



MEDIA RELEASE 5 November 2020

NT VOLUNTEERS REWARDED FOR KEEPING UP THEIR GREAT WORK

Darwin based retiree and music lover, Lyla Wills, has been named the overall winner of the Northern Territory Volunteer of the Year Award 2020.

A deserved recipient, 86 year old Lyla has been volunteering in pre and primary schools for 30 years. She was selected in the top award after winning the **Chief Minister's Volunteer of the Year Award** for the Top End where she was up against seven other Central Australia and Top End award category winners.

A proficient piano player, Lyla is passionate about her music, and sharing time and space with her treasured pupils. Through the gift of music, Lyla thrives on their joy and seeing an increase in confidence. Her commitment and faithfulness can be felt all over the Territory, with the judges conceding that her weekly commitment to volunteering is commendable.

Evelyn O'Loughlin, CEO of Volunteering SA&NT said that it is this wonderful volunteer story and more, that, in a turbulent year, brings a smile to people's faces.

"It is more important than ever to recognise, applaud and celebrate everyone working in the volunteering sector, and the NT Volunteer of the Year Awards are just one way to share the good news.

"It just goes to show, even with the volunteering sector experiencing major changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic this year, volunteers have been acknowledged for their valuable work in their communities.

"We all know someone that volunteers, and under trying conditions, these wonderful people have certainly kept up their great work," said Evelyn.

With a record number of nominations, other sectors represented in the list of winners include emergency services, sport and youth.

The announcement of the winner for the **Excellence in Volunteer Management Award** at the Darwin presentation on 5 November called for an additional celebration, as it fell on International Volunteer Managers Day. This important day recognises the backbone support of the people who lead volunteer programs, providing support and guidance to volunteers.

These awards went to two remarkable volunteer managers - Christine Turner, St John Ambulance (NT) in Darwin and Amanda Houston from the Alice Springs Volunteer Bushfire Brigade.

Nominees, sponsors and special guests joined Volunteering NT in announcing the winners at gala presentations in Alice Springs on 4 November and Darwin on 5 November 2020.

Media enquiries and interviews

Evelyn O'Loughlin, CEO

T 08 8221 7177 M 0421 724 272

E evelyn.oloughlin@volunteeringsa-nt.org.au

Emily Zesers, A/Executive Manager

M 0417 871 288

E emily.zesers@volunteeringsa-nt.org.au

Proudly supported by Alice Springs Town Council, Community Bendigo Bank Alice Springs, INPEX and Jacana Energy.

2020 Award winner - NT wide

Volunteer of the Year Award	Lyla Wills Millner Preschool
------------------------------------	---

2020 Award winners – Central Australia and Top End

Central Australia		Top End	
Chief Minister's Volunteer of the Year Award	Winner: Sharon Donnellan Alice Springs Athletics Club <i>Highly commended:</i> Jude Mapleson Arts & Culture sector volunteer	Chief Minister's Volunteer of the Year Award	Winner: Lyla Wills Millner Preschool <i>Highly commended:</i> Baburam Bhattaraiz Nepalese Association of Northern Territory
Chief Minister's Youth Volunteer of the Year Award	Winner: Elisabeth Storer Australian Red Cross Central Australia	Chief Minister's Youth Volunteer of the Year Award	Winner: Marie Cunnington Virginia Bees Creek Volunteer Fire Brigade <i>Highly commended:</i> Cal Mickle Australian Red Cross NT
Community Bendigo Bank Alice Springs Community Volunteer Organisation/ Team of the Year	Winner: Alice Springs Girl Guides Unit	Community Bendigo Bank Alice Springs Community Volunteer Organisation/ Team of the Year	Winner: Kindness Shake Incorporated
Emergency Service Volunteer Award	Winner: Damien Medley Alice Springs Volunteer SES Unit	Emergency Service Volunteer Award	Winners: Annette Turner Duggan Red Cross Emergency Services Johannes Van Loenhout Koolpinyah Volunteer Fire Brigade <i>Highly commended:</i> Mark Follett Northern Territory Emergency Services (NTES) Katherine Volunteer Unit
INPEX Lifetime Contribution to Volunteering Award	<i>Highly commended:</i> Benjamin Rowley St John Ambulance NT	INPEX Lifetime Contribution to Volunteering Award	Winners: Diane Spicer City of Palmerston Library Robert Shewring Veterans Australia NT <i>Highly commended:</i> Peter Poole St John Ambulance NT
Alice Springs Town Council Excellence in Volunteer Management Award	Winner: Amanda Houston Alice Springs Volunteer Bushfire Brigade	Excellence in Volunteer Management Award	Winner: Christine Turner St John Ambulance NT