



AUSTRALIA DAY
IN LEETON



Australia Day

Reflect. Respect. Celebrate.

2024 CELEBRATIONS in LEETON

Compiled by: Leigh Houghton | LSC Events Trainee





Australia Day CELEBRATIONS in LEETON

Thursday 25 January

Survival Day Mural party
Gossamer Park

9am – 12pm

Friday 26 January

Official Ceremony
Mountford Park

9am – 12pm

Pool Party

Leeton Regional Aquatic Centre

3pm – 8pm

The Australia Day celebrations in 2024 successfully brought together residents from diverse backgrounds to commemorate our nation's identity and heritage. The events included a range of activities designed to promote community engagement, cultural appreciation, and inclusivity.

Building upon the successes of previous years, this year's Australia Day events were characterised by a renewed commitment to the National Australia Day Council's (NADC) theme of "Reflect, Respect, Celebrate" to foster inclusivity, cultural appreciation, and community engagement.

One notable addition to this year's festivities was the introduction of what representatives of the local Aboriginal community chose to call the Survival Day Mural and its unveiling at Gossamer Park.

This initiative, suggested by the Leeton and District Local Aboriginal Land Council (LDLALC), aimed to draw attention to the Wattle Hill community and acknowledge and honour Indigenous history and culture as an integral part of Australia's story.

The mural serves as a visual representation of our community's dedication to reconciliation and respect for Indigenous Australians, highlighting the importance of Australia Day as a day of reflection and commemoration.

The unveiling ceremony on January 25 was well attended. Rapid Relief provided a BBQ breakfast and brunch, Jillybeans Coffee van supplied hot and cold drinks, and Dookie entertained the crowd whilst children played on an inflatable water slide. Western Riverina Arts with Elijah and William Ingram and representatives from Parkview and Leeton High School created the mural which community members added their handprints to on the day.

The January 26 activities commenced with a free BBQ breakfast hosted by the Rotary Club of Leeton at Mountford Park where the Leeton Town Band provided morning melodies.

Official proceedings began after breakfast, including a citizenship ceremony and the announcement of Australia Day awards. Australia Day Ambassador Lyndey Milan OAM was present to engage with residents, delivering a heart-felt speech and sharing her passion for food and wine.

Following the proceedings, a bush tucker lunch was available at Mountford Park. From emu spring rolls to marinated kangaroo and lemon myrtle cheesecake, the menu showcased the unique flavours of Australian cuisine, curated by Michael Lyons of Sandhill Artefacts.

Festivities continued at the Leeton Regional Aquatic Centre with the Pool Party with free entry from 3pm to 8pm. The Lion's Club train, waterproof glitter face painting, inflatable pool toys and resident Disney Princess added to the spirit of the day. SunRice Festival Ambassador entrant Mel Beecham provided attendees with a traditional sausage sizzle.

The Australia Day Ambassador also attended events organised and coordinated by community groups including the community breakfast at Murrami, hosted by the Murrami CWA, and SunRice Festival Ambassador Martelle Maguire's event at the Leeton & District Bowling Club.

Reflect | Respect | Celebrate

SURVIVAL DAY MURAL PARTY

FREE BBQ Breakfast
• Water Slide • Summer Fun Day

Proudly supported by the NADC

THURS 25 JAN 2024

@ Gossamer Park All welcome



Australia Day

POOL party

JAN 26

@ Leeton Regional Aquatic Centre
FREE ENTRY 3pm - 8pm
BBQ supporting SunRice Ambassador
Melissa Beecham

Lions Train (from 4pm)
Plenty of fun games & activities
with a visit from a Disney Princess

Australia Day
Reflect. Respect. Celebrate.

WE'RE ALL PART OF THE STORY.

Help us celebrate the outstanding contributions of Leeton Shire residents

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN

FOR THE 2024 AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

in the following categories:

- Citizen of the Year • Young Citizen of the Year
- Achiever of the Year • Young Achiever of the Year
- Event/Group/Organisation of the Year
- Lifelong Citizen of the Shire
- Sportsperson of the Year • Junior Sportsperson of the Year

Nominate online today at <https://bit.ly/AusDay2024>

Nominations close: 5pm Wednesday, January 10, 2024
Contact 6953 0911 for more information

Australia Day
Reflect. Respect. Celebrate.



Australia Day
Reflect. Respect. Celebrate.

