

25 January 2010

Juan Alvarez named Shoalhaven's Citizen of the Year

Cambewarra dynamo **Juan Alvarez** is the 2010 Shoalhaven City Australia Day Citizen of the Year.

At 76 Juan is the driving force [Chairman] behind the Hands Across NSW organisation which provides toys, and gifts to farmers in rural NSW who are affected by drought and working in difficult circumstances.

Originally from Argentina, Juan arrived in Australia in 1964 and began work with Ansett Airlines as an Aircraft Engineering Inspector.

Among some of his community achievements Juan has also been involved in fundraising for learn to swim classes in primary schools, the restoration of headstones at Kangaroo Valley Cemetery, Christmas hampers for Australian troops in East Timor, time capsules for Kangaroo Valley and Cambewarra, and a number of suicide prevention programs. He also assists with respite care for people from rural areas who are finding it difficult to cope with the ongoing drought in rural Australia.

As part of his work with Hands Across NSW Juan regularly goes on "field trips" to inspect fodder for distribution to the farmers, he regularly visits affected communities in the Riverina, and meets with representatives of Government departments and industry to supervise contributions.

Samantha Davies, representing Ulladulla High School, is the 2010 Shoalhaven City Young Citizen. Just 17 years, Samantha was the Ulladulla High School Vice Captain, runner up in the Milton-Ulladulla Blessing of the Fleet competition. She has also been an active competitor with the Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club, Ulladulla Physical Culture Club and the Milton-Ulladulla Oztag Association.

Samantha has been a member of the Ulladulla High School's student representative council. She has also attended the Youth Parliament Leadership Forum and the Beyond 2020 Youth Vision Forum, and represented Ulladulla High School at the Gilmore Youth Leadership Forum in 2008 and 2009. Samantha is also the Ulladulla-Milton Lions Club Youth of the Year for 2009 and will represent the club at the regional finals in 2010.

Peter Dooley, from Huskisson, is the winner of the 2010 Shoalhaven City Sports Award.

Peter has been involved with rugby league and rugby union since 1976 as a member of the University of NSW rugby league club. He has been involved with beach sprinting for the Bronte Surf Life Saving Club; he was a representative for the country rugby competition. Peter competed in the NSW professional running circuit in 1989 and 1990. He has also been a regular participant in the Nowra cross country and track and field seasons.

In 1997 Peter won gold medals at the World Masters championships in the 800m and 1500m events in the 40 to 44 age group. In 2008 Peter was NSW and Australian gold medals in the 1500m 50 to 54 age group.

Peter has played a supportive and volunteering role in the Vincentia High School's track and cross country teams, the triathlon and mountain bike squads.

Winner of the 2010 Shoalhaven City Junior Sports Award is **Ben Atkins** from Callala Bay. Ben is 18 and has won numerous sporting awards in shot put. But his passion is football. In 2007 Ben joined the Australian Paralympic Football Team and was one of the youngest members to play with the Australian team in Canada, playing against Russia, Argentina and Canada. In 2009 Ben was chosen in the Australian Paralympic Football Team to play in the Netherlands. He was Vice Captain on the tour, the youngest vice captain. In 2009 Ben was awarded the Football of the Year by CPSARA. Ben has cerebral palsy and has worked in the local IGA since he was 15. He also tutors younger students in Mathematics. In 2007 Ben achieved Dux [Academic Excellence] of Shoalhaven High School. He has also been accepted into the University of Wollongong, Shoalhaven, to undertake a Commerce degree.

While Ben was competing in the Netherlands he was also completing his Higher School Certificate.

Jordan Matthews, 16 of Bomaderry, was awarded a Highly Commended in the 2010 Shoalhaven City Junior Sports Award for his achievements in cricket and AFL, with the Bomaderry Cricket Club and the Bomaderry Junior AFL Club.

Jordan is a local and zone representative in Cricket and AFL and selected for the Australian School Boys Cricket Tour to India. He was the leading wicket taker on the tour.

Aaron McElhinney, 17 of Bomaderry, was also awarded a Highly Commended in the 2010 Shoalhaven City Junior Sports Award for his achievements in football, volleyball, cricket and football refereeing. In 2009 he was referee for the first grade grand final, the youngest ever referee for a Shoalhaven senior grade grand final.

Editor's Note: Shoalhaven City Mayor Councillor Paul Green will announce the winners of the 2010 Australia Day awards at the annual Presentation Ceremony on Monday 25 January 2010 at the Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre.

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