



AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

TERMS OF REFERENCE
JULY 2026

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Australia Day Awards Program is to acknowledge outstanding individuals and groups who have made a valuable contribution to the Shire of Dowerin. This document outlines the structure and administration of the Australia Day Awards Program.

2. BACKGROUND

Each year, the National Australia Day Council delivers the Australian of the Year Awards, recognising the achievements and contributions of eminent Australians. Local Australia Day Awards are administered by local government authorities across the country to recognise outstanding local citizens.

The Shire of Dowerin participates in this program to honour the efforts and contributions of individuals and groups that positively impact the local community.

3. AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS PROGRAM

3.1 OVERVIEW

The Shire of Dowerin Australia Day Awards recognise outstanding achievement and excellence in the local community. The awards highlight the importance of service to the community and offer an opportunity to acknowledge those who contribute positively to the Shire. All residents are encouraged to nominate individuals or groups whose contributions deserve recognition.

3.2 AWARD CATEGORIES

The Shire of Dowerin's Australia Day Awards include the following categories:

Citizen of the Year

- Recognises an individual who has made a noteworthy contribution during the current year and/or provided outstanding service to the local community over several years.

Senior Citizen of the Year

- Recognises an individual aged 55 years or older as of 26 January of that year who has made a noteworthy contribution during the current year and/or provided outstanding service to the local community over several years.

Youth Citizen of the Year

- Recognises an individual under 26 years of age as of 26 January of that year who has made a noteworthy contribution during the current year and/or provided outstanding service to the local community over several years.

Community Group of the Year

- Recognises a local group or organisation that has made an outstanding contribution to the community, including projects, events, or initiatives.

3.3 ELIGIBILITY

- Nominees must be Australian citizens or permanent residents.
- Nominees must reside, work, or study in the Shire of Dowerin. If residing outside the area, their service must largely contribute to or significantly benefit the Shire of Dowerin community.
- Community groups must be based in the Shire of Dowerin or provide significant benefits to the local community.
- Awards will not be granted posthumously.
- Sitting local, state, and federal politicians are not eligible, nor immediately after leaving office.
- Multiple nominations for an individual or group do not influence the decision-making process.
- Past award recipients will not be considered for the same category again.
- Where a category receives fewer than three (3) nominations by the closing date, previously submitted nominations for that category from the preceding two award years may be carried forward for consideration by the panel, provided the nominee remains eligible under this Terms of Reference.

3.4 NOMINATION PROCESS

- Nominations must be submitted on the official Australia Day Awards nomination form.
- Nominations should outline the nominee's background, achievements, and reasons for nomination, addressing the selection criteria below.
- Nomination forms can be submitted online, via email, or in person at the Shire of Dowerin office.
- Nominees may be contacted for additional supporting information.
- Information provided in the nomination may be included in the Australia Day Awards event program and media release.
- Personal information collected through the nomination process will be handled in accordance with applicable privacy legislation, and used only for purposes connected with administering the Awards Program.

3.5 SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection panel will assess nominations based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated commitment to community betterment.
- Contributions that have a positive and lasting impact on the community.
- Leadership and vision.
- Active involvement in community activities.
- Outstanding achievement in a specific field (e.g., academic, sporting, cultural, environmental, civic engagement).
- Law-abiding conduct and positive role modelling.
- Community participation and engagement.
- Personal, academic, and professional achievements.
- Awards and recognitions received.
- Special achievements.

The panel reserves the right to:

- Reallocate nominations to a different category if deemed more appropriate.
- Withhold an award in any category if no suitable nominations are received.
- Award 'Highly Commended' certificates where appropriate.

4. JUDGING PANEL

4.1 OVERVIEW

The Australia Day Awards Judging Panel is responsible for reviewing nominations and selecting award recipients.

4.2 MEMBERSHIP

The judging panel should consist of an odd number of members, not exceeding five (5), including:

- 3 Shire of Dowerin Councillors
- Past Citizen(s) of the Year award recipient (where available).

Panel members must reside, study, or work in the Shire of Dowerin. Members will not receive remuneration and must abide by the Shire's code of conduct.

Panel members must declare any conflict of interest, including where they are related to a nominee, or otherwise personally connected to a nomination, and must withdraw from discussion and voting on that nomination.

4.3 APPOINTMENT

Citizen members of the judging panel will be selected through an expression of interest process. Panel members will be chosen based on their experience, skills, and community involvement.

Where a panel position becomes vacant during a nomination cycle, it will be filled in accordance with the appointment process above, or the panel may proceed with the remaining members provided an odd number is maintained.

4.4 MEETINGS

Meetings will be conducted at the Shire of Dowerin administration office. The panel will convene as needed to assess nominations and select award recipients. Additionally, the panel will review the adopted Terms of Reference and hold an annual post-event meeting to evaluate the program and discuss any improvements.

4.5 VOTING

- Each panel member has equal voting rights.
- Decisions will be made through discussion and consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached, the decision will be determined by a majority vote of members present.
- Shire staff may provide support but do not have voting rights.

5. AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS CEREMONY

The Australia Day Awards will be presented at an official ceremony on Australia Day (26 January each year), or an appropriate date determined by the Shire of Dowerin.

6. THE ROLE OF CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

The Citizen of the Year will be encouraged to participate in Shire initiatives, including:

- Future judging of the local Australia Day Awards.
- Civic and community events.
- Other relevant community activities.

7. PROGRAM BUDGET

The Australia Day Awards Program will be funded through the Shire of Dowerin's annual operational budget.