

## Citizen of the Year Awards

Strategic Alignment - Our Community

Confidential - s 90(3) (o) proposed award recipient

Tuesday, 2 December 2025

City Community Services and  
Culture Committee

**Program Contact:**

Carole Johns, Executive  
Manager, Office of the Chief  
Executive Officer

**Approving Officer:**

Michael Sedgman, Chief  
Executive Officer

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the report is to provide advice on the nominations received for the 2026 City of Adelaide: Citizen of the Year, Young Citizen of the Year, Community Event of the Year and Active Citizenship Awards.

The City of Adelaide Citizen of the Year Awards form part of Council's Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony in January each year and are held in conjunction with the Australia Day Council (SA Division).

The Awards are presented to local citizens and groups who have made noteworthy contributions to the City of Adelaide during the past year or who have given outstanding service over many years. There are four awards each year, including:

1. **Citizen of the Year** – This is presented to someone making an extraordinary contribution to the community and may recognise outstanding service over a number of years. To be eligible, the person must be an Australian Citizen.
2. **Young Citizen of the Year** – Presented to a young emerging leader who is making a real difference in their community. To be eligible, the person must be an Australian Citizen aged over 16 years and under 30 years of age on 26 January 2026.
3. **Community Event of the Year** – Awarded to the person or group who has staged the most outstanding event for their community. To be eligible, the person or group must be Australian Citizens.
4. **Award for Active Citizenship** – This is presented to a person or group delivering outstanding work on an event or project for the community during the past calendar year. The person or group need not be Australian Citizens.

Advice of the eligible nominations received in each category is provided for consideration by the City Community Services and Culture Committee and recommendation to Council.

Consideration in confidence is sought because the award winners for each category are confidential until Thursday 29 January 2026, when the winners will be publicly announced at a Citizenship Ceremony hosted by the Lord Mayor.

## RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 9 December 2025 for consideration

THAT THE CITY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CULTURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL  
THAT COUNCIL

1. Notes the eligible nominations for the 2026 Citizen of the Year as contained in Attachment A to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the Special meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 2 December 2025.

## NOT FOR PUBLICATION

2. Notes the eligible nominations for the 2026 Young Citizen of the Year as contained in Attachment B to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the Special meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 2 December 2025.
  3. Notes the eligible nominations for the 2026 Community Event of the Year as contained in Attachment C to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the Special meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 2 December 2025.
  4. Notes the eligible nominations for the 2026 Active Citizen of the Year as contained in Attachment D to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the Special meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 2 December 2025.
  5. Approves the recommendations of the City Community Services and Culture Committee in awarding:
    - 5.1. 2026 Citizen of the Year to \_\_\_\_\_
    - 5.2. 2026 Young Citizen of the Year to \_\_\_\_\_
    - 5.3. 2026 Community Event of the Year to \_\_\_\_\_
    - 5.4. 2026 Active Citizen of the Year to \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Notes that in accordance with Section 91(7) & (9) of the *Local Government Act 1999* (SA) and on the grounds that Item 7.1 [Citizen of the Year Awards] listed on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Community and Culture Committee held on 2 December 2025 was received, discussed and considered in confidence pursuant to Section 90(3) (o) of the *Local Government Act 1999* (SA), this meeting of Council, do order that:
    - 6.1. The discussion in relation to this matter remain confidential and not available for public inspection.
    - 6.2. The resolution, the report and any other associated information submitted to this meeting, excluding the discussion, and the Minutes of this meeting in relation to the matter remain confidential and not available for public inspection until after the 2026 Citizen of the Year Awards Ceremony.
    - 6.3. The confidentiality of the matter be reviewed in December 2026
    - 6.4. The Chief Executive Officer be delegated the authority to review and revoke all or part of the order herein and directed to present a report containing the Item for which the confidentiality order has been revoked.
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## IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	<b>Strategic Alignment – Our Community</b> The recognition of community achievements directly delivers Council's Strategic Plan in particular support for community diversity, cultural expression, experiences and participation.
Policy	The awarding of Citizen of the Year is covered by the Civic Recognition and Protocol Policy ( <a href="#">Link 1</a> ), requiring a decision of Council.
Consultation	Not as a result of this report
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Not as a result of this report
Opportunities	There are a range of opportunities to promote the work of the Council and recipients of the awards, through this process
25/26 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Proposed 26/27 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Not as a result of this report
25/26 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

## GROUNDS AND BASIS FOR CONSIDERATION IN CONFIDENCE

### Grounds

Section 90(3) (o) of the *Local Government Act 1999* (SA)

(o) information relating to a proposed award recipient before the presentation of the award

### Basis

This Item is confidential as it contains information relating to recommended award recipients prior to the presentation of the awards at the Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony scheduled for Thursday 29 January 2026.

## DISCUSSION

1. The City of Adelaide Citizen of the Year Awards form part of the Council's Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony in January each year and are held in conjunction with the Australia Day Council (SA Division).
2. The Awards are presented to local citizens and groups who have made noteworthy contributions to the City of Adelaide during the past year or who have given outstanding services over many years. Nominations are sought for four awards each year, including:
  - 2.1. Citizen of the Year - This is presented to someone making an extraordinary contribution to the community and may recognise outstanding service over a number of years. To be eligible, the person must be an Australian Citizen.
  - 2.2. Young Citizen of the Year - Presented to a young emerging leader who is making a real difference in their community. To be eligible, the person must be an Australian Citizen aged over 16 years and under 30 years of age on 26 January 2026.
  - 2.3. Community Event of the Year - Awarded to the person or group who has staged the most outstanding event for their community. To be eligible, the person or group must be Australian Citizens.
  - 2.4. Award for Active Citizenship – This is presented to a person or group delivering outstanding work on an event or project for the community during the past calendar year. The person or group need not be Australian Citizens.
3. The Council promoted the awards in accordance with the guidelines set by the Australia Day Council.
4. External communications utilised social media, the City of Adelaide's website, Australia Day Council promotions, advertising in local media. Posters were also distributed to libraries and community centres. Our internal communication channels such as The Next Edition, Digital Signage TV screens, email signatures and direct emails were also used.
5. Nominations for all award categories closed on 16 November 2025.
6. While there were multiple nominations for each category, not all met the nomination criteria, including the nominee's community activities being based outside of the City of Adelaide.
7. Including nominations received from the Australia Day Council of SA, the final nomination tally stands at:
  - 7.1. Citizen of the Year – 7 nominations received of which 5 are eligible.
  - 7.2. Young Citizen of the Year – 3 nominations received of which 1 is eligible.
  - 7.3. Community Event of the Year – 4 nominations received of which 3 are eligible.
  - 7.4. Award for Active Citizenship – 2 nominations received of which 2 are eligible.
8. Nominations were processed by the Administration, which included character reference checks and achievement verification, to ensure each of the nominees satisfied the criteria for the Committee's consideration and recommendation to Council.
9. The selection criteria for Citizen of the Year and Young Citizen of the Year are:
  - 9.1. Significant contribution to the City of Adelaide community, above and beyond employment duties.
  - 9.2. An inspirational role model for the Australian community.

