sit on its board. Along with her

husband Bernie she created the first National Indigenous Football Championships in 2016 in Nowra. This has become an annual event and continues to grow each year with teams coming to play in Nowra from all across the country. On behalf of Indigenous Football (soccer), and in between work and family commitments, Narelle has formed relationships with local businesses, various state and federal government departments, NSW, Qld, NT, VIC soccer bodies, and Football Federation Australia, to help create career pathways for young Indigenous soccer players. On several occasions, Narelle has been instrumental in finding funds and support for the Australian Indigenous women’s and men’s team to travel and play in New Zealand. Narelle has always stayed in the background working tirelessly while her husband Bernie has been the face of Indigenous Football. She has volunteered her time for more than two decades to help promote and showcase Indigenous Football. And finally, Narelle is a woman within the Aboriginal community that other women lean on for support and advice when it comes to domestic violence. She has supported numerous women at Court hearings and always follows up with welfare checks.

sue mcMillan [DENILIQWIN]

Sue McMillan moved to the region in 1964 where she married her late husband, David, and started a family in Wakool. She has raised five children and enjoys her 12 grandchildren. Sue established the Deniliquin branch of Sing Australia more than 20 year ago, which has grown

from an embryonic group of a mere dozen people to its current level of nearly 70 singers under her leadership. A very involved member of her local church, Sue devotes a great deal of time to the needs of the congregation, members and its community. Preferring to fly under the radar with her volunteer work, Sue has held few leadership roles but always is a strong and positive influence in the organisations she has been a part of; from teaching swimming to volunteer bus driver for charitable events. Sue has been the recipient of a Ministerial Award for her 40 years of service to the Wakool Primary School.

mellisa meli [TUMBARUMBA]

Mellisa Meli was born and raised in Canberra and at the age of 22 moved to Adelong and has lived and worked in the region ever since. She is currently the proprietor of Ray White Real Estate in Tumbarumba, the town she has called home for the last eight years. Why I want to nominate Mellisa is not only due to the many volunteer committees she is/has been on (rodeo, schools, Chamber of Commerce, TumbaFest), the money she has personally donated (to the local art show, child care center, TumbaFest and the netball association), or the money she has raised for various community initiatives, it is because of her tireless volunteer efforts during the recent bushfires, which annihilated our region. Mellisa single-handedly recognised that the need for support was extreme. She took it upon herself to find an empty shed in town and turn it into a refuge centre, called out to her nationwide networks, and was responsible for pulling

together two floors of furniture from a fancy hotel in Sydney, truck loads of drinking water and new clothes/personal products by the truckload, all so she could disperse them to the people who had lost everything, she even organised the transport. Quality control was important as she didn't want people who had lost everything getting other people's second-hand, poorer quality things. She kept that shed going with goods coming in and going out for six months, with people still coming in every weekend until she had to close it as the shed sold. She also worked through the nights for the 50 days of the fires, washing the volunteer firefighters' clothes for them, organising food and cooking for them, and ensuring generators were bought into town and put where they were needed (our town was without power or communications for two weeks). When you walk the street with Mellisa it takes you at least four times what it should because she knows everyone, is generous with her time and is well respected and loved. There is no job too big or small for Mellisa if it is making a difference for the people in the community she lives in and loves.

carolina merriman [GOOD HOPE]

Carolina Merriman is a very active member of the local farming community and selflessly puts herself forward for volunteer positions. Taking on roles with the local NSW Farmers branch during the peak of the drought was a big step for a busy young mum. She made a big effort to get the community behind her various drought, mental health, skills training on weed management, and other initiatives. Carolina does thankless work

that not many other people are prepared to do and she deserves to be recognised so that others can follow in her tracks.

Trish moore [LOOMBERAH]

Trish Moore was born and bred in the New England. She has studied and worked in this region and has 'sown' into it her whole life; always seeking to leave it better for having her in it. Trish works at our church (The Chapel Collective) in a paid capacity doing accounting and governance. However, aside from that, she volunteers heavily, mainly on behalf of our church, in the community. She has organised farmer family fun days in our local communities over the last year, providing much needed respite from this awful drought, in the form of a fun gathering with food, entertainment, games, kids activities, and raffles, all supplied. She also found ways to give donations to the farmers without them feeling like it was a handout. Trish would volunteer for the community an average of 10 hours a week, while holding two part-time jobs and raising her family.

robyn mowbray [ATTUNGA]

I have known Robyn Mowbray for 58 years. She was born and bred in Attunga. In all these years she has always been one to apply herself to volunteering in many ways. Some of these have been her involvement in the Tamworth Stroke Group, serving as president, helping with BBQs at Bunnings, and transporting many stroke patients

to meetings and functions. She also helped in creating the garden at the Tamworth Base Hospital Rehabilitation Unit. Robyn has been a volunteer at Attunga Public School helping young children with their reading, been part of the Kids Club at the local Anglican Church each week, has served as treasurer for a number of years with the local Attunga Hall on their committee, and has been instrumental in organising the annual Anzac Day service at Attunga. Robyn is always the first to take food to and to comfort people who have lost loved ones or who are incapacitated.

claire mudford [GILGANDRA]

Claire Mudford (nee Braby) has agriculture and community values born into her blood. Claire, the oldest of five siblings, was born in Griffith. Her farming parents lived in the Goolgowi district, later moving to Goolhi. Being a farmer's daughter and working at the local bank after she completed her high school education in Gunnedah, Claire was the perfect fit for any young, local, gentleman. However, a young farmer from Gilgandra caught her heart and within a few quick years she was respectively known in the Gilgandra community. Claire and her husband Keith, have five children, all on their own farming properties, walking in their agricultural footsteps. Claire professionally manages her time between family, her own farming enterprise and her community organisations. She loves being involved due to the social aspect, but her attention to detail and passion for perfection and numbers sees her enjoying the challenge of treasurer. Claire puts much time and effort into ensuring all her reports for

meetings are professional, leaving no room for errors. On an average week, with her current committee roles, Claire spends more than 20 hours a week completing various tasks. These tasks can include: applying for grants, reconciling statements, balancing accounts, receiving money, banking, cooking, cleaning, and liaising with other committee members. Claire is an astounding and hard working woman of the land. She is made up of tough hands with battle scars, tough skin illustrating the country's tough conditions, a brain wired for rural living, and has a heart full of love and giving. Other volunteer positions Claire has held include: member and treasurer of Collie CWA (2009 to current), member Curban Hall (2009 to March 2020), treasurer Curban Hall (2010 to current), chief steward for the Cooking Gilgandra Show Society (2019), treasurer of Gilgandra Show Society (2016), president of Gilgandra Show Society (Past), and treasurer of No CSG Gilgandra District (2014–2016).

