

MINUTES

AUSTRALIA DAY COMMITTEE

Date: Friday, 14 February 2025
Venue: Kempsey Shire Council, 22 Tozer Street, West Kempsey - Committee Room
Time: 10:00am to 12:00pm

Members: Mayor Kinne Ring, Councillor Annette Lawrence, Councillor Noel Selby, Peter Chambers, Philip Harvey, Ross Foster, Anika Malcolm, Aden Harris.

Council support: Liesa Davies, Giles Hardie, Wendy Brown

Item	Subject
1.	Acknowledgement to Country The meeting commenced at 10am
2.	Apologies Aden Harris, Giles Hardie
3.	Confirmation of previous minutes Minutes confirmed – Australia Day Awards Committee held, Friday, 17 January 2025
4.	Discussion / Debrief: Australia Day Nominations Staff advised that an internal wrap-up of the process had been completed noting there are some things that could be done differently next year but overall, it was a successful event. The Committee and staff discussed and noted the following feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While there were the usual time constraints leading up to Christmas, both staff and the Committee thought the earlier cut off for nominations (end of Oct to early Dec) worked well allowing the Committee to meet and run through the nominations before the Christmas break. • This also allowed staff to manage production of certificates, programmes and other tasks in house efficiently when they returned from the Christmas break • Communication staff have reached out to some of this year's winners inviting them to do a short video of what receiving the award meant to them which can be used as promotional material for next year • Some questions in the nomination form felt repetitive • Some members of the public are unaware of the nomination process and might have benefited from a prior information session on nominating people • Potential literacy and computer access issues for some nominees, especially the elderly • There was a high number of nominations this year with a high-quality pool, which were mainly committee driven, which is similar to other regions • Committee members are well-versed in the region and actively prompt nominations and there was good representation across the Shire • Positive feedback on the overall process and emotional impact of the event



Suggestions for 2026 nominations process

- It would be good if we could encourage state/federal members to nominate worthy community members
- Consider an evening “drop in” session at the local library for nomination assistance and attend local monthly markets in the lead up. Committee members indicated they would happily volunteer for these session
- Promote hard copies of nomination forms available at the library
- Include nomination forms in correspondence to residents
- Explore additional promotion via radio or TV, budget permitting

Australia Day Awards

- There was a significant response from the community expressing concern that too many Local Heroes were awarded (6 out of 8). Concern was also noted that the two nominees who didn't receive an award, were a disability support worker and person with a disability and this could be perceived as discriminatory
- It was noted that Post-COVID, a lot of local awards were given, leading to a "everyone's a winner" sentiment and possibly diminishing the award's prestige
- We have a diverse committee who review the nominations but acknowledge that not everyone can be pleased
- The Committee's decision is based on the quality of nominations, with some nominees having multiple achievements / contributions
- It was discussed whether we include sports, arts, culture, and environment categories within the Local Hero framework
- There was a positive reception from everyone receiving a nomination certificate
- The committee discussed whether award recipients should be allowed to speak with the following considerations:
 - Set guidelines on who can speak and for how long
 - Larger awards may have speaking opportunities
 - Ensure everyone who wants to speak gets a chance

Action:

- Staff will do a review of the Local Hero category and nomination criteria and report back to the Committee with recommendations for 2026

Australia Day Event

- Overall feedback was very positive. The Australia Day & Citizenship Awards Ceremony was highly praised with the event being described as classy and well organised
- Consideration might be given to adding informal seating in the foyer area where Dave McGrath was playing but with limited space, due to the shop closure, and encouraging people into the Gallery area this might be difficult
- The welcome tent was well positioned allowing smooth entry to the event
- Positive feedback was received on coffee provided although would benefit from more shading for people waiting
- It was suggested that it would be good to know if anyone in the community received an OAM so they could be acknowledged but this might be difficult due to the timing of when they are announced
- There were more than the usual members of the public visiting the Centre unaware of the Australia Day event and signage was suggested: "Australia Day Awards Event" to clarify the event details
- Feedback had been received on the timing before the official start of the ceremony (9am – 10am):
 - Some felt it was too long
 - Should we keep the BBQ as is or have it after the event, consensus is that after the event might not work as people prefer to go home



	<p>There was a discussion on the additional grant funding available for the cultural element, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for meaningful application of the funding before the application opens so we are ready to apply • Engage with other councils for insights on how they have utilised this funding • Consider the performance element required (not just welcome to country or smoking ceremony) • Consider a separate event, outside of the Australia Day event, perhaps in the evening rotating between different villages each year • Plan with community consultation • Ensure the event brings the community together and celebrates <p>Action: For further consideration by the Committee at the next meeting</p> <p>Australia Day Ambassador</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee all agreed that having Mark Morrison as the 2025 Australia Day Ambassador was a huge success. Mark attended the South West Rocks Flag Raising Ceremony and the Slim Dusty Centre events receiving a positive reception from the community and attendees. The Committee also agreed that the Sundowner event was a success and well attended by Councillors • The Committee agreed to start thinking and planning for the selection of 2026 Ambassador which will be discussed at a future committee meetings
5.	<p>Additional Committee Members Comments and Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising costs of the event were noted and acknowledged that costs are expected to increase over the next 12 months • While exact figures unavailable at the time of the meeting, staff anticipated that the 2025 event came in under budget due to increased use of Council rather than contracted/local business resources (eg printing, photography)
6.	<p>Committee Membership and Terms of Reference Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that in accordance with the new Council resolution, we are now due to conduct an expression of interest for a new Committee, with up to 7 new members from the community to be appointed • Current committee will wrap-up and EOI (Expression of Interest) will be sent out with new membership to be approved by Council at a future meeting • Current committee members are welcome and encouraged to apply • In reviewing the Committee Terms of Reference, all agreed they remained current and relevant • The Committee did note that it would be beneficial to add a clause noting that non-attendance without an apology would lead to removal of a member from the Committee • Discussion on attendance obligations and modes of attendance (including Video) • It was noted that a Deputy Chairperson will need to be elected after the EOI process
7.	<p>General Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special thanks were extended to the Committee members for their tenure and efforts, with appreciation noted for the contributions from all members • Special thanks were also given to the Committee and staff for organizing a very successful Australia Day event

Meeting closed 11.06am

Next meeting will be scheduled after the EOI process.

