

## THE 2018 BALLARAT YOUTH AWARD AMBASSADORS



Spark change: This year's Youth Awards ambassadors Macaylah Johnson and Sam Rizzo at the Ballarat Library.

Coming from two very different backgrounds, the 2018 Youth Awards ambassadors Macaylah Johnson and Sam Rizzo are excited to share the achievements of Ballarat's young people with a wider audience.

Seventeen-year-old Buninyong wheelchair athlete Sam showed incredible grit and maturity in his sporting endeavours this year, finishing sixth in men's T54 1500 metres at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.

As a proud young Wadawurrung woman, Macaylah has been an incredible ambassador for her community, encouraging her friends and schoolmates to ask her about her culture. She has also passionately shared the history of her family's female line, connecting with the NAIDOC Week theme of 'Because of Her, We Can'.

She said there was a "negative portrayal" of young people in media and in broad public opinion, with the city needing to recognise "how much good is going on and how much young people are doing and giving back to the community."

"Volunteering your time is a really rewarding experience, and you learn so much from that ... [the awards] are a good self-esteem boost for young people and encourages them to keep going and doing the right thing."

Sam said while improving as an athlete, "progressing and getting better," the acknowledgement of his hard work had been "fundamental" to his career.

"There's some amazing, talented young people here that through their own passions like sport, art or public speaking are just rising up and doing what they love to do," he said. "They should definitely get signed up for the awards. There's no harm in putting your name down and having a crack."

Nominations for City of Ballarat's Youth Awards will close at 5pm on August 24. Categories will recognise young people for their contributions to entrepreneurship, STEM, sport, arts and volunteering.

The Youth Awards will be presented at a ceremony at the Wendouree Centre of Performing Arts on October 12. For more information or to lodge a nomination, go to [youthawards.ballarat.vic.gov.au](http://youthawards.ballarat.vic.gov.au).

*Article courtesy of the Ballarat Courier, text and picture: Ashleigh McMillan*

## LAUNCH OF THE 2018 CITY OF BALLARAT YOUTH AWARDS

*The City of Ballarat Youth Council recently celebrated the launch of the 2018 Youth Awards.*

*This celebration marks the opening of the nomination period, which will continue through August, with judging commencing in early September and the awards ceremony in October. Guests were entertained with music from local young musicians "Jam Packed" and met the 2018 Youth Awards Ambassadors. Congratulations to Macaylah Johnson, Year 11 student from Loreto College Ballarat who was chosen to present as Ambassador for the Ballarat Youth Awards. Macaylah spoke at the launch held at the Town Hall.*

*The City of Ballarat Youth Awards publicly acknowledge the great work and achievements of young individuals, groups and organisations across the region. Approximately 20,000 12 – 25 year olds call Ballarat home. The City of Ballarat Youth Awards provide the community with an opportunity to recognise and celebrate our city's young people who volunteer and contribute to our community. The event was created in 2005 after the incumbent Youth Councillors expressed a desire for young people to be better recognised for their role in the community.*



*Congratulations also to Macaylah who performed the Welcome to Country and Maxi Sam-Morris, also a Loreto College Ballarat student, who spoke the Acknowledgement of Country at the Catholic Youth Festival held on Friday, July 27.*

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