danielle murphy [COBARGO]

Danielle Murphy grew up in Sydney. She worked for a law firm on Macquarie Street as a legal clerk before moving to a job as Retail Operations Manager for a wholesaler with stores in Newtown, Paddington and Bondi Junction. She bought property in Cobargo in 1998 at the age of 23. She made the move from Sydney in 2004 when her eldest child started at Cobargo Primary School. She has volunteered on the committees, which saw the building of a skate park and BMX track in Cobargo. She has also volunteered at the primary school canteen for more than 13 years and coordinated

uniforms for seven years. She has four children, the youngest has autism and epilepsy. She responded to the bushfire crisis from 5 January after fighting fires herself in the village of Cobargo. Three and half weeks later, while volunteering at Cobargo Bushfire Relief Centre, she saw the black smoke cloud near her property (10 km north of Cobargo). She then fought the firefront for 36 hours with no sleep. She has been co-coordinator of the Cobargo Bushfire Relief Centre, estimated at 2268 volunteers hours for six-and-a-half months. She also researches on the computer sometimes until 2 am. She has been the biggest advocate for the community of Cobargo. Danielle has been a loud voice for the unheard members of our community. She has worked on proposals of compulsory subsidised insurance policies for the lower economic people with Kevin Butler (CEO, BlazeAid). She negotiated and coordinated with Tracey Alders (the Craig Marsh) from Rural Aid for three semi-trailer loads of 1000 L water pods for the burnt-out communities across the entire Bega Valley Shire. Danielle was one of the first people to reach out to smaller communities not receiving help and providing them with donations, as well as information of programs to help smaller communities. Danielle has worked closely with Mindaroo Foundation on the implementation of the Temporary Housing Pods. She also gave Fiona Kotvojs (Liberal Candidate for Eden Monaro) the idea for a proposal to Scott Morrison for a temporary housing option where the property owner can rent to own. She has had video links with His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley. Danielle has had numerous meetings with the Hon. Andrew Constance MP, the Hon. Michael McCormack MP, and the Hon. Anthony Albanese.

Danielle has also had a public media presence with her last appearance being on the Four Corners episode, Hard Winter. Her passion in this current crisis has been to respect and maintain the dignity of our citizens while giving them choices and providing opportunities for people to be an active participant in their own recovery along with their community.

saba nabi [WAGGA WAGGA]

Dr. Saba Nabi is an absolute inspiration. She is a value-driven leader and well-respected in her community by making a positive impact on the lives of others. Saba was the winner of NSW International Student of the Year Awards in the Higher Education category, finalist at CROW Awards in the category 'Young Professional Award' organised by Wagga Business Chamber, NEMBC National Ethnic Broadcasters eChamp, finalist in 2017 India & Australia Business and Community Achievement Awards, finalist in 2017 NSW & ACT Regional Achievement & Community Awards, one of 100 women included in the 2018 Australian Financial Review's Women of Influence, and in 2019 she was the Riverina Volunteer of the Year Award winner. Based in Wagga Wagga, Saba dons many hats. She is currently a member of the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) member with Multicultural NSW, Board Member at Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga (MCWW), AFL Multicultural Community Ambassador, Riverina Board member at NSW P&C Federation, Australia Day committee member, a member of BreastScreen NSW with Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD), Healthy Framework

Committee with MLHD, representing NSW P&C Federation on Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW committee, and on National Education Standards Authority (NESA) Curriculum committee. Saba arrived from Delhi, India in 2011 with her young family to finish her Ph.D in Biomedical Sciences and has made Wagga Wagga her second home. Currently, she is working as a project officer at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. She confirms that volunteering is the best platform to engage locally. For her, sometimes 24 hours in a day is not enough, because the level of connections she has around her keeps her very busy.

rachel nicoll [HAMPTON]

It is with great pleasure that I nominate Rachel Nicoll for inclusion in the 2020 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll. In addition to performing any role she sets her mind to at an exemplary level, Rachel demonstrates an extraordinary commitment to her community with a knack of being able to link up women and people with her networks so they can be more engaged, empowered and succeed. Rachel's dedication is typified by her willingness to take on roles, often concurrently, with energy and enthusiasm. In addition to chair of NSW Young Farmers, Rachel chairs the Hartley Branch and is a Rural Affairs committee member. She has contributed her energy and expertise presenting at the UNICEF Youth Living with Drought Summit, AgriYouth Connect, the University of Notre Dame Rural Medical Conference, and chairing the Association's Tertiary Scholarships Panel. Rachel has been actively involved with the Central Tableland Local Land Services (LLS) through the

Regional Pest Animal Committee and Community Advisory Group. This year Rachel was ministerially appointed to the Central Tablelands LLS Board. She has assisted large organisations to deliver positive outcomes with a grassroots focus. In 2018 Rachel was selected as an emerging leader in the National Farmers' Federation EU-UK trade delegation and joined Australia and India for the ninth Australia India Youth Dialogue. She is a graduate of the Australian Mental Health Leaders Fellowship with the National Mental Health Commission and worked extensively with the Centre for Rural & Remote Mental Health (CRRMH), the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP), Lifeline, and key mental health organisations. While her presence is often behind the scenes, she has never shirked away from any task and is absolutely essential to the successful outcome of many events and initiatives. She has a depth of empathy and understanding that only comes from experience and ensures that every contribution, no matter how small is recognised for its value. This is just the surface to Rachel as a person, and by getting to know her, you realise just how special she is. If you do get to, the reward is truly worth it.

shirley pankhurst [WEE WAA]

