Bexley’s Henry Pan crowned Sydney South 2015 Volunteer of the Year

Bexley’s Henry Pan took top honours at the regional 2015 Volunteer of the Year Awards at Tradies Gymea today, putting him in the running for the overall NSW Volunteer of the Year.

Henry was recognised for his outstanding volunteering with the Chinese Australian Services Society and was joined by other category winners Jesse Hanna of Bexley, Barbara Falloon of Yowie Bay and the Ramsgate RSL Junior Football Club.

CEO 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 and keeping people connected.

“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.

Ms Rygate said Henry won the award because of his dedication over the past 36 years volunteering so that disadvantaged Australian Chinese families could access culturally appropriate services like child care, care packages for the aged and recreation opportunities.

Some of his volunteering includes Multicultural Aged Care (18 years and still going), Elderly Australian Chinese Homes, and the Chinese Australian Services Society Ltd (CASS) since 1981.

“With Henry’s vision, CASS grew from a concept to a sustainable organisation and today more 2,000 families use the services and join activities provided by CASS every day,” Ms Rygate said.

“The community organisation Henry envisioned more than 30 years ago now has an annual budget of $10 million, over 200 paid employees and 200 volunteers to help the community.”

The Winners of the 2015 Sydney South Volunteer of the Year Awards are:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Award Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Winner Volunteer of the Year</td>
<td>Henry Pan of Bexley Chinese Australian Services Society</td>
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<td>Youth Volunteer of the Year (up to 24 years)</td>
<td>Jesse Hanna of Bexley Rockdale Youth Council with Rockdale City Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult Volunteer of the Year (25 – 64 years)</td>
<td>Henry Pan of Bexley Chinese Australian Services Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Volunteer of the Year (65+ years)</td>
<td>Barbara Falloon of Yowie Bay Carinya RSL Day Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer Team of the Year</td>
<td>Ramsgate RSL Junior Australian Football Club</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.

“We 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 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

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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 go to www.volunteering.com.au