

**THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION
QUEENSLAND BRANCH**



PICTORIAL HIGHLIGHTS

**THE 27th ANNUAL
SECONDARY SCHOOLS CITIZENSHIP AWARDS
PRESENTATION
2026**



Parliament House, Brisbane

The Premiers' Hall and Speakers' Hall

Friday, 18 September 2026

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 National Anthem performed by Jonathon Welch AM

Awards proudly sponsored by Mrs Gina Fairfax AC

Geoff Cowles OAM, Awards Coordinator

Commemorative Plaque and Certificate of Merit Recipients 2026

*Spencer Aldridge
Chloe Eldridge
Ella Fisher
Francesca Fleming
Lachlan Gatto
William Hoult
Hattie Howgate
Saxon Miller
Arwin Rahimi
Stella Richardson
Samara Ryall
Kobi Scott
Charlotte Stent*

*Brisbane Bayside State College
Mount Gravatt State High School
Gordonvale State High School
Somerville House
Bundaberg State High School
Somerset College
Holland Park State High School
All Saints Anglican School
Yeronga State High School
Mountain Creek State High School
Lourdes Hill College
St Ursula's College – Yeppoon
Benowa State High School*



Our Awardees for 2026 with Guest of Honour and The Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch Chair- Back row from L-R – Spencer Aldridge (*Brisbane Bayside State College*); Lachlan Gatto (*Bundaberg State High School*); Saxon Miller (*All Saints Anglican School*); William Hoult (*Somerset College*); Mrs Ronda Nix OAM, Chair, The Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch; Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland; Hattie Howgate (*Holland Park State High School*); Arwin Rahimi (*Yeronga State High School*) and Kobi Scott (*St Ursula's College-Yeppoon*)
Front Row from L-R – Ella Fisher (*Gordonvale State High School*); Chloe Eldridge (*Mount Gravatt State High School*); Francesca Fleming (*Somerville House*); Samara Ryall (*Lourdes Hill College*); Stella Richardson (*Mountain Creek State High School*) and Charlotte Stent (*Benowa State High School*).

2026 Commemorative Plaque Winners Student Profiles 1 and 2



Spencer Aldridge

Brisbane Bayside State College

Taking it easy does not seem to be in Spencer Aldridge's high-energy world!

Spencer has embraced numerous opportunities as School Captain and leads with integrity, humility and purpose as Peer Support Leader -

- mentoring young students as they transition into secondary school;
- promoting student wellbeing by encouraging conversations around mental health; and
- providing greater engagement and cultural understanding within the school's First Nations community.

Beyond the school gates, Spencer is Club Captain of his local swim club, and has progressed through Scouts to his current role as Venturer Scout Unit Leader and Chairperson.

In this role he shows leadership by mentoring younger members and teaching outdoor adventure skills in abseiling and canoeing, and fostering teamwork and personal growth, at the same time modelling responsibility and service.

Spencer's dedication to environmental sustainability is evident through his leadership in Clean Up Australia Day and various environmental conservation projects - contributing to cleaner public spaces while encouraging environmental responsibility within the broader community.

In the school's nomination of Spencer they wrote "*Spencer is a young man of exceptional character, consistently placing service before self and leads by example to inspire those around him and a demonstrated maturity beyond his years.*"

Congratulations Spencer on receiving one of the thirteen Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards today.



Chloe Eldridge

Mount Gravatt State High School

Connecting with the school community is important for Chloe.

As School Captain, she actively participates in a wide range of social service initiatives that have benefited both students and charitable organisations and willingly gives her time to mentor younger students as a debating coach for the Year 9 team encouraging confidence, teamwork and critical thinking.

Chloe has participated in the school's strings program since 2021 and has held the leadership positions of Stage Band Captain, Jazz Band Captain, and Vocal Captain – consistently leading by example and mentoring younger students.

Within the broader community, Chloe has actively participated in

- Scouts;
- the Kokoda Challenge Youth Program where she travelled to Malaysia to commemorate those **lost** during the Sandakan Death March while delivering school supplies and toys to children in rural villages;
- the Lifeline Bookfest as a volunteer; and
- being a Football Queensland referee.

