



## JUDGING COMMENTS - RUNNERS UP

### **BOOMERANG BAGS DUNGOG & SINGLE USE PLASTIC FREE DUNGOG – ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

This group of passionate volunteers have achieved some very impressive goals in the last 2 years and deserve recognition for the goals they have achieved in steering our Shire toward a greater consciousness of our environment.

In the last 12 months, Boomerang Bags Dungog has reached 5,500 bags made as well as making over 500 fruit & veg/produce bags and cutlery tote bags. All are available (including Dungog BeeRaps) at The Dungog Growers Stall on Saturdays and at a range of supportive like-minded businesses in our community and Shire. In 2020 they also started a *Repair and Re-wear* service at our bees every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month.

When Covid-19 arrived in March 2020, Boomerang Bags Dungog moved its focus for the next many months to making over 700 reusable fabric masks mainly for our essential services and frontline workers as well as making them free and available at our chemist for the sick and elderly.

In our Shire the following accomplishments are due to their ongoing work and messaging.

- 45 tonnes of soft plastics have been collected and diverted from landfill since 2017.
- 225kg of Dungog Cup Rescue cups & lids have been collected since SUPFD Launch in July 2019.
- 25 business have achieved Blue Planet Status
- 9 water refill stations have been installed across Shire.
- Dungog's Return and Earn Kiosk installed May 2020 – stats to March 2021; 1,752,000 containers. *Boomerang Bags Dungog and Single Use Plastic Free Dungog were instrumental in Dungog being given a Return & Earn Kiosk through our advocacy and work in the community to raise awareness through education as well as providing solutions.*

### **EMILY WARE – ADDISON PARTNERS - OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE UNDER 21**

Congratulations Emily, Addison's are very fortunate to have such a dedicated trainee on their team. Their comments below show their recognition of your contribution to the firm.

*Emily is a quiet achiever who joined our firm in 2020 as a trainee accountant. Emily is conscientious and hardworking, thorough and organised. Emily balances near full time work with full time study – something she should be proud of.*

*Emily has just started meeting with clients, in particular to process tax returns for individuals. This greatly helps our more senior team as they can trust Emily to competently meet with the client and process their return correctly.*

## **FLANNERY HIRE - TRADES AND CONSTRUCTION**

Congratulations to Andrew from Flannery Hire on your nomination and being runner up in Trades and Construction. With the downturn in business during 2020 Andrew had the forward thinking to diversify his business into hire of earth moving equipment, turning around his business's fortunes.

*'I have met a lot of new members of our Dungog shire community, as well as some more born and breed locals who are now all happy customers of Flannery Hire and word has just spread, the amount of community support is great, without them all my business would not be able to run.*

*I am very happy to be able to offer services that not only keeps other businesses up and running through my mechanical field service but now I can help customers build their dream homes in our beautiful shire and help fix their yards etc with my machines that I can operate, or they can hire.*

*I also volunteer a lot of time and money into our local Clarence town soccer club and in July was awarded Newcastle Permanent Coach of the Month award, presented by Hunter Valley Football club. The Support from our local community and word of mouth about my services has contributed to the success of my business. I have been operating for over 8 years now and plan on getting bigger to be able to support the growing area. I was born and breed here and love where I live and work and if your happy in your job you will most likely succeed and have a positive impact on your customers.'*

## **HALLEY EDWARDS – MEG'S KITCHEN – OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE OVER 21**

Congratulations Halley, a much-deserved award. Your amazing baking skills and warm and welcoming personality all contribute to helping make Meg's Kitchen the popular eatery it is.

Megan Garnham certainly appreciates your contribution with these comments when asked about her employee.

*We are so happy to have Halley Edwards as our nominated employee. Firstly, Halley is an outstanding employee always going above what is required. Halley has been a key player in assisting Meg's Kitchen in its first year of trading.*

*Halley is a very confident chef that loves to work together with the team to produce a product that is always of the highest standard. She is happy to train & encourage our team members helping create a workplace that always happy & productive while providing excellent customer service.*

*Halley is also a single mum of 3 who works often a 40 plus hour week. Halley is passionate about helping grow our business & promote our ethos. As a Dungog local Halley was born here but has worked away for many years & is now very excited to be back in her own community providing healthy food. We are very grateful to have someone with such a great work ethic & love for her skill at Meg's Kitchen.*

## **PATERSON HISTORIC AND MUSEUM – COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Paterson Historical Society has achieved the following in the past 12 months due to its very committed volunteer committee and support from the community. Their list of accomplishments and activities in the last year has been outstanding, which includes being involved in wider community issues.

