



SUNSHINE COAST BIOSPHERE

COMMUNITY AWARDS

2024



TRADITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Sunshine Coast Council acknowledges the Sunshine Coast Country, home of the Kabi Kabi peoples and the Jinibara peoples, the Traditional Custodians, whose lands and waters we all now share.

We recognise that these have always been places of cultural, spiritual, social and economic significance. The Traditional Custodians' unique values, and ancient and enduring cultures, deepen and enrich the life of our community.

We commit to working in partnership with the Traditional Custodians and the broader First Nations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) communities to support self-determination through economic and community development.

Truth telling is a significant part of our journey. We are committed to better understanding the collective histories of the Sunshine Coast and the experiences of First Nations peoples. Legacy issues resulting from colonisation are still experienced by Traditional Custodians and First Nations peoples.

We recognise our shared history and will continue to work in partnership to provide a foundation for building a shared future with the Kabi Kabi peoples and the Jinibara peoples.

We wish to pay respect to their Elders – past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the important role First Nations peoples continue to play within the Sunshine Coast community.

Together, we are all stronger.



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Mayor's Message

On behalf of Sunshine Coast Council and our Sunshine Coast community, it is my absolute pleasure to recognise the achievements of all our nominees.

Each of your stories represents what is special about the Sunshine Coast Biosphere and why our region is such a wonderful place to live, work, learn and play.

You are the volunteers and facilitators, the enablers and role models, each contributing to our way of life now, and for future generations.

In our Sunshine Coast Biosphere we celebrate people and nature and these awards celebrate your generous contributions towards our sustainable future.

Thank you for your inspiring dedication and efforts.

Whether you've been caring for our environment, growing our economy, or creating, supporting and nurturing our thriving communities, you make a difference and for that we give our heartfelt thanks.



Mayor Rosanna Natoli
Sunshine Coast Council



Program

Pre-Ceremony Entertainment

Mason Hope
2023 Young Citizen of the Year

Master of Ceremonies

Emma Thomas
CEO Sunshine Coast Council

Welcome to Country

Aunty Bridgette Chilli Davis
Law Lore Woman of the
Mooloolah Kabi Kabi

Welcome

Mayor Rosanna Natoli
Sunshine Coast Council

Healthy People Award

Sponsored by My Weekly Preview

Creative Arts Award

Sponsored by TAFE Queensland
East Coast

Healthy Planet Award

Sponsored by University of the
Sunshine Coast

Guest Speaker

Anna Owen
Biosphere Community Advisory
Group Representative and
Principal, Sunshine Coast
Grammar School

Community Group or Organisation Award

Sponsored by Sunshine
Coast Daily

Biosphere Business of the Year Award

Sponsored by Unitywater

Young Citizen of the Year Award

Sponsored by 92.7 MixFM

Senior Citizen of the Year Award

Sponsored by Maroochy RSL

Citizen of the Year Award

Sponsored by 7 News
Sunshine Coast

Healthy People Award

Sponsored by My Weekly Preview

MASON BLACKER

Mason is an inspiring sports leader, who in his own time organises, runs, and funds a school soccer tournament. In addition to working three part-time jobs to support the event, he has secured multiple sponsorships with members and businesses. He encourages students at his school to be involved regardless of their skill level, and provides support and assistance to those who need it. Mason is a true leader and a fantastic role model who also volunteers his time to assist in raising funds for Bloomhill Cancer Care on the Sunshine Coast.

ALAN BRADFORD

Alan has made remarkable contributions to health, well-being, and community engagement on the Sunshine Coast. He has devoted more than 35 years to teaching in Queensland high schools, inspiring countless students to embrace active, healthy lifestyles. His role as manager of the AFL team for more than two decades has significantly enhanced sports participation and inclusivity. He volunteers in official sporting, recreational, and health-related duties, and his leadership, management, and administration of sport and recreation activities, exemplify his passion for promoting a healthier community.

JAMIE MILNE

Jamie has made a significant impact on the health and well-being of the Sunshine Coast community. Through a variety of ultra-endurance challenges, community fundraisers, and school-based programs, he has raised more than \$150,000 for Dementia Australia over the past decade. As an ambassador for the organisation, Jamie plays a vital role in promoting mental and physical wellness in both personal and corporate settings. Professionally, he has empowered individuals from diverse backgrounds to reach their full potential, and his philanthropic endeavors have supported numerous charities.

DEL PARKYN

Del has been involved in local surf lifesaving and swimming on the Sunshine Coast for many years and her legacy is ingrained in the region's sporting fabric. She was the former president of the Sunshine Coast Water Ski Club, and wife of champion Mooloolaba Surf lifesaver Arthur Parkyn. Del recently donated items and volunteered to tell her story for an exhibition and film about Sunshine Coast aquatic sporting history. These contributions ensure the captivating stories of surf lifesaving and swimming endure, inspiring generations to come.

TREVOR PICKEN

Trevor's exceptional leadership as the manager of the all-abilities team within the Sunshine Coast Churches' Soccer Association promotes inclusivity and community spirit. For three consecutive seasons, he's been the driving force behind the program, which offers all children the chance to participate, regardless of physical, developmental, or cognitive challenges. By actively encouraging teamwork, camaraderie, and positive social interactions, Trevor cultivates an atmosphere where participants feel valued, accepted, and empowered. His dedication extends beyond the field, volunteering countless hours to ensure the program's success.

GREG ROGERSON

Greg's dedication to local waterskiing on the Sunshine Coast spans decades. As an operator of the Aloha Ski Club and an active member of the Sunshine Coast Water Ski Club, he has been a pillar of the sport. He played a key role in hosting the 1967 Queensland Country titles and the national championships in 1983 and 1997. He recently contributed to the region's heritage collection, sharing his recollections and passion for waterskiing in the Grassroots to Glory aquatic sport exhibition. Greg has helped build skills and character in the countless waterskiing enthusiasts he has taught and coached.

Healthy People Award continued...

BRENDAN AND LUKE WULF

Brendan has transformed the Mudjimba Beach Boardriders Club, where he serves as president, into a family-centred community hub. His hands-on approach welcomes members of all ages, fostering inclusion and genuine interest. Supported by his brother Luke and an active Committee, Brendan has innovated club activities. Their dedication extends to organising social events and securing impressive sponsorships. Notably, the club won the 'Team Spirit Award' at the Kirra 40th Team Event, a testament to Brendan and Luke's tireless efforts and impactful leadership.

Creative Arts Award

Sponsored by TAFE Queensland East Coast

(UNCLE) PAUL CALCOTT

Uncle Paul is a globally acclaimed, Wiradjuri artist. He uses the community-building and healing strength of art to bring together and support First Nations people living with disabilities, through the NuunaRon Art Group. The group's artworks are showcased worldwide and have been collected by several esteemed institutions. Paul's exhibitions, aligned with United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Disability Royal Commission, exemplify his commitment to raising awareness and promoting inclusivity in the arts.

TINA COOPER

Tina, a renowned glass artist with 35 years experience, is recognised nationally with pieces displayed in collections around the world. She has generously donated more than \$69,000 worth of her work to various organisations and is a devoted advocate for the art of hand-blown glass, mentoring numerous local glass artists towards successful careers. Tina actively seeks out and supports First Nations local artists and is a champion for women in the industry.

RED CHAIR

Angie Dunbavan and the Red Chair team have dedicated two decades to curating and delivering a wide array of live music tours, top-tier festival experiences, and community-focused projects. Through these they highlight local talent and stories, engage local artists and arts workers, and enhance the cultural landscape of the Sunshine Coast. Red Chair is deeply committed to honouring local First Nations culture and narratives, recognising the arts as a unifying force in the community. By breaking down physical, geographical, and financial barriers, they strive to make the arts more inclusive and accessible to everyone.

Creative Arts Award continued...

(AUNTY) HELENA GULASH

Aunty Helena is a driving force for Indigenous community cultural development on the Sunshine Coast. As the First Nations representative on the Sunshine Coast Arts Advisory Board and chairperson of the First Nations Sub Committee, Helena is a visionary leader. Her influence extends through roles as creative consultant and Elder in residence for the Creative Arts team, the Refinery program and Horizon Festival initiatives. Through her tireless efforts, Helena cultivates a thriving space for First Nations creatives, enriching the cultural landscape of Kabi Kabi (Gubbi Gubbi) Country and beyond.

MELISSA LANHAM

Melissa has more than 25 years of experience in the dance and theatre industry. She played a pivotal role in establishing the first Artist in Residence for Dance and Theatre Makers in the region and has actively served on the board of the Regional Arts Development Fund. Melissa is an ambassador for the Sunshine Coast Arts Foundation, runs a studio that provides space for dance artists to innovate and, through mentorship programs, imparts knowledge and guidance to aspiring young dancers.

JESS LECLERK

Jess is a renowned artist who has inspired countless individuals to pursue their creative passions. From humble beginnings to establishing one of Australia's largest art schools, Jess's vision and determination are evident. Her inclusive teaching approach has welcomed students of all ages and backgrounds, leading to numerous successes in prestigious competitions. Despite personal challenges, Jess's resilience, and compassion shine through and make a profound impact on the arts community.

BJ (JORY) MURPHY

BJ, a Jinibara/Kabi Kabi man, epitomises resilience and cultural preservation in his remarkable work as a contemporary Aboriginal artist. Inspired by his ancestral lands in the Sunshine Coast hinterland, BJ skilfully merges traditional wisdom with modern art forms in his paintings, carvings, wood burnings, songs, and community projects. Co-founding a local Indigenous gallery and cultural hub, BJ has been instrumental in fostering a dynamic environment where First Nations heritage thrives. Thanks to his guidance, the Sunshine Coast has become a hub for Indigenous voices to resonate and flourish.

WAYNE PARCELL

Wayne, the dedicated festival director of the Rangebow Festival, is the visionary behind this vibrant not-for-profit event held across various Hinterland locations. Through Wayne's relentless efforts, the festival remains a valuable and free source of entertainment for the entire community. Rangebow Festival aims to showcase the diverse contributions of individuals from various backgrounds, life experiences, and beliefs, while promoting community well-being. The festival encompasses film, theatre, arts, music, nature, and cultural activities that champion community spirit, diversity, inclusivity, reconciliation, sustainability, creativity, and self-expression.

