

2025 Citizen of the Year

Lyn Hood

They say that music is the soundtrack to life, and if that is true then there is a single individual in the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu who has provided this community's soundtrack for almost 50 years. Ballidu local Lyn Hood married farmer David Hood in 1975 and arrived in this community with a teaching degree and the ability to play the piano effortlessly. Lyn taught in Koorda, Ballidu and the Wongan Hills schools throughout her career, however, it is her volunteering that I would like to highlight here.



To the best of my ability, I have tried to note all the occasions that Lyn has volunteered her time and skills over the years, but I am confident that there will be things that I have missed despite my best efforts. What made my investigation particularly challenging was the stock standard answer I received whenever I asked any community member how long Lyn Hood had been involved in a particular area; "Oh, about 100 years" I heard again and again. Although this made obtaining accurate timelines difficult, it did cement my belief that Lyn is well and truly worthy of Citizen of the Year. It should be noted that this is not the first time Lyn has been nominated and that a group of very passionate women approached me to write this nomination on their behalf – each believing that she is well past deserving of this award.

It would be easier for me to name the local events that Lyn hasn't played the piano at over the last half-century. Nevertheless, it seems fitting to start this list with the Wongan Hills Australia Day breakfast, which Lyn played at for many years before packing up and heading back to Ballidu to participate in their festivities for the day as well.

WHATS (Wongan Hills Amateur Theatrical Society) was established in 2000, and Lyn was involved in all 12 productions between 2000 and 2019. Most people consider this commitment a 2-show event, not realising the amount of rehearsal hours that went into those impressive evenings. Over the course of 10 weeks leading up to each production, the society would rehearse twice a week, with extra rehearsals in the final week. Lyn was there for everyone, queuing the actors with her music and assisting wherever needed, including sewing costumes.

Lyn also played the piano or organ at countless weddings and funerals, helping to celebrate the love and lives of community members across the Shire, learning new songs on request and travelling long distances to be a part of special occasions. Lyn's generosity isn't limited to our community as she has also spent the past 50 years playing piano for the Dalwallinu Baptist Church, including Sunday services, Carols by Candlelight and Sunday School presentations. She also played for the local Wheatbelt Christian Fellowship in Wongan two or three times a year when needed and has played at the end-of-year school concerts in Wongan Hills, Ballidu and Cadoux.



NEWSLETTER

As if the above is not already enough, Lyn is also a life member of the Wongan Hills Netball Association for her dedication to playing, coaching, and refereeing games throughout the decades. Lyn has also been our town's dedicated Librarian for more than 20 years now, always helpful and obliging, with an excellent knowledge of books and community members' needs. In her spare time, she also worked as a music teacher, offering private home lessons for young children with an interest in music.

For more than 20 years, Lyn has played at the annual Senior Citizen's Christmas party, and in more recent years, she has been an essential organiser of the event, ensuring that the special lunch is filled with quality entertainment and is a success every year.

In 2005, the Community Voices Choir was established, and of course, Lyn was there from the beginning. In fact, even before that, there was a small group of locals, including members from each of the town's churches who had organised the local Carols by Candlelight. Lyn is a fundamental part of the Community Voices Choir, practising fortnightly and performing at countless events over the years, including wine and cheese nights, official openings, art exhibitions and special occasions year-round.

Lyn has been a constant support to husband David, throughout his time on the Council and years in Rotary – cooking, baking and assisting in organising events and fundraisers. Lyn joined Rotary as a member herself in 2019. She was then Secretary for the group from 2020 until last year when she then stepped into the role of President herself. During recent years Lyn has also been battling significant health challenges that have not slowed her dedication.

All of the above and more has been carried out without fuss and absolutely no need for acknowledgement, all the while being a busy farmer's wife, mother, and grandmother, based on a farm 40kms out of town. On the rare occasion that Lyn is not involved in a community event, you will still see her there, supporting the cause, reason, or group behind the occasion. Never too far away, never saying no, and always with a smile on her face, Mrs Lyn Hood is the true definition of an upstanding citizen dedicated to community service and there are many locals who believe she is worthy of the Citizen of the Year award for 2025.





