



Media Release

EMBARGOED until 10pm 23 May 2026

Ensuring no one left behind worthy hallmark of Cockburn's 2026 volunteer award winners

Main points:

- The winner of the 2026 Volunteer of the Year is **Serena Gamble**, founder of the Community Collective Hamilton Hill Incorporated
- The Volunteer Organisation of the Year award for 2026 was presented to **Friends of the Community Incorporated**
- The winner of the Mayor's Volunteer Award for 2026 is **Lani Slaughter** of the Treeby Community Association Inc. and Coogee Beach Surf Life Saving Club (Inc).

Ensuring no one is left behind is a key attribute of the passionate and gritty winners of Cockburn's Volunteer Awards for 2026.

Described by their nominators as the first to arrive and last leave, kind, non-judgmental and out-of-the-box thinkers, this year's winners again demonstrate Cockburn's rich volunteering tradition.

The annual awards were held to coincide with National Volunteer Week 2026 (18-24 May) and recognise a Volunteer of the Year, a Volunteer Organisation of the Year, plus a Mayor's Volunteer Award, with 91 nominations across the three categories.

Lots of people would go without if it wasn't for **Serena Gamble**, winner of the **2026 Volunteer of the Year** title.

Supported by her husband Owen and a team of dedicated volunteers, Serena spends six days a week ensuring hundreds of people receive free food and words of comfort in her role with Community Collective Hamilton Hill Incorporated, and formerly with Feed It Forward Inc.

Using her own car and personal funds, Serena ensures families in need don't go hungry. The team has already begun preparing Christmas hampers, packed with love



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and kindness, to promote joy at what can be an emotional time of year. Last year, about 120 Christmas hampers comprising food and presents, were donated to local families.

Patrick Rivers from Coogee Beach Surf Life Saving Club (Inc) was awarded second place and third place went to **Diana Corbyn** of Cockburn Community Wildlife Corridor Inc.

The **Volunteer Organisation of the Year** award title has been presented to **Friends of the Community Incorporated**.

This unique group has spent the past 20 years using food and drink service and certified training, equipment hire, and electrical testing and tagging to raise funds, while also organising many local events including the Manning Park Run for the past decade.

Twenty-five young people have graduated from the FOC's youth volunteer training program. It promotes citizenship and includes a job-related skills certificate encompassing customer and food service, leadership, occupational health and safety as well as all facets of not-for-profit charity organisations.

It has invested \$200,000 back into the community through a variety of donations and grants plus scholarships that include 30 provided to Lakeland Senior High School students to help with education supplies.

Jandakot Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade Inc. and **Community Collective Hamilton Hill Incorporated** took out second and third place respectively in the annual organisational award.

The winner of the **Mayor's Volunteer Award for 2026** is Treeby Community Association (TCA) President and Coogee Beach SLSC volunteer **Lani Slaughter**.

As TCA president, Lani can be found doing everything from communicating with residents, erecting gazebos, cooking, cleaning and operating movie equipment as she achieves the community connection and diversity goals she set when establishing the group in 2017.

Some of the community events she has helped introduce include Harmony Day, Diwali,



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health and wellbeing sessions, Halloween and the Treeby Olympics, while hiring event equipment to other resident groups to enable their own events

She began volunteering at Coogee Beach SLSC in 2014 and has achieved a bronze medallion, logging over 600 volunteering hours in total.

Her roles at the SLSC included equipment officer, patrol captain, and club coordinator.

Travis Jewell from Jandakot Volunteer Bushfire Brigade Inc. and **Colin Gibb** of Yangebup Knights Junior Ball Club Incorporated received second and third place recognition respectively.

City of Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett said the winners of 2026 were as impressive as always, with many having received award recognition in previous years, along with some impressive newcomers whose dedication to community was commendable.

“Cockburn has a strong core of volunteers dedicated to making their community better, and serving as role-models for the honourable tradition of volunteering,” Mayor Howlett said.

“In keeping with the current theme of National Volunteer Week, I encourage more people to view 2026 as ‘your year to volunteer’.

“The benefits of volunteering are immense, from increasing belonging and reducing loneliness for volunteers and those they help, to creating a sense of purpose and achievement, building confidence, and staying physically and mentally healthy and active.

“I encourage locals to check out the City’s Volunteer Centre on our website to find out about the rewarding roles available in our community.”



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Learn more about this year's deserving winners –

Volunteer of the year, 2nd place, Patrick Rivers, Coogee Beach SLSC:

With 17 years volunteering at the club, Patrick has done everything from implementing patrol systems to equipment audits, mentoring new lifesavers, coordinating Nippers and event water safety, to contributing to state and national lifesaving initiatives.

