

AUSTRALIA DAY 2008



THE award for best decorated table, sponsored by the ParkView Hotel, went to Gunnedah High School. Pictured are judges Cathy Smith, left, and Juliana Pun, presenting the prize to retiring Gunnedah High School teacher Marie Spinks.

The Independent

Serving Gunnedah and district

PRINT POST APPROVED - PP 23501000001

Thursday, January 31, 2008 \$1.20 including GST

Page 2

FRIDAY night I had my first taste of an Australia Day Citizens Awards' dinner.

Not really knowing what to expect, I decided to make it a "dry" evening so that I would have a better appreciation of what the night was all about.

I am glad I did.

Aside from a big "thank you" from my kidneys and liver, it is congratulations all round for those involved in what is now one of Gunnedah's showpiece evenings.

The organisation was outstanding and the evening went off without a hitch.

Under the guidance of Master MC Lloyd Angel, the awards were presented to sincere and enthusiastic applause and

each nominee as well as recipient, was fittingly recognised and congratulated.

The meal was top class, the service speedy, friendly and efficient.

Gunnedah's Australia Day Ambassador, Dr Anthony (call me Tony) Pun, was outstanding.

His speech was excellent, addressing the vexing and for some, misunderstood subject of multiculturalism from the vantage of being a true blue, dinky-di Aussie as well as seeing the problems migrants, coming to a strange land, must face. His speech can be found in this issue.

On Saturday, Gunnedah showed once again why it is regarded as a community with pride and spirit.

I was up at 6.30am, thanks to the car-

lier decision regarding Friday night, and after setting a startled dog, attended most of the events on the Australia Day program.

Children running, riding and swimming with their mums and dads, while not quite moving me to embrace lycra, gave me a better understanding of what the day should be all about.

Young and not-so-young, they make an effort and have a go, from the fun of the raft racing, to the sprints, the touch shoot-out and pet parade.

There are not too many other centres in this region that embrace an Australia Day program as willing as we do.

Once again Gunnedah, take a bow.

EDITORIAL

The Independent

Serving Gunnedah and district

PRINT POST APPROVED - PP 2350100001

Thursday, January 31, 2008 \$1.20 including GST

Volunteering part of Judy Henderson's life

JUDY Henderson has made an outstanding contribution to the community in a voluntary capacity.

Judy's dedication to service was rewarded at the Australia Day dinner when she received the Ossie and Beryl Campbell Memorial Volunteer of the Year award.

Mrs Henderson, a staunch supporter and volunteer for the Gunnedah Pony Club, received her award from Marie Hobson, who presented her parent's memorial award on behalf of her family.

Always ready and willing to lend a helping hand, whether it be with a cake or slice or provide a costume for the Pas de Deux (theatre to music dressage test for two riders) or call a dressage test for a child or adult.

She has been a member of the Gunnedah and District Pony Club for 35 years, first with her daughter, Marlene and now with her four grand children who have also inherited her love of horses.

The Namoi Horse Association Incorporated has benefited from many hours of her time, at the canteen on championship days and always with a cheerful smile and good humour.

The Gunnedah Camp Draft Club is another organisation to benefit from Mrs Henderson's time.

She has served the club as both Secretary and Treasurer.

A Show Society committee member since 1990, she is always busy making preparations for the show. One of the organisations

