



Media release

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Karoonda East Murray's Australia Day winners announced

A grandmother with a love of history, an inspiring young sportsman and the anniversary celebration of a well-loved community school have all been awarded 2018 Australia Day accolades by the District Council of Karoonda East Murray.

Maggea resident Leanne Parker said she was “overwhelmed” after being told she had won Council’s Citizen of The Year Award for 2018, saying she never considered her community history projects to be work.

“History is my passion. It’s like a jigsaw puzzle that never finishes,” says the 63-year-old, who admits research is often best accomplished with a cheeky glass of port.

“I was a bit surprised and then delighted to get the phone call telling me about the award. Researching history isn’t work to me. I just love getting my teeth into that sort of stuff.”

Mrs Parker was nominated for the award for her efforts to preserve local history for future generations and has been dubbed “an inspiration for the whole community”.

Mrs Parker’s dedication to research has uncovered long-forgotten information and photographs, which have been used for many community projects and events over the past two decades, including Anzac Day ceremonies and last year, Mantung Hall’s first ever History Festival event - Step Back in Time.

Mrs Parker’s historical research was also instrumental in the success of the East Murray Area School 50th anniversary celebration in September, which has also won Council’s Event of the Year award for 2018.

The community event was attended by hundreds of past students, teachers and families, who travelled from far and wide to return to the small regional school that was once part of their daily lives, sharing five decades of history, photographs and memories.

The anniversary celebration had been lauded as an event of significance which had not only brought former and current residents together, but also ensured the facility remained at the “heart of the community”.

Meanwhile, Karoonda sportsman Chris Rudiger has been named the *Young Citizen of The Year* for his valuable community work on the region's sports fields.

Juggling multiple playing, coaching and coordinating roles for local basketball, football, tennis and cricket teams during the last decade, Chris has proved he's not only an all-round sportsman but also his ability to inspire budding young athletes to perform at their best.

At a time when many young people move away for careers, Chris has remained in the area, recently establishing a White Suffolk stud with his young family.

Karoonda East Murray Mayor Kevin Burdett congratulated the successful recipients, saying the awards recognised outstanding contributions in the community.

"These awards celebrate the exceptional people and events in our small community, who often fly under the radar when it comes to recognition," he said.

"Our quiet achievers deserve every bit of gratitude we can give them for their valuable contribution to community service."

The Australia Day Awards are proudly presented by the *Australia Day Council of Australia* in conjunction with the District Council of Karoonda East Murray.

Dr John Halsey is the guest speaker on Council's Australia Day event at Sandalwood Hall, where the awards will be formally presented at 10.30am.