

# 'Thank you' to giving citizens

By Liselotte Johnsson

THE young and the old were united as Manningham thanked two of its most outstanding citizens on Australia Day.

Citizen of the year Vera Hampson's long history of volunteering is drawing to an end, while young citizen of the year Ben Dennis hopes his is just beginning.

Mrs Hampson, of Doncaster, has volunteered with Manningham Food Services' Meals on Wheels for 18 years, the Box Hill Hospital kiosk for 17 years and the Doncare Opportunity Shop for 12 years, and is actively involved in the Neighbourhood Watch program.

And while the mother of four and grandmother of five, who has been married for 57 years, is still enjoying volunteering, she is considering giving it up next year.

"I always say 'while you're well, healthy, do it'", she said.

"I say to people, 'I'll be 80 next year. I think I'll finish then'. I probably will miss it, though."

Mrs Hampson was surprised to receive the award, but said it was "nice that someone appreciates what you do".

Ben, 15, of Warrandyte, began volunteering with the Manningham YMCA FreeZA committee to improve entertainment and performance opportunities for youth in the municipality.

Passionate about ska and reggae music, Ben plays the tenor saxophone and bass, and does a bit of disc jockeying.

As a member of the FreeZA committee, he helps with lighting and sound at the drug-and-alcohol-free youth events. "I just love music and organising events," he said. "I'll keep doing it until I'm 25; you can't do it after that."



**Thank you:** Mayor Ron Kitchingman thanks citizen of the year Vera Hampson and young citizen of the year Ben Dennis for their contribution to the Manningham community.  
**Picture:** Joe Mastrolanni