- 9.3. The scope of impact the individual's contribution has on the local government area.
- 9.4. Person must be an Australian Citizen.
- 9.5. The Young Citizen must be an Australian Citizen aged over 16 years and under 30 years of age on 26 January 2026.
10. The selection criteria for Community Event of the Year are:
  - 10.1. The quality of the event in the City of Adelaide community.
  - 10.2. The scope of impact the event has on the local government area (City of Adelaide).
  - 10.3. The event's contribution to the City of Adelaide community.
  - 10.4. Person or group must be an Australian Citizen/s.
  - 10.5. Ticketed events are eligible if the event is open to all members of the public to purchase a ticket.
11. The selection criteria for the Award for Active Citizenship:
  - 11.1. The person or group has demonstrated leadership in and for the City of Adelaide community.
  - 11.2. The person or group's involvement in the City of Adelaide community
  - 11.3. The scope of impact the person or group's work has on the community.
  - 11.4. The person or group need not be Australian Citizens.
12. In addition, the City of Adelaide applies the following local criteria:
  - 12.1. Whether the nominee is a resident or has a substantial connection with the City of Adelaide.
  - 12.2. Whether the nominee's achievement(s) align with Council's strategic priorities.
13. Details of the eligible nominees in each award category for consideration by Council are contained in the attachments as follows:
  - 13.1. **Attachment A** – 2026 Citizen of the Year.
  - 13.2. **Attachment B** – 2026 Young Citizen of the Year.
  - 13.3. **Attachment C** – 2026 Community Event of the Year.
  - 13.4. **Attachment D** – 2026 Active Citizenship Award.

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## DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

**Link 1** – Civic Recognition and Protocol Policy

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## ATTACHMENTS

**Attachment A** – 2026 Citizen of the Year.

**Attachment B** – 2026 Young Citizen of the Year.

**Attachment C** – 2026 Community Event of the Year.

**Attachment D** – 2026 Active Citizenship Award.

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- END OF REPORT -

# Citizen of the Year Nomination Form

## Nominee Details

Award Category	Citizen of the Year
Given Name	<u>Theo</u>
Family Name	<u>Maras AM</u>

## Reason for Nomination

How has the nominee contributed to the community?	Theo Maras has long held a philosophy of giving back to the community of the City of Adelaide. Whether it be via the rejuvenation of the East End of Adelaide, the upgrade of the Rundle Mall precinct, the future of 88 O'Connell Street in North Adelaide, the redevelopment of the Central Market Arcade (Market Square), the Hutt Street Centre or Common Ground, in his various roles as Chairperson or via philanthropic pursuits, Theo has time and time again demonstrated his unwavering commitment to better outcomes for people and for places across the City of Adelaide.
How has the nominee demonstrated active citizenship and enhancement of community life?	By putting people consistently at the heart of every decision, Theo Maras has the unique ability to combine community wellbeing with economic vibrancy. Theo continues to play a pivotal role in ensuring that the Adelaide Central Market has a viable, prosperous and community orientated future. As a passionate advocate for the future sustainability of the Adelaide Central Market, Theo has gone above and beyond to ensure that the City of Adelaide's commercial, community and multi-cultural interests are safeguarded and that the adjoining Market Square development seamlessly integrates with the wider Market Precinct.
How has the nominee's contribution been recognised elsewhere?	Theo Maras holds an Order of Australia (AM) and has been recognised by numerous organisations for his civic minded leadership, philanthropic contributions and positive advocacy for the City of Adelaide.

# Citizen of the Year Nomination Form

## Nominee Details

Award Category	Citizen of the Year
Given Name	<u>Jana</u>
Family Name	<u>Gomes</u>

## Reason for Nomination

How has the nominee contributed to the community?	<p>Jana Gomes has made an extraordinary contribution to the Adelaide community through her work as a sexuality educator, consent education specialist, and violence prevention advocate. With a strong background in psychology, sexology, and sexual health, Jana has educated and empowered over 60,000 individuals across Australia and New Zealand - including many within the City of Adelaide - on topics such as respectful relationships, sexual well-being, and consent.</p> <p>Jana has developed and facilitated workshops for schools, universities, sporting organisations, and government departments, including programs specifically tailored to vulnerable youth in the youth justice system and the Department for Child Protection. Through this work, she has equipped young people and adults alike with the tools to build safer, healthier, and more respectful relationships.</p> <p>Her tireless advocacy for gender equality, social justice, and violence prevention has had a measurable impact, particularly in advancing cultural and attitudinal change around consent and respectful behaviour. Her trauma-informed, evidence-based, and culturally sensitive approach ensures that her work is inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of the community.</p>
How has the nominee demonstrated active citizenship and enhancement of community life?	<p>Jana demonstrates active citizenship through her hands-on engagement with schools, sports clubs, community organisations, and government agencies. She consistently uses her expertise to address some of the most pressing social issues facing our community - particularly family, domestic, and sexual violence - by delivering education programs that foster understanding, empathy, and proactive bystander behaviour.</p> <p>Her leadership extends beyond facilitation. She has acted as a master of ceremonies and keynote speaker at significant events such as the Respectful Relationships Pembroke Student Symposium, where she educated and inspired young people to be agents of change in their communities. Jana's ability to engage across generations - from school children to elite athletes - reflects her deep commitment to enhancing community life at every level.</p> <p>Her work promotes safer, more inclusive environments, and she actively mentors others in the sector, contributing to the long-term sustainability of consent education and violence prevention efforts in South Australia.</p>
How has the nominee's contribution been recognised elsewhere?	<p>Jana Gomes' impact has been widely recognised. In 2025, she was nominated for the SA Women of Impact Award in recognition of her ongoing efforts to end Family, Domestic, and Sexual Violence. She was also invited to participate in a prestigious panel on respectful relationships, speaking alongside leading legal figures such as Justice Sandi McDonald, Lisa Dunlop SC, David Edwardson KC, and Commissioner Sarah Quick.</p> <p>Her expertise has been sought by major national organisations such as the AFL</p>

Players' Association, NRL, SACA, and the A-League, where she has delivered workshops to professional athletes, contributing to cultural change in high-profile sporting environments.