MURRAY POWER

Since 2013, Murray has diligently expanded the Caloundra Film Festival to encompass Noosa, Nambour, Maroochydore, Kawana, and Caloundra, providing Sunshine Coast residents access to diverse films. Murray supports local filmmakers and students by showcasing their work. Despite challenges facing the film industry, Murray's efforts have resulted in high attendance rates, sold-out sessions, and repeat screenings due to popular demand. The festivals offer a platform for global, thought-provoking films and thanks to affordable ticket options, Murray ensures everyone has access to cultural enrichment.

Creative Arts Award continued...

EQUITY WORKS

Equity Works is a community-based organisation supporting artists with disabilities through its Equity Makers platform. The capacity building initiative provides a space for artists to connect with their community and each other, and provides a unique opportunity for artists to reach a broad customer market. In six months, sales of works have exceeded \$15,000, with 100% of proceeds returned to artists. The program also supports artists to deliver workshops and make connections, fostering deeper inclusion in the Sunshine Coast arts sector. The organisation has plans to grow the initiative, facilitating new customer markets for artists and makers.

Healthy Planet Award

Sponsored by University of the Sunshine Coast

QUENTIN BROWN

Quentin has worked tirelessly for environmental advocacy across the Sunshine Coast, particularly for better recognition and preservation of the Point Cartwright Reserve and its nationally significant critically endangered Littoral Rainforest. Quentin has invested hundreds of hours in engaging and educating the community, council, and politicians on the need to preserve the reserve and other remnant littoral zone areas and was a catalyst for Council to establish a new master planning process. His advocacy has seen him selected as representative for several local and state groups and initiatives aimed at preserving our local environment.

ECOLLABORATION

ECollaboration is an environmental organisation committed to creating resilient landscapes and communities. All proceeds are reinvested into caring for the region's land, waterways, and community. Their mission includes fostering community engagement, ensuring sustainable land-use, and sharing valuable knowledge and skills. In partnership with government organisations, they deliver impactful projects, such as the South Maroochy Rivercare project, and Queensland's longest-running citizen science program, Maroochy Waterwatch. ECollaboration has planted over 100,000 trees, engaged over 125 landholders, and trained 137 trainees. Their work significantly contributes to the environmental conservation of the Sunshine Coast community and beyond.

GATEWAY CARE

Gateway Care's Vision 'to help build a thriving and resilient community' is underpinned by their holistic 'connect, collect, and care' program, which has helped more than 40,000 families since 2003. They provide a listening ear, believing no one should have to do life alone; their food rescue program, which distributes rescued food to low-income families, ensures no one goes hungry, and each month they save around 40,000kg of food waste from going to landfill. Anything not able to be used in their program is set aside and re-purposed, maintaining Gateway Care's zero-waste policy.

Healthy Planet Award continued...

HINTERLAND BUSH LINKS

Hinterland Bush Links supports local landholders with conservation work on their properties, empowering them to protect, restore and connect native vegetation. The outcome is the improvement of wildlife corridors, helping enhance and secure the longevity and resilience of biodiversity and nature. For more than a decade the organisation has led practical on-ground restoration works with notable projects including the Roving Restorers and the Upper Mary Valley Weed Vine Project. Their Koala Habitat project provides practical and effective strategies for coexisting harmoniously with koalas while promoting the preservation of their natural habitat.

LINDSAY HOPE

Lindsay is a dedicated volunteer with BushCare Sunshine Coast and the Alex Forest Preservation Group. As a founding member of the group, Lindsay has protected this vital area for more than 25 years. He has spent countless hours engaged in bush regeneration activities that not only enhance and maintain the environment but reward volunteers with satisfaction, friendship and education. Lindsay's efforts have led to significant achievements, including planting more than 735 native plants and removing around 165 wheelie bins of weeds. In 2023, Lindsay deservedly received the BushCare Sunshine Coast Silver Mattock Award for his exceptional contributions.

CRAIG HOSMER AND DARYL REINKE

Craig and Daryl are long-term private landholders who, in partnership with the Land for Wildlife and Voluntary Conservation Agreement programs, have achieved outstanding environmental conservation outcomes on their property and across the region. For three decades, they have worked to turn their property, once a farm, into a thriving forest, which is now home to an increasing diversity of native flora and fauna. By hosting field days on their property and sharing advice and knowledge with other landholders, they have created a legacy of conservation stewardship with the wider community.

KERRY JONES

Kerry, a dedicated Kabi Kabi man, has made remarkable contributions to environmental conservation, working tirelessly alongside groups like Maroochy Waterwatch and Landcare. Kerry's focus on restoring native vegetation and wetlands has contributed to sequestering carbon and expanding habitat for threatened species such as the water mouse. His leadership in traditional fire management practices and his collaborative approach have earned him impressive accolades. Kerry embodies the spirit of the Sunshine Coast Biosphere, fostering a resilient future for all.

MOOLOOLAH RIVER LANDCARE

Mooloolah River Landcare is focused on the health and protection of the Mooloolah River. For more than 20 years they have worked to combat erosion, habitat loss, and invasive species. Partnering with ECollaboration, they train Conservation and Ecosystem Management students, applying conservation and horticultural principles with students gaining hands-on experience in plant propagation. In the past year, their 54 volunteers contributed more than 3,000 hours, assisting the organisation to preserve the health of the river.

REEF CHECK AUSTRALIA

Reef Check Australia is building a more sustainable future through citizen science, community engagement, and collaborative partnerships. Their passionate volunteers collect data and protect Sunshine Coast reefs through dives, beach clean ups, and educational workshops. The thousands of data points collected are shared with authorities to help safeguard this critical ecosystem. The organisation improves the health of waterways, and empowers citizens to become active stewards of the Sunshine Coast's marine environment.

