

**THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION
QUEENSLAND BRANCH**



PICTORIAL HIGHLIGHTS

**THE 26th ANNUAL
SECONDARY SCHOOLS CITIZENSHIP AWARDS
PRESENTATION
2025**



Parliament House, Brisbane

The Undumbi Room

Friday, 19 September 2025

Commemorative plaques presented by

Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM
Governor of Queensland

Certificates of Community Service presented by Mrs Gina Fairfax AC, the awards sponsor

Compere -Mr John McCoy OAM: **Music** – “The Diamonds” Vocal Group, Lourdes Hill College

Awards proudly sponsored by Mrs Gina Fairfax AC

Geoff Cowles OAM, Awards Coordinator

Commemorative Plaque and Certificate of Merit Recipients 2025

*Ethan Cavanagh
Emilie Cresswell
Joshua Golato
Amayah Hague
Rocco Harder
Grace Hemmings
Ava Hetherington
Anastasia Jordan Wright
Sharnicqua Morsch-Ivey
Eve Reimers
Sydney Richter
Ruby Zsadony*

*Ignatius Park College
Lourdes Hill College
Assisi Catholic College
Ingham State High School
Ipswich State High School
St Ursula's College - Yeppoon
Toolooa State High School
Holland Park State High School
Mitchelton State High School
St Ursula's College - Toowoomba
Cairns State High School
Maroochydore State High School*



Our Awardees for 2025 with Guest of Honour and The Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch Chair- Back row from L-R – Ethan Cavanagh (Ignatius Park College); Grace Hemmings (St Ursula's College-Yeppoon!); Joshua Golato (Assisi Catholic College); Ava Hetherington (Toolooa State High School); Amayah Hague (Ingham State High School); Rocco Harder (Ipswich State High School); Front Row from L-R – Emilie Cresswell (Lourdes Hill College); Ruby Zsadony (Maroochydore State High School); Eve Reimers (St Ursula's College - Toowoomba); Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland; Sharnicqua Morsh-Ivey (Mitchelton State High School); Anastasia Jordan Wright (Holland Park State High School) and Mrs Ronda Nix OAM, Chair, The Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch. Absent Sydney Richter (Cairns State High School) –SEE INSET****

2025 Commemorative Plaque Winners Student Profiles 1 and 2



Ethan Cavanagh
Ignatius Park College

Ignatius Park College said in its nomination of Ethan that *“as the 2025 Prefect of Justice and Solidarity, Ethan seeks to contribute meaningfully to something greater than himself, with a genuine warmth and humility.*

He does this by giving his time to others without expectation of recognition or reward”.

At the age of 9, Ethan was recognized for his efforts in fund raising through his own campaign “SMILE” (Share a Meal in A Loving Environment), where he sought to donate laundry baskets of food to Ronald McDonald House.

At the age of 10, Ethan was named “Young Citizen of the Year” in Townsville when he was donating his birthday presents each year to local charities.

He received the award again this year for arranging donations and compiling dignity bags for the homeless with his project “Bags of Kindness”.

Currently, Ethan is working on another of his own projects “Bags for Stars” which aims to provide school bags with supplies for families facing financial difficulties, homelessness and domestic violence.

His belief is – Something as simple as a backpack can carry more than books - it can carry pride, confidence, self-worth and belief that education is worth showing up for.

Congratulations Ethan on receiving The Order of Australia Association Secondary Schools Citizenship Award today.



Emilie Cresswell
Lourdes Hill College

Emilie is College Captain and an exceptional Year 12 student whose commitment to service, leadership, and community engagement exemplifies the values of her school.

She has spearheaded awareness campaigns and fund raisers for a number of charities that reflect her deep compassion and drive to make a tangible difference.

Emilie has represented her school in AFL, netball, volleyball, and basketball.

She enthusiastically role models hospitality and connection through community and the joy of representing her school in sporting and service activities.

