

Council Congratulates 2014 Citizens of the Year

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Mayor of Baw Baw Shire Councillor Murray Cook announced the Baw Baw Shire's 2014 Citizen and Young Citizen of the Year at a ceremony held on Thursday 23 January.

Michael Wardle was announced as the Citizen of the Year, while Samantha Charles was awarded the Young Citizen of the Year.

The Mayor said both were worthy recipients of the prestigious honour.

"Congratulations to Michael Wardle and Samantha Charles on being named as our Citizen and Young Citizen of the Year for 2014," said the Mayor.

"Michael has been heavily involved in the Drouin Cricket Club for 18 years. Throughout this time, Michael was President of the club for five years and has won the club's best clubman award six times. He has also taken on various duties to maintain and enhance the club within the local community, including: coaching junior sides, fundraising, actively supporting the social committee, and networking with local sponsors who support the club.

"Michael is also deeply involved in the Warragul and District Cricket Association and has been a hard-working and diligent secretary for the past four seasons. On top of all this, Michael is a life member of the Warragul and District Badminton Club, where he has had 36 years involvement; has been heavily involved in the Hallora Cricket Club and the Hallora Football Club for 16 years; and, has spent seven years on the Drouin Recreation Reserve Committee.

"For the past six years, Samantha has devoted herself to making her local area a great place for young people to live. Volunteering for the Youth Foundations Neerim District she has; participated in the presentation of the Youth Grants Program from 2008 to 2010; become the youngest Director of a bank in Australia at the age of 21 for Neerim District Financial Service Limited; and become a Director on the Board of Management responsible for the Youth Portfolio and a member of the Governance and Audit Committee. In 2012, Samantha was honoured as a rural young person with an ABC Heywire award for her story and contribution to the community."

The Community Contribution Sporting Achievement Award was presented to the Warragul Cycling Club.

"The Warragul Cycling Club is a volunteer group that has initiated the state's first road safety project for on-road cyclists. The *Upright and Insight* program, funded in part by the Transport Accident Commission, aims to educate, train and mentor riders, develop a culture of adherence to road rules, promote the legitimacy of cyclists as road users, and foster respect between cyclists and drivers."

Community Event of the Year was awarded to the Jindivick Country Market.

"The Jindivick Country Market is held on the first Saturday of every month and boasts between 25-30 stallholders on average each market day. With a diversity of products and stalls available, the market draws people from near and far, and welcomes more than 1,000 people to experience the market each month.

"Two Australia Day Medallions were also awarded to Beth Sheffield and Jacob Bush, both of whom made important contributions to our community.

"Beth has spent many years volunteering for organisations and programs including: the Focus on School Service, Bounce Back, Disability Support, five to six year old leadership, L2P Program, Strategy Programming, and Community Gardens. Generously volunteering her time to the cause, Beth worked with the Warragul Community House committee to have Growing Together Baw Baw administered under the Community House umbrella.

"In September 2012, Jacob travelled to the Northern Territory with school to train in cross-cultural understanding through 'Youth with a Mission'; a youth orientated organisation based in Darwin. During his time there, Jacob ran children's programs, became involved in the local school, and interacted with local indigenous young people.

"On behalf of the Council, I would like to say thank you to all of our award winners for their continuing efforts to improve our community."

Award winners will be in attendance at various events across the Shire on Australia Day – Sunday 26 January.

For more information on events being held in Baw Baw Shire visit www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au/AustraliaDay