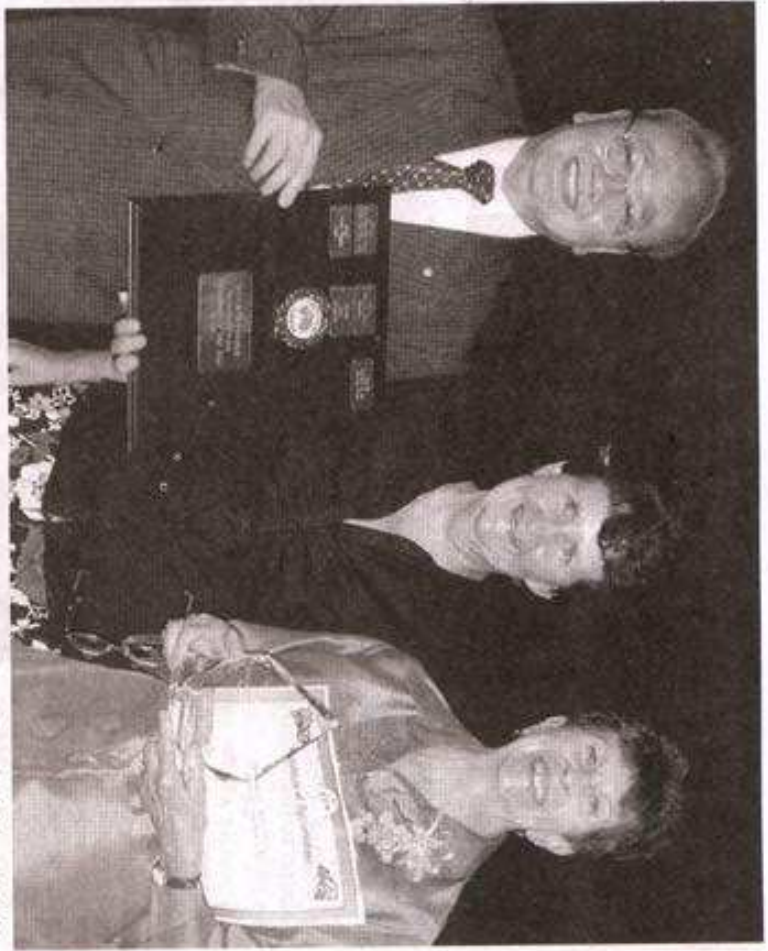
close to her heart is Riding for the Disabled.

She has been an active member since the group was formed more than 20 years ago and has served the organisation as both President and Secretary.

She still finds time to be a Citizen Advocate, a role she has filled for the past decade.

With her grand children now at school, she is back in the school canteen and is on call for Meals on Wheels.

Judy Henderson is a fine example of a caring, committed person who exhibits high ideals and does her utmost to improve the quality of life for all the people and organisations she is has been involved with, never seeking praise in making Gunnedah and district a better place to live.



JUDY Henderson, right, was the recipient of the Ossie and Beryl Campbell Memorial Volunteer of the Year Award, presented by the couple's daughter Marie Hobson. Also pictured is Gunnedah's Australia Day Ambassador Dr Tony Pun OAM.

Page 5

Cecily Maxwell worthy recipient of Turner Award

CECILY Maxwell was a worthy recipient of the Eve Turner Perpetual Award at the Australia Day dinner.

Mrs Maxwell was presented with the award, donated in memory of Gordon Turner, by Gunnedah's Australia Day Ambassador, Dr Anthony Pun OAM.

Mrs Maxwell has been a member of Wiljala CWA since its foundation in 1966 and has held all the major offices including that of President, Treasurer, cultural Officer and International Officer for 14 years.

The International Officer researches and presents a segment on the country of study that is decided each year, studying the history, geography, politics and the entire spectrum of that particular country's way of life.

Mrs Maxwell also arranges displays and guest speakers for the Branch International Day and promotion of Agricultural Products.

She also makes jams, pickles, lemon butter and cakes for the CWA street stalls and AgQuip stand and also assists on these days.

Mrs Maxwell has worked for the Gunne-



CECILY Maxwell was presented with the Eve Turner Perpetual Award in memory of Gordon Turner, by Australia Day Ambassador, Dr Tony Pun.

dah Nursing Home (Lundie House) for 14 years and is a member of the Friends of the Nursing Home which raises funds for Lundie House to improve the comfort and quality of life for residents.

She assists with the catering at the annual clearance sale and on the barbecue on the charity golf day, also providing her tasty cakes.

Mrs Maxwell plays hymns at the anglican services and participates in sing-a-longs in the new Multi-Purpose Room.