Therefore it is with total confidence that her school concluded its nomination with the words "*Chloe's service is motivated not by personal recognition but by a deep commitment to helping her community and embodies the values of citizenship through her unwavering commitment to making a meaningful contribution to society.*"

We congratulate Chloe for her dedication to the betterment of others and delighted she is the recipient of the Secondary Schools Citizenship Award.

2026 Commemorative Plaque Winners Student Profiles 3 and 4



Ella Fisher

Gordonvale State High School

In her unassuming and humble manner, Ella depicts the true spirit of an engaged citizen who contributes to society and leaves a lasting legacy in everything she does.

As School Captain, Ella leads from the front at Anzac ceremonies, fundraising and involving students with a disability in sport.

Ella is an inspiring leader who has earned tremendous respect from her community through sport where she is outstanding in her local vigoro, touch football, athletics and rugby league programs.

Where Ella has excelled above all others is in developing and leading a Touch Football Program for Young Primary students, and students with a disability.

She has delivered this program to 7 local primary schools to over 400 students with sessions tailored to fully engage students with a disability in touch football – resulting in Ella receiving the awards of

- Highly Commended Cairns Young Citizen of the Year (2025); and
- Highly Commended Cairns Young Woman of the Year (2026).

No wonder Ella's school describes her as an exemplary demonstration of community service, a role model, and someone that everyone aspires to be like in their service to community.

Congratulations Ella.



Francesca Fleming

Somerville House

Vice School Captain, Francesca (Frankie) has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership skills with a strong sense of responsibility and a commitment to community spirit.

Frankie displays a passionate determination to succeed and to make a difference to others.

She is a representative of her school in softball, athletics and netball; a Patrol Leader and mentor in Scouts; and contributed to the development of youth financial literacy through Gen Z Abroad.

She is working through her Duke of Edinburgh Award – Bronze Award, which is further evidence of her determination.

Another community contribution has been Frankie's involvement in the Jacaranda Festival where she has facilitated events, specifically organising and planning a Silent Disco (yes please!).

As part of her involvement in the Kokoda Youth Foundation over many years, Frankie has volunteered in events that give back to the community including

- tree planting with Pine River Catchment Association;
- a Charity Duck Race for domestic violence; and
- trekking the Kokoda Trail this year through the Owen Stanley Range in Papua New Guinea – what an achievement!

We congratulate Francesca for her dedication to the betterment of others and delighted she is the recipient of the Secondary Schools Citizenship Award.

2026 Commemorative Plaque Winners Student Profiles 5 and 6



Lachlan Gatto
Bundaberg State High School

Lachlan has established himself as a young man of exceptional character, and has distinguished himself through his ability to make meaningful contributions across leadership, academics, the performing arts and community service.

His passion for music and performing arts has seen him become an outstanding ambassador for Bundaberg State High School through his involvement in orchestra, strings, choir and taiko drumming. For Lachlan, it is about contributing to something greater than himself and he takes genuine pride in representing his school with excellence.

Academically, Lachlan has engaged in university programs, STEM initiatives, innovation competitions and public speaking all with a growth mindset and an intellectual curiosity.

His positive attitude, reliability and willingness to support others have earned him the respect of staff, peers and younger students alike.

Indeed he approaches every opportunity with humility, enthusiasm and a genuine desire to make a positive difference.

In their nomination of Lachlan for this award today, his school has written *"Lachlan embodies the ideals of active citizenship, selfless service and responsible leadership that the Order of Australia Association Secondary Schools Citizenship Award seeks to recognise."*

We fully agree and congratulate Lachlan on receiving this award today.



William Hoult
Somerset College

As Service Captain, Will coordinates service initiatives around the school and helps fellow students to find a form of service that they are passionate about.

At the same time, he has achieved the Gold Level Duke of Edinburgh award.

Will has represented his school at a state level in Cross Country and, this year, he was bestowed the honour to represent the school externally as the Cross Country Captain, with responsibilities including leading training sessions and developing new ways to promote participation within the school.

