

Media Release

10 September 2025

Recognising Cowra's Young Peace Makers

Six outstanding young locals have been recognised for making our community a kinder, more peaceful place, with the announcement of nominees for the biennial Cowra Youth Peace Award.

"The Cowra Youth Peace Award is a proud initiative of the Australian Chapter of the World Peace Bell Association," said Cr Cheryl Downing, Chair of the Australian Chapter. "This award celebrates young people in the Cowra Shire who lead by example, promote peace, and make a positive difference in their community through their actions and the way they connect with others. This year's nominees are truly outstanding, making the judging panel's task all the more challenging."

The 2025 Cowra Youth Peace Award winner will be announced at the Rotary Club of Cowra's World Peace Day Dinner on Thursday 18 September 2025 at Club Cowra.

World Peace Day is celebrated annually in Cowra each September, to coincide with the United Nations International Day of Peace. This year's theme is *Act Now for a Peaceful World*. Other activities to be held on Thursday 18 September include the annual Cowra Youth Peace Forum at the Cowra Civic Centre and the community World Peace Bell Ceremony at 12:30PM.

The nominees for the 2025 Cowra Youth Peace Award are as follows:

Laura Bennet (16 years)

Laura has shown an unwavering commitment to helping others and promoting peace within Cowra Ballet School and the wider community. Her kindness, respect, and positive energy create a welcoming space where everyone feels valued.

As a member of the Cowra Youth Council, Laura actively contributes to initiatives that foster understanding and unity. Her involvement in the Cowra Festival of International Understanding highlights her passion for celebrating cultural diversity.

What sets Laura apart is her proactive attitude—she volunteers willingly, supports her peers, and leads by example. Her natural ability to bring people together and encourage inclusivity makes her a role model for young people.

Laura's dedication, leadership, and compassion embody the spirit of the Youth Peace Award. She truly inspires others to build a more harmonious and inclusive community.

Callie Bridges (18 years)

Callie is the 2025 Cowra Young Citizen of the Year and served as a 2024 Vice-Captain of Cowra High School, a leadership role she carried out with responsibility, skill, and dignity.

She is a dedicated senior member of the Cowra Youth Council where her involvement includes the Youth Peace Forum, Youth Week events, NAIDOC Week and Children's Week Family Fun Days, and planning for Mental Health Month initiatives.

In addition to her community leadership, Callie has been part of the Cowra Ballet School for over 14 years. Progressing through the ranks, she is now an Assistant Teacher, respected and admired by both instructors and younger students. She is always willing to offer her time and guidance, with her maturity, dedication, and reliability deeply valued by both Cowra Ballet School and the Youth Council.

Alongside her volunteer and cultural commitments, Callie works at Mulyan Public School as a School Learning Support Officer, where she continues to demonstrate her passion for helping others and supporting young people in their learning journeys.

Ky Garratt (18 years)

Ky Garratt is an outstanding ambassador for Cowra youth and exemplifies the spirit of the Youth Peace Award. As the 2025 Cowra High School Captain, he leads with integrity, empathy, and a genuine connection to his peers and community.

Ky is a role model in sport, academics, and culture. Earlier this year, he represented NSW at the Australian Youth Athletics Championships, earning a silver medal and mentoring younger athletes with encouragement and leadership.

His commitment extends beyond competition—he coaches junior players at Cowra Tennis Club four afternoons a week and officiates on weekends, helping to grow confidence and connection through sport.

Ky also leads the Triple O Sports Performance team, speaks at community events like ANZAC Day, and captains Cowra High's successful hockey, tennis, and squash teams.

Through his actions, Ky promotes peace, inclusion, and excellence, making a lasting impact on Cowra's youth.

Patrick Lazarou (22 years)

Patrick is a valued asset to the Cowra community, known for his caring nature and dedication to supporting young people. Over summer, he works as a swim instructor, teaching children up to 12 years old. Parents frequently share how patient, encouraging, and attentive he is with their kids—his positive impact is clear.

In his role as Community Engagement Officer with Headspace Cowra, Patrick connects with young people across a wide age range. He's actively involved in presentations, social and volunteer groups, and mental health advocacy, always promoting inclusion and wellbeing.

Patrick is a gentle, humble leader who brings passion and empathy to everything he does. He inspires others not through loud words, but through quiet, consistent action. Whether in the pool or out in the community, he's helping to build a stronger, more supportive environment for Cowra's youth.

Madeleine Negus (17 years)

Madeleine Negus is an outstanding candidate for the 2025 Youth Peace Award. As 2025 Cowra High School Captain, she has consistently demonstrated leadership, kindness, and a strong commitment to supporting others. A role model for younger students, Madeleine contributes across all areas—sport, academics, and the arts.

She has proudly represented Cowra in Rugby League at Woodbridge Cup and CHS state level, and as a senior dancer in School Spectacular and other major performances, where she mentors junior dancers.

Academically driven, Madeleine is completing her HSC and plans to study Nutrition at university. She has received numerous awards for sportsmanship, including the 2024 Hilton Shield.

Beyond achievements, she leads the Student Leadership Committee, speaks regularly at assemblies, and represents the school at major community events such as ANZAC Day, the Cowra Breakout, and Peace Bell ceremonies.

Laura Price (18 years)

Laura Price is an exceptional young leader, and a caring and positive mentor to young people. A long-time volunteer, Laura has contributed to numerous local initiatives including the Festival of International Understanding, Cowra Youth Council, and most recently Rotary's new community bookshop.

In 2025, Laura received the prestigious Order of Australia Youth Community Award from the Governor of NSW—an honour awarded to only 20 recipients across the state. She has also been recognised for her leadership through the Rotary Peace Speech and Cowra Youth Council Peace Day events.

Laura served as a youth ambassador at the Cowra Breakout commemoration and has represented her school in Japan, fostering international friendship. Her involvement spans the Duke of Edinburgh program, RYPEN, faith-based youth retreats, and local sports including swimming, netball, and triathlon.

Named Cowra's Young Citizen of the Year in 2023, Laura is deeply respected for her humility, compassion, and leadership. She consistently leads by example, inspiring others to contribute to a more peaceful, inclusive community.

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Caption : 2025 Youth Peace Award Nominees