Albury’s Helen Chant wins Murray 2015 Volunteer of the Year

Albury’s Helen Chant received the State’s top volunteering award when she was named 2015 Murray Volunteer of the Year at a special ceremony at The Albury Club today.

A volunteer with St John’s Ambulance, Helen was joined on the winner’s podium by other RSPCA volunteer Colin Barrow of Thurgoona, and the volunteers with Lutheran Aged Care in Albury, who also won awards in their category.

Chief Executive Officer of The Centre for Volunteering Gemma Rygate, who runs the NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards - said volunteers improve people’s lives by helping out, keeping people connected and creating a sense of belonging.

“New research on volunteering in Australia shows that people give more than 743 million hours of their time each year – they’re the backbone of our community,” Ms Rygate said.

“This year The Centre for Volunteering received more than 500 nominations covering almost 7,000 volunteers – including teams - which shows how much communities value volunteers.”

Ms Rygate said Helen Chant won the Murray 2015 Volunteer of the Year Award for her expert co-ordination of volunteers to provide first aid services to the community along parts of the Victorian border, out to Deniliquin and across the Riverina.

“Helen takes a many after-hours phone calls as well as organising and volunteering alongside her volunteer teams at public events to provide first aid to the public,” Ms Rygate said.

“Helen’s guidance of her team and her ability as a volunteer trainer has inspired more volunteers who now provide first aid or have used their new skills to save lives in our community.”

The Winners of the 2015 Riverina NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Winner</td>
<td>Helen Chant of Albury</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer of the Year</td>
<td>St Johns Ambulance volunteer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult Volunteer of the Year (25 – 64 years)</td>
<td>Helen Chant of Albury</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St Johns Ambulance volunteer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Volunteer of the Year (65+ years)</td>
<td>Colin Barrow of Thurgoona</td>
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<td>Albury RSPCA (Pets of Older Persons program)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer Team of the Year</td>
<td>Lutheran Aged Care Albury Volunteer Team (120 volunteers)</td>
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ClubsNSW CEO Anthony Ball said the industry was proud to sponsor the Awards Program in order to help recognise volunteers across the state.

“With almost 50,000 volunteers engaged in our industry, clubs across NSW know how vital and valuable volunteers are to their activities and operations,” he said.

“We appreciate the inspirational role volunteers play in our communities to help others.

“These Awards are an opportunity to put a spotlight on our volunteers and say thank you.”

NSW Minister for Multiculturalism Mr John Ajaka, who is responsible for volunteering, said the awards were an opportunity to uncover and celebrate the great achievements of volunteers across NSW.

“The NSW Government is proud to sponsor these awards because we understand the profound social and economic value of volunteering. Volunteers are remarkable people who deserve our recognition,” Mr Ajaka said.

Twenty regional Volunteer of the Year Awards ceremonies are being held around the state.

All regional winners will be in the running for the overall NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards, which are announced at a gala event in Sydney on Friday 4 December 2015 to coincide with International Volunteer Day.

The Volunteer of the Year Awards are generously supported by principal partners the NSW Department of Family and Community Services, and ClubsNSW, the industry body which represents the state’s 1400 not-for-profit clubs, as well as Bupa Aged Care.

For information visit www.volunteering.com.au

Media inquiries: Kylie Yates 0418 607 575

BACKGROUND

The NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards is an annual program run by The Centre for Volunteering – the State’s peak body for volunteering - to recognise the outstanding work of volunteers in every region across NSW. Twenty one award ceremonies are held across NSW in September and October where nominees are recognised with certificates and winners announced.

Regional winners will be entered into the overall State 2015 Volunteer of the Year

For more information about more about the 2015 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards and last year’s winners, go to www.volunteering.com.au