Friday, January 26, 2024 in Mountford Park

7.30am - 9am **Australia Day BBQ Breakfast** hosted by Rotary Club of Leeton with Leeton Town Band on stage

9.15am **Official ceremony** with Ambassador Lindey Milan OAM followed by a bush tucker lunch

3pm - 8pm **POOL PARTY** at Leeton Regional Aquatic Centre

FREE POOL ENTRY 3pm-8pm • fun games & activities • DJ • Lions Train

NEWS

Nominees revealed

Extensive coverage of the official proceedings by *The Irrigator*

Australia Day awards on offer

AUSTRALIA Day in Leeton has always been about recognising the achievements of residents, events and groups who all reach for the stars. It is no different in 2024, with a plethora of residents nominated for Leeton's Australia Day awards. Below is a brief summary of each nominee's accolades, but is not a full representation of all they have achieved.

Maryann Malloy
Maryann is a talented cake maker, who lends her skills to helping others. She will often make birthday cakes for children who can't afford to have a birthday party. On top of this she also donates cakes once a month to those in the community who are less fortunate. Maryann likes to ensure no one misses out. She has also won first place at the Leeton Show in the cake section for one of her

to attend a game to watch all the proceedings and attend a training session with the side. Tamika is a role model for other young girls to follow their dreams and strive to achieve. Tamika also works at the Leeton Veterinary Hospital and juggles training, senior school and work. She is humble, shows great sportsmanship and strives to achieve her dreams. Tamika is also a talented basketball player, representing at various levels of the game.

Shane Leighton
Shane is a hard-working, dedicated member of the Leeton community. In this case, Shane has been nominated for his bravery and professionalism in saving the life of a young adult male from drowning at the Leeton pool in February, 2023. Shane's actions were so commendable - he saved a young man from shallow water blackout drowning. Shane had to pull the man from the water and revive him. Shane is heavily involved with the town's youth, working at the pool as a lifeguard, at YAHS as a weekend boarding supervisor and as a disability support worker. He is known to be hard working, dedicated, respectful, kind and

has shown dedication, support and enduring drive to ensure a pathway for creative expression. She is a fine artist, mentor and trusted friend.

Leeton Esteðdóð
The Leeton Esteðdóð is an outstanding cultural event that offers a showcase of talent in music, drama, speech and drama, literature, and Highland dancing. The Esteðdóð experience is a family-friendly event where artists can perform to an audience and grow and learn through the encouragement of adjudicators. The commitment and dedication of the Leeton Esteðdóð Society is outstanding. The time volunteers give every year is outstanding. This event is an enduring part of the Leeton shire community.

Leeton Pride Festival
The inaugural Leeton Pride Festival held in 2023 drew overwhelming attendance with participation from both the local community and visitors. The festival included initiatives and support programs for rainbow families, including safe spaces, counselling options, and educational resources. This demonstrated a commitment to the well-being of diverse family structures within our

community. They sing, dance and entertain the residents. They visit with them, building strong and lasting connections with the residents. The giving nature, kindness and respect these young people show is incredible. Residents are so inspired and feel so respected and loved by these young people. These young people make these visits in their own free time.

University of the Third Age (UTA)
The Leeton UTA group provides an active, social and inclusive environment for senior citizens. This outstanding group has grown in membership because it enjoys engaging the community to share wisdom, to continue to build knowledge and forge enduring friendships. It has had a positive contribution in the community as it has provided an encouraging environment where our senior citizens are embraced and their stories are valued.

Jack Crowe
Jack has made significant contributions to the Parkview Public School, community, broader Leeton shire community and the Riverina as a whole through his achievements and contribution in a range of roles throughout 2023. Some of this has included being a school captain, a representative on the Parkview SRC, winning leadership awards, being an active member of the Windjard dance group and a talented sportsman across a range of codes at different representative levels. This includes excelling at athletics, cross country, basketball, touch football, soccer, rugby

league and many more. He is a fine role model for his peers, displaying tremendous dedication to his sporting pursuits, scholastic studies, leadership duties and cultural immersion.

Miah Weymouth
Miah Weymouth has excelled across the board at Parkview Public School and has been a valuable contributor to her school community and the broader Leeton shire area. She was school captain in 2023, a member of the Parkview SRC, and a winner of leadership and sporting awards.