Shirley Pankhurst was born in Tamworth NSW in 1930. After completing school, she was a stenographer and then her passion to help people saw her start a nursing career. Shirley met the love of her life, Dudley, and married in 1952. They moved to Newcastle in 1954 and raised four children, one boy and three girls. They

moved to Wee Waa in 1985 and she has been involved in the community ever since. Shirley has life memberships at: Newcastle Women's Hockey Association, Wee Waa & District Historical Society Inc, Wee Waa Horticultural & Garden Society NSW, and Garden Clubs of Australia. She has received: the Ann Williams Clark Award, Wee Waa Lions Senior of the Year (2014) and Narrabri Shire Citizen of the Year (2016). The Wee Waa & District Historical Society has been a big part of their lives after joining in 1987. Shirley and Dudley volunteered every Friday to show visitors through the Namoi Echo Museum, which opened in 2009. After Dudley's passing in 2018, Shirley continues that tradition and volunteers for 16 hours per month as well as other functions held at the Museum. I know that Shirley is a worthy recipient of the 2020 Hidden Treasure Honour Roll. She is a true treasure.

lorna parnell [MERRIWA]

Lorna Parnell has recently retired from her post as volunteer manager of the Merriwa Non-Emergency Medical Transport Service, a job far, far more time consuming and difficult than most people would realise. Lorna has shown unwaivering dedication to the service for eight years, while being, at all times, a compassionate and understanding friend to her clients. She has also found time to be a valued member of both the Anglican Church and the Cancer Council fundraising committee.

cheryl pearce [KIAMA]

Cheryl Pearce has volunteered her time to organise the annual Rainbow Fashion Parade with the Country Women's Association (CWA), Kiama Day Branch. When the Kiama Day Branch of CWA was formed in 1938, it was the only branch between Wollongong and Nowra. Aside from its fundraising and social activities, the branch was responsible for initiating and running baby health centres in the region and continued to do so until the 1980s when it became a government responsibility. Its 80th anniversary in 2018 came at a time of great renewal for the branch, with a new evening group attracting 20 members, compared to the traditional day group's 18 members. Cheryl has served as president of CWA Kiama Day Branch for many years now and has been responsible for organising many events and activities which have benefited our local Kiama community. Therefore, we would really like to see her distinguished community service duly recognised and honoured.

julie pearce [COFFS HARBOUR]

Julie Pearce is an adored volunteer at C.ex Coffs International Stadium. With her 16 years of dedication to the operation of our events and her volunteer role in many other organisations, Julie is a valued part of our community. She has become a volunteer that participants and staff look forward to seeing during events, due to her charming personality, strong work ethic, and her valued skills.

kay pellizzer [YENDA]

Throughout her life, Kay Pellizzer has been a passionate member of the Yenda community. She has devoted her life to the improvement of her district and has given generously of her time and skills. After finishing high school, Kay worked at the Yenda telephone exchange before taking on a position at Yenda Producers Co-operative Society Ltd, where she has worked for 59 years, and continues to this day. Volunteering has always been a priority for Kay. Her love of sport, particularly rugby league, resulted in her taking on the position of secretary/treasurer of the Yenda Rugby League Football Club. Not content with this, Kay accepted the position of treasurer for Group 20 Rugby League, which she held for 25 years. Kay's interests also extended to education, and while her daughter attended St Therese School, Kay accepted the position of secretary of the P&F Committee. Kay's tireless efforts also included secretary of the Wade Park Management Committee, a 35-year membership of the St Therese Parish Committee, membership of the ladies committee of the Yenda Diggers Club, and chairperson of the Yenda Progress Association; a position she has held for 40 years. Through her stewardship, the township of Yenda and its citizens have been a beneficiary of Kay's dedication and unwavering pursuits. Her efforts haven't gone unnoticed and recognition should be made of her selfless contributions to Yenda.

cheryl penrith [WAGGA WAGGA]

Cheryl Penrith is a Wiradjuri elder who is admired in the community. She is a mother of one, grandmother of five and the eldest of 10. She grew up in Tumut and is now based in Wagga Wagga. Cheryl has been committed to Indigenous employment and is the director of Indymarra Ngumbaay (Respect First) Aboriginal Corporation (INAC). INAC was established to provide technical support to improve, develop and build capacity and capability in people, community, tribal groups and traditional structures that existed for more than 80 000 years. INAC aims to build a regional workforce of Aboriginal people within the construction/rail Industries in regional NSW-ACT and Victoria. Cheryl has spent a lifetime promoting Wiradjuri culture and language, and bringing all members of the community together through sharing her knowledge. In the last 12–18 months, Cheryl has been involved in The Wired Lab—an artist led organisation evolving interdisciplinary art practices in rural Australia. Cheryl has been facilitating the Wiradjuri Grasslands, Weaving and Tanning Project, which is as skills development and knowledge sharing project oriented around Wiradjuri agriculture, utilising native grasses for weaving, storytelling, and the creation of presentation outcomes for exhibition. Cheryl continues to be an inspiration for the whole community and is the absolute definition of a hidden treasure.

carol ray [SCONE]

The love of her family, friends, volunteer work and being part of the community give Carol Ray purpose and meaning in life. Born in Camden, Carol moved to a dairy farm near Muswellbrook in 1967. She married Edmund Ray and settled into farming life near Denman with their seven children, eventually moving to Scone in 2006. Carol completed her Cert III in Aged Care and worked in retail and as a teacher's aide. Carol's days are always busy. She cares for two of her grandchildren while her daughter teaches maths at the local high school. You will see Carol in Aberdeen at the Local Studies group and hosting the Golden Oldies movies and luncheon for the Upper Hunter Museum of Rural Life. She is an active member of the Scone and Upper Hunter Historical Society, working in the museum. She has juggled her time between volunteer work at Transcare for almost 18 years with the aged care clients and the canteen at Scone High School. Carol is regularly seen at Upper Hunter Shire Council offices as a member of three committees: Aberdeen Revitalisation; Community Services; and Access & Inclusion, with a focus on improving the wider community. In her spare time, Carol enjoys the Spinners & Weavers group at Scone Arts & Crafts and lectures with Scone Australian Decorative & Fine Arts Societies (ADFAS). She is especially passionate about the traditional craft of felt making and cites Mrs Margaret Lee as her inspiration in this creative field. Carol's extraordinary commitment to her community reflects her caring and generous nature.