These acknowledgements speak to the significance and reach of her contributions - not just locally, but nationally - and highlight her as a leading voice in the fields of consent education and violence prevention.

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# Citizen of the Year Nomination Form

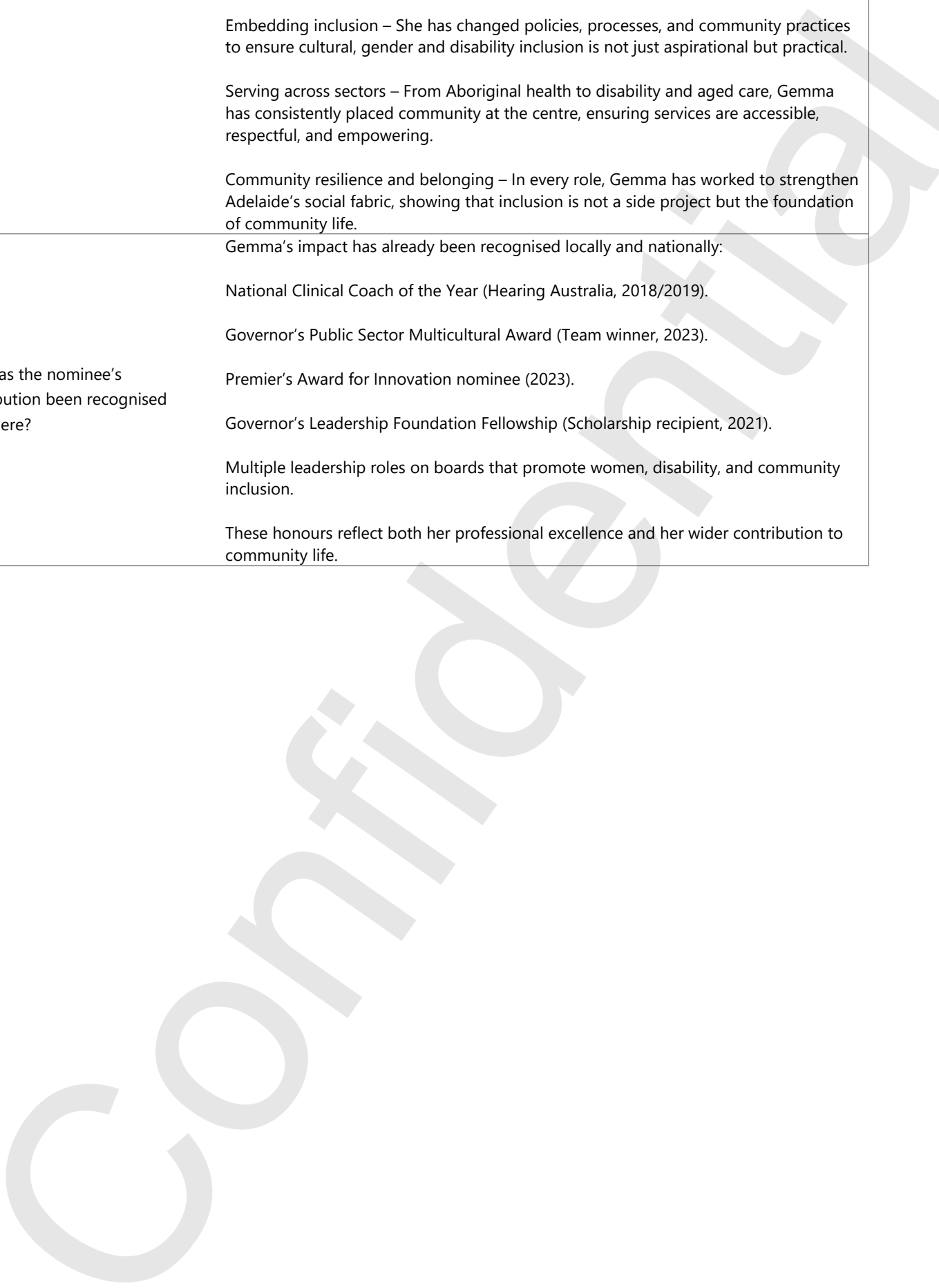
## Nominee Details

Award Category	Citizen of the Year
Given Name	<u>Gemma</u>
Family Name	<u>Cooper</u>

## Reason for Nomination

	<p>Born deaf and told she would never be able to have a career or speak, Gemma has defied expectations and dedicated her life to giving back to the community. Her journey from overcoming personal barriers to becoming a leader in health, disability, multiculturalism, women's advancement, and aged care reflects the very spirit of Adelaide's Citizen of the Year. Gemma is a role model who has transformed challenges into opportunities, inspiring others and leaving a lasting impact on communities across South Australia and beyond. I am so proud of her.</p> <p>Gemma's contributions span health, disability, multicultural inclusion, aged care, and women's leadership:</p> <p>Audiology and Aboriginal health – After completing her master's and becoming an audiologist, Gemma worked as a remote audiologist, flying up to 80 times a year to deliver hearing services in Aboriginal communities across South Australia and the Northern Territory. Later, she specialised in complex audiology, supporting clients with multiple disabilities.</p> <p>Mentorship and coaching – Recognised as Clinical Coach of the Year in 2018 at Hearing Australia, she has guided countless clinicians and students to provide person-centred care.</p> <p>Leadership in disability and multicultural inclusion – As a Director at the Lifetime Support Authority, she led a \$20M disability research program, created the inaugural LSA Innovate showcase, and drove major policy reform to embed multicultural and ESL inclusion. In 2024 her team won the Governor's Multicultural Award and was nominated for the Premier's Innovation Award.</p> <p>Aged care and workforce wellbeing – After her mother's sudden passing in 2023, Gemma shifted to aged care to honour her memory and support others older Australians. She is now General Manager, People Services at Lutheran Homes Group, supporting over 1300 staff and volunteers across SA and Victoria, with a focus on human resources, diversity and inclusion, rostering and recruitment.</p> <p>Community service and boards – Gemma serves as a Director on Technology &amp; Disability SA (4 years), The Spence Club (supporting women leaders) (2 years), and Soundfair (a national hearing advocacy not-for-profit - 1.5 years). She was the Chair of the Disability Committee at the Department of Treasury and Finance and also volunteers her media skills pro bono for not for profits like Catherine House, creating awareness videos to support women experiencing homelessness.</p>
How has the nominee demonstrated active citizenship	Gemma's life is an example of active citizenship in action:

<p>and enhancement of community life?</p>	<p>Lifting others up – gemma has been mentoring young professionals, advocating for multicultural communities, or supporting women leaders, she creates pathways for people who are often overlooked.</p> <p>Embedding inclusion – She has changed policies, processes, and community practices to ensure cultural, gender and disability inclusion is not just aspirational but practical.</p> <p>Serving across sectors – From Aboriginal health to disability and aged care, Gemma has consistently placed community at the centre, ensuring services are accessible, respectful, and empowering.</p> <p>Community resilience and belonging – In every role, Gemma has worked to strengthen Adelaide’s social fabric, showing that inclusion is not a side project but the foundation of community life.</p>
<p>How has the nominee’s contribution been recognised elsewhere?</p>	<p>Gemma’s impact has already been recognised locally and nationally:</p> <p>National Clinical Coach of the Year (Hearing Australia, 2018/2019).</p> <p>Governor’s Public Sector Multicultural Award (Team winner, 2023).</p> <p>Premier’s Award for Innovation nominee (2023).</p> <p>Governor’s Leadership Foundation Fellowship (Scholarship recipient, 2021).</p> <p>Multiple leadership roles on boards that promote women, disability, and community inclusion.</p> <p>These honours reflect both her professional excellence and her wider contribution to community life.</p>



# Citizen of the Year Nomination Form

## Nominee Details

Award Category	Citizen of the Year
Given Name	<u>Sarah</u>
Family Name	<u>Ladewig-Jones</u>

## Reason for Nomination

How has the nominee contributed to the community?	<p>Sarah fills many roles in her local community and has hosted Neighbour Day events for residents of Halls Place/Weil St over the past couple of years. She has also been a leader of the Parents group of Gilles Street Primary School and was instrumental in the huge success of the recent celebrations of the 125th anniversary of the school. Sarah also is an active member of the Walyu Yarta Community Garden and regularly assists the garden by liaising with Gilles St PS to bring students to the garden and also designing promotional flyers to promote holiday working bees in the garden.</p>
How has the nominee demonstrated active citizenship and enhancement of community life?	<p>Sarah has hosted Neighbour Day events for residents of Halls Place and Weil Street in both 2024 and 2025 with each event attracting large attendances. Sarah has effectively utilised Neighbour Day as a springboard to engage her neighbours in identifying local community projects to enhance the community. From these idea brainstorms she has worked with the community and City of Adelaide to install a little street library and to revitalise a local community bench seat. As part of the street library Sarah went door to door collecting the views and commitment from 30+ neighbours and presented this to City of Adelaide as evidence that the community wanted the library, were in agreement of where it would be situated and that they were interested in borrowing and restocking the library. Sarah is adept at bringing her neighbours on board to assist with projects and neighbour days and this help to enhance connection and community ownership. At the community garden she is quick to welcome new participants and visitors. For example the City of Adelaide worked with Study Adelaide for 20 international students to visit the garden and Sarah was observed speaking at great length with a number of students. Sarah did a remarkable job with playing a leading role in a very successful celebration of GSPS 125 year anniversary. For example she worked with a local artist who painted an image of the school and reproduced 100+ prints which were sold for fundraising for the school.</p>
How has the nominee's contribution been recognised elsewhere?	I don't think so

## Citizen of the Year Nomination Form

### | Nominee Details

Award Category	<b>Citizen of the Year</b>
Given Name	<b><u>Margaret</u></b>
Family Name	<b><u>Capel</u></b>

### | Reason for Nomination

How has the nominee contributed to the community?	Margaret has been a committed volunteer with both the City of Adelaide ( 10+ years ) and at the Joinery with the Adelaide Sustainability Centre ( 8 years ). During this time Margaret has fulfilled many roles with most notably being at City community centres as a volunteer cooking skills instructor for programs targeted at teaching men how to cook. These programs also include an opportunity to share a meal together afterwards. The men who have participated in this program often are living alone and lacking in social skills. Margaret's delivery style is slow, relaxed and non-threatening, gently encouraging everyone to contribute in the preparation of the food and enhancing their skills. Additionally, Margaret has volunteered with UCity to take new residents on food discovery tours pointing out nearby places offering quality, lower cost meals.
How has the nominee demonstrated active citizenship and enhancement of community life?	Through volunteering and active involvement with community where she has lived i.e. Christie Walk and UCity. Her food tours introduced new residents to restaurants and cafes particularly across Gouger and Grote Streets.
How has the nominee's contribution been recognised elsewhere?	She has received a 10 years of service certificate from City of Adelaide

# Citizen of the Year Nomination Form

## Nominee Details

Award Category	Young Citizen of the Year
Given Name	<u>Evan</u>
Family Name	<u>Johnson</u>

