



MEDIA RELEASE

Regional Queensland Shines at 2026 Outdoor Queensland Awards

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The strength, diversity and impact of Queensland's outdoor sector were on full display at the **2026 Outdoor Queensland Awards**, with regional organisations, volunteers and outdoor professionals among the standout winners in a special year marking the awards' **25th anniversary**.

The milestone event celebrated a quarter-century of recognising excellence, innovation and leadership across Queensland's outdoor communities, while introducing three new award categories: the **People's Choice**, **Outdoor Professional**, and **Outdoor Volunteer Awards**.

Regional Queensland featured strongly among the finalists and winners, showcasing the depth of talent and innovation beyond south-east Queensland and reinforcing the statewide impact of outdoor recreation.

More than half of the ten 2026 award winners are from regional Queensland, with two from Far North Queensland (Ella Phillips from Guides Queensland and Cape York Motorcycle Adventures), two from North Queensland (Townsville Bushwalking Club and Naturally Kids Allied Health), and two winners from the Wide Bay-Burnett region (Bundaberg Regional Council and Walkabout Training).

The Queensland Government is an official partner of the Outdoors Queensland Awards.

Minister for Sport and Racing and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tim Mander said the 2026 Outdoors Queensland Awards are proudly supported by the Crisafulli Government.

"The 2026 Outdoors Queensland Awards are a great opportunity to highlight the great contribution of Queensland's outdoor sector to getting Queenslanders active," Minister Mander said.

"Queensland is the home of Australian sport, and in the lead up to the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, we want to encourage every Queenslanders to get active in a variety of ways.

"Some of the best outdoor landscapes in Australia belong to Queensland, and without our volunteers and local legends who run our outdoor organisations, we wouldn't have the opportunity to showcase everything Queensland has to offer."

Outdoors Queensland Executive Officer **Dom Courtney** said the 25th anniversary provided an opportunity to reflect on the sector's remarkable growth while recognising the people and organisations shaping its future.

"For 25 years, the Outdoors Queensland Awards have celebrated the individuals, clubs, businesses and community organisations that inspire Queenslanders to get outdoors, connect with nature and lead healthier, more active lives.

"This year's awards highlight the extraordinary contribution being made across the state, particularly in regional and remote communities where outdoor activities play such an important role in community wellbeing, tourism, environmental stewardship and local economies.

"The introduction of the People's Choice, Outdoor Professional and Outdoor Volunteer awards recognises the full breadth of leadership and contribution that makes our sector so vibrant."

The **People's Choice Award** gave the outdoor community a direct voice in recognising the organisations, experiences and initiatives that have made a significant impact on participants across Queensland. The winner of the Queensland Government People's Choice Award for 2026 is parkrun Australia.

Meanwhile, the new **Outdoor Professional Award** and **Outdoor Volunteer Award** acknowledged the dedicated individuals whose leadership, expertise and commitment continue to strengthen the sector and create life-changing outdoor experiences for thousands of Queenslanders.

The 2026 awards brought together leaders from outdoor recreation, outdoor education, tourism, nature-based health, local government and community organisations to celebrate excellence across the industry.

Since their inception in 2002, the Outdoors Queensland Awards have recognised outstanding organisations and individuals whose work encourages participation in outdoor activities, builds community connections and promotes Queensland's unique outdoor environments.

As the awards celebrate their 25th anniversary, Outdoors Queensland remains committed to supporting a thriving, accessible and sustainable outdoor sector for future generations.

"Outdoors Queensland appreciates the support of the sponsors of these awards, Queensland Government, Equipped Outdoors, K2 Base Camp, Active Queenslanders

Industry Alliance, Protect Beautiful Queensland, Klepper Training Academy and Element Photo & Video Services," Mr Courtney said.

"The stories celebrated tonight remind us why outdoor activities matter. We were privileged to have Ross Cook and Allana Bold in attendance – a father and daughter who have achieved the rare feat of having both won the same Outdoors Queensland Award with Ross winning in 2013 and Allana winning in 2025, twelve years apart.

"From volunteers and professionals to clubs, businesses and community champions, these are the people creating opportunities for Queenslanders to discover the physical, mental and social benefits of the outdoors.

2026 Outdoors Queensland Award Winners:

Klepper Training Academy Outdoor Professional Award - Winner: Steve Whitmore

K2 Base Camp Emerging Achiever Award - Winner: Ella Phillips

Queensland Government Outdoor Volunteer Award - Winner: Brent Greenfield

Equipped Outdoors Outdoor Education Award - Winner: Berrinba East State School

AQIA Workforce Development Award - Winner: Walkabout Training

Queensland Government Outdoor Recreation Award - Winner: Townsville Bushwalking Club

Protect Beautiful Queensland Outdoor Therapies Award - Winner: Naturally Kids Allied Health

Queensland Government Adventure Tourism Award - Winner: Cape York Motorcycle Adventures

Outdoors Queensland Government Achievement Award - Winner: Bundaberg Regional Council

Queensland Government People's Choice Award - Winner: parkrun Australia

About Outdoors Queensland

Outdoors Queensland is the peak body for outdoor recreation in Queensland, representing organisations, businesses and individuals who facilitate outdoor activities, education, adventure experiences and nature-based recreation across the state. Established in 1996, Outdoors Queensland empowers, supports and values Queensland's outdoor sector.

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