

Australia Day 2024

Citizen of the Year Award – Lameroo SA

Citation for Mrs Glenda Thomson

Glenda was born in Echuca, Victoria, in 1956, started school in New South Wales, later moved with the family to Balaklava, South Australia, and eventually to Lameroo where she completed her final four years of school.

Glenda married Mark in 1977 and they had two boys, Aaron in 1984 and Hayden in 1987 both of whom have, sadly, passed away.

Glenda worked for many years as a nurse at the Lameroo Hospital but is now retired. She is being recognised for the huge commitment she has made to health care both locally and in the wider community.

Glenda joined what became the Women's and Children's Hospital Auxiliary in 1987 to help fundraise for them as her own children and many others spent time at and used the facility on a regular basis. During her membership, besides working hard at raising money, she was an office bearer for 16 years holding positions as treasurer, vice president and president. When the group disbanded in 2022 she then joined the Lameroo Hospital Auxiliary.

In September 2011 at the State Annual General Meeting in Adelaide, Glenda received Life Membership of the WCH Auxiliary.

The Lameroo WCH Auxiliary was well known for its annual Melbourne Cup Luncheon and Glenda was very active in the organisation of these functions.

After Glenda and Mark's son Aaron passed away from melanoma Glenda set out to raise awareness of and raise money for the newly formed Australian Melanoma Research Foundation (AMRF) and in 2012 held a function which resulted in a donation of \$40,000 to help fund awareness.

In 2012 and for several years, Glenda travelled widely all over Australia, often accompanied by fellow nurses Deb Lock and Lorraine Hancock, to spread the word about melanoma and the need to use sunscreen, cover up and also have regular skin checks. They targeted sporting clubs, mining sites, community groups, universities, hospitals, school and community events. Unfortunately, due to Covid and family illness and commitments Glenda had to curtail her AMRF work for some years but will be restarting again very soon.

It was Glenda, in 2014, who encouraged the AMRF to start hosting an annual Melanoma March in Adelaide when she realised it was being held in other states but not in SA. At the second, 2015, march Glenda was appointed the inaugural Ambassador of the AMRF. Free skin checks are held at the march and hundreds of referrals have been made to skin cancer clinics resulting in early detections of melanomas and, potentially, saving many lives.

Locally Glenda could see a need for improvements to the Lamerook Aged Care Facility and over several years, with a dedicated band of helpers and a lot of fundraising in the community, she was able to raise \$41,633.62 to enable her dream of a Room With A View to become a reality. In essence it involved enclosing a verandah space to provide a light and bright area for residents to sit and watch the comings and goings along the Mallee Highway and to sit with their visitors.

The journey for the Room With A View project was not always smooth, dealing with fundraising, government guidelines and processes and Glenda's frequently heard saying of "It's truly true" certainly showed her passion and resolve for the project.

Currently Glenda is the Lamerook Hospital Consumer Representative and speaks to the HACC committee and community groups on behalf of the aged care residents.

Also, Glenda was an active and very enthusiastic member of the 2006 Lamerook Centenary Committee which was awarded "The Event of the Year" at Australia Day celebrations.

This citation has only dealt with Glenda's health commitments but many other groups can surely attest to the work she has put into sporting and other achievements.

Glenda "truly true" deserves the honour of being a Citizen of the Year for Lamerook in 2024 and is to be congratulated for her many, many hours of service to the community over a very long time.