## Reason for Nomination

<p>How has the nominee contributed to the community?</p>	<p>Evan Johnson has made extensive and meaningful contributions to the disability, neurodivergent, queer, and student communities through professional practice, advocacy, leadership, and volunteer work.</p> <p>Evan’s civic contribution is strongly demonstrated through his work with the City of Adelaide’s Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel. As an Individual Panel Member—and now Chair for the 2025 calendar year—Evan plays a key role in shaping access and inclusion outcomes across the city. He provides informed, evidence-based, and lived-experience-driven advice on projects, policies, and strategies, ensuring that decisions reflect the needs of disabled, neurodivergent, and LGBTQIA+ communities. His leadership strengthens the Panel’s capacity to deliver meaningful and equitable change for residents and visitors alike.</p> <p>Evan has made significant contributions as a Disability Consultant with the Department of Human Services’ Disability Engagement Group, offering advice to staff, ministers, and media on disability inclusion. His expertise has also been recognised more broadly through publishing articles for the ABC and speaking on 5AA on behalf of the Department of Human Services about the Pavely App, further promoting digital accessibility and public awareness.</p> <p>Within the University of South Australia, he supports student wellbeing and advocacy through multiple leadership roles, including President and Founder of Access Guild, Executive Assistant for the Rainbow Club, and Secretary of the Occupational Therapy Student Society. In addition to these roles, Evan is completing his Occupational Therapy degree—with graduation expected at the end of 2025—and has recently completed his honours research thesis, positioning him to pursue a future career supporting people with disability through evidence-informed practice.</p> <p>As an Allied Health Assistant, Project Officer, and Mentor with Sunny Spectrum Supports, Evan provides neuroaffirming support to neurodivergent clients and contributes to sector-wide improvement through co-authoring the Neurodiversity Affirming Supports for Autistic Individuals training module in partnership with the Office for Autism.</p> <p>Across all areas, Evan consistently elevates marginalised voices, builds inclusive environments, and supports individuals and communities to thrive.</p>
<p>How has the nominee demonstrated active citizenship and enhancement of community life?</p>	<p>Evan exemplifies active citizenship through leadership, advocacy, and a steadfast commitment to elevating lived experience within decision-making spaces. As Chair of the City of Adelaide’s Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel—the first person with lived experience of physical disability, neurodivergence, and intersecting identities to hold the role—Evan ensures that diverse perspectives are represented at the highest level. He fosters an inclusive decision-making environment where all panel members are</p>

empowered to contribute meaningfully to projects shaping the city's accessibility outcomes.

His advocacy extends into government collaboration through his longstanding involvement with the Department of Human Services, where he provides practical, lived-experience-informed advice on disability policy and service design. Evan's lived experience as a physically disabled, Autistic, queer, and transgender person informs his approach to policy development, ensuring that equity and intersectionality remain central considerations.

Evan enhances community life both by directly supporting individuals—such as neurodivergent clients and university students—and by influencing systemic change in health, education, and government. His community education work with SAMESH, his contributions to inclusive sexuality resources, and his facilitation of peer support groups all demonstrate a personal commitment to empowering others. Through each role, Evan strengthens community belonging, safety, and wellbeing, consistently modelling compassionate, engaged, and informed citizenship.

How has the nominee's contribution been recognised elsewhere?

Evan's leadership and impact have been formally acknowledged by the City of Adelaide, which announced him as the elected Chair of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel for 2025. This historic appointment recognises not only his professional expertise but also the value of his lived experience as a person with physical disability, neurodivergence, and intersecting identities. The City of Adelaide has commended Evan for his inclusive leadership style, his commitment to equitable representation, and the positive influence he has on the panel's work.

In addition to this civic recognition, Evan has been sought out for public engagement opportunities, including media appearances and a guest feature on the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's podcast *The Post* to discuss the State Disability Inclusion Plan. His contributions to disability, sexuality, and neurodiversity discourse are further recognised through his ongoing columnist role with *Adult Toy Mega Store* and his recruitment and educator roles with SAMESH. These opportunities reflect the high regard in which Evan is held across community, government, and professional sectors.

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# Citizen of the Year Nomination Form

## | Nominee Details

Award Category	Community Event of the Year - <b>Still Aware Gala 2025</b>
Given Name	<b><u>Amira Shahin</u></b>
Family Name	

## | Reason for Nomination

How has the nominee contributed to the community?	<p>Still Aware is Australia's first and only charity dedicated to stillbirth education and research in an effort to end preventable stillbirth.</p> <p>Still Aware actively contributes to Australian community life through education, advocacy, and meaningful engagement with families, health professionals, and diverse cultural groups. Its work strengthens public awareness, empowers citizens with life-saving knowledge, and fosters a safer, more informed community for all expectant parents.</p> <p>1. Community Education and Prevention</p> <p>Still Aware demonstrates active citizenship by:                      Providing free pregnancy education resources nationwide, ensuring all families, regardless of background or income, can access life-saving information.</p> <p>Delivering training to midwives, doctors, medical students, and health organisations, strengthening Australia's health literacy and improving outcomes.</p> <p>This not only empowers individual families but enhances broader public health.</p>
How has the nominee demonstrated active citizenship and enhancement of community life?	<p>2. Advocacy for Safer Maternity Care</p> <p>Still Aware plays a leading role in advocating for:</p> <p>Preventable stillbirth awareness                      Culturally inclusive health information                      Improved maternity policies and clinical practices</p> <p>Through submissions, campaigns, and policy partnerships, Still Aware ensures that Australian families have a stronger voice in the health system.</p> <p>3. Supporting Diverse and Vulnerable Communities</p> <p>The organisation actively enhances community life by ensuring no group is left behind. This includes:</p> <p>Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) engagement                      Translation of pregnancy resources into Arabic, Mandarin, Vietnamese, and plans for Indonesian                      Community partnerships with local leaders, places of worship, and multicultural organisations                      Sensitivity training for health providers on supporting minority communities</p> <p>This builds trust, inclusivity, and a sense of belonging across multicultural Australia.</p>

#### 4. Volunteerism and Community Participation

Still Aware's programs are driven by volunteers who:

Assist with events  
Distribute resources  
Support awareness campaigns

This promotes active citizenship by encouraging community members to participate directly in lifesaving, community-strengthening work.

#### 5. Collaboration With Government, Hospitals, and Organisations

Still Aware enhances community life through strong cooperative partnerships, such as:

Working with state and federal governments on health initiatives  
Partnering with hospitals, universities, and clinics  
Engaging corporate sponsors to support public health outcomes

These collaborations amplify the reach of stillbirth prevention education across the whole country.

#### 6. Creating Safe, Supportive Spaces

Still Aware fosters compassionate, community-centred spaces where:  
Parents can seek support without judgement  
Grieving families are acknowledged and cared for  
Staff and volunteers uphold values of respect, empathy, and inclusion

This strengthens resilience and emotional wellbeing within the community.

The nominee's contribution has been widely recognised across multiple sectors, reflecting their significant impact on community health, education, and cultural engagement. Their work has been acknowledged through:

##### 1. Awards, Nominations, and Public Recognition

The Head of Strategy and Operation Amira Shahin is a finalist for Young Australian of the Year, highlighting their national impact and leadership in health advocacy and humanitarian work.

Public acknowledgment through state and community awards for their contribution to stillbirth prevention, multicultural engagement, and community empowerment.