Healthy Planet Award continued...

TEN LITTLE PIECES

Ten Little Pieces supports everyday conservation efforts across our region, especially our precious waterways and coastlines. What started as a family collecting rubbish on a beach, is now a globally recognised organisation. Ten Little Pieces raises awareness of and advocates for solutions to, plastic pollution through sustainability education, community activism and corporate consultancy. Founder and Director Alison Foley applies her expertise and dedicated enthusiasm to education in schools, beach clean ups, volunteering during turtle nesting season, marine crises situations and proactive efforts such as co-authoring an emergency response methodology for preventing incidents like the White Spill Event.

Community Group or Organisation Award

Sponsored by Sunshine Coast Daily

ADHD MUMS

Jane launched an ADHD-focused podcast following her own life-transforming diagnosis. Her aim is to raise awareness about ADHD in women and girls, providing a platform for open discussions about the challenges faced. This community has grown to over 100,000 members, offering support, proper diagnosis, and treatment for Autism and ADHD. Jane has been a vocal advocate for Vyvanse accessibility, and fundraising to aid mothers fund their children's diagnoses.

BAMBOO PROJECTS

Bamboo Projects promotes inclusivity by integrating individuals with disabilities into their workforce, emphasising volunteering, skill development, innovation, and knowledge sharing. Run by volunteers, they organise Back2Work Recycle Programs, Waterways Cleanup Programs, and social community events. These initiatives provide meaningful employment for individuals with disabilities, contributing to recycling and environmental conservation efforts. Embracing diversity and unique abilities, they cultivate skill development, innovation, and inspire positive change.

BEERWAH STATE SCHOOL (PRIMARY) P&C ASSOCIATION

The Beerwah State School (Primary) P&C Association works tirelessly to unite the small school and the broader community. This volunteer-run organisation manages multiple school services and is dedicated to enhancing opportunities and facilities for students. They organise events and establish strong relationships with local businesses and dignitaries to secure sponsorships and have implemented strategic planning to enhance engagement with First Nations and multicultural students.

DICKY BEACH SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Established in 1950, Dicky Beach Surf Life Saving Club is celebrated for its dedication to inclusivity, innovation, and community involvement. They welcome all ages and backgrounds, offering tailored community programs to meet diverse needs. Their 'Pippies Inclusive Nippers' program provides young people with physical or intellectual challenges the chance to engage in surf lifesaving activities, while their SLSA 'Silver Salties' program caters to older Australians (60+) seeking physical activity, social connections, and community engagement.

ENDED

Leading charity ended provide unwavering support to individuals and families experiencing eating disorders. Their residential facility 'Wandi Nerida' was the first in Australia, and House of Hope in Woombye provides access to allied services and a supportive community. They have forged an essential support network with other community organisations, ensuring a one-team approach and provide training and information sessions for teachers and students. They are involved in world-first genetic studies and social media research projects, have plans underway to provide short term accommodation through Connect Kids, and run events supporting mental health.

GATEWAY CARE

Gateway Care focuses on combating isolation, hunger, and enhancing community well-being while promoting environmental sustainability. The food rescue and distribution charity, serves over 20,000 Sunshine Coast residents monthly, diverting around 40,000 kg of food from landfills. The organisation acts as a vital link for those in need, connecting them with essential services through tailored programs, strategic partnerships, and support for local community groups, ensuring a holistic approach to community welfare.

GRAMMAR HELPING HANDS

Sunshine Coast Grammar School's Grammar Helping Hands program blends community engagement, sustainability, and leadership skills into students' learning journeys. By partnering with local organisations, students become agents of change, applying their passion and creativity to real-world scenarios. The program's global reach includes partnering with education and health services in Timor Leste, instilling a strong sense of social responsibility and environmental awareness in students.

HAIR AID

Hair Aid, founded by Selina Tomasich, is an international organisation providing unskilled people with the ability to make a living cutting hair. Through Selina's adaptive and innovative approach to education and empowerment and under her leadership, the organisation has seen extraordinary growth. Hair Aid now facilitates ten international projects annually, has trained more than 6,700 individuals and has agreements with five international governments, allowing volunteers to enter countries and work inside jails. Within Australia, the Hair Aid Community Cuts program operates across 85 communities, offering free haircuts to those unable to afford them.

LIFEHOUSE RESOURCE CENTRE

Ruth and her team of 41 volunteers at Lifehouse Resource Centre tirelessly support the community by providing essential furnishings and goods to the Coast's most vulnerable individuals and families. Last year, the program aided 255 adults and 210 children across the Sunshine Coast, emphasising sustainability through item reuse. The Lifehouse team embodies community spirit, delivering valuable services that bring positive outcomes to the area.

Community Group or Organisation Award continued...

MAROOCHY MEN'S SHED

Maroochy Men's Shed was established by retired individuals seeking companionship and has expanded from ten founding members, a decade ago, to a membership of 160. This group of men goes beyond mere companionship, providing support to each other, their families, and contributing meaningfully to the community within their means. The camaraderie shared and the positive impact they generate have had profound effects on their physical and mental well-being.