Highlights of their many accomplishments include:

- *expanded its services to host a Vintage Rail Journeys tour in Paterson with more to come*
- *worked with IT service providers to set up digital tours of Paterson and the Shire - CYA on the Road and GoDrivin with QR code links on local signage boards and a free bookmark in the museum and local businesses*
- *published two local history books: Steamships on the Paterson River by Wayne Patfield and Portraits of Paterson by Alison Pitkin*
- *grew the Society's website to be a most authoritative website on local history containing many out-of-print references*
- *expanded the online image collection through Flickr to have over 2000 images freely available to the public*
- *prepared a detailed submission objecting to the transport of material from Martins Creek Quarry through Paterson*
- *hosted the annual Paterson Historic Walk - this year was one of the largest ever – 85 adults plus children.*
- *continued to operate despite Covid*

## **PRINCE STREET SURGERY- PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

The Prince Street Surgery is an appreciated addition to the health care services in Clarence Town, particularly with the district's growing population. From community comments this is a well-respected practice and their service has been first rate and deserve the recognition of this award.

The Practice's comments outline their care and commitment to the community.

*'Rural based services come across many hurdles but as a team we work together to overcome them, having a sister clinic just 15mins away at Seaham gives us opportunities to assist patients even more from the community that not all clinics can offer.*

*Dr Amany Abdel Galil loves the area & the community and is working tirelessly to assist patients with all their healthcare needs. I believe our friendly nature & dedication to our patients has gotten us to where we are now, we look forward to ongoing success with the community into the future.*

*We hope everyone stays safe in these difficult times and want everyone to know as an essential service we are always here for the community.*

*Very rarely do rural towns have the opportunity to choose a different medical practitioner! Although this practice is small, they offer a lot of heart and genuine customer service which is missing from bigger practices. - Community nomination comment*

*This is a fantastic new medical practice that bulk bills everyone in the community, providing a much needed local service - Community nomination comment.*

## **RYKAR RURAL – RURAL AND MANUFACTURING**

Congratulations to Ryan and team on your nomination and being the runner up in Rural and Manufacturing. This new business has burst onto the scene offering a wide range of rural services. Their business Face Book page is a great record of the varied jobs and projects they have tackled around the district. A great accomplishment in a short amount to have set up a new business and really making it work.

*'This nomination is the first big one for Rykar Rural, but I hope that it will certainly not be the last. I want to have high quality customer service with my clients and be approachable in all aspects of the work – from the first consultancy work to the finished job. I pride myself on my efficiency, professional outlook, and my finished work. I hope our customer service exceeds the client's expectations and that they are willing to recommend us to other people. I hope to establish a good record with our existing clients and continue to provide rural solutions with them into the future.'*

## **TEMPEST BICYCLES – OUTSTANDING NEW BUSINESS**

Rob and his team at Tempest Bicycles is another stand out among the many new businesses who have commenced in the Shire in the last 2 years. It took a lot of courage to open a brand-new business to Dungog but with Rob's obvious knowledge of this industry has made it thrive. Congratulations and here is their story.

*In the past 12 months we've had huge growth, as you probably know we started small on the Common with our mobile workshop but quickly outgrew what we could offer which led to our shop in Dowling Street store.*

*The shop has grown into a large business which has a huge range of bicycles and parts and were able to better serve the people in town and visitors in town with high quality product and quick 'turn around' service.*

*More recently we expanded, and we've brought my machine shop into the rear of our building where we now manufacture our own bicycles from scratch. We're about to land a couple of contracts to mass produce bicycles for other companies well as the two we already own. Currently we already manufacture bicycles that are shipped worldwide and within Australia to some acclaim with several magazine articles to back up what we do.*

*We're hoping this means jobs in Dungog and we'll be up skilling locals on how to construct bicycles and pay a decent wage and long-term employment.*

*This year has also seen the introduction of our frame building school where we take students from around Australia (and worldwide) and teach them how to build a bike frame in two weeks.*

*The great thing about this is, we're currently the only frame building school in Australia and we hope that the influx of students will bring trade to local businesses, Cafes and accommodation providers for the two week stay.*

*Recently we finished a custom-built trike which we built for a local para-athlete Stuart Jones. It's the only one of its kind and we've really pushed the technology forward for a pretty special bike.*

*It'll be at the para-olympics in Tokyo next month and we've even made sure that handmade in Dungog is visible on the frame to try and put our little town on the map.*

*It's slated for several magazine and newspaper articles which will promote the town as a whole.*