Outside of school, Emilie is

- a dedicated patrol member at Point Lookout Surf Life Saving Club;
- Vice-Captain of her AFL Under 17s team where she fosters inclusivity and team spirit; and
- participates in charity fun runs to support mental health awareness and the Stroke Foundation.

In their nomination of Emilie, her school states *“Emilie leads with integrity, inspires her peers, and embodies the spirit of service.*

She is a role model within our community and a young leader of remarkable promise.”

We congratulate Emilie on receiving her award today.

2025 Commemorative Plaque Winners Student Profiles 3 and 4



Joshua Golato
Assisi Catholic College

Joshua is the 2025 College Captain and advocates for, and has led the planning, organisation and delivery of Student Led Assemblies for the secondary students.

Thanks to Joshua's leadership and vision, the school has successfully introduced student-voice surveys, giving students a meaningful platform to share their perspectives and shape their school experience.

Joshua excels academically, particularly in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering.

Joshua and three other senior students formed Team Canary.

Together they developed and engineered the *Canary Wearable* which is a groundbreaking device developed to enhance workplace safety by monitoring 15 different metrics, including heart rate and air quality and sends this data to employers in real-time.

Most notably, they were honoured as Dream Team of the Year at the NextGen Awards 2024 - a showcase event for young changemakers.

Joshua is currently the State Ambassador of the Queensland Youth Parliament which involves promoting and encouraging Year 10 and 11 students to become involved with youth parliament.

As a deeply committed, values-driven individual who leads by example, we congratulate Joshua on receiving a Secondary Schools Citizenship Award today.



Amayah Hague
Ingham State High School

In their nomination, Amayah's school states *"It is with great pride that we nominate Amayah."*

She is an exceptional young leader whose commitment to her school and community exemplifies the values of citizenship, service, and leadership.

She is a visionary, a change maker and an exceptional leader".

When Ingham was devastated by a catastrophic flood event earlier this year, Amayah took immediate action.

Her vision extended beyond raising money, and after collaborating with her fellow captains, the idea for 'Relay for Resilience' was born - an event where teams of students would run laps of the school oval to symbolize strength, determination, and community spirit - with students completing 3,081 laps totaling 1,232 kilometres and raising almost \$3,000.

Her commitment extends beyond the school gates, where Amayah volunteers as a junior netball coach and cricket assistant and is a qualified touch football referee where she mentors younger participants in each of her roles.

Amayah exemplifies Leadership through her persistence, resilience and genuine commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of others.

It is with warm congratulations that we present Amayah with a Secondary Schools Citizenship Award.

2025 Commemorative Plaque Winners Student Profiles 5 and 6



Rocco Harder
Ipswich State High School

Rocco has demonstrated exceptional commitment to social service and community engagement through a wide range of meaningful initiatives.

He is deeply involved in the school's co-curricular life as a passionate supporter of the creative industries team and is an active participant of the Drama Club and a committed member of the choir.

Rocco demonstrates strong leadership as School Captain and represents the student body with confidence and professionalism; and contributed thoughtfully to discussions at the Zonta Student Forum on gender equality and leadership.

One of his standout initiatives was founding the school's Theatresports team, including independently organizing a coach and coordinating the team's involvement in interschool competitions.

Outside of school, Rocco has demonstrated impressive community engagement by volunteering for the Salvation Army contributing to fund raising and charity efforts for those in need.

He regularly shares his musical talents through busking and performing at open mic nights – helping to bring people together and contribute to the local creative scene.

Ipswich State High School stated on their nomination of Rocco *"his initiative, reliability, and ability to lead by example has made a lasting impact on the school community"*.

We congratulate Rocco on receiving his award today.



Grace Hemmings
St Ursula's College - Yeppoon

As School Captain, Grace is a student whose contributions to St Ursula's College have been both extensive and deeply meaningful.

Grace has actively participated in a wide range of social service activities and has embraced co-curricular life with enthusiasm and dedication.

