22.1 Community Citizen of the Year Awards

Summary

The Community Citizen of the Year Awards recognise individuals and groups that have made a significant contribution to the community during the current year and/or provided outstanding service over a number of years.

Council is requested to endorse the recommendations of the Australia Day Awards Selection Panel and note that the award recipients will remain confidential until they are announced on 26 January 2027.

Disclosure of Interest

Nil

Confidentiality

This report is designated confidential under section 5.23 (2) of the *Local Government Act 1995* as it relates to:

(b) the personal affairs of any person

Previous Relevant Documentation

- G. 6/10/2025 28 October 2025 Council appointed seven Elected Members to the Australia Day Awards Selection Panel.

Background

Auspire Australia Day Council WA has run the Community Citizen of the Year program in partnership with local governments since 2003.

The Community Citizen of the Year Awards are designed to profile leading local citizens who are role models that inspire with their achievements and challenge those around them to make their own contributions to creating a better community.

The awards comprise four categories:

1. Community Citizen of the Year
2. Community Citizen of the Year Youth (16 – 30 years)
3. Community Citizen of the Year Senior (Over 65)
4. Active Citizenship – Group or Event

Nominations opened on 1 September and closed on 31 October 2026. The City promoted the awards through its website, social media, stakeholder emails, newsletters, newspaper and radio advertising, posters, flyers, internal communications and community networks. The City received 36 nominations, 13 less than in the previous year. Two nominees declined their nominations and one nominee was found ineligible and was removed from the assessment process.

The Council-appointed Australia Day Awards Selection Panel (Panel) comprised Mayor Kearns, Deputy Mayor Smith and Councillors Mulder, Schumacher, Green and Wilkins, with administrative support provided by the Office of the Mayor and Councillors. Councillor Wright was also appointed

to the Panel but withdrew before the assessment process because conflicting commitments prevented participation within the required timeframe.

The City confirmed nominee eligibility, sought to notify nominees and provide them with an opportunity to verify the evidence and add relevant information, undertook appropriate due diligence, and prepared nomination summaries and assessment material for the Panel. Where a nominee could not be contacted within the available timeframe, the nomination proceeded using the information provided and this was identified in the judging pack.

Panel members independently assessed eligible nominations before the Panel meeting. For the three individual categories, nominations were considered against the following published criteria:

- Significant contribution to the local community.
- Demonstrated leadership on a community issue resulting in the enhancement of community life.
- An initiative that has brought about positive change and added value to community life.
- Inspiring qualities as a role model for the community.

For the Active Citizenship - Group or Event category, the published criteria considered community engagement, initiatives for new employment and significant initiatives that brought positive change.

Panel members scored each criterion from 1 to 5, using the scale Limited, Some, Sound, Strong and Outstanding. Scores were submitted independently through an online survey and collated before the Panel meeting. The highest aggregate score informed the preferred recipient for each category, subject to the Panel confirming eligibility and considering any relevant conflict of interest or procedural issue. Equal highest scores were to be resolved through Panel discussion and, if required, a majority vote.

The City also applied its local guideline that a previous recipient is not eligible to receive the same award category again until three award years have elapsed. This did not prevent consideration in another category where the eligibility requirements were met.

Before scoring commenced, the Panel reviewed category eligibility. A nominee could be considered in more than one eligible category but could receive only one award. The judging pack identified two nominees for assessment in both the general and senior categories, with the Panel to determine the appropriate category if either achieved the highest score in both.

Comment

Following completion of the assessment process, the Panel recommends that Council endorse the nominees in Confidential Attachment 1 as the 2027 award recipients. The Panel endorsed two recipients in the Community Citizen of the Year Senior category.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, impartiality interests were declared and recorded, with members able to continue participating unless the Chair determined that a material conflict required alternative management. Financial or proximity interests required the affected member to withdraw from discussion, assessment and voting for the relevant category.

The Panel acknowledged the outstanding commitment to community service demonstrated across the nominations. While the calibre of nominees was exceptionally high, the Panel again identified substantial variation in the level and quality of information provided in nomination forms. Some nominations focused only on contributions made during the past year, while others provided detailed accounts of long-term service. This made consistent comparison more difficult.

The Panel recommends that this feedback be provided to Auspire, including a request for clearer guidance to help nominators provide relevant and consistent evidence, consideration of an initial completeness check before nominations are forwarded to local governments, and an earlier nomination deadline to allow sufficient time for local assessment.

The Panel also requested a clearer distinction between contributions made through paid employment and voluntary service or work beyond normal professional responsibilities.

The Panel also recommends that Auspire review the question asking whether a group or event has created new employment, as this does not directly align with the published assessment criteria.

Statutory Environment

The Australia Day Awards Selection Panel is duly constituted under section 5.10 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Policy Implications

Nil

Risk Implications

As with all awards and recognition programs, there is a reputational risk to Council and the Community Citizen of the Year Awards program if information relevant to a nominee's suitability is not identified before an award is announced, or if an award recipient subsequently comes into disrepute. The following measures reduce, but do not eliminate, this risk:

1) All nominations must include a referee, which the administration support officer checks for any concerns.
2) The person or group nominated is provided with a copy of the nomination and given the opportunity to provide any corrections, clarification and/or further information.
3) The Panel comprises Elected Members who can draw on their knowledge of the nominees and their contributions to the local community when considering the information provided.
4) The Panel's final recommendations are endorsed by Council, which also has the opportunity to raise any concerns.

Financial Implications

Nil

Strategic Implications

The following strategies from the City of Mandurah Strategic Community Plan 2024 – 2044 are relevant to this report:

Social:

- Promote a positive identity and image of Mandurah based on its unique lifestyle offering.
- Promote and encourage community connection to create social interaction and a strong sense of belonging.

Organisational Excellence:

- Demonstrate regional leadership and advocate for the needs of our community.

Conclusion

The Australia Day Community Citizen of the Year Awards offer the opportunity for Council to publicly acknowledge the contribution of local people and groups to the betterment of our community.

The standard of nominations was very high. All eligible nominees will receive an Auspire certificate of achievement in recognition of their contribution to the community and each 2027 category winner will also receive a medallion.

The award recipients will be announced at the Australia Day Citizenship and Community Citizen of the Year Awards ceremony on 26 January 2027. All eligible nominees and their nominators will be invited to attend.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Endorses the 2027 Australia Day Community Citizen of the Year award recipients, including two recipients in the Community Citizen of the Year Senior category, included in Confidential Attachment 1.**
2. **Notes that all eligible nominees will be recognised at the Australia Day Citizenship and Community Citizen of the Year Awards ceremony on 26 January 2027 and that the identities of the award recipients are to remain confidential until they are announced at the ceremony.**
3. **Requests City officers to provide the Selection Panel's feedback to Auspire, including the need for clearer guidance for nominators, an initial completeness and appropriateness check of nominations, an earlier nomination deadline, clearer distinction between paid and voluntary contributions, consideration of a dedicated volunteer category and review of questions that do not align with the assessment criteria.**

Attachments

REDACTED Confidential Attachment 1 2027 Citizen of the Year Awards Recipients
REDACTED Confidential Attachment 2 Summary of the 2027 Citizen of the Year Award Nominees