She is involved in the Anglican Church's activities, playing the organ at services and at other times, funerals etc.) when required.

She also is a great supporter of the Church Fete and Flower Show, providing jams, pickles, cakes and lemon butter.

Mrs Maxwell has held the position of Treasurer of the RSL Women's Auxiliary for the past 10 years and is a member of the Legacy Widows and War Widows Guild and assists with the crosses on the Field of Remembrance.

She helps with the organising and sales of badges and poppies on Anzac and Remembrance Day and arranges fund-raising card days for the auxiliary, Yallabee and Lundie House.

She is Vice-President of Gunnedah Multiple Sclerosis Incorporated and assists with fund-raising activities.

Her expertise in the field of jam and pickle making makes her an ideal judge at the annual National Tomato Growing competition held each January.

31 Jan 2008

Page 6

'The Australian landscape is truly beautiful when painted with the multicultural brush'



AUSTRALIA Day Ambassador Dr Anthony Pun OAM, brought a special kind of honour and frankness to Gunnedah's Awards Dinner on Friday evening.

Educated and gifted, (he has PhD in molecular biology as well as a litany of other achievements), Dr Pun, who prefers to be called Tony, said he has a desire, as Australia Day Ambassador, to visit those parts of Australia he jokingly refers to as "redneck".

There he makes the time to speak with locals about the benefits of multiculturalism.

He believes above all, multiculturalism is a process of mutual respect.

He said it is firstly about accepting the core Australian values of "political democracy, rules and law, the judiciary, education and recognition and respect of the traditions of all migrants and indigenous peoples" and having done that, for the migrants to share the richness of their own cultures with the Australian society.

He also believes no other country in the world can boast the same degree of acceptance of different cultures as Australia.

His speech at the Australia Day awards dinner encompassed what he believes is required to truly embrace multiculturalism and negate racism.

"Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge the traditional own-

know country folks are friendly, genuine and fair dinkum.

"I was told that in this region, there are two types of music, country and western, particularly accompanied by a lagerphone.

"On Australia Day, we commemorate our heritage as one people joined together in spirit.

"On this day, we Australians celebrate in unity and acknowledge that our cultural diversity is part of our heritage and our national identity.

"As a multicultural society, Australia must acknowledge, accept and respect the cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity of our contemporary Australia and the unique position of our indigenous Australians as the First Nation people.

"This evening, I like to share with you, my perception of a multicultural Australia.

"A successive wave of immigration since WWII has brought economic prosperity to Australia.

"These immigrants have also contributed to the development and nation-building of this country.

"As the immigrants drifted in over the last 60 years or so, they have transformed the demography of Australia.

"The immigrants come from more than 239 countries and they speak 208 different languages at home.

"The first 20 immigrants chosen



GUNNEDAH has always been blessed with fine, caring citizens who put in countless hours of volunteer work to ensure that 'the job gets done.' Australia Day Ambassador Dr Tony Pun was so impressed with the outstanding qualities of all nominees that he asked for a group photo, pictured above.

"With the accompanying statistics above, there is no denying that immigrants have transformed the Australian landscape and the accurate and true description of Australia is a "multicultural" Australia.

"Today, we have an Australian multicultural society, a cohesive and harmonious one, and one we should be proud of.

"I have chosen when I received that mail,

"For those who want to change the word "multiculturalism" to something else, they have shown a lack of appreciation of the positive aspects of multiculturalism and what it has contributed to Australian society.

"For those in government who want to revamp the word "multiculturalism", they have failed to define multiculturalism dynamically, they have failed to tell all the citizens what it is, perhaps they had no real intention of accepting multiculturalism in the first place and maybe there are simply no votes in it.

"In the SMH report by Cath Hart (Multiculturalism is a dirty word - SMH 4/11/2006), the government is canvassing alternative words for "multiculturalism" and this move is seen as a shift in emphasis away from fostering diversity and towards increasing integration and responsibility among migrants.

