

2026 EVERALD COMPTON COMMUNITY CHAMPION ANNOUNCED

11 June 2026

National Seniors Australia (NSA) has announced Rosie Fitzgerald as the recipient of the 2026 Everalld Compton Community Champion Medal.

Nominations for the prestigious accolade were received nationwide but it was Kilkivan-based Rosie Fitzgerald who took home the silverware for her tireless work to improve the experience of ageing for residents in Kilkivan – a rural region around 50kms northwest of Gympie, helping residents, including those living with dementia, to stay connected and to age in place rather than relocate to larger centres away from family and friends.

In 2020, Rosie founded the Kilkivan District Community Care Association Incorporated (KDCCAI), which included the establishment of Seniors Social Hubs to strengthen social connections. KDCCAI purchased a community minivan to provide transport to medical appointments and social activities, and continues to advocate for improved access to Home Care Packages.

Under Rosie's leadership, KDCCAI purchased a former church with plans to develop supported accommodation to enable older residents to remain local rather than relocate to residential aged care elsewhere. KDCCAI has also partnered with University of the Sunshine Coast researchers to co-design and pilot a dementia caregiver support program as well as other initiatives.

“Now in its second year, the Everalld Compton Community Champion Medal has again shown how older people are making differences in the communities. While nominations were strong, it was Rosie who stood out for her efforts to improve the experience of ageing in rural communities,” NSA CEO Chris Grice said.

“We congratulate Rosie on receiving this prestigious and well-deserved accolade and thank all nominees for the vast and varied ways they contribute to their communities.”

NSA's Founder and medal inspiration, Mr Everalld Compton AO said, “Too often, older Australians get cast aside. But they're an asset and shouldn't be ignored. Rosie, and all nominees, are shining examples of the difference older Australians make to their communities through humble, selfless and inspirational work.”

“Rosie embodies everything the medal represents including impact on the community, inclusivity and accessibility, leadership and inspiration, and dementia care and support.”

In presenting the medal to Rosie, Mr Compton said, “We all play a role to help change negative attitudes about older Australians by acknowledging them as community builders who have the wisdom and ability to turn ‘grey into gold’ throughout Australia in the manner so ably demonstrated by Rosie.”

Upon receiving the medal, Ms Fitzgerald said she was deeply honoured and proud to be recognised for the work she does and deeply loves.

“I am so grateful to have won this accolade so I can shine a light on the additional challenges seniors, and their families face in rural areas such as Kilkivan,” Ms Fitzgerald said.

“Challenges such as transport, care, support, and appropriate accommodation are better and more cost-effectively tackled at the source, rather than expecting less-than-fully-independent seniors to relocate, in their most vulnerable years, from their homes or home areas to access basic options.

“It's cruel to expect seniors who have often lived and volunteered for their entire lives in a community to end up as a hospital bed-block statistic or in a facility a long way from their social networks.

“I sincerely thank my local community for so strongly supporting our Rise & Shine Ageing-in-Place vision, and especially my friend and KDCCAI member/Treasurer Lynda Sempf – without her wisdom and commitment over the years we would not have got this far.”

The winner of the medal was announced on June 10 at a ceremony and dinner at Brisbane’s Convention and Exhibition Centre attended by Minister for Health and Ageing; Minister for Disability and the NDIS the Hon. Mark Butler MP (who delivered the keynote address) and Federal Member for Blair Shayne Neumann (who delivered the closing remarks). Federal Member for Mayo Rebekha Sharkie MP and Hon Paul de Jersey AC CVO KC presided as judges. NSA thanks ECCCM sponsors Nucleus Network, RMBL, Watch Smoke Alarms and the Good Guys Commercial for supporting the event.

Media enquiries Media & Corporate Communications Manager Anna Townend 0488 047 380