Every Wednesday senior boarding students from St Francis College in a group of around 20 visit Assumption Villa. They sing, dance and entertain the residents. They visit with them, building strong and lasting connections with the residents. The giving nature, kindness and respect these young people show is incredible. Residents are so inspired and feel so respected and loved by these young people. These young people make these visits in their own free time.

Sheree Wilesmith
Sheree Wilesmith's remarkable achievements and contributions to the Leeton community are multifaceted and impactful. Her 20 years of service at Leeton High School will be remembered by staff and students alike for years to come. Sheree has been actively involved in a whole host of Leeton organisations over the years, including Leeton Little Athletics, Leeton Basketball Association, Leeton Junior Rugby League Club, and the Leeton Greens Rugby League. She has taken on different roles with these groups over the years to ensure their success and continuation. Beyond sports, Sheree's contributions extend to the Anglican Op Shop as a volunteer and involvement with the Leeton Community Christmas Lunch. Sheree's varied, and extensive contributions have left an indelible mark on education, sports, community service, and local businesses. Sheree is a valued member of the Leeton shire community thanks to her achievements, but also her wonderful and happy personality that is

evident in all she does. **Ruby Miller**
Ruby had an exceptional year in 2023 and was extremely successful across areas pertaining to sport, academics, community and the arts.

This has included excelling at a high level for swimming, athletics, squash, netball and umpiring. Ruby received recognition in multiple academic subjects and actively participated in numerous dance opportunities, including Leeton High's performance of *The School of Rock*. Ruby is known for her caring nature, her leadership skills and friendship to those around her.

Elena Halloran
Elena is a talented young sports person who also brings her enthusiasm to her schoolwork at Leeton High. In 2023, Elena qualified at a state level for various sports, including swimming and athletics. She broke several records at carnivals across the Riverina and was the recipient of a Leeton Shire Council youth development grant. Elena was also identified as a 2023-24 Southern Sport Academy Future Star. Elena also attends the virtual selective school - Aurora Regional College and was part of the LHS SRC in 2023. She is a wonderful role model in the community and is always happy to "have a go" at anything.

Amie Fazekas
Amie represented Leeton at local, regional and state level for rugby union in 2023. She was selected for the ACT Brumbies Pathways program, playing in the Brumbies Provincial Championship with the SRU women's representative squad playing in June. She was selected in the Country Women's team and from there in the ACT Southern NSW Keestrals Squad where she then played in the Christmas Lunch. Sheree's varied, and extensive contributions have left an indelible mark on education, sports, community service, and local businesses. Sheree is a valued member of the Leeton shire community thanks to her achievements, but also her wonderful and happy personality that is

FRIDAY JANUARY 12, 2024

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Leeton Australia Day committee members Leigh Houghton, Fran Macdonald and George Weston are set for the celebrations. Picture by Talia Pattison

Traditional fun

BY TALIA PATTISON

AUSTRALIA Day in Leeton - think barbecue breakfasts, fun in the pool and recognising some of the shire's top-performing residents.

That has been the tradition for as long as the community can remember and 2024 will be no different.

Kicking off the morning of January 26 in the shire will be mouth-watering barbecues

lead the ceremony off at 9.15am, with Australia Day ambassador Lyndey Milan to address attendees from the Mountford Park stage and a citizenship ceremony to also take place.

Once the formal part of the morning is complete, the fun will continue with traditional Indigenous bush tucker on offer to try in the shade of the park. Later in the afternoon the festivities will be

rounded out by a free pool party at the Leeton Regional Aquatic Centre from 3pm to 8pm. Leeton Australia Day committee chairman George Weston said the best part of the occasion for him every year was the community element.

"It's people getting together and realising who they are as an Australian," he said.

"We are so lucky to live where we do. Leeton has a

real cross-section of people and that's what makes Australia great.

"That's what we are celebrating and, of course, the people who contribute to our community every year. It's great to see them be recognised." Prior to January 26, Leeton will also hold a Survival Day Mural Party event at Gossamer Park on January 25. Students from Parkview Public School and Leeton

High School have been crafting the mural alongside artist Elijah Ingram.

The mural will be officially unveiled on January 25 and the day will include all sorts of activities and entertainment courtesy of funding from the National Australia Day Council.

This event is open to all community members from 9am to noon at Gossamer Park.