She has been a member of both the Junior and Senior debate teams, and was part of the inaugural Thinking Big class.

Grace holds the position of Company Sergeant Major in the Australian Army Cadets, where she leads and instructs a large group of cadets with confidence and care.

Her leadership style is grounded in empathy, resilience, and a strong sense of responsibility.

Grace consistently achieved academic excellence, earning exceptional results and receiving awards such as the Junior Public Speaking Award and the Australian Defence Force Long Tan Youth Leadership and Teamwork Award.

We congratulate Grace on her award today and in the words of her school nomination "Grace approaches every opportunity with enthusiasm and a genuine desire to make a positive difference.

Her ability to maintain a consistent commitment to excellence is a testament to her strength and character".

2025 Commemorative Plaque Winners Student Profiles 7 and 8



Ava Hetherington
Toolooa State High School

As School Captain, Ava has played a pivotal role in developing and strengthening the school's culture of community and connection through her involvement with the school's Charity and Fundraising Group.

Also, as a senior mentor during the Year 8 Carnarvon Gorge camp, she demonstrated her dedication to shaping a supportive school environment.

As a member of the Gladstone Youth Council, Ava pitched a proposal for civic water fountains to the Gladstone Regional Council and now they are currently being rolled out in local parks, aligning with the objectives of the Disability Act.

Her commitment to environmental conservation is evident through her work with the Quoin Island Turtle Rehabilitation Program that is dedicated to rehabilitating sick and injured marine turtles from across the region.

She has been recognized for her work in geospacial awareness at the 2024 National Locate Geospacial Conference, receiving the Outstanding Geospacial Student Award.

Her school describes Ava as *"an extraordinary young woman who is humble, compassionate, and deeply principled, and leads not for recognition but out of a genuine desire to help others and make a positive difference in the world"*.

We congratulate Ava on receiving her award today.



Anastasia Jordan Wright
Holland Park State High School

Anastasia has served as Chairperson and Lead Student Organizer for the past two years for the Japanese Cultural Festival, welcoming international students and celebrating cultural diversity.

Anastasia's ongoing involvement in the International Student Program has supported students from Malaysia, Taiwan, Japan, and Italy, helping them integrate into school life.

She is currently launching an intergenerational outreach program with Regis Aged Care, fostering empathy and connection between students and aged care residents.

Her commitment has been recognized through multiple Citizenship Awards and academic honours.

Anastasia's co-curricular involvement is extensive and varied as a member of the volleyball excellence program, and touch football.

Outside of school, she has a strong commitment to community engagement as a competitive dancer who has represented Australia internationally and supported younger dancers as an assistant teacher.

Leadership is a defining feature of her school life. She served as the inaugural Junior School Captain and currently holds the position of School Captain.

Her school stated in their nomination *"Anastasia is a dedicated and compassionate student who exemplifies leadership, service, and character."*

Her ability to lead with kindness and inspire others makes Anastasia a truly outstanding student and community member". Congratulations Anastasia.

2025 Commemorative Plaque Winners Student Profiles 9 and 10



Sharnicqua Morsch-Ivey
Mitchelton State High School

“A certain alchemy occurs in the Mirrigin Room at Mitchelton State High School, where D’s become B’s and C’s become A’s.

Orchestrating this transformation is “Beyond the Broncos” Volunteer Student Tutor Sharnicqua, working with her classmates to patiently explain concepts, guide their understanding and boost their grades.”

No shame, taking this directly from the Brisbane Broncos website!

Sharnicqua is a volunteer tutor, supporting junior First Nation students at the school with literacy and study skills during lunch breaks; and embodies the spirit of cultural leadership and community engagement by providing cultural and academic guidance.

Last year, Sharnicqua collaborated with local elder Katherine Fisher to design and implement First Nation Totems into the school to replace the school’s house system, developing connection within her school and ensuring school competitive events were next level.