MAROOCHY RSL

Founded 91 years ago, Maroochy RSL, like all Australian RSLs, serves as a support network and community for Veterans and their families. Over the years, they have been pivotal in uniting like-minded individuals in the community to offer mutual support. As a not-for-profit organisation, their annual charity contributions benefit various Sunshine Coast groups, including the RSL's Veteran Hub, schools and sporting organisations, extending assistance, education, care, and crisis support across a range of services.

MOOLOOLAH RIVER LANDCARE

Mooloolah River Landcare is a community-driven organisation dedicated to preserving and enhancing the health of the river. The group, along with its members and volunteers, has spent over two decades enhancing the river catchment ecosystem, mitigating erosion, habitat loss, weed infestation, and invasive species threats. Collaborating with ECOllaboration and TAFE to host Conservation and Ecosystem Management and Horticulture students, they educate the next generation in conservation and horticultural principles and practices.

NAMBOUR COMMUNITY CENTRE

Nambour Community Centre is a safe space where the aim is to reduce the disadvantages that limit wellbeing. The centre provides community facilities, events, and individual support for eligible individuals. Through its multicultural section, the centre brings together people from diverse backgrounds for meetings, cultural, creative, and educational events, and assistance. Their multicultural programs were the first on the Sunshine Coast to address the needs of migrants and refugees and continue to support and connect individuals with essential services.

NAMBA CREEK BUSHCARE GROUP (PETRIE CREEK CATCHMENT CARE GROUP)

Namba Creek BushCare group, is deeply committed to environmental conservation and community bonding. By removing invasive plants and reinstating Indigenous vegetation along Namba Creek, the team has revitalised native animal habitats in the area. Since 2013, the group has made substantial progress by clearing Camphor Laurel trees and replanting native species. Through partnerships and skill-sharing initiatives, they aim to enhance environmental restoration practices and promote biodiversity.

PRESTIGE INHOME CARE (SUNSHINE COAST)

Prestige Inhome Care work collaboratively to boost social interaction, establish partnerships, enhance connectedness, and provide crucial support to vulnerable individuals in the community. They recently organised a large-scale charity event raising more than \$10,000 for two charities helping those with neurological conditions. By fostering community involvement, volunteering, skills development, diversity, inclusivity, and a supportive network, they enable individuals with compromised health conditions to maintain their independence.

RANGE COMMUNITY GYM AND FITNESS CENTRE (MAPLETON)

Range Community Gym and Fitness Centre (Mapleton) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to providing health and fitness services to the local community. Established in 2001, following the closure of a commercial gym, the centre emphasises social engagement and community participation. Operated by volunteers, the gym hosts social gatherings, community events, educational programs, and a specialised Strength and Stability for Older People program, significantly contributing to local health and well-being of the local community.

REEF CHECK AUSTRALIA

Reef Check Australia is an innovative citizen science-focused charity dedicated to educating and empowering community volunteers to better understand, appreciate, and protect oceans and marine environments. They provide comprehensive training, enabling volunteers to actively participate in reef health monitoring and conservation projects. Their tireless efforts inspire a collective spirit for local action, igniting a wave of environmental stewardship within the Sunshine Coast community. Their collaborative partnerships maximise the impact of their initiatives and the ability to address complex environmental challenges with a unified front.

RHYTHM INITIATIVE LIMITED

Rhythm Initiative's Parcels of Peace Christmas Appeal brings joy through the gift of Christmas gifts and hampers, ensuring everyone feels valued during the holiday season. Their Community Cafe provides employment opportunities to individuals with additional needs and promotes dignity, independence, and empowerment through meaningful work and community engagement. Their meal exchange program embraces cultural diversity, while their community initiatives address food insecurity and promote equal access to nutritious meals for all.

SLEEPBUS MAROOCHYDORE

As well as providing a safe and secure place to sleep for people experiencing homelessness, Sleepbus Maroochydore provides a connection to essential services. Their diverse community of volunteers provide a compassionate environment, promoting dignity and well-being. The presence of the Sleepbus raises awareness about homelessness and prompts residents to become more compassionate and involved in addressing this issue. Sleepbus aims to break the cycle of homelessness through support and empowerment.

STARFISH NIPPERS (MOOLOOLABA SLSC)

The Starfish Nippers modified surf lifesaving program at Mooloolaba Surf Life Saving Club is inclusive of all abilities, teaching essential surf safety skills to children. Through adapted beach and water activities, they promote genuine inclusion, enabling individuals with physical, intellectual, or developmental disabilities to participate in nippers. Soo Smith and her team cultivate a sense of belonging and empowerment among participants and their unwavering dedication and passion have a profound impact on the children.

STEPS PATHWAYS COLLEGE

STEPS Pathways College is dedicated to transforming lives and expanding possibilities for young adults with disabilities and autism. As Australia's sole college of its kind, STEPS offers a comprehensive educational approach, integrating real-world experiences and innovative training programs. The college's success is fuelled by volunteers who contribute their diverse expertise and support across various programs and initiatives. Students gain essential independent living skills and access pathways to employment through training, work experience, and volunteer opportunities.

Community Group or Organisation Award continued...

SUNNYKIDS

SunnyKids assists women and children affected by domestic violence with temporary housing, case management, counselling, and referrals. Since 1999, they have gone beyond traditional services by collaborating to offer comprehensive family support. Through various initiatives, partnerships, and programs, SunnyKids aims to create lasting positive changes in the Sunshine Coast community, symbolising hope for families in need.

