



Oxley group leader Sarah Heinz was awarded the Special Service Award. Picture by Mark Kriedemann

Scouts rewarded on big day

Four of the Tamworth region's most dedicated scout leaders and supporters were recognised for their decades of voluntary commitment on World Scout Day.

On Monday, the region's scouting commissioner, Brett Grimmond, presented the four with medals at a ceremony at the Hillvue Scout Hall. One of the awards was among the highest that can be bestowed, he said.

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NEWS

Scout is rewarded for 37 years' work

PETER Shields might be the most dedicated Scouting volunteer in Tamworth never to be an actual Scout.

As an adult he has spent 37 years volunteering for the movement - but as a kid growing up in Narrabri, he never joined.

"I sometimes ponder what that would have been like," he said.

"Sometimes I wish that I'd been a scout. It gets ingrained into your being I think. If you start off as a young kid, you think as a scout probably for the rest of your life. I only did that from the time when I was 40."

After the better part of four decades as an adult volunteer, Mr Shields has risen to the rank of regional chairman, with responsibility for looking after the region's facilities and real estate, among other tasks.

He was awarded the second-highest rank available to a "non-uniform" scout on World Scout Day, August 1, the Distinguished Service Award, in recognition of his decades-long service.

The region's scouting commissioner, Brett Grim-

mond, presented four scout leaders with medals at a ceremony on Monday. About 50 scouts and parents attended the ceremony at the Hillvue Scout Hall.

Regional office manager Caroline Rothwell and Hillvue scout leader Nicole Engert were awarded the Silver Wattle.

Oxley group leader Sarah Heinz was awarded the Special Service Award.

Mr Grimmond said the Distinguished Service Award was an "absolute honour in scouting circles".

He said the 37-year veteran had been a "constant" since he kicked off his career as a leader at West Tamworth Scouts.

Mr Shields said he never knew he'd be sucked into the organisation when he first joined up to help his four sons through scouting.

After 14 years as region chairman, he is still going strong in the administrative role.

"I believe in supporting the community," he said.

"It sounds altruistic but I've always believed that."

— ANDREW MESSENGER