

Friday 24 May 2019

## Council presents Citizen and Young Citizen of the Year and Community Group of the Year Awards

Council presented its annual *Citizen of the Year*, *Young Citizen of the Year* and *Community Group of the Year Awards* on Wednesday 22 May and Thursday 23 May.

The Awards, which were presented as part of Council's *Community Awards 2019* event, recognise residents and community groups in the City of Glen Eira who have significantly contributed to the local community.

Twenty-six individuals and community groups were nominated for *Citizen*, *Young Citizen* and *Community Group of the Year*.

### Citizen of the Year — Julie Walker

Julie Walker has dedicated many years to supporting and empowering her local community. Her contribution to the Glen Eira community began with many years of volunteering as a parent helper at her children's kindergarten and school in Bentleigh East. Julie is actively involved with Moongala Women's Community House and St Peter's Parish (Holy Trinity) Church. Julie's involvement in community houses began in the mid-1980s and includes 30 years as a part-time House Co-ordinator and many hours of volunteering. Her involvement at St Peter's Parish includes being part of the Family Ministry Group, a member of a Social Justice Group, Chairperson of the Parish Leadership Team and more recently she joined a group that is looking for ways to support refugees. She has been instrumental in developing innovative programs such *Pathways to Healthy Lifestyles*, a program designed to improve the social health outcomes for women in Glen Eira with severe disabilities. She is also deeply committed to supporting community members who are disadvantaged and supports many community initiatives, such as collecting and delivering toiletries to the women's house at the Sacred Heart Mission in St Kilda East.

Finalist in this category was Margaret Mercer.

### Young Citizen of the Year — Emily Qiao

Emily Qiao is an enthusiastic member of her local community. She actively participates in local events and is always passionate about giving back to the City of Glen Eira. Emily is a member of the Council's Youth Leadership Team and #YouthVoice and is a Girl Up Glen Eira ambassador and committee member. As a Girl Up Glen Eira committee member, Emily works on large-scale projects that build on the positive identity of young girls in the community, including the production of storybooks to distribute to local primary schools. Emily has been an exceptional role model and mentor for young people and actively encourages them to follow in her footsteps to engage in STEM-related (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields of study. She is currently a training manager at Robogals Monash, a student-run organisation that aims to inspire young women to consider studying engineering and other STEM-related fields, and is also a facilitator with UN Youth Australia.

Finalists in this category were Sapphire Khodr and Piper Sweeny-Johnston.



### **Community Group of the Year — Caulfield South Community House**

Since 1988, Caulfield South Community has brought people together to connect, learn and contribute in their local community through social, educational, environmental and support activities. One of the House's programs — the Caulfield South Community House Garden Group — was established almost seven years ago in response to the need in Glen Eira for residents to plant, grow and harvest produce in a community space. The garden is open seven days a week, 365 days a year, and is operated and governed by a group of dedicated and passionate volunteers. The space is located in the heart of Caulfield South and welcomes people of all ages and experience. The Garden Group reaches out and connects people with other like-minded gardeners and inspires its members to enjoy the benefits of all things gardening through information workshops, education sessions and garden orientation days. The garden has recently undergone a complete upgrade to accommodate the growing number of all-abilities members. The garden continues to grow its partnerships with key stakeholders including Caulfield Health Services, TAC Rehabilitation and Marriott services, which use their garden visits as part of their clients' rehabilitation and/or socialisation wellbeing plans.

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