christine riley [CASSILIS]

Christine Riley has been an active member in the community since leaving school, acting as secretary and treasurer for both the Merriwa Campdraft Association and Merriwa Pony Club for many years. Since moving closer to Cassilis, Christine is now involved in many organisations in the town. She is on the Board of Cassilis Bowling Club and holds the role as vice president. She volunteers countless hours doing bar rosters, ordering of stock, cooking in the kitchen on Saturday nights, shopping for supplies and advertising events. She also spends many hours working behind the bar keeping the doors open. Christine is the backbone of the Cassilis Social Tennis Club, keeping the tennis courts tidy, organising working bees and barbeques throughout the warmer months. She is treasurer of Cassilis Rodeo Committee heading in to her third year of service. She has recently taken on the role as treasurer of the Cassilis Pony Club, bringing in previous knowledge from many years of experience with the Merriwa Pony Club and assisting the newly formed committee of Cassilis. She is also a committee member of the Cassilis Camping, Campfires & Country Music weekend held on the October long weekend at the Cassilis War Memorial Park.

marelle robinson [WINGHAM]

Marelle Robinson comes from a farming family who have worked tirelessly to provide a life for their family. She is a woman who gives all to her commitment to women in dairy through her roles on committees. Marelle has a quiet manner and is often the person in the room who says the least, however when she speaks it is always from the heart and for the wellbeing of the Mid Coast Women in Dairy group she manages. Marelle has been the treasurer of the 'Bale Up' women in dairy conference committee for the last three years. She has challenged herself by taking on roles of leadership in the community, as well as participating in leadership workshops that have shown her very capable of the roles she manages on farm and in the community. Marelle works an average of eight hours a week as a volunteer, organising monthly meetings for women in dairy and sourcing sponsorship and grants for projects the women in dairy are involved in. She is part of the current steering committee involved in finding a solution for recycling farm plastic waste, and is a team member on the committee running the student AgSkills scholarship program in the Manning Valley. Marelle is never one to publicise her achievements. She really is our 'women in dairy' hidden treasure.

narelle ryan [RUTHERFORD]

Narelle Ryan grew up on a sheep and cattle station at Nundle where she developed a sense of community and experienced being a Brownie in the Girl Guide movement. In 1985 Narelle moved to Maitland where she married and raised two sons as a primary carer after her marriage ended. In 1988 Narelle joined 3rd East Maitland Scout Group Committee as Secretary and later Treasurer. In 2000, she commenced as a Joey Scout Leader and assisted with the Cub Scout Pack. In 2003, Narelle commenced as a Group Leader and coordinated the amalgamation of the 2nd and 3rd East Maitland Scout Groups. Narelle continued as Group Leader until 2009 when she transferred to Cub Scout Leader. During this time, Narelle attended two Australian jamborees and encouraged community involvement by youth members and their families in National Tree Day, Maitland Triathlon, Australia Day and visits to aged care homes. Narelle also produced the monthly group newsletter and assisted in the Scout Troop. In 2015, Narelle was awarded a Silver Wattle Award, having given so much time and effort to the scouting movement for her family, the sense of community it gave her, and the love of seeing young people grow in confidence and resilience. Although leaving the Scout Movement in 2018, Narelle is a keen supporter of the movement. Later, Narelle joined West Maitland Centennial Lions Club in 2018 and has been a very active member participating in the many activities organised by the Club to fundraise for local community organisations. Narelle helps make meetings enjoyable and interesting and coordinates the canteen arrangements and roster

for West Maitland Junior Rugby League Club, a Lions project. Narelle is also keen to participate in Lions training days and conferences. She is recognised as a valuable member of the Lions Club and is nominated by members, supported by the Maitland community.

ruth sandow [PACKSADDLE]

I haven't got enough room to start on why Ruth Sandow should receive this award. Let's start by saying 20 plus years as the volunteer behind Milparinka Heritage & Tourism Association and the thousands of dollars she has managed to apply and add to the experience for tourists that come to corner country NSW every year. Secondly, she is president of the South East Division of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS), again contributing hours of volunteer work to the essential needs of the western NSW area. Ruth is a passionate person who has to look after others as well as herself. She runs two cattle stations with her husband and even during one of the worst droughts in record she is managing the Milparinka Visitors Centre and attending to all the requirements of her role at the RFDS. Recently Ruth was successful in getting a major project off the ground that has been a brainchild of hers for years and would open up the corner country to more visitors from around Australia. Sturt's Steps touring experience will bring to life the history of the area and tell stories from traditional owners, to Sturt's journey to the life on the land in the area today. She never stops dreaming about how the area can thrive for those that live and work in Western NSW and she is the most humble of people you will meet. She needs to be congratulated for her efforts for humanity and region.

Fay shaw [TARANA]

Fay Shaw is a tower of strength and a joy for all in the tiny central west village of Tarana, between Bathurst and Lithgow. Fay, now in her 70s, met her husband Tony when working in Papua New Guinea in her 20s. Together, they moved to Tarana more than 40 years ago, where Fay initially became the post mistress, then moved on to a secretarial role at Mitchell College in Bathurst, which later became Charles Sturt University. Fay continued in this role for 28 years. But retirement from paid work for Fay meant stepping up to the plate, and taking on a number of voluntary roles locally, which she continues to the present day. She kicked off as secretary to the Tarana & Fish River Development Group, a local organisation formed to fight a State Rail plan to establish a granite quarry in the Tarana Valley. The ‘David and Goliath’ effort was eventually successful, and to this day no quarry disturbs the glorious peace of our valley. About the same time, Fay became secretary of the Tarana Rural Fire Service, a pivotal role she still holds today, along with similar roles for the local Farmers’ Market committee, and two other local groups. But whether it’s taking minutes at meetings, feeding fire fighters during bushfire emergencies, removing bacon rinds for the bacon and egg roll stall at our monthly market, or a hundred and one other essential jobs done quietly and reliably, Fay is a very much loved local treasure who enriches the lives of the entire Tarana community.

edith shipway [MERRIWA]

