

Rotary

Club of Gosford City



Bob Ward Vocational Service Awards

2025

These awards are held to:

Recognise vocational excellence of the highest order and to honour outstanding contributions by individuals or small teams of individuals and for significant advancement in their vocational field, inspire further enthusiasm and to give added reward to exceptional achievers, set an example to others, particularly youth, of the need to strive for vocational excellence for the benefit of their discipline and the broader community.

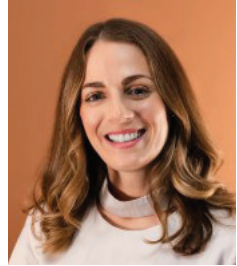
Brendan Rogers - Leader by Design



Brendan is an active small business leader on the Central Coast. He champions other small businesses on the coast and contributes to the economic success of the region. Brendan is one of the founding organisers of LinkedIn Local, a thriving free networking event he hosts with others here on the Central Coast. Most notably, Brendan works tirelessly with his partner supporting children in need as foster parents. He has made a significant contribution to help the foster community and is an excellent ambassador for the foster program in NSW.

Laura Prael - CEO LEP Digital

Laura is the owner and CEO of LEP Digital. LEP Digital (LEP) is a digital marketing firm based at Terrigal, and Laura has grown the business from humble beginnings to a successful business venture with several employees. LEP, and Laura herself have been recipients of the NSW Business Chamber awards over several years. More importantly, Laura is an active supporter of Central Coast projects to improve the quality of life for all Coasties. She regularly volunteers to do the 'Take 3 for the Sea' community project and has also completed the 'CEO Sleep Out' for several years. Laura has also inspired budding female entrepreneurs via her participation in the Women in Business program introduced and managed by TAFE. Her work in this project is outstanding. Finally, Laura has been an active industry consultant for the University of Newcastle, building communication between academia and industry expectations. She is an outstanding vocational ambassador for the Central Coast.



Joely Langmaid - Chief of Staff to Liesl Tesch MP



As Chief of Staff to Liesl Tesch MP, Joely Langmaid is a passionate and dedicated advocate for the people of the Gosford electorate and the broader Central Coast. Joely first joined Liesl's office as an intern, researching the benefits of working from home for our region. Her study revealed the immense social and economic toll of long commutes, with some locals travelling up to six hours a day to Sydney. She found that flexible work—especially post-COVID—has been transformative, particularly for women, carers and people with disabilities. Recognised for her effectiveness, Joely was offered part-time work while completing her degree in Social Research and Political Science at Sydney University. She also worked with Dr Gordon Reid MP before becoming Chief of Staff to Liesl in 2021. Joely brings excellent communication skills, deep compassion, and strong leadership to her role. She manages Liesl's team, coordinates media—including a vibrant social media presence—and liaises across all levels of government. Her insight into local issues, talent for HR, and fabulous sense of humour make her a standout. Joely is a driving force behind so much of the good work coming from Liesl's office, and I highly recommend her for a vocational award from the wonderful Gosford City Rotary.

Megan Maher - Wyong Neighbourhood Centre



Megan joined Wyong Neighbourhood Centre in 2020 as a Community Referral Worker, where she quickly stood out for her compassion, professionalism, and ability to support people in crisis with empathy and care. Her commitment and growing leadership saw her promoted to Wyong Hub Coordinator in late 2024. In this role, Megan supports individuals and families facing complex challenges, guiding them through services with calm and clarity. She also mentors students on placement, offering thoughtful guidance and a powerful example of ethical, community-focused practice. While working, Megan is also studying Psychology, building on her Community Services background with the goal of working in child psychology—a natural extension of her passion for early intervention and family support. With quiet determination and integrity, Megan balances her professional, personal, and academic life, modelling a sustainable, values-driven approach that inspires all who work with her.

Kim Pemberton - Wyong Neighbourhood Centre

Kylie Hopkins is nominating Kim for her determined and persistent management of the Gosford CBD Community Hub. There are a lot of challenges to operating the hub in Gosford. Not the least, being isolated from the rest of the Wyong Neighbourhood Centre team. She navigates this isolation along with the lack of funding that presents itself as not enough money to hire any ancillary staff to assist her with the daily activities and services delivered from the hub. She never gives up though and is always optimistic, resourceful and energetic in her attitudes towards work and the community.



Jade Atkinson - Kwik Kopy Gosford



Jade has quickly become the heartbeat of customer service at Kwik Kopy Gosford, recently celebrating her one-year anniversary with the team. In just twelve months, Jade's dedication to exceeding expectations has earned her a stream of thank you cards, heartfelt emails, and five-star Google reviews from happy clients. Jade brings a wealth of experience from the photography and print industries, previously serving as Production Manager at Bellizzi Studios, where she led both local and offshore teams, managed projects, and designed new procedures for greater efficiency. She's also held key roles with Advanced Life Photography and Harvey Norman, consistently recognised for her organisation, creative flair, and professionalism under pressure. Jade's approachable manner and "master at multi-tasking" attitude have set a new standard for customer care. As one delighted customer, Mel, shared in a recent Google review "Jade was quick to respond, incredibly patient when I didn't know what I was doing and accommodated a late change of order. Professional, friendly and a quick turn around." Jade's commitment to every customer interaction—no matter how big or small—has made a lasting impression on both her colleagues and clients. Her outstanding service and dedication make her a truly deserving recipient of the Vocational Service Award.

Kate Toon - The Book Nook



Kate deserves this nomination for all the hard work she has done reviving the local independent book store at Umina. The Book Nook has become a local retail attraction, and their support of the recent Words on the Waves festival was a credit to them. Kate's dedication to marketing and promotion of the book store and Umina has added a retail vibrancy to the area that has been lacking. Her vocational commitment to our Central Coast community helps all businesses to thrive here.

Deepu Maharjan - Mr Sha Sha's

Sous Chef at Mr Sha Sha's. Deepu has been a dedicated part of the Mr Sha Sha's team for the past two years, playing a vital role in the day-to-day running of our fast-paced and thriving business. Originally from Nepal, Deepu made the brave move to Australia with the goal of giving his family a better life. His work ethic is second to none — reliable, humble, and genuinely kind, Deepu is the type of team member every business dreams of. It's no exaggeration to say that we simply couldn't do it without him. As the owner, it is our absolute honour to present this award in recognition of Deepu's incredible contribution. We are truly grateful to have him on our team.



Aaron Graham - At Baker St Restuarant



Nominated by Chef Daniel, Aaron has become a passionate and highly respected figure in Gosford's culinary scene, Aaron is a driving force behind the success of Baker St Restaurant. With a commitment to excellence, consistency, and service, Aaron is part of more than just a restaurant, At Baker St's Team have cultivated a destination known for exceptional dining and warm hospitality. His hands-on attendance to detail, from kitchen to front-of-house, sets a high standard that inspires the team and delights patrons. In recognition of his outstanding professionalism, leadership, and ongoing service to the Central Coast community, the Rotary Club of Gosford City is proud to honour Aaron Graham with the Vocational Service Award.

Gosford City Rotary thanks the following sponsors for their support:

