

**EMBARGOED 26 January 2015 at 12pm**

## **Bayside recognises leading citizens with Australia Day awards**

Liz Dawes, Executive Director of the Robert Connor Dawes Fund and leading young Life Saver Alexander Walton have been recognised as part of Bayside City Council's 2015 Australia Day Citizen of the Year Awards.

Bayside Mayor Cr Felicity Frederico said that the awards provide Council with an opportunity to recognise individuals who make an outstanding contribution to the Bayside Community.

"Australia Day gives us time as a nation to reflect on what it is to be Australian and to celebrate the many and varied contributions that individual citizens make to our communities each year," Cr Frederico said.

"Through the Australia Day Citizen of the Year Awards, Council is able to celebrate the achievements of Bayside residents who have made outstanding contributions to the life of our community."

In 2015 Council recognised individuals in two categories, the Australia Day Citizen of the Year Award and the Australia Day Young Citizen of the Year award.

Liz Dawes, Executive Director of the Robert Connor Dawes Fund, has been recognised as Australia Day Citizen of the Year Award for her outstanding work galvanising the Bayside community around the issue of paediatric brain conditions, following the death of her son from a brain tumour in 2013.

Hampton Life Saver Alexander Walton has been recognised as Bayside's Australia Day Young Citizen of the Year award for his impressive contribution to life saving as a Patrol Captain, trainer and mentor and a contribution of over 640 hours on patrol at Hampton beach.

This year's ceremony was held in the Kamesburgh Gardens adjacent to the ANZAC Hostel.

"In 2015 as we celebrate the ANZAC Centenary is only fitting that we should be celebrating Australia Day in Kamesburgh Gardens," Cr Frederico said.

"In 1919 Kamesburgh House was renamed ANZAC House to serve as a care and rehabilitation centre for ex-servicemen following World War 1."

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The awards were announced following a flag raising and citizenship ceremony.

**Liz Dawes**, Executive Director Robert Connor Dawes Fund

Australia Day Citizen of the Year award

In April 2013, Liz Dawes's son Robert Connor Dawes lost his battle against ependymoma brain tumour. In the following May Liz turned the death of her son into a call for arms and established the Robert Connor Dawes Fund.

Since this time Liz has worked to galvanize the Bayside community around the issue of paediatric brain conditions. In September 2013 the first Connor's Run was held with 1500 participants raising over \$100,000. This inaugural Connor's Run received the 2014 Australia Day Award for Bayside Community Event of the Year.

Building on the success of this event the 2014 Connors Run included 2500 participants and raised over \$300,000.

Monies raised on behalf of the Fund contribute towards research and treatment in brain research and patient care.

To date the Fund has provided support for the creation of a PhD pediatric brain tumour research scholarship at the Brain Cancer Discovery Collaborative as well as funding support for treatment programs at the Monash Medical Centre and the Sydney's Children's Cancer Institute.

The Fund maintains an active involvement with Schools across Bayside encouraging students to engage with issues around brain health.

Planning is now underway for a range of fundraising activities in 2015.

Through her dedication to improving our knowledge of paediatric brain conditions and the lives of young people living with such conditions Liz is making an outstanding and inspiring contribution to the Bayside Community and beyond.

**Alexander Walton**, Life Saver

Australia Day Young Citizen of the Year Award

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## Media release



18 year old Alexander Walton is an extraordinary young member of the Hampton Life Saving Club. In the short four years since completing his Surf Rescue Certificate at age 14, he has gone on to complete his Bronze and Gold Medallions and has been appointed to the leadership role of Patrol Captain supervising up to 30 voluntary surf lifesavers at a time.

He has attained numerous life saving endorsements and is now qualified to plan, train and conduct courses in important life saving skills. He is an active member, mentor and role model for the Youth Involvement Program and is an important, positive influence on his peers. He has also established and managed Hampton Life Saving Club's IRB competitions during the winter racing calendar.

He has also recently qualified as one of only a small number of professional beach Life Guards in Victoria and will be patrolling beaches in Victoria over the summer.

Since becoming a life saver Alexander has contributed in excess of 620 hours to patrolling the Hampton beach. Alexander is an outstanding young citizen.

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