

James is S.A. Citizen of the Year



Keyneton farmer, Mr James Graetz has been recognised for his outstanding contributions to the local community and beyond. Photo by Alicia Lüdi-Schutz.

Australia Day awards for James

By Paige Swearse

Mr James Graetz, Keyneton farmer, has been named South Australian Citizen of the Year.

James will be presented with his state award from the Australia Day Council on January 23 at the grounds of the Government House in Adelaide.

James was also awarded the Mid Murray Council Citizen Award.

He was nominated for the awards due to his ongoing commitment to not only his local Keyneton community but also all surrounding communities in the district.

After receiving the phone call to be told he was the South Australian winner for 2017 James was excited but humble.

“I was quite shocked when I was told I had won the award,” he said.

“Im sure there are plenty of other people just as deserving, if not more.”

At 66 years of age, James has provided

over 50 years of commitment to a variety of community organisations.

James was awarded a National Medal for his 50 years of commitment to the CFS and 30 years as the captain.

During the 2014 Eden Valley fires James was commended for his fast action and for the considerable amount of energy he put into rebuilding and helping the community move forward.

The community members admired James for these efforts, especially as his farm was severely impacted in the Eden Valley fire.

He was involved in the volunteer-based organisation BlazeAid during this time and also for the Pinery Fire of 2015.

With James’ vast experience and knowledge, he now gives talks to a variety of community groups through BlazeAid.

James said he receives huge support from his family and from the community which makes what he does easier.

“I am so thankful for the community who have helped me throughout the years of doing everything and if it wasn’t for them I wouldn’t be able to do it.”

“I am also grateful for my family who have supported me and helped me from the very beginning.”

James’ wife Carol sadly passed away 12 years ago. However he still has the constant support of his two children Kym and Sally.

Among his life long achievements with the CFS James has also contributed to many other community organisations.

Coming from a farming background, James has been a member of the Angaston Agriculture Bureau for the past 36 years and during his time there has served terms as both the president and vice president.

James has also been heavily involved in youth groups within the community as well as religious organisations and schooling committees.