Biosphere Business of the Year Award

Sponsored by Unitywater

BRUSH TURKEY ENTERPRISES

Brush Turkey Enterprises showcase their ongoing dedication to conservation by focusing on education, ecological restoration, and the propagation of indigenous plants. For 26 years they have highlighted the importance of both ecological and cultural aspects of key plant species. Taking an innovative and inclusive approach, they engage various voices in safeguarding culturally significant flora. Their initiatives include a well-received community symposium and public art exhibition aimed at raising awareness about bunya dieback. By uniting diverse stakeholders, they have fostered a collaborative, community-centred method to monitor and reduce species decline.

ECOLLABORATION

ECollaboration is a for-purpose environmental organisation dedicated to nurturing nature and promoting a sustainable future for the Sunshine Coast. They focus on restoring ecosystems, providing environmental education, and delivering consultancy services, while engaging communities in environmental stewardship. Through various projects like the South Maroochy Rivercare initiative and Maroochy Waterwatch program, they have made significant contributions to land management, tree planting, and water quality testing. With a strong commitment to sustainability and community impact, ECollaboration's efforts have earned them recognition, including the Medium Employer of the Year award in 2023. Their extensive work aligns with UN Sustainable Development Goals and Biosphere values.

GATEWAY CARE

Gateway Care has made a significant impact on the Sunshine Coast Biosphere through its dedicated community programs. Since 2003, they have continuously expanded their reach and influence, particularly in the areas of food security and environmental sustainability. Through innovative initiatives like the Community Connect Centre, Food Centre, and Food Rescue Warehouse, Gateway Care has provided essential support to over 40,000 families, while also reducing food waste and supporting biodiversity. Their holistic approach, focusing on 'Connect, Collect, Care,' exemplifies their commitment to both people and the planet.

GO FOR ZERO

Go For Zero, founded in 2018, leads the way in promoting sustainability and inspiring others to reduce waste and harmful ingredients in their daily lives. With a wide range of 2,000 plus eco-friendly products, this State Telstra Best of Business award-winning company prioritises giving back to the community through donations to Australian charities. By focusing on a circular economy, minimising waste, and operating as a certified carbon positive organisation, Go For Zero sets a high standard for environmental responsibility. Through education and community engagement, they empower individuals to make a positive impact on the planet.

NARROWS ESCAPE

Narrows Escape are national tourism award winners, offering conscious luxury with a small environmental footprint. They prioritise sustainable and ethical tourism and hold advanced eco-certification. The business is committed to reducing its carbon footprint by using solar panels, sourcing local food, offsetting carbon emissions, and promoting eco-friendly practices. Guests are encouraged to reuse towels, and rooms are designed for energy efficiency. Recycling, composting, and donations are part of their waste management strategy. They support ethically sourced products and inspire guests to make eco-conscious choices. Most lights are LED, with natural lighting emphasised in living areas.

NOOKS AND COOKS

Tanika Orr, an Eastern Arrernte woman, runs Nooks and Cooks, a food van situated on Kabi Kabi country. The van aims to enlighten customers, raise cultural awareness, and honour the richness and diversity of Indigenous cuisine. Nooks and Cooks operate under the principle of 'Caring for Country', emphasising respect for the land and its resources ensuring their sustainable use for future generations. Tanika utilises native ingredients from the community and is dedicated to sharing her expertise through workshops on foraging wild food, Indigenous cooking methods, and passing down knowledge to younger individuals.

SUNSHINE COAST GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Sunshine Coast Grammar School cultivates a love for learning and ensures that sustainability principles permeate all aspects of school life. Through the School's innovative programs and collaborative efforts, they inspire positive change and advocate for a more sustainable future, locally and globally. Their dedication to environmental stewardship is evident through the Grammar Helping Hands program, involvement in the 2023 Kids in Action BiospHERO Presentation Day, the Principal's membership on the Biosphere Community Advisory Board and attendance at the UNESCO Global Inclusive Schools' Forum in Paris. Their global engagements underscore their commitment to creating responsible global citizens.

THE POINT COOLUM

The Point Coolum has embarked on a journey of sustainability over the past year. The team has made small but impactful changes to make their accommodation more eco-friendly. They are reducing, and eliminating plastic and waste, donating leftover amenities, transitioning to greener cleaning, offsetting carbon emissions, and have plans to go solar later in the year. The Point Coolum are proud partners of Visit Sunshine Coast's Sustainable Sunshine Coast Program.

Biosphere Business of the Year Award continued...

THRIFTER

Thrifter leads the way in embracing circular economy principles, transforming the fashion industry with its innovative sustainability practices. By providing clothing racks for rent to vendors, Thrifter advocates for clothing reuse and encourages mindful consumer habits, reducing textile waste significantly. This initiative not only minimises environmental impact but also fosters a sustainable fashion environment. Thrifter's dedication to sustainability is evident across all its operations, from waste reduction measures and a strict no-plastic-bag policy to ethical business standards, showcasing the harmonious balance between profitability and sustainability.

VISIT SUNSHINE COAST

Visit Sunshine Coast is committed to creating a greener future through the Sunshine Coast Sustainability Program. This Australian-first initiative aims to reduce carbon emissions across the destination by bringing together visitors and the local tourism industry for reforestation and ecosystem restoration. In collaboration with Reforest, they have planted 10,000 trees in the Cooroy Mountain Wildlife Corridor, marking a significant step towards environmental conservation and innovation through collaborative efforts.