Edith Shipway made a ‘tree change’ to Merriwa, with her husband John in October 1991. Since that time she has been involved in numerous community events and organisations, including the Festival of the Fleeces, Merriwa Tourist Welcoming Centre and Merriwa Spinners, to name but a few. She became Festival of the Fleeces Director in 1995 and 1996, organising numerous stall holders and ‘woolly’ attractions. She later became involved in the Pembroke Merriwa Jumbucks and competed in the International Wool Challenge—a worldwide competition promoting wool, friendship and cancer research. Edith was the president of the Merriwa Spinners, team manager for the Jumbucks and event organiser for nine years. The team was crowned World Champions in 2001 and Guinness Record holders in 2004. The Jumbucks and visiting teams also raised more than \$40 000 for Camp Quality, breast and prostate cancer during that time. Edith has been greatly involved in the development of the Merriwa Tourist Welcoming Centre and held several roles since its official opening in 2004 including secretary, treasurer and president. The Centre has grown from strength to strength, promoting local artisans as well as assisting many local organisations and donating more than \$75 000 to the community since its inception. In 2018 when it appeared that there was no end in sight for the drought, she coordinated the hugely successful ‘Bugger the Drought’ party which more than 700 people attended. She is a mover and a shaker and a fabulous ‘force’ to be reckoned with in our community.

ailsa sinclair [TEMORA]

Ailsa Sinclair was born in 1930. Her mother passed away when she was three-years-old. Her aunt in Sydney looked after her until she left school and returned home to look after her father and help on the farm. Ailsa met Peter and they married in 1952. They had five children and life was difficult raising the children and paying off the farm. Ailsa helped to make ends meet by raising chickens for egg production, selling eggs to the Temora Egg Marketing Board; raising turkeys and meat birds for sale locally; milked cows, separating milk and cream to sell; and feeding poddy lambs and calves that would have died otherwise. Peter and Ailsa were both community minded people, involved in many committees. Ailsa supported Peter when he took on the job of President of Rotary. She has been involved in many community groups/committees including the school P&C while children were at school; Dirnaseer Country Women's Association, Spastic Centre (Cerebral Palsy Alliance); Temora Presbyterian Church, catering and fundraising; Temora View Club; Temora Branch of the National Party; Temora Probus; Temora Rural Museum; Temora Hopsital; Meals on Wheels; Show Society; Temora Rotary Club and many more.

gwen smith [NORTH STAR]

There's a quiet presence of knowing intelligence, humour and commitment when you meet Gwen Smith. A long-term resident of the North Star area, Gwen and her husband David raised three children to adulthood who are making their way successfully in the world. Gwen has spent her lifetime working alongside David on their property. She is a polite, well spoken and highly intelligent woman, with a soft definitive voice. Her capacity to offer assistance through her presence and thoughtfulness is highly valued in any organisation or cause she chooses to support. Involvement with the local Anglican Parish Council includes the active roles of Parish Council Member, previously women's guild contribution and active fundraising support of the parish. Gwen has also been secretary of the Women's Auxiliary in earlier years of the local Bushman's Carnival (a horse sports and social event held annually at North Star). We are always enlightened by Gwen's insightful research, presentation and discussion of agricultural related topics as part of her agricultural and environment officer role for North Star CWA branch. She has won the Gwydir Group Trophy on at least three occasions for excellent standards of presentation of her annual reports. This was a well-earned reward for dedication and commitment by Gwen. Gwen has an amazing mind and memory. Her capacity to bring relevant facts and a balanced view to any discussion is greatly valued. Gwen is a delight to be in the company of others. She possesses great humour and never fails to praise. Her respect for fellow citizens is to be admired and learnt from.

tash taaffe [MERRIWA]

Tash Taaffe is the Merriwa Community Services Officer at Council; a role she approaches with dedication and commitment. From her coordination of playgroup and the Merriwa Family Support Network, to her organisation and promotion of numerous community events, she is always looking for ways to improve what's in Merriwa. When not at work, Tash is a tireless volunteer. She has been coach and president of Merriwa Little Athletics for the last eight years, seeing the club grow from six athletes to more than 60, coaching hundreds of young athletes along the way to 'be their best'. Tash has managed the Merriwa Pony Club canteen for many years, to raise money not only for the club but numerous other community causes such as the hostel, playgroup, sports groups and schools. She is passionate about supporting Merriwa students and has assisted countless students with resumes, references and interviews. There is no area of community life where Tash's positive presence and impact is not felt. Her capacity to network and bring people together for the good of the whole community is admirable and Merriwa is fortunate to have her. That she manages to contribute so greatly to her community while supporting and raising a farming family through the toughest of droughts is testament to her commitment, dedication and drive.

shirley teague [COFFS HARBOUR]

Shirley Teague is always first to volunteer for any job that involves our community. Most of Shirley's days are spent doing volunteer work. Shirley has

also purchased products with her own money because the community needed it, for example, the microwave for the Toormina Community Hall and much more. Shirley always has a warm smile and a generous heart and quirky laugh. I couldn't think of anyone more deserving of this Hidden Treasures award.

pat thomas [TEMORA]

Pat Thomas OAM and the Federal Member for Riverina's Volunteer of the Year 2010 is a kind, generous, selfless, and genuine lady. Her commitment to her family and community is quite remarkable. Raising four children (one with special needs), Pat helped to make ends meet by taking in sewing, doing alterations (she is infamous around Temora Shire for her outstanding sewing skills). Pat is the founding and current member (president for many years) of the Temora Special Persons and Carers Group. She has made our community aware of the real needs of many in our community. Pat has spent her life tirelessly working towards ensuring a succession plan for our more vulnerable citizens; fundraising and creating a supportive environment for her beloved special persons and their carers. Being a carer herself, Pat knows firsthand how hard life is for the carers too. Carers usually miss out on the outings organised, so the group usually get together to share their stories, problems, successes and to enjoy the company of each other. Truly a lovely lady and a well deserving nominee for the 2020 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll.