This year Sharnicqua has initiated the school’s Aged Care Project where she leads students to create Life Books for local seniors, strengthening intergenerational ties and respect.

Mitchelton State High School writes “*Sharnicqua is an exemplary role model who consistently demonstrates a deep commitment to service and upholding our school values*”.



Eve Reimers
St Ursula’s College-Toowoomba

Leadership is a defining feature of Eve’s school life where, as Service Captain, she leads with empathy and purpose.

She is respected for not only her achievements but for her ability to empower others and build inclusive teams where she consistently demonstrates maturity, patience, and a collaborative spirit in all her roles.

Eve founded the Vinnies Service Group - through this initiative, Eve has mobilised students to participate in food drives, fundraising events, and community support programs.

Academically, she captains the Maths Team Challenge and has earned top honours in the Queensland Association of Mathematics Teachers’ Problem Solving Competition and initiated lunchtime tutoring for students in Years 7 to 11.

Her ability to balance academic excellence, artistic expression, and community service is a testament to her discipline and sense of purpose.

She inspires those around her to strive for excellence and to serve with compassion.

Eve’s school nomination states “her presence enriches every aspect of College life. Her ability to identify needs and create sustainable solutions has had a lasting impact on our school culture”.

Congratulations Eve on your award today.

2025 Commemorative Plaque Winners Student Profiles 11 and 12



Ruby Zsadony Maroochydore State High School

Ruby is the 2024-2025 Student Council President at her school with a determination, service and strong leadership making a lasting impact of her school and community.

Ruby has shown deep commitment to service through her weekly volunteer role with *Mighty Minions*, an alternative Year 7 and 8 sport program led by the school chaplain.

Her generosity and community-mindedness extend beyond the school grounds and for the past four years, she has volunteered with the Nambour APEX and recently began volunteering with Nambour Rotary.

In 2024 she joined the school's Humanitarian trip to Cambodia that included teaching English and distributing food in rural villages.

Ruby has a strong passion for Japanese language and culture and, in 2023, was selected for the Global STEM Program in Japan where she visited STEM-related businesses and had a one-month Japanese homestay last year.

Ruby's school stated in their nomination that she is thoughtful and purpose driven - respected by staff and peers for her approach with a strong work ethic, inclusiveness, and maturity – whether in class, the community, or cultural exchange – with empathy and integrity.

Congratulations Ruby on your award today.



Sydney was unable to attend Parliament House on 19 September 2025 so Geoff Cowles OAM (right) presented the award to Sydney at the Cairns State High School's Year 12 Valedictory and Awards on Friday 24 October 2025

Sydney Richter Cairns State High School

Sydney's school describes him as *"an exemplary role model, whose ability to lead with humility, stay actively engaged, and remain focused on making a positive impact is truly admirable"*.

He is a highly capable leader who holds two leadership roles within the school as School Captain and Vice-President of the Student Representative Council where activities include fundraising, student wellbeing, and mentoring younger students to encourage their confidence and growth.

Sydney has immersed himself in school life through music, sport, and student leadership including a member of the Symphonic Winds, Symphonic Orchestra, and the Brass Ensemble and was also a featured performer in this year's school musical *Mamma Mia*.

He is leading a project to revamp a student space on campus which will include new seating and a student designed mural.

Sydney is deeply involved in Scouts Australia, serving as

- an assistant guide in outdoor activities;
- unit leader of his Scout group;
- a mentor to younger members; and
- an advocate for the voice of youth across the state as part of his role on the Queensland Branch Scouting Youth Council.

We congratulate Sydney on receiving a Secondary Schools Citizenship Award.

