

MCG Guides and National Sports Museum volunteers honoured for contribution to Melbourne's profile

MCG Guides and National Sports Museum volunteers were recognised with a prestigious Melbourne Award for their 'Contribution to the Profile of Melbourne' at a gala dinner ceremony at the Melbourne Town Hall last week.

The Melbourne Awards program, conducted by the City of Melbourne since 2003, celebrates the people and organisations whose vision and hard work shape our city - focusing on the people and places that go above and beyond the call of duty.

The MCG Guides and National Sports Museum volunteers were lauded for the quality of the MCG visitor experience and the important role they play in welcoming visitors to Melbourne.

Through offering tours of the iconic MCG and assisting visitors at the new National Sports Museum, volunteers offer a service that is part education, part entertainment and part inspiration. Drawn from a pool of Melbourne sports lovers and many of whom are MCC members, the MCG Guides and NSM volunteers offer more than information - they draw on their own experiences and anecdotes to offer visitors an in-depth insight into Australia's rich sporting traditions.

"We are thrilled with the award," said Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) chief executive Stephen Gough. "It reinforces something we have always known - that the MCG and NSM volunteers are the best in the country.

"They are absolutely integral to our business, offering exceptional frontline service and more than 45,000 hours of service each year. But they are also a major community asset - showcasing this important national icon and the story behind our sporting history in a way we can all be proud," he said.

The 'Volunteer' tradition at the MCG

When the MCC opened the doors of its museum to the public in 1969, life at the MCG changed forever. The eclectic collection of cricketana fascinated all who came to see it and for the first time friends of the club were asked to greet visitors and introduce them to the material on display.

The era of the volunteer had begun. Inspired by a great international event – the Centenary Test of 1977 – MCC members soon were conducting tours of the ground and interest in heritage activities boomed.

In 1986 the Australian Gallery of Sport and Olympic Museum, the country's first multi-sport museum, opened to widespread acclaim and it soon became a popular destination for tourists. A volunteer pool of 30 guides serviced demand seven days weekly.

The gallery's successor, the National Sports Museum, has three times the display space and takes the showcasing of sport to a new level. The Volunteer team, now numbering more than 350, inject wit and wisdom into the welcoming experience for visitors.

They are the public face of one of the world's great stadiums, engaging people from far and wide as they inspect the various attractions and gather knowledge of our rich sporting traditions.

The Award was accepted on behalf of the Melbourne Cricket Club and all volunteers by tourism manager, Richard Ponsford.

www.nsm.org.au

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