##### 2. Government and Institutional Support

Formal commendation from the South Australian Government, including the awarding of major grants (such as the \$245,000 CALD translation project), demonstrating confidence in the nominee's expertise and project leadership.

Endorsements from local Members of Parliament and health-sector leaders who routinely highlight the nominee's influence in improving community health outcomes.

##### 3. Community and Organisational Recognition

Strong support and testimonials from community organisations, multicultural groups, and health professionals who have benefitted from their culturally sensitive education and outreach.

Invitations to speak at community events, leadership forums, women's empowerment panels, and professional training sessions, reflecting the nominee's reputation as a trusted community leader.

How has the nominee's contribution been recognised elsewhere?

#### 4. National and International Engagement

Collaboration with respected organisations in Australia and overseas, with their work referenced in sector discussions about inclusive maternity care and public health improvements.

Requests for partnerships and resource-sharing from hospitals, universities, and international health bodies.

#### 5. Publication and Media Acknowledgment

Coverage in community media, health newsletters, and organisational communications that highlight their achievements and impact.

Their work referenced in research discussions, educational resources, and community-driven initiatives.

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# Citizen of the Year Nomination Form

## | Nominee Details

Award Category	<b>Community Event of the Year – Nantu Wama Parkrun</b>
Given Name	<b><u>Tina Nilsson and Bec Paior</u></b>
Family Name	

## | Reason for Nomination

How has the nominee contributed to the community?	Nantu Wama parkrun is a free, weekly timed 5km event held every Saturday at 8am. Participants run, walk or volunteer at the event. The event is encouraging local residents to participate to improve their health and fitness. If they are not up to completing 5km, we have a large number of community members volunteer.
How has the nominee demonstrated active citizenship and enhancement of community life?	Participants take part by either running or walking the 5km course. It is not a race and there is no pressure to finish in a fast time. The first finisher comes in under 20 min and the final finisher often takes over an hour. We have children as young as 4 years old and elderly citizens in their 70s regularly complete the course. We have one family with 3 generations participate regularly. Volunteering is another way that participants can contribute to the event. It's a great way to meet new people and give back to the community. After the event participants meet at a local cafe for breakfast and coffee and to socialise. It's so much more than just a 5km run.
How has the nominee's contribution been recognised elsewhere?	-

# Citizen of the Year Nomination Form

## | Nominee Details

Award Category	<b>Community Event of the Year – Papercuts Festival 2025</b>
Given Name	<b><u>Owen Heitmann and Georgina Chadderton</u></b>
Family Name	

## | Reason for Nomination

How has the nominee contributed to the community?

Papercuts Comics Festival has contributed to the community by delivering an inclusive, accessible and diverse program of events focused on comics and graphic novels as an artistic and literary medium. From its first edition in 2019, the biennial festival has created spaces for the local and national creative community to connect with one another, learn from peers and established creators, and present their work to a wider audience, fostering a sense of community and collaboration. This achieved through its multiple events: Talking Pictures (live-readings of comics, blending visual art + story + performance to present the graphic narrative medium in creative new ways), Creators in Conversation discussion panels (showcasing diverse creators from across Australia, from independent comics-makers working with textiles to DC superhero artists, in dialogue about process, career, and practice) and the Market Day (which in 2025 featured 120+ stallholders from every state and territory of Australia, plus free workshops for the public).

Through these events, Papercuts contributes to the broader community by offering cultural experiences and an opportunity to engage with art and artists. Art offers connection and engagement, and acts as a catalyst to build community. All of the festival's events are free to the public, removing financial barriers to attendance and offering a friendly entry point. The festival enhances cultural literacy around comics/graphic novels, giving the public exposure to a medium that is often undervalued. Over the years, Papercuts has grown in scale and draws a significant number of creators and audience members, successfully creating connections between those who love comics and new audiences who don't yet know that they do. Accessibility and inclusivity are essential to Papercuts, thereby broadening the sectors of the community that the festival reaches. In 2025, the festival co-directors selected all venues on the basis of being wheelchair accessible and facilitated a professional access assessment so that attendees with access needs could come informed and prepared. The festival provided Auslan interpretation for all relevant sessions, where Hearing Loop equipment was also available. The Creators in Conversation panels and the Market Day each included a Quiet Room for neurodivergent attendees or those who find large events overwhelming. This focus on accessibility means more of the community can participate or feel welcome to attend, which strengthens the community connection. Alongside these measures, the programming also included diverse guests (queer, trans, non-binary; neurodivergent; indigenous and people of colour), creating a more inclusive platform for voices that might otherwise be marginalised and reflecting the diversity of the community it successfully engaged. Showcasing these various voices on an equal footing makes comics culture more inclusive, inviting people who might otherwise feel shut out to engage. In addition, by highlighting graphic memoir, non-fiction comics, and a broad range of genres (not just mainstream superheroes), the festival provides a platform for underrepresented voices in the medium.

Papercuts also contributes to the community by fostering emerging artists and future generations. The professional panels and creator-led workshops help up-skill and inspire both creators and the public, deepening the cultural literacy around comics/graphic novels. Young creators and emerging voices also participated in the Market Day as stallholders and were given equal space (e.g. Nicola Scott, Eisner-winning artist of Wonder Woman and Batman, tabled alongside a 10-year old SA artist). The free workshop offered opportunities for learning how to make comics (for kids, beginners, diverse creators). One standout example of how Papercuts helps foster new voices is 14-year-old creator named Max Baird. He had his own stall at Papercuts in 2023, and by 2025 ran a workshop: "Simple comic making for kids – by a kid!". This shows that the festival isn't just for established professionals but genuinely empowers younger / emerging creators to have development opportunities. The 2025 Papercuts was the biggest iteration of the festival yet, with record numbers attending each of the events. The festival successfully attracted not just participants but also attendees from across Australia, thereby boosting the city's cultural credentials and supporting the local economy in indirect ways (hotels, venues, hospitality).

Papercuts enhances community life by encouraging participation beyond mere consumption, fostering connection, inclusion, and local identity.

It focuses on this firstly by removing barriers and increasing access. The festival is free to the public, meaning that cost is not a barrier to attendance, which promotes broader participation. It provides detailed access information about the support available: wheelchair-accessible venues, Hearing Loops, Auslan interpretation, and a "Quiet Room" for people with sensory or communication needs. It encourages use of public transport, cycling or walking to the venue as part of its venue access information — which promotes sustainable mobility within the city. By deliberately lowering physical, financial and sensory barriers, the festival invites a wider cross-section of the community — not just "comics fans" but people who may have been excluded or unfamiliar. This strengthens social inclusion and civic participation.

