



Port Stephens Annual Awards guidelines

Purpose

The Port Stephens Annual Awards recognise individuals, groups and organisations whose outstanding service, leadership and achievements make Port Stephens a better place to live, work, play and grow.

These awards provide Council with the opportunity to formally recognise individuals and groups who have demonstrated outstanding service to the community, while strengthening community pride and celebrating the people that shape Port Stephens.

There are seven award categories:

- Freeman of Port Stephens
- Citizen of the Year
- Young Citizen of the Year
- Port Stephens Medal
- Sportsperson of the Year
- Cultural Endeavour
- Environmental Award

Eligibility criteria

- Nominees must be residents of Port Stephens, except in exceptional circumstances as determined by the Assessment Panel.
- Awards will not be granted posthumously.
- Self-nominations will not be accepted.
- Nominations must fit within one or more of the award categories.
- Nominees may be either volunteers or paid employees.
- Awards may be awarded more than once to a particular person or group at the sole discretion of the Assessment Panel.

Assessment Process

Applications will be assessed and determined by a panel comprising of

- the Mayor (Chair), General Manager (or delegate),
- three Councilors (one from each Ward, drawn from the 355c Port Stephens Australia Day Committee),
- three community representatives from the 355c Port Stephens Australia Day Committee, and
- one Freeman of Port Stephens, invited by the Mayor.

The Panel determines the most appropriate award category for each nomination and assesses nominations using the information provided and the assessment criteria for the category.

The assessment panel will consider the assessment criteria for each category using the rating guide below.

Rating Guide:

- 1 = Limited evidence
- 2 = Some evidence
- 3 = Good evidence
- 4 = Strong evidence
- 5 = Exceptional evidence

Nomination Checklist

Have you;

- Clearly explained what the nominee has done? (provide specific examples of achievements)
- Described how the nominee has benefited or impacted the Port Stephens community?
- Included dates and specific achievements?
- Explained why the nominee deserves recognition (how does their contribution stand out from others)?
- Attached any supporting evidence including testimonials?

Award Categories

Freeman of Port Stephens

Recognises distinguished service of the highest order over many years. This award is reserved for exceptional lifetime contributions and is not necessarily awarded every year.

Assessment Criteria:

- Lifetime contribution to Port Stephens
- Exceptional leadership and influence
- Long-term community impact
- Legacy that will benefit future generations

Citizen of the Year

Recognises an individual who has made a significant contribution to the Port Stephens community, particularly during the previous 12 months.

Assessment Criteria:

- Outstanding community contribution over the past 12 months
- Demonstrated leadership in the community
- Positive and measurable impact for Port Stephens
- Service above and beyond expectations

Young Citizen of the Year

Recognises a young person aged 25 years or younger who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and contribution.

Assessment Criteria:

- Leadership and initiative
- Community involvement
- Achievements and contribution
- Positive role model

Port Stephens Medal

Recognises distinguished service by an individual, organisation or group.

Assessment Criteria:

- Sustained service
- Community involvement
- Positive role model
- Achievements and contributions

Sportsperson of the Year

Recognises excellence in sport through participation, coaching, officiating or administration.

Assessment Criteria:

- Sporting excellence
- Leadership
- Community contribution
- Inspiring participation

Cultural Endeavour

Recognises outstanding contributions to arts, culture, heritage and creativity.

Assessment Criteria:

- Cultural leadership
- Creative achievement
- Community participation
- Community contribution

Environmental Award

Recognises outstanding environmental leadership and sustainability initiatives.

Assessment Criteria:

- Service to the environment
- Community participation
- Environmental leadership
- Environmental outcomes

Presentation Ceremony

The Port Stephens Annual Awards Ceremony is held on Australia Day each year to provide an opportunity for Council to formally recognise the amazing efforts of groups and individuals from around our region.

Contact

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Related policies

[Port Stephens Annual Awards Policy](#)
[Port Stephens Community Strategic Plan](#)
[Code of Conduct](#)

Review date

11 September 2026