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Recognising Our Extraordinary Citizens: 2024 Citizen of the Year Award Winners

The City of Victor Harbor is pleased to announce recipients of the 2024 Citizen of the Year Awards:

- **Citizen of the Year – Heather Wehr**
In recognition of lasting contributions to community groups across the region
- **Award for Active Citizenship – Nedra Haines**
In recognition of ongoing marine conservation efforts
- **Young Citizen of the Year – Sonya Walker**
In recognition of active community involvement
- **Community Event of the Year – The South Coast Choral and Arts Society (Gypsy)**
In recognition of a high calibre theatre production

At the core of a great place is great people, and the City of Victor Harbor has many generous and compassionate residents who commit their time towards supporting the community around them.

The 2024 Citizen of the Year Awards provide an opportunity to formally recognise the important and valuable work that these extraordinary people do for our community.

City of Victor Harbor Mayor, Dr Moira Jenkins, said the 2024 Citizen of the Year award winners were selected from a pool of high calibre nominees.

“This is an extremely exciting time every year, because it’s an opportunity to recognise the extraordinary efforts of people in our region. We are fortunate to have so many generous volunteers who share their time and knowledge as active citizens,” said Mayor Jenkins.

“This year’s winners are truly inspiring. I’m impressed by the time and energy that these individuals have given to their community.”

“Congratulations Heather, Nedra, Sonya and The South Coast Choral and Arts Society. If you happen to know these individuals or see them out and about, be sure to give them a huge congratulations!”

The 2024 Citizen of the Year Awards will be formally presented at the City of Victor Harbor’s Australia Day Celebrations on Friday, 26 January 2024.

The festivities will take place at the Soldiers Memorial Gardens (Flinders Parade, Victor Harbor) with a free BBQ breakfast from 8am, followed by a formal ceremony at 9am.

Visit www.victor.sa.gov.au/australiaday for more information about this event.

About the City of Victor Harbor's 2024 Citizen of the Year Award Winners

2024 Citizen of the Year – Heather Wehr

In recognition of lasting contributions to community groups across the region

Heather's influence in the local community has had an undeniably positive impact on our region. For more than a decade, Heather has been an active and passionate member of the Lower Inman Valley CFS Brigade. She was also a Cadet Leader with the Victor Harbor Group CFS for seven years. Her contributions to significant fires across the state (including Kangaroo Island, Port Lincoln, Pinery, Monarto and Adelaide Hills) have been highly valued. As a breast cancer survivor, Heather joined the Woman's Cancer Support Group (then known as the 'Breast of Friends') in 2010. Still a member today, Heather has supported others and contributed to various fundraising efforts associated with the group over the years. Along with a fellow member of the group, Heather established the 'Victor Dragons' dragon boat club. Heather played a fundamental role in the club's growth, which recently celebrated its 10th anniversary. In 2015, Heather joined the Ukelele Group of Goolwa before supporting the creation of a new ukelele group named 'The Harborites' in Victor Harbor. Now with 35 members, the group entertains at nursing homes, clubs, organisations and markets across the Fleurieu Peninsula. Other volunteering efforts from Heather include as a Justice of the Peace (since 2003) and Committee Member for the Encounter Lakes Residents Group.

2024 Award for Active Citizenship – Nedra Haines

In recognition of ongoing marine conservation efforts

Nedra's contributions to the conservation of marine wildlife will have an enduring impact on the community for years to come. Nedra Haines is the coordinator of the Kangaroo Island/Victor Harbor Dolphin Watch which involves the organisation of regular dolphin surveys along the Fleurieu Peninsula coastline. She is also well known for her work monitoring the endangered Little Penguin colony on Granite Island, and is a local whale spotter. Her passion for marine science and research has been shared through education to the local community, including recently as part of a youth program. Nedra is also a long-standing volunteer at the Horse Tram merchandise shop, and the Victor Harbor Visitor Centre (incorporating the SA Whale Centre), where she is able to share her extensive knowledge with visitors to the region.

2024 Young Citizen of the Year – Sonya Walker

In recognition of active community involvement

Sonya has been involved in several fundraising efforts, including Coast Trek and World's Greatest Shave, where she was instrumental in rallying her peers to donate and participate in worthwhile causes. Sonya's positive attitude and passion have seen her recognised as a leader within the Victor Harbor High School, being appointed as a Student Leader and representing the school at an International Women's Day Dinner. She was also the recipient of the school's Australian Defence Forces Long Tan Leadership and Teamwork Award. Sonya also participates in the community as a player for local soccer and football clubs, and she is a blood donor. Her enthusiastic and community-minded approach will no doubt be an asset to Victor Harbor for years to come.

2024 Community Event of the Year – The South Coast Choral and Arts Society (Gypsy)

In recognition of a high calibre theatre production

Gypsy was a local musical production presented by the South Coast Choral and Arts Society (SCCAS) in October and November 2023. This was the latest theatrical performance by SCCAS, who have been performing in Victor Harbor since 1950. In that time they have staged well over 120 community productions, involving hundreds of locals and entertaining tens of thousands of audience members. As a not-for-profit organization, SCCAS has invested thousands of dollars in projects, fundraisers and scholarships within the community. Gypsy was the product of 80 individuals putting in thousands of volunteer-hours over a 12-month period. Across nine performances in Victor Harbor, they performed for a receptive audience that recognized their dedication to providing quality artistic experiences within the region. Gypsy wasn't just a show; it was a memorable experience that brought people closer together. It made participants and audiences laugh, think, and appreciate the arts in Victor Harbor.