6 THE IRRIGATOR Friday January 12, 2024

NEWS

Celebrity chef locked in

WHAT'S ON

BY TALIA PATTISON

A **CELEBRITY chef** will headline Leeton's Australia Day activities in 2024.

Lyndey Milan has been named the shire's Australia Day ambassador for the upcoming January 26 celebrations.

Ms Milan is no stranger to Leeton's event scene, in the

past she has been in town for the SurfLife Festival.

As part of her role as an Australia Day ambassador, she will attend Leeton's official ceremony on January 26 where she will be the guest speaker and address the crowd.

Ms Milan will also be part of other activities throughout the day and the ceremony. A familiar face on televi-

sion and in print, Ms Milan has been instrumental in changing the way Australians think about food and wine for over 30 years via her own nine best-selling cookbooks, nine TV series and influence as former food director of the iconic *Australian Women's Weekly*.

She is an award-winning multi-media presenter, MC, speaker, food and

wine teacher, consultant, debater, judge and regional Australian specialist who makes numerous TV and culinary appearances.

Ms Milan has an ability to connect with all audiences, meaning Leeton shire residents are in for a treat when she is in town.

The official ceremony in Mountford Park on Australia Day is free to attend, mean-

ing there's never been a better time to attend and hear from a renowned Australian.

The Australia Day ambassador program is one of the longest-running and most successful national Australia Day Programs sending high achieving Australians to over 300 community celebrations nationwide every Australia Day.



Lyndey Milan.

SURVIVAL DAY MURAL PARTY

Unveiling of mural created by Western Riverina Arts artists who engaged youths from Parkview Public School and Leeton High School

BBQ breakfast and lunch provided by the Rapid Relief Team

Entertainment by Dookie

Estimated 130 in attendance



OFFICIAL CEREMONY INCLUDING CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY

Community breakfast hosted by Rotary Club of Leeton
with performance by Leeton Town Band prior to ceremony

12 Leeton citizens naturalised – conferees from New Zealand, the UK,
Sri Lanka and the Philippines took the pledge of citizenship

Address by 2024 Leeton Australia Day Ambassador Lyndey Milan OAM

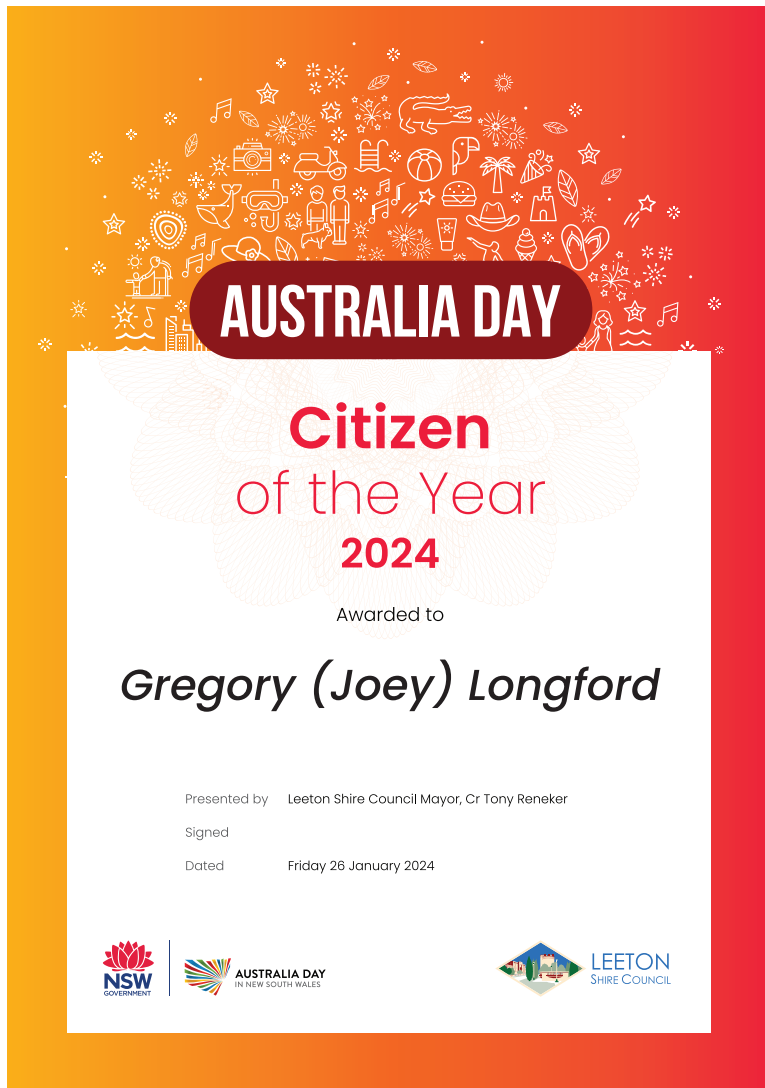
Approximately 200 people in attendance¹



¹ data collected by nCounters installed at Mountford Park.

AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Nominations opened on 23 October 2023, closing 10 January 2024
22 nominations received



2024 AWARD WINNERS

2024 Junior Sportsperson of the Year:	Miah Weymouth
2024 Young Achiever of the Year:	Ellena Halloran
2024 Young Citizen of the Year:	Jack Crowe
2024 Event of the Year:	Leeton Rainbow Pride Festival
2024 Group of the Year:	St Francis College Boarders
2024 Organisation of the Year:	University of the Third Age (U3A)
2024 Sportsperson of the Year:	Amie Fazekas
2024 Lifelong Citizen of the Shire:	Sheree Wilesmith
2024 Achiever of the Year:	Shane Leighton
2024 Citizen of the Year:	Gregory (Joey) Longford

The Irrigator

100 YEARS STRONG

Leeton's own newspaper since 1915

\$2.00 INC GST



Picture by Talia Pattison.

SIMPLY THE BEST

Leeton's Australia Day awards recognise vast range of residents, groups, events

NEWS: LEETON'S AUSTRALIA DAY WINNERS REVEALED, INSIDE

Valentine's Day Inauguration!

2 THE IRRIGATOR Tuesday January 30, 2024
NEWS



Among the winners were Jack Crowe (left) and Joey Longford, with young achiever of the year Elena Halloran. Picture by Talia Pattison

Deserving winners

BY TALIA PATTISON

A YOUNG leader with a bright future ahead and a resident who lives each day to better the lives of those among Leeton's best in 2024. Joey Longford was named the citizen of the year and Jack Crowe the young citizen of the year at Leeton's Australia Day celebrations on January 26.

For Mr Longford, the citizen of the year honour recognises his years of hard work that through various programs, initiatives, events and fundraisers that have all been aimed at helping others. While he aims to encompass his work for all of the community, Mr Longford is heavily involved with the shire's young people and the town's Indigenous residents. "It is easy for me to give

back to the community as it is something I want to do and I make it my business to make this community as safe as possible for everyone," Mr Longford said. "Obviously Australia Day does come with a few political issues, but I am happy to represent the Aboriginal community and to be a positive member of society as an Aboriginal person. "I wish everyone the best. Whatever problems may come your way, we will advocate for you as a group. When you leave here today, I ask everyone to do something kind for themselves and to be consistent with that over a period of time." Among the work Mr Longford does is striving to continue to spread the history of Aboriginal people, as well as being an advocate for strong mental health among all people.

He works closely with students at Leeton High School and Parkview Public School and has built a strong rapport with them. Mr Longford enjoys bringing his culture alive by educating all people. On top of this he regularly promotes physical health and wellbeing and is involved in several community events and groups. Meanwhile, Jack was nominated for his array of sporting, academic and community achievements. In 2023 he was a school captain at Parkview Public School, as well as an SR representative. Jack has won several awards, including a range of codes at different representative levels. He said he was surprised to be named Leeton's young citizen of the year for 2024. "There was a lot of us

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Shire's broad range of winners

SCHOOL students, Leeton's first ever pride festival and a group aimed at equipping older residents with knowledge all found it hard to believe they had been recognised in the town's Australia Day honours. In 2024, St Francis College student boarders took out the group of the year accolade, while the Leeton Pride Festival was named the event of the year. Leeton's University of the Third Age group was honoured to be awarded the organisation of the year. The three categories were hotly-contested in 2024, but the trio of organisations were described as being a representation of all corners of the community. The St Francis College students took out the title for their volunteer work at Assumption Villa, which is set to continue this year. Meanwhile, Leeton's first-ever Pride Festival had its organisers surprised to



Representatives from Leeton's USA with their organisation of the year award (left), with (top) St Francis College students and supervisors after winning the group of the year and event organisers of the Leeton Pride Festival after taking out the event of the year. Pictures by Talia Pattison

take the crown during the Australia Day official ceremony. Leeton Rainbow Pride Collective chairman Denise McGrath said it was a testament to the hard work put in by the group's volunteers. "It was our first event,

there was a lot happening that weekend, so for it to still be such a success was amazing," she said. "The community support was wonderful." The festival will now be held biennially and is scheduled to go ahead in 2025.

