

Greater Dandenong's sporting stars are recognised

By Nick Creely

The City of Greater Dandenong recognised some of the region's finest sporting talent at the annual sports awards evening on Wednesday 9 October at Ian Tatterson Pavilion in Keysborough.

The awards, now into their fifth year, are aimed to recognise the contribution of people within the Dandenong sporting community in order to grow sport and provide opportunities for people from all backgrounds to participate.

Rising 16-year-old badminton star Kaitlyn Ea from the Smashing Feathers Badminton Club took out two major gongs on the night, taking out the Junior Athlete of the Year as well as the prized Athlete of the Year award.

Kaitlyn's mother, Michelle, accepted both awards on her behalf, with the rising star currently in Russia competing in the World Championships for Australia. The teenage sensation continues to rise up the ranks around the world, and is one to keep an eye on in the coming years.



Dandenong athlete of the year, Kaitlyn Ea in action during a Badminton World Federation Event.

Picture: SUPPLIED

Others nominated for the Athlete of the Year award were Jessica Fischmann from Carrum Rowing Club and Ryder Medal winner Brett Forsyth of the Dandenong Cricket Club, who are both at the top of their game in their

respective sports.

In the other awards, South Springvale Soccer Club junior girls coach Paul Xistras was awarded the Coach of the Year, Silverton Cricket Club once again shone on the night with Dean Jones taking out the Club Volunteer of the Year as the Bakers continue to do some remarkable things within the community, the incredible Noble Park Bulls Reclink Football Program took out the Community Program of the Year, while Dandenong Cricket's women's 1st XI took out the Team of the Year, and Mick Rossato's superb work over 40 years with the Noble Park Juniors saw him named the Inspiring Club Person of the Year.

Mayor Roz Blades also honoured all of the Dandenong-based winning teams with prominent clubs such as Buckley Ridges Cricket Club, Dandenong Cricket Club, South Springvale Soccer Club and the Dandenong Baseball Club also recognised for their outstanding team achievements and continued success within the local community.

Southside Flyers WNBL star Rebecca Cole was the guest speaker on the night, and talked about her stellar career to date - which includes running second in the 2018/19 WNBL MVP voting and inclusion in the 2019 Australian women's national basketball squad - as well as the season ahead and her love for the Dandenong sporting community.

The full list of the award winners:

- Coach of the Year: Paul Xistras, South Springvale Soccer Club
- Club Volunteer of the Year: Dean Jones, Silverton Cricket Club
- Junior Athlete of the Year: Kaitlyn Ea, Smashing Feathers Badminton Club
- Community Program of the Year: Noble Park Bulls Reclink Football Program
- Team of the Year: Women's 1st XI Twenty20 team, Dandenong Cricket Club
- Athlete of the Year: Kaitlyn Ea, Smashing Feathers Badminton Club
- Inspiring Club Person of the Year: Mick Rossato, Noble Park Football Club Juniors

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