

# Recognition for life of service to others

When Maree Thomas stepped out to accept her community service award on Saturday, her success story was not known to many.

Together with local services, she has driven the most summer school holiday activities in history. Police say it reduced youth crime and the mayor agrees.

Master of Ceremonies Mark Griggs described Maree as a warm, welcoming personality with a happy, smiling face.

"It is important to recognise this person has done much, much more, especially in hours, than what she has ever been paid for," Mr Griggs said.

"Maree has volunteered her time for many occasions such as Springfest; face painting at church functions; fundraising three years in a row for Shine for Kids, after Derby Day she made 200 plaster



**Maree Thomas with Australia Day chairman Marcus Hanney.**

moulds for a McHappy Day in her own time to help others; volunteered at Homeless Week and stayed the night with the kids," he said.

"Often she provided her own transport to mothers in need, just out of kindness.

"Maree has worked at the Wellington Children's Centre preschool for 18 years and the Shine for Kids adjacent to Wellington

Correctional Centre for five years, running an activity centre for children who visit with their parents on weekends and also conducting an in-visits program," Mr Griggs told the big crowd at Saturday's Australia Day ceremony.

"As well, she was also a Shine volunteer mentor.

"She has spent her own money at times to provide children some-

thing substantial to eat as their parents didn't have enough money for food.

"Nominators stated in the preamble that they really believed that it was time that this lady gets the recognition she rightly deserves for the hard work and time she puts into the Wellington community, very much over and well above the call of duty."