Sue Thomas [WINGHAM]

Sue Thomas' 30-year community contribution to the Manning Region displays the true spirit of a community minded volunteer. She is highly respected in the cricketing community and locals share their stories about Sue and her willingness to always help, no matter what the task. Sue is a friendly, outgoing person who never seeks recognition or attention. The term 'hidden treasure' truly describes Sue and is indicative of her continued community involvement, even when her children had finished playing sport. Sue grew up on the Central Coast. She married Rex in 1973 and has three children and three wonderful grandchildren who all bring her happiness. Sue and her family moved to Wingham in 1989 where she soon became involved in her children's cricket. In the true spirit of a community minded volunteer, Sue volunteered to coach her sons' team. She continued to coach for several years, while also managing her daughters' team. Sue was a scorer for her children's matches and continues to do this, even now, for her local club. Her involvement has included: Cricket Scorer's Association, Wingham Cricket Club, and Manning Junior Cricket Association Treasurer for more than 20 years. Sue has also provided assistance for the Stan Austin Carnival since its inception 20 years ago and cooks team BBQs for eight teams at the Carnival. Sue's thoughtfulness and kindness are not only seen in sporting. She also spent 12 years as a Community Care Manager at Storm Village until illness forced her retirement. Sue continues to be a role model to everyone she meets and is worthy of recognition.

Fleur Tonge [CASINO]

Fleur Tonge was born and raised in Beaudesert on her family's dairy farm. In 1981 she and her husband bought their own dairy farm near Casino. Over this time, they have taken the farm's annual milk production from 350 000 to 2 million litres. Fleur has been involved with many field days and farm trials which has allowed her to learn about and adopt new farming techniques. She has been very involved in the industry which has included a period as the chairperson of NORCO in the early 2000s. Fleur is the current chair of the Cattle Tick Ministerial Advisory Committee and also a board member of The Richmond Valley Business and Rural Financial Counselling Service Inc. On a community level, Fleur has been part of The Casino Pony Club for 14 years as a parent, instructor, and president. Fleur has also opened her home and farm to vet students for 30 years to allow students to complete their dairy placement. Through this work, Fleur has been instrumental in offering young people a chance to experience working in the dairy industry.

Janelle Tongue [LOOMBERAH]

Janelle Tongue was born at Loomberah and has lived there all her life on the family farm with husband Kevin, raising three children, and now has 11 grandchildren. She is a dedicated community person, having worked as a local primary school teacher before retirement. Janelle holds many community positions including: church warden of St Luke's Loomberah, Parish

Council representative, St Paul's Tamworth, Secretary Tamworth Pastoral & Agricultural Association, Loomberah War Memorial Hall committee, School Council member for Nemingha Public School, advisor with Loomberah & District Rural Youth Club. Janelle also volunteers her time as a scripture teacher at three local schools and at the SUPA club. She is an active member of NSW Farmers and has been heavily involved assisting with drought relief throughout the Tamworth district. Janelle is a caring lady who always thinks of others and helps wherever she can in her community. A very worthy candidate.

sally torr [BOURKE]

Sally Torr was born and spent her teenage years on the Northern Beaches of Sydney. She trained as a general nurse and midwife and then matriculated and attended university. During this time Sally volunteered with the weekly 'Johnny's Club' at the Darlinghurst Anglican Church. Sally trained in health services management and managed health facilities in the Greater Sydney area, the Northern Territory and Bourke. While living in Sydney, she volunteered as a Leader of Leichhardt Scout Group, as the parent coordinator of the Leichhardt Out of School Hours Service, and as a host for AFS (American Field Service) students from America, Japan and Brazil. After Sally moved to Bourke in 2006 she assisted in the development of the Scout movement here. Since 2010 she has been an active member of the local Rotary branch, held a series of positions with the local branch of the Country Women's Association (CWA) and the Far Western Group

of CWA NSW. Sally is the volunteer secretary of Bourke Arts Community Inc., organiser of 'Flicks in the Sticks' and the Bourke Ceramics Centre. She is a consumer volunteer representative of the Regional Outback Arts Centre board. The Western Primary Health Care Network appointed her to its Consumer Advisory Committee to provide feedback on primary health care services, and she has written successful grant applications on behalf of a number of local Bourke organisations. Sally is a passionate volunteer in the Bourke community. Overall she spends 20–30 hours per week on volunteer work and says she enjoys every moment of it.

judi unger [PEAK HILL]

Judi Unger's passion for empowering people in rural communities was nurtured during her formative years on her family's farm in the foothills of the Hervey Ranges, east of Peak Hill. A love of learning together, with devotion to her family, have enabled Judi to live a productive life within and beyond our local community. Judi chose teaching as a career and completed a BA degree and DipEd at Macquarie University. When she retired as Deputy Principal of Parkes Public School in 2012, Judi left a legacy of personally created, innovative teaching resources and educational programs, which are still being adopted throughout the State. The Aboriginal Mathematics Resource Kit K-6 and Peak Hill Sight Word Program are but two of Judi's innovations. In mid-1980 Judi and her husband Ray began to convert their conventional farm north west of Peak

Hill to an Australian certified organic/ biodynamic broadacre enterprise. They now host annual workshops and field days to share their journey and knowledge. Judi's contributions of plants, kits, catering and advertising for these events are invaluable. She is currently serving a three-year term on the Board of Biodynamic Agriculture Australia Ltd while studying for qualifications to mentor students studying organic and biodynamic farming. Judi's passion to support women in agriculture led her to join and take active roles in NSW Women in Agriculture, Orana Women in Agriculture and Rural Women's Network. Judi is president of Peak Hill's Leisure Centre. She uses her photographic skills to promote our annual Arts & Craft Exhibition and take photo shoots which promote tourism for Arts OutWest. Judi also volunteers monthly at our Arts & Craft Information Centre.

christine walters [COBARGO]

Christine (Chris) Walters has been involved in her community wherever she has lived and worked. When she lived on the Central Coast, she arranged many festivals and exhibitions for the local community, the Gosford Council and the Wyong Council. In recent times, Chris has been one of the coordinators of the Cobargo Bushfire Relief Centre, which began operations on 31 December 2019 at the Cobargo Showground. The Centre was used by the community as a refuge during the bushfire crisis. After the many volunteers who had initially helped during the initial stages went back to their 'normal' lives, Chris, along with her co-coordinator, Danielle Murphy, remained in place

to manage the relief centre as an ongoing welfare and distribution point of donated goods for the community. Chris was instrumental in sourcing the funding for more than 200 1000 L water tanks (IBCs) for bushfire affected people who had lost all water infrastructure. She has also secured funding to enable the relief centre to operate for the next 12 months, to the value of more than \$30 000. Chris works as a volunteer at the Cobargo Bushfire Relief Centre approximately 50 hours per week. She is a dedicated member of her community and volunteers because she cares that the fire ravaged community and its people make the best recovery from this disaster as possible.