Young Citizen of the Year Award

Sponsored by 92.7 MixFM

MASON BLACKER

Mason is an inspiring sports leader, who in his own time organises, runs, and funds a school soccer tournament. In addition to working three part-time jobs to support the event, he has secured multiple sponsorships with members and businesses. He encourages students at his school to be involved regardless of skill level and provides support and assistance to those who need it. Mason is a true leader and a fantastic role model who also volunteers his time to assist in raising funds for Bloomhill Cancer Care on the Sunshine Coast.

KURT JONES

Kurt is the founder of Co-Exist and what started as a high school assignment has morphed into an environmental charity with 200 volunteers. Co-Exist tackle conservation from a different angle. They ensure young people are in the right headspace before they target education. Using outdoor recreation activities, such as canoeing and snorkelling, they encourage young people to engage with the environment, which encourages them to learn and get involved in activities like tree planting and beach clean ups. There are eight stable branches of Co-Exist around Australia, and any young person can start their own.

TAYLOR LADD-HUDSON

Taylor dedicates her time and expertise to the pursuit of shark conservation, raising awareness and inspiring others to act. She actively engages in community outreach programs, educational workshops, and conservation initiatives, fostering connectedness and promoting environmental awareness. Taylor's invitation to collaborate on a research project, by renowned marine biologist and shark conservationist Valerie Taylor, underscores Taylor's expertise and credibility and her potential to make significant contributions to marine conservation on a global scale.

Young Citizen of the Year Award continued...

JAMES MILNE

James is an inspirational young man, who having overcome significant mental health issues has gone on to become an advocate for both trans and mental health awareness in the region. He is an active community champion, volunteering with the Rewired steering committee; the youth reference group for Headspace Maroochydhore; Queensland health, USC market days, Sunshine Coast Mardi Gras, as well as providing strategic direction to Headspace Maroochydhore. James spoke at the inaugural youth led event 'Rewired' and voluntarily facilitates a board game group for youth with social anxiety or problems engaging with peers.

BRODY MORRISON

Grade six student Brody is a school and community volunteer, a fundraiser, and a leader. He is the vice captain on the school council and has pledged to not only lead with kindness but to be a role model for younger students. He volunteered with Night Eyes Water and Landcare and Youth Fest 2024. Recently, he's been raising money to buy a defibrillator, having learned a groundsman at his father's workplace had suffered a heart attack. Brody's community spirit and social conscience are inspiring to all.

WINNIE VAN BEEK

Winnie is a passionate 7-year-old, advocating for the conservation of wildlife and wild places, in particular the critically endangered Northern Hairy Nosed Wombat. She started raising money with family and classmates and later joined the Australia Zoo Visionary Wildlife Warriors program, raising \$8,500. Winnie's efforts, which include creating items to sell, organising clean ups, collecting cans and planting trees, have seen her recognised in the 2023 world-wide Visionary Wildlife Warrior of the year awards, by Australia Zoo and Containers for Change.

Senior Citizen of the Year Award

Sponsored by Maroochy RSL

MARK DOWSETT

Mark has volunteered with Sailability Sunshine Coast since 2013. He is the first point of contact for new members, introduced measures that saw the club through COVID, and successfully liaises with many external groups. He actively supports inclusion and many of the Disability Support groups use the services because of his input. Mark also engaged the groups' powered support vessel, to collect general rubbish from the Mooloolah River, whilst patrolling in support of the fleet. He lends his professional photography skills to help promote sailing on the Sunshine Coast and volunteers with the Queensland Air Museum.

MARK FORBES

Mark volunteers his time and resources to fund many community projects and initiatives. He established the charity endED, helping those with eating disorders. He sold his home to establish Australia's first residential ED facility, established the House of Hope in Woombye, co-founded the Nurture Festival to bring together Sunshine Coast mental health organisations, and partnered with Rotary's 'Lift the Lid' walk for mental health. He also has generous plans underway to donate accommodation to endED and Connect Kids. His passion, drive and determination are balanced by his warm, caring, compassionate nature.

CHERYL JEYNES

Cheryl, a dedicated volunteer for 15 years, is a beacon of warmth and joy as she volunteers at Wishlist, Wishlist Reed House and Wishlist Coffee House in Nambour. She also serves as treasurer for the Red Cross Nambour Branch and from 2010 to 2023 as an emergency and evacuation volunteer in the Emergency Operation Centres and field operations. Cheryl is driven by a genuine desire to make a difference, to comfort and ease those facing challenging times.

Senior Citizen of the Year Award continued...

KEN MEWBURN

Ken has volunteered tirelessly for a variety of community organisations since retiring to the Sunshine Coast in 2000. He was instrumental in forming the Take Action for Pumicestone Passage group, was the driving force behind the Community Engagement Group that won an Innovation in Excellence Award from the building industry, and continues to work tirelessly with Stockland, state, and local governments, preparing well-researched submissions and papers comprehensively detailing public concern. Ken has formed a citizen science group, gives regular talks to schools, university students, and community groups, and spends his spare time monitoring local environmental issues.