A long term member of Kurrawa Surf Club, Will is a regular water safety volunteer at youth training programs, and a patrol member who also competes at a national level.

He has been recognised for the past two years with the club's Good Member Youth Bursary Award.

In addition, Will is an active volunteer within the Disabled Surfers Association program where he shares his passion for the beach and water sports with those less advantaged and, to this end, he has helped organise a school-wide fundraising day where more than \$1 600 was raised for the Association.

We congratulate Will on his award today and in the words of Somerset College in their nomination *"Will is an engaging, altruistic and enthusiastic young man with a calm demeanour, and demonstrates integrity at all times."*

2026 Commemorative Plaque Winners Student Profiles 7 and 8



Hattie Howgate

Holland Park State High School

Hattie leads by example, encouraging others to become involved, mentoring younger students and creating opportunities for her peers to contribute positively to school life.

As co-convenor of the school's intergenerational partnership with Regis Aged Care, she played a leading role in organising and coordinating three visits that brought students and aged care residents together.

She recruited student volunteers, coordinated activities and participated in acknowledgement services that celebrated the lives and contributions of the residents.

As School Captain, Hattie has ensured student voice remains central to school decision-making.

In addition, she has represented Holland Park State High School in All Schools Touch Football and Senior Girls Netball.

Hattie has actively sought opportunities to contribute to her local community as a member of the Bonner Advisory Group working alongside a Federal Member of Parliament to consider community funding applications and recognise outstanding local citizens.

Also, she has participated in the Young Leaders Program, exploring public policy, leadership and community advocacy while engaging with elected representatives and learning how effective leadership can create positive change.

This reflects her genuine commitment to public service and active citizenship.

We congratulate Hattie and are delighted that she is a recipient of a Secondary Schools Citizenship Award.



Saxon Miller

All Saints Anglican School

Saxon's school writes " *he is achieving at the highest level in his academic, leadership and community service, unearingly polite and humble, and is so well respected by all staff and students. We could think of no student more suited to be recognized by The Order of Australia Association.*"

Eptomising the values and ethos of his school, Saxon is one of a few students to be awarded the Foundation Day School Award and the Speech Night Citizenship Award.

He is a talented debater and public speaker and was the winner of his school's Innov8 Business Awards for his business and marketing pitch and ideas; and has received Academic Endeavour Awards in recognition of his dedication to his studies.

Gold, gold, gold! Saxon is currently completing his Gold Level of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

He has been a Gold Coast City Junior Council member since 2025; and volunteers at the Gold Coast Lighthouse Education Museum.

Saxon is a personable student who is always happy and engaging and his community service and leadership saw him recognised as a finalist in the Gold Coast Young Australian of the Year in 2026.

Saxon is a young person of integrity that leads by example and we congratulate him on receiving the Secondary Schools Citizenship Award.

2026 Commemorative Plaque Winners Student Profiles 9 and 10



Arwin Rahimi

Yeronga State High School

Arwin actively contributes to the broader life of Yeronga State High School through participation in debating, sport and leadership programs.

He is the 2026 School Captain and Student Representative Council President who consistently works to strengthen student voice and improve school culture.

Arwin introduced a student feedback box initiative to encourage meaningful student participation in decision-making and initiated a school uniform collection program to support students experiencing financial difficulties.

As an active member of the Hazara Association of Queensland, he has served as Master of Ceremonies for major community events and delivered public presentations on issues affecting migrant communities.

He led a fundraising campaign that raised approximately \$2 000 for a woman in Pakistan who had suffered devastating burn injuries.

Arwin regularly assists community members with citizenship applications, government forms, employment paperwork and English language communication.

Through his family's business, he has helped migrants access employment opportunities to support successful settlement in Australia.

His school states in their nomination: "*Arwin consistently seeks opportunities to support others, build community connects and create positive change.*"

Congratulations on receiving this award today, Arwin.



Stella Richardson

Mountain Creek State High School

How diverse are Stella's volunteering pursuits.