Patrick serves on the Lifesaving and Beach Management Committees, while nationally he represents SLSWA on the SLSA Lifesaving Systems Working Group, contributing to initiatives that enhance lifesaving quality, efficiency, and safety across Australia.

In 2025, Patrick was named the Surf Life Saving Western Australian Lifesaver of the Year.

Volunteer of the year, 3rd place, Diana Corbyn, Cockburn Community Wildlife Corridor Inc.:

For the past seven years Diana has been dedicated to bushcare and hand weeding the Tuart block in the Cockburn Community Wildlife Corridor.

Liaising with the Rehabilitating Roe 8 Program Manager, she leads volunteers and provides occupational health and safety and bushland hygiene guidance.

She encourages best practice weeding techniques that result in minimal soil disturbance and helps volunteers discern native plants from invasive species.

Diana has worked hard to eradicate the black flag weed via hand-weeding which allows annual plants such as native daisies and Mulla Mulla to germinate and grow creating a more biodiverse vegetation in both undamaged areas and those bulldozed in 2017.

The qualified botanist and TAFE lecturer retired 8 years ago and also volunteers for the Wildflower Society of Western Australia.



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Volunteer Organisation of the Year, 2nd place, Jandakot Volunteer Bushfire Brigade Inc.:

Active in the community for 59 years, the Jandakot brigade comprises volunteers who provide emergency bushfire response, hazard reduction burning, training and skills development, equipment and appliance maintenance, and community education.

Members respond to incidents at all hours, committing significant unpaid time to training and maintenance, supporting prolonged multi-day fire campaigns, conducting hazard reduction burns to protect the community, mentoring new volunteers, and actively engaging with local schools, events, and community programs beyond core operational requirements.

Volunteer Organisation of the Year, 3rd place, Community Collective Hamilton Hill Incorporated:

For the past year, this group has spent seven days a week picking up donations of food and household goods from multiple businesses and community sources before creating food packages for the growing number of people in need in Cockburn.

In that time the service has supported 15,000 individuals, community group members and school children access free fruit, vegetables and food items.

Six days a week, volunteers sort, present and organise food for people to collect from the open pantry donation centre where other tasks involve recycling, cleaning and safety management.

The registered charity is governed by a dedicated committee, with Serena Gamble and two other members receiving awards in recent years.

It leases a City-owned property in Hamilton Hill with space for the Fremantle Street Doctor to visit weekly, and the City's financial counsellor to attend each fortnight, each providing free assistance.

Emergency hampers are provided daily, a morning tea is held each fortnight and it has held four Hami Eats community dinner events at Memorial Hall, feeding about 500 people.



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The service replaces the open pantry Serena and her husband Owen operated from the driveway of their Hamilton Hill home as part of Feed It Forward Hamilton Hill.

The charity also prevents tonnes of good food deemed waste by local businesses, from ending up in landfill.

Mayor's Volunteer Award, 2nd place, Travis Jewell, Jandakot Volunteer Bushfire Brigade Inc.:

Travis has been an active firefighter for about 15 years with several stints as 4th Lieutenant in that time.

He has led firefighting appliances and operated in high-pressure situations, demonstrating strong leadership, sound judgement, and an unwavering commitment to community safety.

In 2026, Travis was appointed a Fire Control Officer for the City of Cockburn, a significant responsibility that reflects the trust placed in him and his extensive operational experience.

As Junior Vice President of the Jandakot Jets Football Club, Travis oversees all football-related matters providing leadership and guidance to coaches, players, support staff, and volunteers, and fostering a positive and inclusive club culture.

He has volunteered as an Auskick coach for the past three years, fostering teamwork, confidence, and a love of sport in young children.

He supports the President and works collaboratively with the committee to ensure the efficient operation of the club, strengthening its sustainability and community impact.

Mayor's Volunteer Award, 3rd place, Colin Gibb, Yangebup Knights Junior Ball Club Incorporated:

The Yangebup Knights Teeball Club President takes on diverse operational responsibilities including organising fixtures, club liaison, umpiring, marking out and maintaining playing diamonds, representing the club at state committee level, and working closely with Cockburn council to ensure facilities are safe and well maintained.



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Colin has been President for 20 years and has made an outstanding and sustained contribution to volunteering in Cockburn through his long-term leadership.

He has also had significant involvement in the women's softball team operating from Aubin Grove Reserve.

Winners were announced at a special ocean-themed awards evening at the Spearwood Dalmatinac Sport and Community Club on 23 May.

All nominations were submitted by members of the community.

Find out more about volunteering in the Cockburn community on the City's [website](#).

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