

Media Release

24 May 2025

Cockburn's most dedicated recognised for lasting legacy at 2025 volunteer awards

Main points:

- The winner of the 2025 Volunteer of the Year title is **Leanne Stickland** who volunteers for Cockburn Pets and Wildlife (including Lost and Found), Salvation Army Emergency Services and the Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Conservation Centre
- The Volunteer Organisation of the Year award was presented to the **Cockburn Community Wildlife Corridor Inc Bushcare Group**
- The winner of the Mayor's Volunteer Award for 2025 is **Mike Graham** of Marine Rescue Cockburn

Boasting a combined 125+ years' service to our community, the winners of Cockburn's Volunteer Awards for 2025 have left lasting legacies in every corner of our City, from people to pets and native animals.

The annual awards were held to coincide with National Volunteer Week 2025 (19-25 May) and recognise a Volunteer of the Year, a Volunteer Organisation of the Year, plus a Mayor's Volunteer Award, with 53 organisations represented among 75 nominations.

Described as an inspirational and compassionate leader, **Leanne Stickland** is the **2025 Volunteer of the Year**, after spending more than 25 years volunteering with several local organisations and advocating for many sections of our community.

Leanne's volunteering journey began when she rescued a dog and her puppy from euthanasia, inspiring the nationwide 'Pound Hound' program which helps rescue pets find homes, saving thousands of lives.

She also founded Cockburn Pets and Wildlife which reunites pets with their owners, rescues wildlife and provides animal welfare education, and as well as Cockburn Youth in Emergency Services Cadet program.

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Other volunteering roles have included Salvation Army Emergency Services, supporting first responders during bushfires and search operations, and at Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Conservation Centre.

She has advocated for nurse recognition, more inclusive NDIS processes, and better TAFE access for students with disability.

Catherine Lumsden from Hami Helps, Community Collective Hamilton Hill, Hamilton Hill Community Group and the Hamilton Hill & Surrounds Pets and Cockburn Pets Facebook page was awarded second place and third place went to **Helen Miskell** from Treeby Community Association.

The **Volunteer Organisation of the Year** award title has been presented to the **Cockburn Community Wildlife Corridor Inc Bushcare Group**.

For more than seven years, this community-lead group has worked to protect and restore Cockburn bushland in the former Roe 9 corridor.

Each fortnight, a team of 18 people have enhanced a tract of Tuart bushland on the corner of Stock and Forest roads, along with the Blackwood Avenue bushland.

They have added tube stock to the site, which they water themselves, and complete hand-weeding to avoid the use of herbicides and work with the Rehabilitate Roe 8 project and South-East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL) to ensure best practice.

Their tireless work, including rubbish removal and brush-cutting, has created a thriving bushland environment regularly frequented by flocks of Carnaby's black cockatoo.

Cockburn Turtle Trackers Saving Our Snake-Necked Turtle were named in second place and third place went to **Repair Café Cockburn**.

The winner of the **Mayor's Volunteer Award** for 2025 is **Mike Graham** from Marine Rescue Cockburn.

Not only has his service to the community saved lives, but Mike's 45 years at Marine Rescue Cockburn has meant he has taken on almost every role within the organisation.

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Described as calm under pressure, he was Commander for 20 consecutive years, Skipper, Radio Officer, trainer, fundraiser, volunteer mentor, and his current role is in the vital area of post-rescue community engagement.

In his early years he helped secure the infrastructure that enables 24/7 operations, helped build the crew room, boatshed, and headquarters, and worked tirelessly to maintain vessels and facilities.

Cockburn Senior Citizens Association President **Cono Favazzo** received the award for second place while **Kevin Hughes** of Cockburn Care was in third.

City of Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett said towns and cities were built from the ground up by people who served their communities.

“Again we have received a healthy collection of nominees, which demonstrates the rich volunteering tradition that exists, and always has, in Cockburn.

“We are all very thankful for the work our volunteers do, both behind the scenes and in more visible ways,” Mayor Howlett said.

“Their desire to help all people is a big part of what makes Cockburn the best, and kindest, place to be.”

Learn more about this year’s deserving winners –

Volunteer of the Year, 2nd place, Catherine Lumsden, Hami Helps, Community Collective Hamilton Hill; Hamilton Hill Community Group; Hamilton Hill & Surrounds Pets and Cockburn Pets Facebook pages:

Volunteering in Cockburn for more than 15 years, Catherine is described as both quietly dedicated and full of energy.

She volunteers about 30 hours a week for seven different community organisations, providing expertise and compassion in equal measure.

Some of her regular activities include organising community dinners and Christmas events, rescuing lost pets, applying for grants, sharing emergency updates, helping run

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local workshops and managing multiple social media accounts.

Catherine has also run a uniform and book exchange to support families at Fremantle College for the past eight years.

Volunteer of the Year, 3rd place, Helen Miskell, Treeby Community Association:

Described as the heartbeat of Treeby, Helen has been secretary, treasurer, grant-writer, event organiser/manager, website updater and created several community partnerships in her varied roles at Treeby Community Association.

She has established a community garden with a greenhouse, book library, undercover meeting area and a garden shed.

Volunteer Organisation of the Year, 2nd place, Cockburn Turtle Trackers Saving Our Snake-Necked Turtle:

Cockburn's volunteer turtle trackers are no strangers to early mornings and late nights, and their passion for the local Southwestern Snake-necked Turtle has combined with expert training to create a safety-net for the vulnerable species.

In the past year the group has protected 323 turtles, secured 192 nests, and contributed over 1,000 volunteer hours across seven lakes in the City of Cockburn.

Volunteer Organisation of the Year, 3rd place, Repair Café Cockburn:

For more than five years, a bunch of boffins has gathered to fix broken items while also connecting communities and creating a sense of belonging.

These volunteers are skilled in everything from electronics and tool sharpening to clothing repair and bike maintenance, repairing favourite toys, tools and heirlooms while saving hundreds of items from landfill disposal.

And all this is done while sharing stories, enjoying a cuppa and introducing neighbours in a welcoming hub that operates monthly.

Mayor's Volunteer Award, 2nd place, Cono Favazzo, Cockburn Senior Citizens



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Association Inc:

A resident of Cockburn for 80 years and association president for 12, Cono has volunteered at various clubs and organisations for the past 25 years.

An enormous heart and dedication to community have earned Cono recognition for a plethora of volunteer activities over the years.

Some of these include driving seniors to appointments, helping set up community events, running bingo nights and barbecues, cleaning, fundraising, and even pulling weeds or doing shopping runs for those who need a hand.

He is also involved with local groups St Jerome's Seniors, The Prime Timers and Southern Cross Care.

Mayor's Volunteer Award, 3rd place, Kevin Hughes, Cockburn Care:

Supporting fellow veterans with quiet understanding is just one treasured role Kevin has fulfilled during his time with Cockburn Care.

Known for his flexibility, generosity and positivity, Kevin's treasured assistance has included driver for social outings and service access, a teacher sharing a range of skills from carpentry to cake baker, plus a valued mentor and companion.

Winners were announced at a special awards evening with a 60s theme at the Spearwood Dalmatinac Sport and Community Club on 24 May.
All nominations were submitted by members of the community.

Find out more about volunteering in the Cockburn community on the City's [website](https://www.cockburn.wa.gov.au).

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For more information contact:
Media and Communications Officer
City of Cockburn
T: 08 9411 3551
E: media@cockburn.wa.gov.au