VALDA ORCHARD

Valda's selfless dedication to serving the communities she has lived in spans decades. Her trademark energy and enthusiasm have been felt across her work with the Caloundra Uniting Church for 30 years, the Pelican Waters Bowls Club (as ladies president), and the hospital auxiliary at the former Caloundra Private Hospital. Valda served as president of the Caloundra Mahjong Club until December 2023 and now volunteers her time teaching mahjong to residents at a local aged care facility, bringing joy, social connection, and a sense of purpose to the residents.

JOCELYN WALKER

Jocelyn's success in business is matched only by her unwavering commitment to serving her community. Her support for RACQ LifeFlight Rescue, Steps Charity, SunnyKids, and Montrose Access exemplifies her deep commitment to the well-being of her community. For more than two decades, she has served on the University of Sunshine Coast Foundation Board and has created two scholarships (at the University and at Immanuel Lutheran College). Jocelyn's passion for the arts is evident in her role as patron of the Sunshine Coast Oriana Choir, and through her commitment to the Sunshine Coast Arts Foundation.

JOHN HANS FREDERICK WINTERHOFF

John has spent a lifetime volunteering with the Junior Farmer's Association, Scouting Movement, United Fruit Growers, SES, Young Rural Youth Sports Club, Glass House Mountains State School and the Glass House Mountains Business and Tourism Association. He also supports the local RSL League. His biggest achievement is his tireless support of the Glass House Mountains Community Hall for which he has been Chairman for the past 63 years and is the last original surviving trustee of the land the hall is built on.

Citizen of the Year Award

Sponsored by 7 News Sunshine Coast

NEIL COLLIE

Neil founded the Silverfox Initiative in 2021 following his own battle with mental health and after seeing a need in the community. The organisation provides a safe space for people to be connected and to chat about their mental health. Neil leads by example and is committed to supporting and improving the mental health of those around him. He has worked to deliver several information sessions to local businesses, spreading the importance of talking about mental health. His favourite motto is 'mental health starts with a chat'.

KATHLEEN HOPE

Kathleen's 12-year journey in supporting women and children escaping domestic violence is remarkable. Starting as a trainee and now CEO of SunnyKids, she has revolutionised the organisation's support framework. Kathleen's innovative programs, like the 'Save a Life Tonight' campaign and the SunnyKids in Schools program demonstrate her proactive approach to early intervention. Her leadership has expanded services, providing crucial support to over 2,500 individuals annually. This year, Kathleen made history, being awarded an Elsie award alongside 49 other unsung heroines. Kathleen's dedication and impactful contributions embody resilience and transformative change.

CRAIG JOSIC

Craig is an unparalleled beacon of inspiration in our community, guiding countless entrepreneurs through the tumultuous waters of business. For over a decade, Craig has driven Silicon Coast, fostering an ecosystem where innovation thrives. His genuine commitment to every entrepreneur's success sets him apart. Craig's creation of events like 'Forward Fest' and 'Collaboration Lives Here' provides a platform for startups to showcase their ideas, connect with like-minded individuals, and gain invaluable exposure. His philosophy of 'give before you get' isn't just a slogan, it's a way of life.

JAMIE MILNE

Jamie has raised more than \$150,000 for Dementia Australia, has conducted over 30 community-based fundraisers and runs school-based behavioural development programs. He is the Dementia Queensland ambassador and Sunshine Coast Dementia Memory Walk and Jog Ambassador. In 2023 Jamie ran a six-month campaign mentoring two 14-year-old children, chasing a \$50,000 fundraising target and a world record. Jamie supports many businesses and local charities in his own time and is an amazing role model. He acts from his heart assisting others from all walks of life.

BEN PRINCEHORN

Through his innovative leadership of Sunshine Coast Grammar School's Helping Hands program, Ben has transformed the initiative into a robust platform for student engagement and community outreach. His dedication to fostering empathy and volunteerism has empowered students to become changemakers. Ben also dedicates countless hours to the development and enhancement of the Sunshine Coast community and environment. Contributing to community events and environmental initiatives, he leaves a lasting, positive impact on the Sunshine Coast.

LEON STENSHOLM

In 2021, Leon had a vision to change the way we help, mentor, and support our disconnected youth on the Sunshine Coast. In 2023 he opened 'Lookout 07', a youth centre that provides recreation facilities alongside resilience programs, mentoring and crisis counselling. Since opening, the centre has seen over 4,000 youth sign in with an average of 145 youths per week. Leon provides free counselling and mentoring as well as free weekday evening access to the centre. His mission is to create a safe, welcoming, all-inclusive space for young kids where meaningful connections support their path to physical, mental, and social wellbeing.

Citizen of the Year Award continued...

BRIAN WARNER

Brian, a dedicated Kabi Kabi Elder, works tirelessly to bridge the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, while significantly benefiting the region through his leadership and commitment. For a decade he has served with Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation and is an advocate for Indigenous Tourism. His contributions include leadership in the Sunshine Coast Legacy Plan for the Brisbane 2032 Olympics, the Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers program, and numerous environmental and community projects. Brian's dedication to positive, sustainable change embodies the spirit of the Sunshine Coast Biosphere.

Be inspired by stories from
people contributing to our



**SUNSHINE COAST
BIOSPHERE**

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A special thank you to our judges

Dr Greg Mews

Urban Design and Town Planning
University of the Sunshine Coast

Jacquie Smith

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UDIA Sunshine Coast Executive Committee Member
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