It also successfully builds community networks and supports creators. The festival is explicitly about showcasing local creators, connecting them with each other and with new audiences. This creates civic value by empowering individuals to participate as creators, sellers and facilitators rather than only spectators. It strengthens social capital — networks, trust, mutual assistance — which is central to flourishing communities.

How has the nominee demonstrated active citizenship and enhancement of community life?

Papercuts further contributes to enhancing community life by facilitating inclusive dialogue and diversity of voices. The festival's guests include a diverse set of creators from across Australia, and the festival emphasises the medium of comics as inclusive of many genres and voices (not just mainstream). Community isn't just about averaged voices; it's about enabling marginalised or under-represented voices to participate. By doing so, the festival helps broaden civic and cultural inclusion, and ensures more community members feel represented and engaged.

Activating public spaces is another way that Papercuts contributes. Events are held across prominent civic venues (e.g., the Adelaide Town Hall, Adelaide City Library), thus activating and drawing people into the city centre. It has been recognised by the city's arts grant programs as contributing to "Connected Cultural Community" and the cultural life of the city. The festival helps transform public spaces into vibrant gathering places, reinforcing civic identity and engagement with the city's cultural life.

In addition, Papercuts enhances community life by encouraging creativity, skills and lifelong learning. Workshops offered at the festival (free, targeted at various ages) help individuals learn how to make comics, tell stories, express themselves. The festival fosters a creative ecosystem whereby local creators feel supported to grow and share their work nationally and internationally. The festival helps participants not only consume culture but create it — that's empowering for the community.

Finally, Papercuts demonstrates active citizenship by following through on its commitment to inclusivity, not just paying lip service. Beyond ensuring accessible venues and programming diverse guests (who were all paid in accordance with

Australian Society of Authors and National Association for Visual Arts rates), the festival hired behind-the-scenes workers such as a photographer who is hearing impaired; a videographer who is a person of colour; an access assessor who is autistic, mobility impaired and has a chronic illness; a marketing coordinator who is a person of colour; and a queer screenprinter.

Papercuts Comics Festival is entirely funded by arts grants, and consecutive festivals have received funding from the local, state and federal government levels. This shows that the City of Adelaide, CreateSA and Creative Australia have all recognised the festival as contributing to the "creative and cultural community" of the city.

Papercuts received the 2024 Ruby Award for Outstanding Community Event or Project (<https://create.sa.gov.au/initiatives/ruby-awards>).

Papercuts also received the Comic Arts Awards of Australia's 2022 Platinum Award (awarded to an individual or organisation presently active in the Australian comics publishing scene who best represents the ideals of the Awards) (<https://comicartsaust.com.au/previous-recipients/2022-2/>).

How has the nominee's contribution been recognised elsewhere?

Papercuts co-director Georgina Chadderton was profiled on The Post (<https://thepostsa.au/events/2025/09/09/why-sas-graphic-novel-scene-is-growing-and-going-global/>).

Both Papercuts co-directors were asked by Creative Australia to put together a showcase of Australian graphic novelists to present to international publishers at the 2025 Visiting International Publishers program in Sydney, showing the esteem that the festival is held in and recognition of its contribution to the creative community.

Selected quotes from people who attended the 2025 festival have been uploaded as support material that demonstrates further recognition of the nominee's contribution.

# Citizen of the Year Nomination Form

## | Nominee Details

Award Category	Active Citizenship
Given Name	<u>Ruth</u>
Family Name	<u>Appiah</u>

## | Reason for Nomination

<p>How has the nominee contributed to the community?</p>	<p>Ruth is a post grad student at the University of South Australia, her PHD studies being in chronic pain in migrant and refugee communities. She is also a part time doctor at the Lyell Mac hospital. Alongside and complementing her work and studies, Ruth has been actively involved in volunteering in Adelaide, driven by a passion for community service and making a meaningful impact.</p> <p>Since moving to Adelaide Ruth has volunteered for Baptist Care SA, working most Sundays since January 2023 with a team to prepare and serve free meals for individuals and families facing hardship. With the Survivors of Torture and Trauma Rehabilitation Service (STTARS), Ruth assisted with programs for refugee children and adults from December 2023 to December 2024, supporting participants one-on-one and helping set up sessions. These roles have taught Ruth about resilience, cultural diversity, and community engagement.</p> <p>Ruth has also volunteered at Vision Australia Radio since May 2024, reading newspapers and publications live on air to keep people with low vision informed and connected, strengthening her appreciation for accessibility. Last year, Ruth supported the Australia Day Council of South Australia with the multicultural parade. Additionally, Ruth serves as a student representative in her academic unit, advocating for postgraduate research students and contributing to initiatives that enhance the student experience.</p> <p>Beyond formal roles, Ruth participated in the UniSA Vinnies SleepOut, raising nearly \$500 and spending a night outdoors to gain insight into homelessness. Across all these experiences, she has contributed through mentorship, community engagement, accessibility, and direct service, guided by a genuine commitment to equity, inclusion, and connection.</p> <p>Collectively, Ruth's volunteering has fostered inclusion, empowerment, and opportunity for diverse communities in Adelaide.</p>
<p>How has the nominee demonstrated active citizenship and enhancement of community life?</p>	<p>Ruth's volunteering has contributed to building stronger, more inclusive communities in Adelaide.</p> <p>In Adelaide, Ruth's role at Baptist Care SA directly supports people facing food insecurity. By helping prepare and serve meals each week, she contributes to reducing hunger and creating a welcoming environment where people feel seen, supported, and valued. At STTARS, Ruth supports refugee children and adults through social and therapeutic programs.</p> <p>These activities offer healing, connection, and a sense of belonging, especially for those who have experienced trauma and displacement.</p> <p>Through Ruth's work with Vision Australia Radio, she helps ensure people with low vision stay informed and connected to the world around them, promoting inclusivity and independence. Lastly, supporting the multicultural parade helped celebrate and showcase Adelaide's vibrant diversity. Across all these roles, Ruth's impact has focused on empowering individuals, fostering connection, and contributing to a more compassionate, equitable community.</p>

One of Ruth's most meaningful achievements in community service has been contributing to the success of STTARS' programs supporting refugee children and families in Adelaide. Many of the individuals she worked with have experienced significant trauma, loss, and disconnection. Through consistent volunteering and genuine engagement, Ruth helped create a safe, welcoming space where participants can begin to rebuild trust and community.

