

Media Release

Monday 26 January 2026

Cockburn leaders recognised at City's 2026 Australia Day Community Citizen of the Year Awards

Taking a stand to improve the lives of others takes leadership and it is a common thread among the winners of the City of Cockburn's annual Australia Day Community Citizen of the Year Awards for 2026.

The overall title of Community Citizen of the Year was awarded to passionate community health professional and advocate **Clory Carrello**. He supplements his fulltime role as CEO at Cockburn Integrated Health with countless volunteer hours for the benefit of Cockburn residents.

As an active member of the City of Cockburn Youth Advisory Collective, **Lilijana Nicholls** ensures youth voices are represented in local decision-making. She is this year's Youth (16-30 years) Community Citizen of the Year.

Mike Graham's unwavering commitment and service over 45 years at Marine Rescue Cockburn has been recognised with the Senior (over 65 years) Community Citizen of the Year title.

Community-enriching **Community Collective Hamilton Hill Inc** and **Harvest Lakes Residents Association** are joint winners of the Active Citizenship – Group or Event award.

Recipients were announced at the City's annual Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony on 26 January where about 130 new Australian citizens also pledged their commitment to our country on the 77th anniversary of Australian Citizenship.

Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett said he had personally witnessed the tangible benefits the 2026 award winners had added to the quality of life of others in the Cockburn community.

"I am thankful every day for the passion and compassion of those that work hard behind the scenes in our community," Mayor Howlett said.

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“Without these people we would be so much poorer, in our hearts and in the knowledge that they serve as inspiring role-models for a tradition of helping others that has made Cockburn the vibrant and compassionate community it is today.”

Awardees for 2026 are:

- Community Citizen of the Year – Overall: **Clory Carrello**
- Community Citizen of the Year – Youth (16-30 years): **Lilijana Nicholls**
- Community Citizen of the Year – Senior (over 65 years of age): **Mike Graham**
- Active Citizenship – Group or Event joint winners: **Community Collective Hamilton Hill Inc** and **Harvest Lakes Residents Association**

As CEO at Cockburn Integrated Health, **Clory Carrello** champions innovative health including Cockburn Aboriginal Ear Health, Healthy Lifestyle, school nutrition and children’s spectacles programs.

The award-winning \$1.2m community-led Aboriginal ear health initiative delivers culturally safe, collaborative care that closes the ear health gap for many young people in Cockburn and further afield.

Clory’s dedication extends far beyond his professional role. He generously invests time and energy into volunteer work in mental health governance, having served as Chair and board member for multiple organisations over many years.

Lilijana Nicholls demonstrates an inclusivity that makes space for young people in Cockburn, as an active member of the City of Cockburn Youth Advisory Collective.

She elevates the voice of local youth to ensure their perspective is represented in important decision-making, attending Council meetings, mentoring fellow young people, and contributing to safety initiatives like Neighbourhood Watch.

She founded the Australian STEM Project, a not-for-profit organisation designed to make science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) more accessible, particularly girls and those from underrepresented backgrounds.

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Its programs have reached hundreds of young people across WA, through creative, hands-on workshops that inspire curiosity and confidence.

Lilijana's advocacy also has a state-wide impact as an appointee to the WA Ministerial Youth Advisory Council, where she contributes to youth policy development on education, wellbeing, and inclusivity.

Mike Graham has served in multiple roles at Marine Rescue Cockburn, including 20 consecutive years as Commander, along with Skipper, Radio Officer, and providing administrative support during post-rescue communications.

Guiding the team through numerous rescue missions, Mike has also been instrumental in building the infrastructure that allows Marine Rescue Cockburn to operate 24/7.

He has spent hundreds of hours fundraising for essential equipment, providing marine safety education, and conducting marine radio coverage from his home seven days a week.

Community Collective Hamilton Hill Inc operates an open pantry seven days a week in Cockburn to tackle food insecurity and the rising cost of living.

Every month they help up to 3,000 people by providing essential items like bread, fresh produce, pantry staples, frozen food, pet supplies, and sanitary products.

The volunteer group also delivers emergency food hampers to those in urgent need.

Based at the Southwell Community Centre, the collective collaborates with other local groups including Freo Street Doctor, City of Cockburn financial advisors, and Freo Street Kitchen, while also supporting schools and other community groups.

Harvest Lakes Residents Association has enabled the Harvest Lakes community in Atwell to blossom into a vibrant, connected and caring place to live and visit.

It offers a variety of initiatives including cultural events, wellness programs, environmental stewardship, youth engagement, and historical education that build meaningful and sustainable connection in the growing community.



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Activities include an annual Christmas concert, school holiday workshops, clothing swaps, community clean ups, youth mentoring and turtle conservation.

Caption l-r: Clory Carrello, Serena Gamble and Owen Gamble (Hamilton Hill Community Collective Inc) Mayor Logan Howlett, Lilijana Nicholls, Leah Vagel (Harvest Lakes Residents Association) and Mike Graham.

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