NEWSLETTER

2025 Community Group of the Year

Wongan Hills Tidy Towns Association

This dedicated group of hardworking volunteers can be seen out and about in all kinds of weather, bravely collecting rubbish and refuse to keep our town of Wongan Hills neat and tidy.

Our community parks are always beautifully maintained, well looked after, and enjoyed by many families and children, who often celebrate special occasions while making use of the playground equipment that keeps little ones busy and happy.

The group also maintains out-of-town tourist attractions, including:

- Gathercole Reserve
- Mount O'Brien
- Mount Matilda Walk
- Christmas Rock Walk
- The Arboretum
- All the Wildflower Walks around the town



The Arboretum, located on the outskirts of town, is a dedicated reserve where many native trees and shrubs are grown for display. Under the guidance of Bruce and the committed volunteers, these plants are nurtured and cared for to ensure future generations can continue to enjoy them.

This group also encourages residents to take pride in their gardens for the enjoyment of both locals and visitors. They coordinate the annual Garden of the Year competition, which includes various categories such as water-wise gardens and business gardens. Entries are anonymously judged, and a presentation ceremony is held in conjunction with the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu, where winners receive certificates in recognition of their efforts.

This enthusiastic group, easily recognised in their orange vests, work tirelessly in all weather conditions to keep our town tidy and immaculate for the benefit of all who live here and those who visit the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu.

This dedicated and hardworking association deserves to be recognised for their invaluable contribution to the community and be awarded Community Group of the Year for 2025.



2025 Community Event of the Year

Wongan Hills Apex Club's 'Bogan Bingo' Evening

Held in February 2024, the event was a huge success, raising an impressive \$11,500 for the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).

The night attracted 120 attendees from various locations, including Moora, Bunbury, Toodyay, Perth, and the local area. The event featured a range of fun activities and games, with many guests enthusiastically dressing up in classic 'Bogan' outfits to embrace the theme.

Local businesses generously supported the event by donating goods for the auction and raffles, while others contributed cash directly to the event's MyCause page.



To further engage the community, the Wongan Hills Fire Brigade was invited to participate by selling burgers, providing them with an opportunity to increase their visibility and raise funds for their own initiatives.

The Apex Club also provided a courtesy bus service, collecting visitors from the caravan park and local residents, ensuring everyone arrived and returned home safely.

In the lead-up to the event, the club organised fundraising BBQs to raise additional funds and promote ticket sales. The dedication of the club's members, along with countless volunteer hours, resulted in a highly successful evening and a significant amount raised for RFDS.

Due to its success, the Apex Club now plans to make 'Bogan Bingo' an annual event, continuing to support RFDS and bringing the community together for a night of fun and fundraising.

This well-organised, community-driven event is a deserving recipient of the award for Community Event of the Year for 2025.





NEWSLETTER

AUSTRALIA DAY POOL PARTY A SPLASHING SUCCESS!

This year's Australia Day Community Fun Day at the Wongan Hills Swimming Pool was an event to remember, with record-breaking attendance that truly showcased the vibrant spirit of our community.

Thanks to the incredible support of a fully funded grant from the National Australia Day Council, we were able to provide a fun-filled day for families, friends, and neighbours to come together and celebrate what it means to be Australian.



The day was packed with activities and contributions that made it extra special:

A delicious BBQ cooked by the Wongan Hills Youth Group, who did a fantastic job feeding the crowd.

Australia Day Cupcakes by Marlees Morish Morsels: A sweet treat that everyone couldn't stop raving about!

Fantastic entertainment was provided by DJ David Dew, whose music kept the energy high and the atmosphere lively.

A big thanks to Jules Anderton for the wonderful photos that helped capture the spirit of the day!

Attendees enjoyed the water slides, inflatables, and a fun day in the pool while also taking time to connect, relax, and celebrate in true community fashion. We were thrilled to have CEO Sam Dolzadelli and Cr Mandy Stephenson join the festivities. Sam even braved the water slide, much to the delight of the crowd.

Exceptional feedback poured in from the community, with many describing the event as one of the best Australia Day celebrations yet. It was heartwarming to see so many smiling faces, hear the laughter, and witness the incredible turnout.

We extend our deepest thanks to everyone who attended and supported the event. Your enthusiasm, participation, and community spirit are what make events like these so special.