jessica wells [NORTH STAR]

If there's an angel of kindness, Jessica (Jess) Wells comes close. Mother of four and rural wife, Jessica is one of the most authentic and genuine people you will ever come across. Her warmth, intelligence, laughter and thoughtfulness are a great gift to our community. Throughout her life, Jess has exhibited generosity of service to others through membership of Girl Guides/Brownies. Volunteer commitment in fundraising and social functions of Gwydir Mobile Preschool (Croppa Creek Group), and Tharawonga Mobile Preschool (North Star Centre). Jess is also secretary of Croppa Creek P&C Association. Jess is a great human, her ability to lend a listening ear, her fabulous passion for cooking, her ability to assist and be present anywhere, anytime despite the demands of her busy family of four vibrant and active children, and her rural life with husband

Wayne, make her a worthy nominee. Jess brings sunlight like a golden sunflower to many people's lives—a sunny hidden treasure.

margaret whyte [WENTWORTH]

Margaret (Marg) Whyte, formerly of Willow Point Station, 90 km north of Wentworth, is now living at 'Rendelsham', Wentworth. She grew up on her family's farm at Karadoc VIC, where she enjoyed a simple but adventurous country life. After completing her secondary school, she worked in Melbourne for a number of years before marrying her husband Malcolm. They spent the next 50 plus years on their sheep station where they raised their three children. Marg taught them through correspondence School of the Air based in Broken Hill. Each achieved success academically at a tertiary level. Marg became a renowned carer and authority on wildlife of the region, as well as helping rescue groups. This led to writing and illustrating children's books and developing her unique paintings of landscapes, birds and animals. This progressed to printing her own paintings and cards. Her artistic skills, as an environmentally and socially aware painter, have been recognised in numerous solo and shared exhibitions, both locally and regionally. These also include Women of the West in Sydney and Women of the Rivers in Wentworth, the latter being an extensive touring exhibition along the Murray River in three states. Marg further developed her skills in establishing the Animal Nursery at the Wentworth Show, where she was a committee member for many years. This project was a very hands-on activity which she ran for

some 25 years. The pavilion was named after her. Marg went on to develop and compere the very popular Wearable Art Competition of fashions from woolpacks. Marg is an Honorary Life Member of the Show Society.

pamela wilkinson [NORTH STAR]

Pamela (Pam) Wilkinson has the most engaging smile and unforgettable soft giggle. Her face lights up in animation when discussing things dear to her heart. A generous soul and mum to two grown children, Pam delights in the growth and activity of her two grandchildren. Together with her husband Gavin, Pam has lived in numerous rural locations during her lifetime. In many of these locations, Pam has been gainfully employed in retail of varying positions and would undoubtedly have enhanced those workplaces with her humanity. It is the degree of selfless volunteering that elevates Pam's worth to amazing. Pam has enriched many organisations through her commitment and energy, some of these include Girl Guides, Brownies, reading at the schools her children attended, community radio (hosting a girls' talk back session regularly), and contributing her own skills in voice-over ads. Pam described her volunteerism as a 'great thing to make you feel good within yourself; it makes you smile to feel the thanks of others coming back at you!' and 'it takes a fraction of a minute to see that person get back up again with your encouragement'. Pam is a profound human with insight to notice and do! Pam also can be found volunteering at the St Vincent de Paul shop here, with her clothing retail experience proving useful

in a shop decorating, complemented by her skilled eye for product placements. The Women's Shed in nearby Goondiwindi also benefits from Pam's commitment. Hygiene kits, towels, sheets and clothes to support families affected by the drought and bushfires were all part of Pam's vision and action, as well as the annual collection of donated goods for action for Cancer Council benefits. A local member and treasurer of the North Star CWA branch add to Pam's heartfelt and multiple volunteer adventures. Pam Wilkinson, you are a great and unassuming hidden treasure.

Julia Wilton [MERRIWA]

Julia Wilton has been the activities officer at the Gummun Hostel for the past four years where she is responsible for creating, supervising and implementing programs and daily activities. But for the residents, this is merely a job description, Julia does so much more! Some of her initiatives include organising mosaic workshops, street stalls and market days, which have also been great money earners for the hostel. She does a wonderful job of planning short day trips and mystery outings to ensure variety in the day-to-day activities of the residents. Her care and compassion goes far and above her job description; her hours of work certainly exceed her paid hours. Julia is always eager to provide that extra care and attention, giving residents manicures, outings and organising active games to challenge the mind and the body. The Christmas in July lunches are another firm favourite with residents and community members alike—a job enthusiastically undertaken by Julia

who oversees all the decorations and gifts, and other arrangements, usually done well outside her working day. When not at the hostel, Julia is also a volunteer with junior league, touch football, netball, swimming club and the P&C.

margaret wood [EAST MAITLAND]

Margaret was born in 1942. She is the mother of four sons and has 13 grandchildren. She has lived and worked in Maitland and East Maitland area all that time and joined Maitland Swimming Club at age 12. She became an accredited volunteer Learn to Swim instructor at age 14 to assist with swimming, including doing free lessons by MSC for children, adults and physically impaired persons to this present day. Margaret became an accredited swim coach (Bronze Level) in 1994 and as a non-paid volunteer, Margaret is a life member and vice president of Maitland Swimming Club. She had a 'run-in' with melanoma in 1984 and she survived this and continued teaching soon after. Margaret has been involved with committees of Fingal Beach Surf Club, Coal Fields United AFL, Tenambit Junior Rugby League Football Club and has supported hearing-impaired children, all on a volunteer basis. Margaret was nominated as a candidate for Maitland's Citizen of the Year. She still provides approximately six hours per week of volunteering when summer comes around. In real terms, this equates to more than 60 years of teaching and coaching as a contribution to Maitland and environs, providing a life skill to the community for the young and old.

jill woodlock [COFFS HARBOUR]

Jill Woodlock is a determined and accommodating volunteer at C.ex Coffs International Stadium. With our stadium and major events team, Jill is acknowledged as a 'go getter'. It is noticeable that she enjoys her time at our events and loves to participate in any task she is given. She has a passionate attitude when it comes to volunteering for her community. With a history of more than 10 years dedicated to the operation of our events, she should be commended for her continual support.

