



Community and Stakeholder Engagement Report

Draft Community Service Awards Policy – Public Exhibition (Stage 1 of 1)

Consultation period: 3 July to 31 July 2023

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1. Summary

This report outlines the outcomes of community and stakeholder engagement as part of the review of the Community Service Awards Policy and proposal to make one amendment, the inclusion of a new award category Community Group of the Year, that would enhance Council’s recognition of outstanding community groups working to improve the Northern Beaches.

Further, feedback was sought on two proposed operational changes that will:

- improve the Operational Guidelines to allow non-Australian Citizens to win the Outstanding Community Service Awards
- amend the process for selecting the judging panel to invite the current Citizen of the Year to participate on the judging panel as one of the five community members selecting the next year’s award winners if they so choose.

The feedback collected during consultation indicated a high level of support for the proposed amendment to include the Community Group of the Year category and the two operational changes. Many respondents noted the important contributions being made by community groups and non- Australian Citizens and supported the collective and more inclusive recognition for the positive impact these community members are making to the Northern Beaches.

Two submissions questioned the proposed operational change to allow non-Australian citizens to be eligible for the Outstanding Community Service Awards. One respondent’s view was the awards should only be open to Australian citizens while the second respondent questioned if they would need to be a resident and what criteria would apply to assessing their contribution to the community.

One submission suggested that all award winners could be given the opportunity to nominate to be a judge in the following year as opposed to only offering this opportunity to the Citizen of the Year.



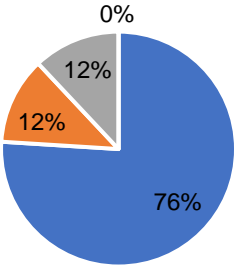

Several submissions also suggested these additional amendments to the policy and operational guidelines:

- increasing the number of judges from five to seven or nine judges,
- Council staff take responsibility for inviting award recipient’s guests to the award ceremony, and
- acknowledging a runner up or highly commended to the Community Group of the Year Award category to spread the public recognition as wide as possible.




1.1. Key outcomes

| | |
|---|-----|
|  Total unique responses | 18* |
|---|-----|

*Not every respondent made a comment in addition to answering the sentiment question

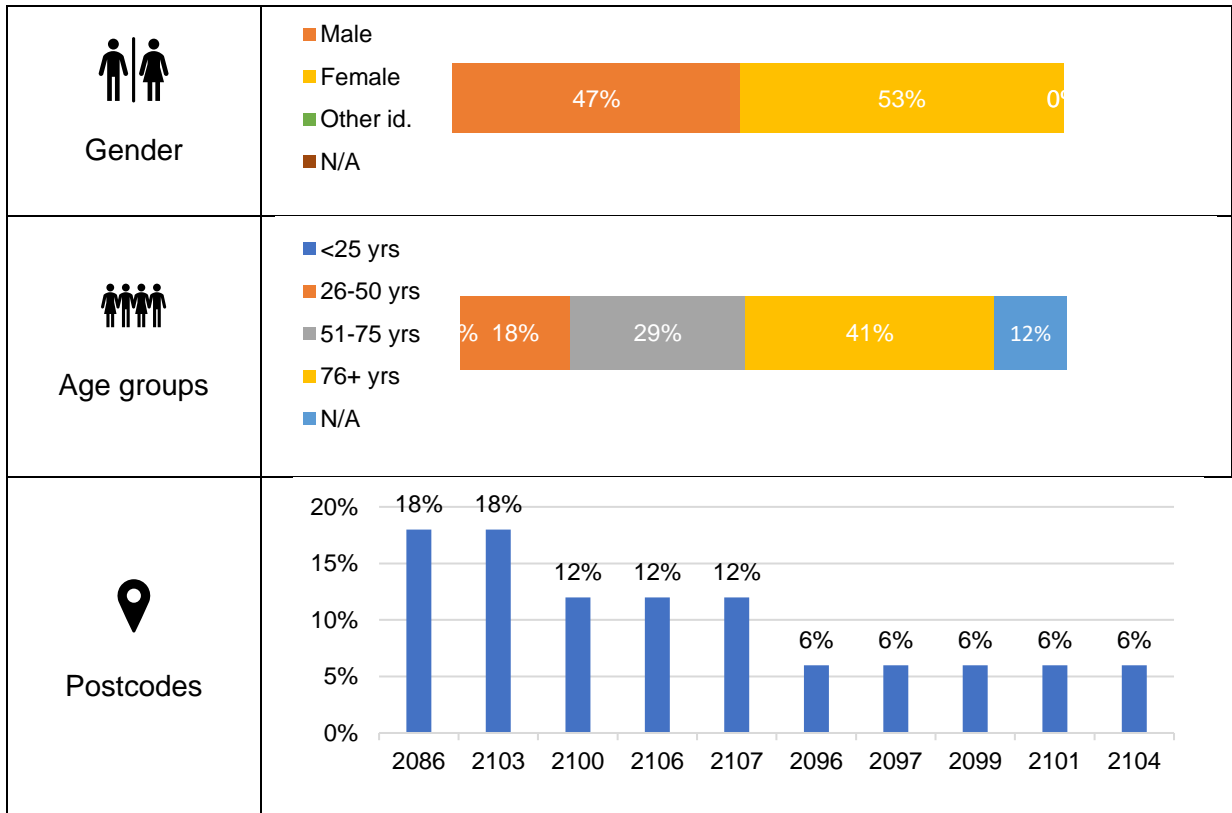
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|---|--|---|
|  <p>How responses were received</p> | <p>Submission/Comment form</p> <p>Written responses (email/letter)</p> | <p>Completions: 17</p> <p>Number received: 1</p> |
|  <p>Online sentiment question:</p> <p>Do you support the proposed amendments to the Policy and guidelines?</p> |  <p>Total responses = 17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes ■ Yes with changes ■ No ■ Neutral | |
|  <p>Feedback themes</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the proposed changes. • Community groups are making a positive contribution and should be recognised. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-Australian Citizens make a positive impact on the Northern Beaches. • There are other opportunities to further improve the policy. |

1.2. How we engaged

| | | | |
|--|--|----------------------|--|
|  <p>Have Your Say: visitation stats</p> | <p>Visitors: 821</p> | <p>Visits: 1,003</p> | <p>Average time onsite: 0mins 33secs</p> |
|  <p>Print media and collateral</p> | <p>Peninsula Living: 1 editorial.</p> <p>Peninsula Living (south ed.): 1 editorial.</p> | | <p>Distribution: 87,000</p> <p>Distribution: 57,000</p> |
|  <p>Electronic direct mail (EDM)</p> | <p>Community Engagement (fortnightly) newsletter: 3 editions</p> <p>Council (weekly) e-News: 2 editions</p> <p>Stakeholder emails: 2 [one email sent to past winners, and one email to past judges]</p> <p>Cooee e-News: 1 edition</p> <p>The Wave Disability News: 1 edition</p> <p>KALOF e-News: 1 edition</p> | | <p>Distribution: 24,000 subscribers</p> <p>Distribution: 61,500 subscribers</p> <p>Distribution: 91</p> <p>Distribution: 1601</p> <p>Distribution: 1338</p> <p>Distribution: 1,771</p> |

| | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| | The Drift Library e-News: 1 edition | Distribution: 84,208 |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------|

1.3. Who responded¹



2. Background

The Community Services Award Policy (the Policy) provides the framework for Council to recognise the outstanding contributions of people making a difference in the community. The current policy was adopted at the Ordinary Council Meeting of 26 November 2019. The Policy required review by 30 June 2023.

In reviewing the Policy, some changes to the policy have been recommended. We are required to publicly exhibit the proposed draft policy including any amendments. Exhibition of the proposed changes is intended to provide the community with the opportunity to indicate their support or non-support of the revised policy and to provide comments. We provided a marked-up version of the current policy to make the changes easy for our community to review.

3. Engagement objectives

Community and stakeholder engagement aimed to:

- build community and stakeholder awareness of participation activities
- provide accessible information so community and stakeholders can participate in a meaningful way

¹ Demographic data was gathered by request only. The data represented only includes those respondents who provided this detail.

- provide balanced and objective information to assist in understanding the problem, alternatives and/or solutions.
- identify community and stakeholder concerns, local knowledge and values
- seek understanding on community support for proposed amendment to policy and operational changes
- gather additional recommendations for amendments to the policy and operational changes.

4. Engagement approach

Community and stakeholder engagement for the Community Service Awards Policy was conducted between Monday 3 July to Monday 31 July, providing opportunities for community and stakeholders to contribute.

The engagement was planned, implemented and reported in accordance with Council's [Community Engagement Strategy](#) (2022).

A project page was established on our have your say platform with information provided in an accessible and easy to read format.

The project was primarily promoted through our regular email newsletter (EDM) channels, a media release and social channels.

Feedback was captured through an online submission form embedded onto the have your say project page. The form included a question that directly asked respondents for their level of support on the proposal - *Do you support the proposed amendments to the Policy and guidelines?* allowing us to gauge, at a high-level, the community's sentiment. A qualitative review of the submitted comments was performed to analyse the high-level sentiment in more detail and understand key themes.

An open-field comments box provided community members a space to explain or elaborate on their support, not support or neutral sentiment as well as any other feedback they wished to contribute.

Email and written comments were also invited.

4.1. Reaching diverse audiences

It was determined for this project that it was particularly important to hear from previous award recipients and former judges. A direct email was sent to these stakeholders providing information about the public exhibition and encouraging them to make a submission via the have your say project page.

Other stakeholder groups including youth, people living with disability, and those interested in the environment were targeted through e-Newsletters; KALOF, The Wave Disability Newsletter, Cooee Newsletter, and The Drift Library Newsletter.

5. Findings

The submissions received demonstrate overwhelming support for the proposed amendments to both the policy and operational guidelines.

Several of the respondents were former award recipients or judges, and their knowledge of the nomination, judging, and award ceremony processes added valuable feedback in support of the proposed amendments.

Many submissions reflected on the important and significant contributions made by community groups, non-Australian citizens, and non-residents in making the Northern Beaches a better place for all. Broad support to recognise these people was received, with the exception of two submissions relating to inclusion of eligibility for non-Australian citizens.

Respondents raised some issues and other consideration which are addressed in Table 1.

Table 1: Issues, change requests and other considerations

| Theme | Issues, change requests and other considerations raised | Council's response |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Judging process | Increasing the number of judges from five to at least seven to nine judges | The current provision of 5 judges allows for broad representation and diverse perspectives in the decision-making process. The inclusion of more judges is not supported. |
| Award Ceremony | Council staff take responsibility for inviting award recipient's guests to the award ceremony, and | Award recipients are invited by Council to the award ceremony. Responsibility for inviting the award recipient guests will remain with the award recipients as it provides flexibility for the recipient to select who to bring and when to notify them. A template invitation for guests will be created and provided to award recipients for their use to assist with the invitation process. |
| Community Group of the Year | Acknowledging a runner up or highly commended to the Community Group of the Year Award category to spread the public recognition as wide as possible. | No other awards have a Runner up/Highly Commended recognition. Worthy nominees that were not successful are encouraged to reapply in the following year. |

| Theme | Issues, change requests and other considerations raised | Council's response |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Non- Australian Citizen eligibility | Will it be necessary for them to be residents of the Northern Beaches? Will there be a criteria placed on how they contribute to the NB community? | The same criteria for Outstanding Community Service Award would apply including requirement to be a resident of the Northern Beaches (exception for one award each year available to a non-resident), the nominee has demonstrated positive impact over a long period of time, has shown commitment to the community, and been involved in unpaid community work on the Northern Beaches over a number of years. |
| Citizen of the Year on judging panel | Opportunity should be open to all previous award recipients to nominate for the selection panel, on equal merit. | An Expression of Interest process is used to select the judges each year. Past winners will be notified when this opens and encouraged to express their interest to be involved in the judging. |

Appendix 1 Verbatim community and stakeholder responses*

Have Your Say project page submissions:

Note - the number of verbatim comments is not equal to the total number of submissions as not all respondents provided commentary about their level of support.

| No | Cont.ID | Submission | Council response |
|----|---------|---|---|
| 1 | 67405 | The proposed amendments are positive and promote good will, encourage achievement and bring people together. | Support for proposed amendments noted. |
| 2 | 67403 | especially important to recognise groups | Support for proposed amendments noted. |
| 3 | 67402 | <p>I would like to respond to the proposed “Community Service Awards Policy – Policy update.”</p> <p>I think it is a good idea to propose the addition of a new award category, “Community Group of the Year” which will enhance Council’s recognition of outstanding community groups.</p> <p>There are many people who are dedicated and committed members of community groups in the Northern Beaches who work together as a collective to achieve and attain worthwhile outcomes The addition of this category will give recognition to all these groups whose hard-working efforts provide valuable contributions to the Northern Beaches region.</p> <p>I also think changing the Nomination Guidelines and Criteria to allow non-Australian citizens to be eligible for the Outstanding Community Service Awards is a good idea, provided the non-Australian citizen is a resident of the Northern Beaches and has lived in Australia and contributed to a worthwhile cause in the Northern Beaches over a period of time – for example, at least a year.</p> <p>I agree with the proposal to change the operational process that allows Council to invite the current Citizen of the Year to participate on the judging panel, as one of the five community members selecting the next year’s award winners. I would also like to see the judging panel increased from five to at least seven to nine community members or more, as this would ensure a more diverse judging panel that can represent more varied points of view when assessing eligible candidates for the Outstanding Community Service Awards.</p> <p>While the invitations to the Award Ceremony may not be</p> | <p>Support for proposed amendments noted.</p> <p>The current provision of 5 judges allows for broad representation and diverse perspectives in the decision-making process. The inclusion of more judges is not supported.</p> <p>Award recipients are invited by Council to the award ceremony. Responsibility for inviting the award recipient guests will remain with the award recipients as it provides flexibility for the recipient to select who to bring and when to notify them. A template invitation for guests will be created and provided to award recipients for their use to assist with the invitation process.</p> |

**Personal details and inappropriate language have been redacted where possible. Spelling and grammatical errors have been amended only where misinterpretation or offence may be caused.*

| No | Cont.ID | Submission | Council response |
|----|---------|--|--|
| | | <p>part of the Awards Policy, I would also like to comment on this as an award recipient. Being able to invite two guests to my Award Ceremony was a good idea, but I had to inform my guests that they were invited and provide information about when and where the award ceremony was being conducted. The organisers via the Northern Beaches Council should invite the nominated guests directly, providing information about the awards and giving them adequate time to respond. In addition. the person who nominated the Awardee of the Community Service Awards needs to receive an invitation & also be allocated seating with the person receiving the Award.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely</p> <p>██████████</p> | |
| 4 | 67398 | <p>This is an important change, because - in most cases - we need others around us in order to achieve anything. It is often difficult for a group to decide whom to nominate and can create all kinds of (unnecessary) political issues, infighting, and hurt egos. The community group caetgory will solve these issues.</p> <p>It is also important for us women. Many of us suffer from 'imposter syndrome' and feel uncomfortable to be nominated as individuals and would prefer to be nominated with the group of people that helped us achieve our objectives.</p> | Support for proposed amendments and recognition of greater inclusion of women noted. |
| 5 | 67389 | <p>I believe the amendments will provide benefits for the community. In particular including the category of a nomination from a non-resident. It is wonderful to acknowledge our Northern Beaches residents contributions but there are of course many cases where those outside of our community have made amazing contributions. It is also important to include the category of a whole group as it was noted in the last nominations that there were many participants from the same organisations put forward and this made it extremely challenging to select only one.</p> | Support for proposed amendments noted. |
| 6 | 67346 | <p>This sounds like a sensible improvement, particularity opening up the awards to people who are not yet Australian citizens but who contribute to our community.</p> | Support for proposed amendments noted. |
| 7 | 67324 | <p>I fully support the new award category, Community Group of the Year & all proposed changes including Change the Nomination Guidelines and Criteria to allow non-Australian citizens to be eligible for the Outstanding Community Service Awards and 2 Change an operational process that allows Council to invite the</p> | Support for proposed amendments noted. |

| No | Cont.ID | Submission | Council response |
|----|---------|--|--|
| | | current Citizen of the Year to participate on the judging panel as one of the five community members selecting the next year's award winners | |
| 8 | 67315 | I don't agree with non- citizens of Australia being recognised in these awards. It should only be open to Australian Citizens | The 'of the Year Award' categories would remain exclusively for Australian Citizens. Non-Australian Citizens would become eligible for the Outstanding Community Service Awards. |
| 9 | 67313 | I was a Community Member on the Judging Panel for the Community Service Awards for January 2020. There was a number of candidates nominated for various categories who were really a figurehead for the excellent work done by their community group. I fully support the addition of a category Community Group of the Year. Some of these groups do an amazing job without one person being particularly dominant and recognition by Council would like their profile and fund raising abilities. It would be advisable to have a runner(s) up as well such as High Commended so that we can spread public recognition as wide as possible | Support for proposed amendments noted. No other awards have a Runner up/Highly Commended recognition. Worthy nominees that were not successful are encouraged to reapply in the following year. |
| 10 | 67296 | Aboriginal Support Group Manly Warringah Pittwater. The support group has been around for 46 +years. Quietly helping Aboriginal Groups and families in need. Helping the community with by monthly meeting at Mona Vale Memorial Hall. The ASG's Elimatta Newsletter every 3 months, the asgmwp.net website the Facebook to keep people informed. All run be volantes. | Support for proposed amendments noted. This is an example of a community group that could be nominated for Community Group of the Year. |
| 11 | 67281 | I consider the proposal to add Community Groups as a beneficial addition and an encouragement to all Community Groups. | Support for proposed amendments noted. |
| 12 | 67133 | ██████████ and her Avalon based THE BIG SING. ██████████ started the Big Sing ten years ago and they have sung at Retirement villages, nursing homes, boot sales. market days, shopping centres raising money for local charities. This group of locals bring a lot of joy to all and especially dementia patients. This choir now numbers around sixty plus with an average age of around 65-70 this is truly a community group bringing joy to others. <i>Supporting image attached to submission showing the group performing.</i> | Support for proposed amendments noted. This is an example of a community group that could be nominated for Community Group of the Year. |

| No | Cont.ID | Submission | Council response |
|----|---------|--|---|
| 13 | 67021 | <p>I do not understand the necessity for the suggested changes.</p> <p>1. Non-Australian citizens - I assume that it would be necessary for them to be residents of the Northern Beaches? Will there be a criteria placed on how they contribute to the NB community?</p> <p>2. Current C of the Y to be on the judging panel - I am concerned that it's possible a particular individual may strongly support an associate and/or colleague. I believe it should be open to all previous award recipients to nominate for the selection panel, on equal merit.</p> | <p>Non-Australian Citizens would become eligible for the Outstanding Community Service Awards. The same criteria for Outstanding Community Service Award would apply including requirement to be a resident of the Northern Beaches (exception for one award each year available to a non-resident), the nominee has demonstrated positive impact over a long period of time, has shown commitment to the community, and been involved in unpaid community work on the Northern Beaches over a number of years.</p> <p>An Expression of Interest process is used to select the judges each year. Past winners can be notified when this opens and encouraged to express their interest to be involved in the judging.</p> |
| 14 | 66539 | <p>I was part of the judging panel last year for the 2023 awards and think it would be a great idea to include the previous recipient on the judging panel. They are obviously community minded and would have a good bearing on what is required to win the award.</p> <p>Allowing non-Australian citizens to be eligible is a fabulous idea as they have so much to offer our community and are often involved in volunteer activities. This would allow them to feel more appreciated for their contributions.</p> <p>The new category of Community Group of the Year is also a great idea. As part of the judging panel last year, I found that some groups nominated every person who volunteered with them, which felt like a "cheapening" of their efforts as it was almost a 'copy and paste' nomination for each person. To be able to reward the entire organisation recognises ALL the volunteers and the work the group does.</p> <p>I fully support all the proposed changes.</p> | <p>Support for proposed amendments noted.</p> |

Written submission:

| Number | Submission | Council response |
|--------|--|--|
| 1 | <p>Good day, Having been a recipient of the 2023 Australia Day Community Service Awards I am happy to accept the proposed changes to the award criteria.</p> <p>There are many worthy community groups that would appreciate being recognised for the work they do to enhance the lives of residents of the Northern Beaches area. I think that it would be a good idea to include them in the awards.</p> <p>Also, an individual who volunteers in the area but does not reside here is also worthy of recognition.</p> | <p>Support for proposed amendments noted.</p> <p>Recognition of people who do not reside on the Northern Beaches is already covered by the allocation of one Outstanding Community Service Award each year for a non-resident.</p> |

| Document administration | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Version | 1.0 |
| Date | 1 August 2023 |
| Approval | Content provided and approved by Community, Arts and Culture Team. Responsible manager: Russell Peake |
| Status | Final |
| Related Projects | Community Strategic Plan 2040, Better Together 2040 Social Sustainability Strategy |
| Notes | Community and stakeholder views contained in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Northern Beaches Council or indicate a commitment to a particular course of action. |