



The Centre for
Volunteering

Media Release

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Perinatal depression advocate named 2025 North Shore Volunteer of the Year

A leading advocate for the Gidget Foundation Marcelle Cooper has been named the 2025 North Shore Volunteer of the Year, for her work raising awareness and support for parents suffering with perinatal depression and anxiety.

Ms Cooper was recognised today at the 2025 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards ceremony at Norths in Cammeray.

The NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards are hosted by The Centre for Volunteering to help promote and support volunteering across NSW.

They are now in their 19th year and celebrate the work of thousands of individuals and volunteer teams from a diverse range of organisations across the state.

Recipients of other individual and team awards were also announced today, including the inaugural Emergency Volunteer of the Year:

North Shore Young Volunteer of the Year: William Webster from Crows Nest

William is a crucial cog in the planning and delivery of events for the Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation.

His volunteer work includes setting up and delivering equipment for the hospital based events, logistics, on the ground support, packing up, and supporting fundraising.

North Shore Adult Volunteer of the Year: Marcelle Cooper from Crows Nest

Marcelle volunteers with the Gidget Foundation Australia, sharing her story of living with perinatal depression and anxiety (PNDA) with expectant and new parents. Her speaking and engagement helps raise awareness of the support and specialist services available for parents and families suffering with this treatable illness.

Her compelling and passionate words have helped to reach more than 6 million viewers on media and social media channels for the Gidget Foundation and PNDA.

North Shore Senior Volunteer of the Year: Garry Standen from St Leonards

Garry gives his time to support the People and Culture team at Taronga Zoo by designing and building elearning and staff recognition programs. His volunteer work over the past seven years has also included administrative work for the volunteer team at the zoo.



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North Shore Emergency Volunteer of the Year: Sally Fenton from Chatswood

Sally helps lead the cadet program at St John Ambulance Australia Harborside Combined Division where cadet attendance has experienced a threefold increase under her guidance.

She has provided more than 860 duty hours developing training material, leading live sessions including interactive simulations and collaborative exercises that encourage cadets to think critically and work as a team.

North Shore Volunteer Team of the Year: Mary's House Services Volunteer Team

The 100 volunteers at Mary's House Services provide day to day support to ensure women and their children staying at the refuge receive the help and care they need during this difficult period of their lives.

They provide child minding for clients when they are seeing counsellors or attending legal and financial clinics. They also help with cleaning, laundry, gardening, collecting groceries and donated meals, as well as grant writing, marketing and public relations; and organising community programs.

The Centre for Volunteering CEO Gemma Rygate said in difficult times, volunteers often come forward to meet a crisis with compassion.

"Volunteers are the quiet force, whether helping ease cost of living pressures, supporting those in crisis or responding on the front line of floods, fires and emergencies," Ms Rygate said.

"Their dedication isn't just admirable; it underpins a more resilient and compassionate society. These exceptional individuals give selflessly - often while juggling careers, study, and family life - yet they still choose to show up for others when it matters most."

The NSW Minister with responsibility for Volunteering, Jodie Harrison said:

"Congratulations to the recipients of the North Shore Volunteer of the Year Awards. You've been recognised as heroes by the people in your communities who know you best.

"Thank you for your ongoing contributions, which make New South Wales the best state to live and work in. These awards are an important way we recognise your passion and dedication to your local communities.

"The NSW Government is continuing to work with The Centre for Volunteering to build a more diverse and inclusive volunteering sector so that all our volunteers feel respected and acknowledged for their work."

North Shore volunteer award recipients will be invited to represent their region at the Gala State Ceremony at the end of the year, where the NSW Volunteer of the Year is announced across each category.



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About the NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards

The NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards are in their 19th year and have grown to become one of the largest celebrations of volunteering across Australia.

They are an annual program run by The Centre for Volunteering to recognise the outstanding work of volunteers and Leaders of Volunteers in every region across NSW.

Individuals or teams can be nominated in one of seven award categories.

The Award categories are:

- Young Volunteer of the Year – sponsored by the Minister for Youth – Hon Rose Jackson
- Adult Volunteer of the Year
- Senior Volunteer of the Year
- Volunteer Team of the Year
- Emergency Volunteer of the Year – sponsored by the Minister for Emergency Services – Hon Jihad Dib
- Not-for-Profit Voluntary Governance Award
- Volunteer Leader of the Year

Twenty-five regional ceremonies are held in towns and suburbs throughout NSW from mid-August until November.

The regional finalists will be invited to a Gala State ceremony in December in Sydney where the NSW Volunteer of the Year is announced. Recipients for the NSW Volunteer of the Year are also announced across the seven categories.

The Awards are run by the Centre for Volunteering. The NSW Government are the principal partners for the awards.



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