NEWSLETTER

AUSTRALIA DAY BBQ BREAKFAST - WHAT AN AMAZING DAY IT WAS!

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu's Australia Day BBQ Breakfast was a wonderful celebration of community spirit, bringing together friends, families, and neighbours to mark this special occasion.

In Wongan Hills, 129 attendees gathered at the Community Park for a delicious breakfast, kindly organised by Apex, with help from Rotary and the CWA.

Cr Brian Donnellan, Cr Geoff Chambon, and CEO Sam Dolzadelli were on hand to welcome the crowd and enjoy the morning festivities.

Over in Ballidu, 20 attendees joined the breakfast at Alpha Park, hosted by the Ballidu Progress Group, where Cr Mandy Stephenson greeted the community and celebrated the day.



The morning concluded when the following awards were presented by Cr Mandy Stephenson, Cr Brian Donnellan, and Cr Geoff Chambon:

Community Service Awards

- Citizen of the Year - Lyn Hood
- Community Group of the Year - Wongan Hills Tidy Towns
- Community Event of the Year - Apex Club's 'Bogan Bingo' Evening

Christmas Light Competition

Wongan Hills Best House:

- 1st place - Ben and Bryony Milton
- 2nd place - Sandra and Ash Dowsett
- 3rd place - Kym and Sonya Thomas

Wongan Hills Best Business:

- Elders Wongan Hills

Ballidu Best House:

- Dawn and Ted Vaughan

A heartfelt thank you to Apex, Rotary, CWA, and the Ballidu Progress Group for their hard work in organising these events, and to everyone who attended for making this Australia Day so special. Thanks to Jules Anderton for capturing these moments and providing us with such fantastic photographs!





NEWSLETTER

CEMETERY TOILET INSTALLATION PROJECT

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu is pleased to announce the installation of a new toilet facility at the Wongan Hills Cemetery, addressing a need identified by the community in the most recent Customer Service Survey.

This project has been proposed and led by the Wongan Hills Rotary Club, with strong support from additional community groups. Funding has been provided through the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program (LRCIP), a Federal Government initiative, with further contributions from the Rotary Club and local organisations.

Preliminary planning and designs are currently underway, with construction scheduled for completion by 30 June 2025.

This project reflects the value of community collaboration and the importance of investing in essential infrastructure to support residents and visitors.

The Shire extends its appreciation to the Wongan Hills Rotary Club, supporting community groups, and the Federal Government for their contributions in bringing this project to fruition.

Further updates will be provided as the project progresses.

HARVEST BAN SMS SERVICE

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu provides a free emergency SMS service to advise residents and relevant personnel of emergency notifications, such as when a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban has been imposed in our Shire. If you are not currently receiving the messages and would like to receive updates, please visit:

www.wongan.wa.gov.au/community/emergency-management/harvest-and-vehicle-movement-bans.aspx to sign up now or alternatively visit the Shire Administration Office for assistance in signing up.

CURRENT ROADWORKS



CONSTRUCTION CREW - Dowerin Kalannie Road Reconstruction.



MAINTENANCE GRADERS - Craig Rd Maintenance Grading.

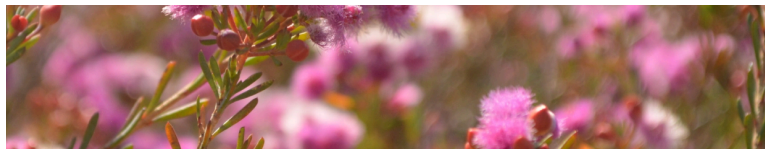


BACKHOE CREW - Stickland St Kerb Removal and Ballidu Rubbish Tip Maintenance



TOWN MAINTENANCE - Various Locations Street/Footpath Maintenance

All Above Worksites Will Be Under The Direction Of Traffic Management.



UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

TV Decommission Information Session

Wednesday 12th February - 6pm - Wongan Hills CRC Function Room

Annual General Meeting of Electors

Wednesday 12th February - 7pm - Wongan Hills CRC Function Room

Ordinary Council Meeting

Wednesday 26th February - 3pm - Wongan Hills Shire Chambers

STAY IN TOUCH



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