She supports Guide Dogs through fundraising events; is a volunteer photographer for Parkrun; assists LifeFLight with fundraising events and is preparing to become a volunteer tour guide at their new Visitor Experience Centre.

She volunteers as an event coordinator with the Queensland Air Museum; plus each ANZAC Day, Stella volunteers at the Brisbane City Parade, assisting veterans by carrying banners and flags ensuring they are honoured with the dignity and respect they deserve.

And...Stella contributes to the University of the Sunshine Coast's Longitudinal Adolescent Brain Study, volunteering her time to support important research into adolescent brain development and mental health for the benefit of future generations.

Lights, camera, action! **Stella** has been the lead sound technician, taking responsibility for the technical delivery of the school's major productions including *Mamma Mia! The Musical*, trivia events, and dance performances.

As an active member of the school's Humanitarian Club, Stella willingly contributes to initiatives that provide support and assistance to those in need, always seeking ways to make a positive impact on others.

In their nomination, Stella's school wrote "*Stella is an exceptionally deserving recipient whose service, leadership and character reflects the very best qualities of our school and our community.*"

Congratulations Stella

2026 Commemorative Plaque Winners Student Profiles 11 and 12



Samara Ryall

Lourdes Hill College

Samara's commitment to service within the College has been extensive and impactful.

As College Captain, Samara has championed initiatives including Galentine's Day celebrations and a leadership networking event that encouraged collaboration among student leaders from multiple schools in the area.

Samara is Ensemble Leader for Chamber Strings, providing mentorship to younger musicians, leading rehearsals, and assisting students with their music and supporting performances at major events.

As an active member and Senior Captain of St Vincent de Paul, Samara has helped lead numerous initiatives and has established the College's first Mini Vinnies Program for the Junior School students to engage meaningful with social justice issues.

Her service extends to outreach programs including Rosies, Salvation Army Sunday Roasts, and Micah Projects.

As one of only ten students selected for the Bulimba Electorate Youth Advisory Panel, Samara worked collaboratively to identify and address issues affecting young people in her community and played a key role in organising and delivering a Teen Health Forum.

As a member of the Lord Mayor's Youth Advisory Panel, she has volunteered for a number of projects.

Therefore it is with total confidence that her school concluded its nomination with the words: *Samara leads not for recognition, but from a genuine desire to create positive change within her school and community."*

Congratulations Samara!



Kobi Scott

St Ursula's College, Yeppoon

Appointed Regional Cadet Under Officer Adjutant in the Australian Army Cadets, in recognition of her exceptional leadership capability, reliability, and dedication to the development of young people, Kobi was selected this year to represent the Australian Army Cadets at the prestigious United Kingdom Army Cadet International Exchange.

This highly competitive opportunity is only awarded to a small number of outstanding cadets and is recognition of her ability to serve as ambassador for Australia on the international stage.

Kobi is working through a school-based traineeship at Rockhampton Base Hospital, with the aspiration to pursue nursing within the Australian Defence Force - reflecting her desire to make a meaningful contribution to her community and country.

Kobi is a talented sportswoman and has competed in Rugby League, OzTag and Netball for her school and club teams.

As Boarding Captain at St Ursula's College, Kobi is recognised for her outstanding leadership, integrity, and commitment to supporting her peers and is a compassionate and approachable role model who fosters a strong sense of belonging, particularly for younger students entering boarding life.

Congratulations Kobi on receiving a Secondary Schools Citizenship Award.

We wish you all the best for a bright future.

2026 Commemorative Plaque Winners Student Profile 13



Charlotte Stent

Benowa State High School

Benowa State High School wrote in their nomination of Charlotte *"she has a sustained commitment to service, and her ability to connect with people from all walks of life exemplifies the qualities of outstanding citizenship."*

As School Captain, Charlotte leads the Student Forum with enthusiasm, ensuring student voice is heard and encouraging students to actively contribute to school life.

She volunteers as a Peer Tutor and mentors a Year 9 student through the Kings Christian College Mentor Program.

Charlotte has embraced debating, music, Spanish language competitions and university extension programs.

