

# NAIDOC awards recognise achievement, effort...

Community-minded individuals and groups were rewarded for their efforts in the Nambucca Valley with NAIDOC Week awards, presented at the Macksville Ex-Servicemen's Club on Saturday night.

A crowd turned out to congratulate the Indigenous award-winners, who were recognised for their academic and sporting prowess and their contribution to the community.

St Mary's assistant principal Cheryl Donovan was recognised as Goorie of the Year, for her work in promoting education for young people.

Ms Donovan was very surprised to receive the award, which she said was very special.

"It's something really special to be recognised by your own people, your own community, with something like this," she said.

"I am honoured."

The group award went to the Gumbaynggir Elders Choir, which almost missed the opportunity to attend the ceremony.

Busy with a NAIDOC engagement at Coffs Harbour, members of the choir had to race back to Macksville to attend the ceremony.

The group was honoured for its work in the community, with its mix of hymns, country and traditional language songs.

The group, which has been running for three years, is still hard

at work throughout the shire, continuing the NAIDOC celebrations.

Elders of the Year were Barry Phyll, chairman of the local lands council, and Bernadette Wilkes, who has been involved in a variety of community organisations over the years, including the lands council, the local choir and education initiatives.

The academic achievements of primary school students Skye Hillery of Scotts Head and Anthony Walker of Bowraville Central were rewarded.

Senior students Michelle Jarrett, Bowraville Central School, and Dylan Hoskins, Nambucca Heads High School, received the Senior Aboriginal Academic awards for their efforts.

Aboriginal education assistant at Bowraville Central School Diana Flanders said the efforts of these students were a positive role model for others in the school community.

Other awards on the night went to: Penny Stadhams and Richard Donovan, who were named Individuals of the Year; Jaleel Jarrett and Damien Culter as Employees of the Year; Tahlia Rotumah and George Jarrett were named Junior Sports People of the Year; and Natalie Rotumah and Edgar Cowell were named Senior Sports People of the Year.



Elder of the Year: Barry Phyll, chairman of the local lands council and member of the Gumbaynggir Elders Choir, was recognised for his community work.



Bowraville Central School students Michelle Jarrett, Year 9, and Anthony Walker, Year 6, were presented with academic awards during NAIDOC Week. Scotts Head student Skye Hillery and Nambucca Heads High School student Dylan Hoskins were also recognised.



St Mary's assistant principal Cheryl Donovan is proud to be named Goorie of the Year, an award announced during the NAIDOC Week celebrations at Macksville on Saturday.