Volunteer agencies

Volunteers make an extraordinary contribution to Australian society. They are the lifeblood of our community and come from all walks of life. They are working people, students and professionals; they are young people and retirees. They come from every suburb and community and from a variety of cultural, educational and religious backgrounds.

Volunteering is a chance to give something back to the community—to use your skills and experience to make a difference in the lives of people who need assistance the most. For others, it is a chance to develop new skills and experience in a supportive environment.

The following contacts are for key agencies and groups represented in the nominee profiles.

Aged & Community Services Australia

1300 877 855
www.acsa.asn.au

Agricultural Societies Council of NSW

1800 025 387
www.agshowsnsw.org.au

Anglican Church of Australia

02 8267 2700
www.anglican.org.au

Create NSW

Freecall (NSW) 1800 358 594
www.arts.nsw.gov.au

Australian Bushman's Campdraft & Rodeo Association

02 6767 9200
www.abcra.com.au

Australian Red Cross

1800 733 276
www.redcross.org.au

Australian Football League

03 9643 1999
www.afl.com.au

BlazeAid

0418 990 267
www.blazeaid.com.au

Bowls NSW

02 9283 4555
www.mswba.org.au

Can Assist

1300 226 277
www.canassist.com.au

Cancer Council NSW

13 11 20
www.cancercouncil.com.au

Catholic Church NSW & ACT

1300 432 484
www.catholic.org.au/nsw-a-act

Community Broadcasting Association of Australia

02 9310 2999
www.cbaa.org.au

Community Transport Organisation Ltd

1300 679 286
www.cto.org.au

Country Women's Association NSW

02 8337 0200
www.cwaofnsw.org.au

Disability Services Australia

1300 372 121
www.dsa.org.au

volunteer agencies

Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW

02 9319 0288

www.eccnsw.org.au

Farmers for Climate Action

1800 491 633

www.farmersforclimateaction.org.au

Football NSW

02 8814 4400

www.footballnsw.com.au

Garden Clubs of Australia Inc.

0412 638 373

www.gardenclubs.org.au

Girl Guides Australia, NSW & ACT

02 8396 5200

www.girlguides-nswact.org.au

Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA)

02 6231 9799

www.icpa.com.au/branches/browse/NSW

Landcare NSW

0458 168 225

www.landcarensw.org.au

Lifeline

13 11 14

www.lifeline.org.au

Lions Australia, NSW

02 4940 8033

lionsclubs.org.au/contact/nsw

Meals on Wheels NSW

1300 676 669

www.nswmealsonwheels.org.au

NSW Rugby League

02 8756 7000

www.nswrl.com.au

Netball NSW

02 9951 5000

<https://nsw.netball.com.au>

NSW Farmers

02 9478 1000

www.nswfarmers.org.au

NSW Rural Fire Service

02 8741 5555

www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

OzHarvest

1800 108 006

www.ozharvest.org

Parents & Citizens Association

1300 885 982

www.pandc.org.au

Physical Culture Club

02 9858 5122

<https://physicalculture.com.au/find-a-club>

Police Citizens Youth Clubs NSW

02 9625 9111

www.pycnsw.org.au

Pony Club NSW

02 4229 8977

www.pcansw.org.au

Presbyterian Church NSW

1300 773 774

www.pcnsw.org.au

Probus, NSW Clubs

1300 630 488

www.probusouthpacific.org/NSW

Returned & Services League NSW

02 9264 8188

www.rslnsw.org.au

Riding for the Disabled NSW

02 8736 1256

www.rdansw.org.au

Rotary Australia

02 8894 9800

www.rotaryaustralia.org.au

Royal Australian Historical Society

02 9247 8001

www.rahs.org.au

Royal Flying Doctor Service

02 9941 8859

www.flyingdoctor.org.au/nswact

Scouts NSW

1800 726 887

www.nsw.scouts.com.au

State Emergency Service NSW

1800 201 000

www.ses.nsw.gov.au/get-involved/volunteer

Stroke Recovery Association NSW

1300 650 594

www.strokensw.org.au

Swimming NSW

02 9763 5833

nsw.swimming.org.au/clubs/committee

Tennis NSW

1800 15 30 40

tennis@tennisnsw.com.au

www.tennis.com.au/nsw

Tidy Towns NSW

02 8594 4000

www.kab.org.au/tidy-towns/nsw

UNICEF

1300 884 233

www.unicef.org.au

Uniting Church of Australia, NSW & ACT

02 8267 4300

www.nswact.uca.org.au

United Hospital Auxiliaries of NSW

02 9926 4262

www.uhansw.websyte.com.au

Wheeling & Able

0408 622 055

admin@wheelingandable.org.au

www.wheelingandable.org.au

GENERAL CONTACTS

The Centre for Volunteering

02 9261 3600

info@volunteering.com.au

www.volunteering.com.au

NSW Volunteering

02 8753 8543

www.volunteering.nsw.gov.au

Indigenous Community Volunteers

1800 819 542

www.icv.com.au

About the Hidden Treasures Honour Roll

An annual initiative of Department of Primary Industries' Rural Women's Network, Hidden Treasures recognises the outstanding efforts of women volunteers in NSW and promotes the valuable role of volunteering to the community.

This important tribute captures inspirational stories, documenting and celebrating the unpaid work of women who are ensuring the viability of so many important and crucial community groups and charities such as emergency services, the arts, environment, social justice, education and sport organisation, and so many others within rural and regional communities.

The growing list of more than 1000 rural women volunteers is a testament to the generosity and hard work of so many women who are publicly appreciated by their community as part of this project.

We hope the Honour Roll will improve recognition of the important and diverse roles women volunteers play and that their stories will encourage others to take on volunteering roles.

For more about Hidden Treasures contact:
Rural Women's Network
NSW Department of Primary Industries
02 6391 3620
rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn





Hidden Treasures is an initiative of
Department of Primary Industries
Rural Women's Network



Department of
Primary Industries