"There is no evidence to suggest that a multicultural society does not encourage integration or down-grade the understanding of the responsibilities of a citizen.

"If we define multiculturalism in its proper context, then the fostering of diversity has no negative impact on the integration and responsibility among migrants. In fact, multiculturalism will have a positive effect on the matter.

"A living definition of multiculturalism - Inclusive and mutually

adopt Australian core values, viz. parliamentary democracy, the judicial system (rule of law), and a system of education and accept English as the bonding language for all Australians.

"Other Australian values should include the respect and dignity of the individual, equality of men and women, the spirit of fair go and mutual respect and compassion for the needy.

"An Australian should have knowledge of the history of his/her country, the culture and traditions of native Australians, civics and the Australian way of life.

"In a multicultural society, all Australians embrace these core Australian values and yet, they are able to freely express their own culture and traditions in a "symbolic" enriching, peaceful and harmonious way. Unless we do this, we will never fully appreciate what it is to be a "true blue".

"Multiculturalism defined in the above way, is inclusive as it embraces all Australians, the new comers and native Australians.

"I would like to mention here something about the English language and proficiency and the citizenship test.

"An Australian with poor English competency is already disadvantaged. He/She is unable to participate in public decision making bodies.

"Although immigrants should

'Speak for Australia proud of Australia'

CONTINUED
 FROM PAGE 4

"Indeed, many immigrants have contributed to the building of this nation irrespective of their English language skills. Despite this, I urge all immigrants to try their best to have skills and proficiency in the English language.

"The changes in the Citizenship Act regarding English language skills and knowledge of Australia "in English" is not helpful and it will retard settlement of new immigrants because of their language skills and give the perception that without English skills you do not understand Australian values and lifestyle.

"Knowledge can be learned and expressed using community languages. Using English to test the knowledge of potential citizens underscores the applicant's knowledge of Australia and therefore, can be perceived as discriminatory.

"Furthermore, it would give an uneasy feeling of being in a nightmare, where you dream of an immigration officer giving you the "dictation" test in a foreign language other than English.

"The road to citizenship starts from a conscious decision to accept the core Australian values and to become a responsible citizen with all its privileges. Do not let the lack of English get in the way of becoming a good Australian citizen.

On the other side of the coin, the commitment to Australia, in a major part, is like the acceptance of multiculturalism in Australia.

"People should not pay lip service to this commitment but rather show publicly their commitment to Australia. They should participate in the celebration of Australia Day, Harmony Day, do jury service, enrol and vote in elections, learn to sing the Australian national anthem, respect the Australian flag, support Anzac Day, and start a public function with the National Anthem.

"When overseas, speak for Australia and be proud of Australia.

"One simple commitment that most people take for granted, is that the law of Australia, made by an Australian parliament, supersedes the laws of the immigrant's homeland. The second simple commitment is not to bring "motherland" politics to Australia as it can divide communities within and without.

"I strongly believe the last federal government did not give multiculturalism a fair go. I urge the newly elected government to give multiculturalism a fair go by clearly defining what multiculturalism is, preferable a living and dynamic definition.

"According to my perception of multiculturalism, the phenomenon is definitely Australian.

"To be Australian, we accept that the landscape has changed for the better, and it is inclusive. It is a phenomenon we have been proud to show the world what a cohesive and harmonious multicultural society we have in Australia.

"To be an Australian is to be a person who adopts the core Australian values and also be able to express their own culture and tradition. You also need to have some knowledge of Australian history and civics and understand the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship. Mutual respect for each others culture and traditions and the ability to share one's culture with all other Australians is a joy in life. In the process of being an Australian, you cannot help but feel that "multiculturalism" is part of the landscape.

"The Australian landscape is truly beautiful when painted with the "multicultural" brush. There is no other country in the world with this phenomenon.

"To "I love a sun burnt country" we need to add "I love the cohesive, harmonious and inclusive multicultural landscape of Australia, a unique place on earth to live."