

MEDIA RELEASE

Volunteers to take centre stage at ISPS Handa Halberg Awards through new Bunnings partnership

Nominations open nationwide this October to recognise the volunteers who are the backbone of community sport.

Summary

The inaugural Bunnings Community Sport Volunteer Award will recognise unpaid individuals who make community sport possible across New Zealand.

Presented in partnership with the ISPS Handa Halberg Awards, the award celebrates volunteers including coaches, organisers, administrators, officials, fundraisers and community leaders whose efforts help people participate, develop and succeed through sport.

Nominations open nationwide from 1 October to 31 October, with finalists to attend the ISPS Handa Halberg Awards and one volunteer to be named the inaugural Bunnings Community Sport Volunteer of the Year.

What is the Bunnings Community Sport Volunteer Award?

The Bunnings Community Sport Volunteer Award is a new annual award that recognises an unpaid individual who has made an outstanding contribution to their grassroots sporting community.

The award sits alongside the ISPS Handa Halberg Awards, which celebrate sporting excellence at the highest level, and acknowledges the unpaid people behind the scenes whose work helps sporting communities thrive.

Who can be nominated?

- An unpaid individual who has made a meaningful difference to a local sporting community.
- Volunteers may contribute through coaching, administration, officiating, organising events, fundraising or other support for community sport.
- Their contribution helps create opportunities for New Zealanders to participate, develop and succeed through sport.
- The award recognises leadership, generosity and commitment in grassroots sporting communities.

Why is Bunnings supporting the award?

The award builds on Bunnings' commitment to grassroots sport through Coaching Legends, which has seen communities across Aotearoa nominate and celebrate volunteer coaches who make a meaningful difference in local sport.

What leaders said

Tom Smith, Chief Executive of the Halberg Foundation, said the new award recognises people who are fundamental to the success of sport throughout New Zealand.



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“For every athlete or coach recognised on stage at the ISPS Handa Halberg Awards, there are countless people in communities across New Zealand who helped make that journey possible by donating their time and energy,” Smith said.

“Whether they’re coaching a junior team, running a local club, fundraising, officiating or simply showing up week after week, volunteers are the foundation of New Zealand sport. Through this partnership with Bunnings, we’re excited to recognise the volunteers who work tirelessly behind the scenes to create opportunities for others and strengthen sporting communities across Aotearoa,” Smith said.

Bunnings New Zealand General Manager Melissa Haines said the award is a natural extension of Bunnings’ commitment to celebrating the people who make community sport possible.

“Through Coaching Legends, we’ve seen thousands of nominations from communities across Aotearoa, each one celebrating the difference volunteer coaches make for players, clubs and communities every day,” Haines said.

“The Bunnings Community Sport Volunteer Award gives us another opportunity to celebrate these incredible people on a national stage and recognise the leadership, generosity and commitment that keeps community sport thriving.”

How to nominate

New Zealanders are invited to nominate volunteers who have made a meaningful difference in their local sporting community.

Nominations open on 1 October and close on 31 October.

Nominate at: <https://halberg.co.nz/halberg-awards/nominate/>

Key facts

- Award: Bunnings Community Sport Volunteer Award
- Who it recognises: An unpaid individual who has made an outstanding contribution to a grassroots sporting community
- Nomination period: 1 to 31 October
- Presentation: ISPS Handa Halberg Awards
- Awards date: 17 February 2027
- How to nominate: halberg.co.nz/halberg-awards/nominate/

About the awards and partners

The Bunnings Community Sport Volunteer of the Year Award recognises unpaid individuals whose generosity, commitment and leadership have made a meaningful difference to their sporting community.

The ISPS Handa Halberg Awards are New Zealand’s premier sporting awards, celebrating sporting excellence while supporting the Halberg Foundation’s work to enhance the lives of physically disabled young New Zealanders through sport and active recreation. The 64th awards will be held on 17 February 2027 and broadcast live on Sky Sport as well as free-to-air coverage.