PHOTO GALLERY EXTRA

PROGRAMME

Arrival of Guest of Honour

National Anthem

Opening address by Guest of Honour

Her Excellency
the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM
Governor of Queensland

Certificates of Community Service

Presented by Mrs Gina Fairfax AC (the Awards Sponsor)

Response on behalf of Queensland Schools

Mrs Deidre Young, Principal, St Ursula's College-
Toowoomba

Musical Interlude

Lourdes Hill College's "The Diamonds" Vocal Group
"I am Australian" by Bruce Woodley and Dobe Newton
with Indigenous verse and chorus "

Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards 2025

Presented by Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette
Young AC PSM
Governor of Queensland

Vote of Thanks

Mrs Ronda Nix OAM, Chairman, The Order of Australia
Association, Queensland Branch

Closing Comments and Official Photographs

Afternoon Tea on the Level 3 Colonnade

Geoff Cowles OAM, Awards & Metro Events Coordinator



Photos – clockwise from top left

1. A most polished delivery from John McCoy OAM the emcee
2. Deidre Young, Principal, St Ursula's College, Toowoomba delivers the Response on behalf of All Schools
3. Mrs Ronda Nix, Chair, The Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch proposes Vote of Thanks to Guest of Honour
4. Keeping everything under control – Geoff Cowles OAM, Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards Coordinator
5. Mrs Gina Fairfax AC – our generous Awards Sponsor
6. Guest of Honour - Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland addresses the gathering.

PHOTO GALLERY EXTRA - Two



Students with their Certificates of Community Service with Mrs Gina Fairfax AC (presenter and sponsor) and Mrs Ronda Nix OAM, Chair, The Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch

Back Row – from L to R – Cody Neal (*The Y School-Redlands Senior Campus*); Max LLOYD (*Cavendish Road State High School*); Maxwell Buhre (*Earnshaw State College*); Merrick Wolski (*Ferny Grove State High School*); Jané van der Merwe (*Genesis Christian College*); Zhexi Teng (*Brisbane State High School*); Lauren Stallard (*Loreto College*); and Poppy Hughes (*St Rita's College*).

Front Row – from L-R – Semisi Manu (*Brisbane Boys' College*); Luca Ellero (*St Laurence's College*); Mrs Gina Fairfax AC (awards sponsor) Georgia Barton (*Sandgate District State High School*); Sallie Bromell (*Somerville House*); Morgan Watt (*Canterbury College*) and Mrs Ronda Nix OAM, Chair, The Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch.



From L-R Geoff Cowles OAM at the Cairns State High School's Year 12 2025 Valedictory and Awards Night on Friday 24 October 2025 with Sydney Richter with his Secondary Schools Citizenship Award and Yasmin Brennan and Liam McNamara with their Certificates of Community Service.



The Diamonds Vocal Group performing their Musical Interlude



"The Diamonds" Vocal Group from Lourdes Hill College receiving their accolades from the appreciative audience – with Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland (5th from left) and Ronda Nix OAM, Queensland Branch Chair (6th from left) and their Ensemble Director Sean Andrews (far right)



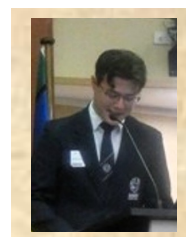
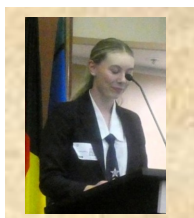
PHOTO GALLERY EXTRA - Three



This highlights package has been produced by and photos provided by

*Geoff Cowles OAM
Awards and Metro Events
Coordinator – November 2025*

Above - Portion of the record gathering of 162 guests in the Undumbi Room enthralled by the stars of the show – the students.



Some interesting facts about the 2025 Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards – the 26th Presentation

- ❖ 101 nominations received from a record number of 66 secondary schools
- ❖ 12 awardees – 3 from Brisbane; 1 each from Townsville; Cairns; Ingham; Yeppoon; Gladstone, Gold Coast; Sunshine Coast; Toowoomba; and Ipswich.
- ❖ Five first time winning schools – Assisi Catholic College-Coomera; Ipswich State High School; St Ursula's College-Yeppoon; Holland Park State High School; and Mitchelton State High School
- ❖ Since 1999 awards to 317 students from 137 schools.

