



Armidale's Citizen of the Year, Anthony Kelly; ADC Mayor, Peter Ducat; and Armidale's 2009 Australia Day Ambassador, Ron Delezio. Image: DANIELI STUDIOS

## Big achievers honoured with ADC Local Area Australia Day Awards

The Armidale Dumaresq Local Area Australia Day Awards honoured big achievers and contributors in the local community. Their stories, for which they were acknowledged, were summed up in citations, read at the ceremony by Armidale Dumaresq Mayor, Peter Ducat.

**Citizen of the Year went to Anthony Kelly.**

"Anthony Kelly established the New England Martial Arts Centre in 1990 and since then has made a significant contribution to the local community.

"Countless numbers of children and adults have benefited

under his specialised expertise. His dedication and belief in others is evident when he is teaching, instilling in his students a sense of pride and determination to improve themselves in the sporting arena and as individuals."

Mr. Kelly's achievements are

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Conservation Award (1993) and many more. However, it is clear that Melvin is most proud when ordinary people love his art, not art critics or even other artists.

He has exhibited in many metropolitan and regional locations. His paintings hang in offices, banks, hospitals, councils, private collections and galleries.

Christopher Ross-Smith has been recognised "for service to the performing arts, and to the community of the Armidale region." He played a major role in the cultural development of the local area, building interest in the theatre and the professionalism of local productions. Mr. Ross-Smith said he is deeply honoured by the recognition and especially pleased that it has put the spotlight on local theatre production.

Mr Ross-Smith was the Deputy Director of the acclaimed National Institute of Dramatic Art

(NIDA), 1974-1976.

He was the Foundation Head of the Drama (later Theatre Studies) Department at the University of New England. He was first appointed in 1977 and became an Honorary Fellow in 1996.

In 1985, Christopher founded the Armidillos Theatre Company, for which he is currently the Artistic Director and Administrator, which has been responsible for directing local productions and financing the appearance of visiting professional theatre and Oz Opera productions in Armidale. It has also provided financial assistance to selected Armidale theatre and cultural groups.

He is a former Deputy President of the Armidale Biennial Arts Festival Committee, having served as adjudicator for several speech and drama events.

Mr Ross-Smith has served as a Committee Member and actor

with local amateur theatre group, the Armidale Playhouse, since 1978.

As a Committee Member from 1997-2001, he helped to coordinate the establishment of the Armidale Teachers' College building as a cultural centre for the arts on behalf of the Friends of the Old Teachers' College.

In recent years the local theatre icon transgressed from the stage to the page. He co-wrote a chapter on Theatre in New England in the recently published book, "High Lean Country", which was edited by Alan Atkinson (et al), [Heritage Futures Centre, University of New England, (Allen & Unwin), 2006].

Christopher Ross-Smith was President of the Australasian Drama Studies Association from 1982-1984 and Secretary from 1977-1982. He became a Life Member in 1984.



## AUDITIONS

**HMS Pinafore & Trial By Jury**  
10 & 11 February  
7:30 pm  
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