However, the group still has a jam-packed schedule of events planned for 2024 and those seeking more information should contact the collective direct. For Leeton's USA group, the Australia Day award was something they weren't ex-

pecting, but hoped it would help spread the word about the organisation. "We're humble and we are proud to win this award," Leeton USA president Val Goudie said. "We're a fantastic group of people and we would love to

see more people join us. We got together once a week." Leeton resident Sheree Wilesmith was named the lifelong citizen to the shire in 2024 and a full report of her award will appear in Friday's Irrigator. - TALIA PATTISON

PEOPLE AND PLACES



Joey Longford with son Jed adding their handprints to the mural.

SURVIVAL DAY

A Survival Day event was held in Leeton for the first time last week showcasing community and unity. A full report will appear in Friday's Irrigator. Pictures by Talia Pattison



Those in attendance added their handprints to the mural on the day.



Elijah Ingram (left) with father William Ingram added his handprint.



My Plan Connect's Sarah-Jane Turek and April Cartwright add their handprints with the help of Elijah Ingram.



A glimpse of part of the mural.



Leeton Rapid Relief Team's Rod Martin.

Extensive coverage of the official proceedings by The Irrigator

POOL PARTY

Free pool entry from 3pm to 8pm

Entertainment: Lions Train, inflatables, glitter tattoos and roving character

SunRice Ambassador Mel Beecham fundraising BBQ

Approximately 500 people in attendance²



² data collected by Camlytics counter on the side gate entry point between the hours of 3pm to 8pm.

BUDGET BREAKDOWN

FUNDING



Australia Day
Reflect. Respect. Celebrate.



LEETON
SHIRE COUNCIL

NATIONAL AUSTRALIA DAY COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

Base Grant for inclusive events	\$10,000.00
Additional events promoting recognition for Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander peoples	\$5,000.00

COUNCIL FUNDING

\$8,000.00

\$23,000.00

EXPENDITURE

OFFICIAL CEREMONY

Community Breakfast catering (Rotary & Murrambi CWA)	\$1,600.00
AV Production	\$1,200.00
Infrastructure hire	\$786.36
Set up (outdoor staff wages)	\$545.26
Decorations	\$452.09
Award certificates	\$15.04

Cultural Elements

Welcome to Country	\$400.00
Cultural Dance Group coordination	\$500.00
Smoking ceremony	\$600.00
Artefact display	\$1,500.00
Bush tucker lunch	\$5,000.00

AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Accommodation	\$320.00
Gift	\$67.00
Official dinner (Thursday & Friday)	\$642.50

CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY

Citizen gifts	\$217.09
Postage	\$20.00

POOL PARTY

Entertainment (Lions Train, inflatables, roving character & glitter tattoos)	\$1,134.95
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SURVIVAL DAY MURAL PARTY

Community Artwork	\$3,065.45
AV Production	\$1,044.99
Entertainment	\$1,546.00
Catering	\$993.00

ADVERTISING & MARKETING (Newspaper)

\$500.00

PHOTOGRAPHY

\$800.00

\$22,949.73

PROFIT/LOSS

\$50.27

AUSTRALIA DAY COMMITTEE

Thank you to all who assisted in the coordination of Leeton Shire Council's Australia Day celebrations.

Particular acknowledgement goes to:

Cr George Weston

Chair of the Australia Day Committee
and MC of the Official Ceremony

Mayor Cr Tony Reneker

Coordination of Leeton Sportsawards Committee
and the independant judging panel for award nominations

Council staff

Fran Macdonald & Leigh Houghton – Events team

Terry Schmidt – Communications

Josh Eurell, Caleb Millar, Brendan Bourke, James Hedditch – Outdoor staff

Shane Leighton, Dennis Irvine, Brooke Eglinton, Nakeia McVittie, Angus Crelley,

Sophie Cross, Makayla Bradshaw, Anabelle Cross – Aquatic Centre staff