*This year we've all been running free mechanics workshop for kids on work experience, and we also hope to introduce these weekly for local folk too.*

*It's also seen the introduction of the ride Dungog bike library where we have bikes specifically for town folk or kids that aren't fortunate enough to have their own bicycle. We provided these at cost for Ride Dungog and we service them and keep them running free of charge to promote the sport.*

*Lastly, we've expanded, we're about to open our second shop in Newcastle in September with a third hit on its heels. We'll be bringing folk from the coast/Newcastle area on gravel/MTB tours and will be working closely with other businesses in town to continue to bring more trade. I really do believe we're all in this together.*

### **THE MAGPIE – RETAIL AND PERSONAL SERVICES**

The Magpie owned and run by Liz Northam in Dowling Street has great eclectic range and a great draw card for visitors and locals alike. During the 2020 lockdown Liz took this time to take a fresh look at her business and focused on sourcing a wider range of stock and visual aspect of the shop space. Liz found taking time to do some training in social media for promotion of her business was a positive move also.

Helping visitors to the area comes as second nature to her, with a range of local maps and brochures to hand out.

*'We live in such a beautiful area it is not a hard sell to promote so encouraging customers to visit other retailers and eating places is important to ensure the money is spread around.'*

The Magpie is a welcoming space with a warm friendly owner, opened all weekend for enhancing the visitor experience to Dungog main street. Congratulations, a worthy winner in the retail section and by comments in your nominations much appreciated by your customers.

*Liz has a wonderful range of homewares, gifts jewellery and ladies wear. Her store is well presented and on trend. The Magpie brings people from out of town as well as being a local favourite and was recently featured in lifestyle magazine Hunter Hunter. Liz is always a pleasure to see and very helpful with all needs.* - Customer nomination comment

*Liz at The Magpie deserves an award and recognition for her continuous kindness and friendliness to all comers, not to mention her extremely good taste. The Magpie is a little gem, a treasure trove. Keep up the amazing job Liz!* - Customer nomination comment

### **TOTAL HOMESTEAD – TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY**

Congratulations to the team at Tocal Homestead. This historical icon in the Shire is much more than a beautiful old house and surrounds, providing great experiences to visitors and locals.

They run modern day services from a historical perspective! Their aim is to make their visitors feel like they have stepped back in time. They offer an immersive experience in particular for school aged children on their excursions and well as their events. And participants in seniors tours, often comment

on how the property looks 'just how they left it', which is the absolute intention. They benchmark themselves against their competitors by:

- Allowing services to run no matter the weather (are adaptive – outdoor to indoor)
- Can tailor the experience – don't just run a 9-5 timetabled tour, if there is something in particular visitors want to focus on, they will do that.
- They are extremely cost appropriate, not expensive to visit
- They run based off volunteer power

*'Without a doubt it has been a team effort that has contributed to all our successes above. Our team is small, and without our amazing community (our Friends of Tocal), a lot of what we achieve would not be possible. We stand out because we are a historical site that provides so many services to so many different demographics. We have no specific target market because each of our services need to be targeted to different groups. In turn, our one big family, our small team and our volunteers, come together to help service our other big family = our community. I think that's what makes us stand out the most.'*

### **VACY GENERAL STORE – SMALL BUSINESS 6 OR MORE EMPLOYEES**

Vacy General Store is a busy thriving business catering for both locals and visitors. They received this award for the great service they provide for Vacy community with their well-stocked shop, along with their café providing great food keeping visitors very happy especially being opened 7 days a week. Another one of the Shire amazing businesses who have learned to continue and supply great service through these difficult times over the last 12 months. Congratulations to Jo and Ian.

*Vacy General Store is always there for the community with great service, food, staff and innovative ideas. Open 7 days for the convenience of its customers. Very supportive of all community and school events. - Customer nomination comment*

### **VALLEY DANCE ACADEMY – SMALL BUSINESS 2-5 EMPLOYEES**

Congratulations to Hannah and the team at Valley Dance Academy for being nominated again this year and being Runners Up in Small Business category. To be able to keep your business going in these difficult times over the last 12 months, where you have the added stress of keeping children Covid safe is admirable. The fact that children where are able to compete around the Hunter in their dance competitions truly took a lot of dedication to make this happen. The comments below show how parents appreciate Hannah and her team.

*Hannah Hopson and her small team are teaching the children of our area how to dance. This is done with so much love for dance the children also have had the opportunity to join competition teams this year to perform all over the hunter, which is a great privilege. - Nomination comment*

*Valley Dance Academy is a kind nurturing studio, that kids love to go and feel safe. - Nomination comment*