Charlotte has volunteered with Legacy Gold Coast as a children's camp leader; is a team leader of Molly's Wildlife Warriors and helped raise funds for the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital.

She represented her school and the Gold Coast as the Mayor's Student Ambassador and is an Experience Gold Coast Ambassador, promoting opportunities for young people and contributing to community consultation.

She has also served as a Gold Coast Debating Association adjudicator, mentoring and encouraging younger debaters with developing confidence, critical thinking and public speaking skills.

Charlotte is an Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts Youth Ambassador, volunteering at industry events, delivering children's acting workshops and mentoring aspiring young performers.

Congratulations Charlotte on your achievements and on receiving the Secondary Schools Citizenship Award.

Presentation Programme

Master of Ceremonies

John McCoy OAM

Arrival of Guest of Honour

National Anthem

Jonathon Welch AM

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

Mr Ben Orford, Principal,
Yeronga State High School

Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards 2026

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 in the Speakers' Hall

Geoff Cowles OAM, Awards & Metro Events
Coordinator and 2026 Secondary Schools
Citizenship Awards Coordinator

PICTORIAL HIGHLIGHTS



Students who received their Certificates of Community Service with Mrs Gina Fairfax AC (presenter and sponsor)

Back Row – from L to R – Samuel Hancock (*St Andrew's Lutheran College*); Bailey Eastland (*North Lakes State College*); Zac Fuller (*Ferny Grove State High School*); Lexi Butler (*Somerset College*); Mrs Gina Fairfax AC (awards sponsor); Mia Phillpott (*St Rita's College*); Lola O'Brien (*Ipswich State High School*); Zachary Richardson (*Redeemer Lutheran College*); and Jackson McConnachy (*St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace*).

Front Row – from L-R – Savannah Walker (*Somerset College*); Lexi Winks (*Corinda State High School*); Lauren Zillmann (*Redcliffe State High School*); Catherine Katter (*Stuartholme School*); and Mischa Reid (*Brigidine College*). Absent from photo – Alex Petterwood (*Rivermount College*)

SAY IT WITH FLOWERS



Photo at left – Her Excellency, in her retirement year as Governor of Queensland and Branch Patron, presented with flowers from Ronda Nix OAM, Queensland Branch Chair (left) as an Association thank you.

Photo at Right – Gina Fairfax AC presented with flowers as thank you for sponsorship of the awards programme



Highlights of the Presentation Photos - above

Top left – Award winning singer/conductor Jonathon Welch AM sings the National Anthem

Top right – Another smooth, polished performance from compere John McCoy OAM

Centre left – Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland addresses the gathering

Centre right – Dina Browne AO reads out the award students' citations

Bottom left - Ben Orford, Principal, Yeronga State High School delivers the Response on behalf of All Schools

Bottom right – Ronda Nix OAM, Queensland Branch Chair moves a Vote of Thanks to Her Excellency the Governor.

Thank You Michelle Mills

for writing the student profiles on the previous pages.

(Michelle is a work colleague of Chris Lassig, a member of the judging panel).



Thank You
Mrs Gina Fairfax
AC

Our generous
Awards Sponsor

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE 2026 AWARDS

- ❖ **100 nominations received from 67 secondary schools (101 from 66 in 2025)**
- ❖ **13 awardees – 6 from Brisbane; 3 from the Gold Coast and 1 each from the Sunshine Coast; Gordonvale; Yeppoon and Bundaberg.**
- ❖ **Three first time winning schools –**
*Brisbane Bayside State College, Wynnum, Brisbane;
Bundaberg State High School; and
Benowa State High School, Gold Coast.*
- ❖ **Three schools with winning students two years running - 2025 and 2026 –**
*Lourdes Hill College;
St Ursula's College, Yeppoon; and
Holland Park State High School, Brisbane*
- ❖ **Since 1999 awards have been presented to 330 students from 140 schools.**



The audience in the Premiers' Hall were captivated throughout the Presentation.



*This highlights package has been produced by
and photos provided by
Geoff Cowles OAM
Awards and Metro Events Coordinator –
October 2026*