A standout moment for Ruth was helping facilitate a holiday program for newly arrived refugee children. At first, many were shy and hesitant, but over the week, she saw them come out of their shells—laughing, participating in activities, and forming friendships. Ruth played a hands-on role in planning, coordinating, and running the sessions, and she found it incredibly rewarding to see how something as simple as shared games, food, and conversation could bring so much joy and confidence to children who had been through so much.

This experience reinforced Ruth's belief in the power of small, consistent acts of care. It showed her that community service isn't just about meeting immediate needs; it's about creating long-term emotional safety and connection.

Knowing that she helped contribute to those children feeling seen, supported, and hopeful is something Ruth will always carry with her.

How has the nominee's contribution been recognised elsewhere?

Yes, Ruth won the Community Engagement Award of Study Adelaide's 2025 International Student of the Year Awards, which I was the judge of the category for. I also advocated for her candidacy for the overall International Student of the Year award, which she won, making her the first ever Community Engagement Award category winner to go on to win the overall International Student of the Year award.

# Citizen of the Year Nomination Form

## Nominee Details

Award Category	Active Citizenship
Given Name	<u>James</u>
Family Name	<u>Davidson</u>

## Reason for Nomination

How has the nominee contributed to the community?	<p>James has significantly enriched the wellbeing of the Adelaide community through his leadership in two impactful initiatives. At the Minor Works Building Community Centre, he established and facilitates the Adelaide region's Good Better Best Men's Sharing Circle—a safe, welcoming space where men meet weekly to share experiences, build trust, and support each other's mental health. This group has created a vital network for men, many of whom previously felt isolated.</p> <p>In addition, James launched Let's Walk &amp; Talk, a free weekly walking group that brings community members together to connect while improving their physical fitness. This initiative promotes social inclusion, reduces loneliness, and fosters positive conversations that enhance community connectedness. Both programs are offered voluntarily, with James dedicating substantial personal time and energy to ensuring they run consistently and remain accessible to all.</p>
How has the nominee demonstrated active citizenship and enhancement of community life?	<p>James demonstrates active citizenship through his unwavering commitment to improving the social fabric of Adelaide's south-west and Reason for nomination beyond. He identifies community needs—particularly around mental wellbeing and social isolation—and responds with practical, inclusive solutions. His Men's Sharing Circle reduces stigma around men's mental health, fosters resilience, and strengthens relationships among participants. Through Let's Walk &amp; Talk, James brings together diverse community members in shared activity, encouraging outdoor engagement, conversation, and connection to local spaces. His gentle leadership style ensures every participant feels valued and welcome, directly contributing to a stronger sense of belonging. These efforts enhance social cohesion, encourage healthy lifestyles, and create regular opportunities for community members to interact meaningfully.</p>
How has the nominee's contribution been recognised elsewhere?	<p>James's work has largely been quiet and behind the scenes, driven purely by compassion and commitment rather than a desire for recognition. While his initiatives have been acknowledged informally by participants and community members through expressions of gratitude, there has been no formal award or public recognition to date. His programs have been promoted in the Heart Foundation's website and City of Adelaide's Experience Adelaide listings—such as the Let's Walk &amp; Talk event—which reflects growing community interest and support, but this nomination represents the first formal attempt to publicly honour his dedication.</p>

**7 Confidential Reports for Recommendation to Council****7.1 Citizen of the Year Awards [S90(3) (o)]**

Moved by Councillor Couros,  
Seconded by Councillor Maher –

THAT THE CITY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CULTURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL  
THAT COUNCIL

1. Notes the eligible nominations for the 2026 Citizen of the Year as contained in Attachment A to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the Special meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 2 December 2025.
2. Notes the eligible nominations for the 2026 Young Citizen of the Year as contained in Attachment B to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the Special meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 2 December 2025.
3. Notes the eligible nominations for the 2026 Community Event of the Year as contained in Attachment C to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the Special meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 2 December 2025.
4. Notes the eligible nominations for the 2026 Active Citizen of the Year as contained in Attachment D to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the Special meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 2 December 2025.

Carried

Discussion ensued, during which with the consent of the meeting, the Chair adjourned formal meeting procedures for a period of 10 minutes at 6.02 pm and for a further 5 minutes at 6.14 pm.

Formal meeting procedures resumed at 6.18 pm.

It was then –

Moved by Councillor Freeman,  
Seconded by Councillor Noon –

THAT THE CITY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CULTURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL  
THAT COUNCIL

5. Approves the recommendations of the City Community Services and Culture Committee in awarding:
  - 5.1. 2026 Citizen of the Year to Sarah Ladewig-Jones
  - 5.2. 2026 Young Citizen of the Year to Evan Johnson
  - 5.3. 2026 Community Event of the Year to Nantu Wama Parkrun
  - 5.4. 2026 Active Citizen of the Year to James Davidson

Discussion ensued

The motion was then put and carried

It was then –

Moved by Councillor Maher,  
Seconded by Councillor Siebentritt –

THAT THE CITY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CULTURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL  
THAT COUNCIL

6. Notes that in accordance with Section 91(7) & (9) of the Local Government Act 1999 (SA) and on the grounds that Item 7.1 [Citizen of the Year Awards] listed on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Community and Culture Committee held on 2 December 2025 was received, discussed and considered in confidence pursuant to Section 90(3) (o) of the Local Government Act 1999 (SA), this meeting of Council, do order that:
  - 6.1. The discussion in relation to this matter remain confidential and not available for public inspection.

City Community Services and Culture Committee  
Special Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, 2 December 2025 at 5.30 pm

- 6.2. The resolution, the report and any other associated information submitted to this meeting, excluding the discussion, and the Minutes of this meeting in relation to the matter remain confidential and not available for public inspection until after the 2026 Citizen of the Year Awards Ceremony.
- 6.3. The confidentiality of the matter be reviewed in December 2026.
- 6.4. The Chief Executive Officer be delegated the authority to review and revoke all or part of the order herein and directed to present a report containing the Item for which the confidentiality order has been revoked.

Carried

CONFIDENTIAL