

*Speech by Councillor Rob Richardson given on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2009 at the 9.30am Armidale Uniting Church Service.*

Can I firstly acknowledge the original inhabitants of our country.

Reverend Dr Anita Monroe, members of the Jones family; Joyce (Alwyn's wife), Margaret, Graeme, Phil, Stuart and Gavin (Alwyn's daughter and sons), other members of the selection committee (John, Margaret, Bev and Martin), recipient of the Alwyn Jones Community Service Award, Aline Christenson, the other nominees, Councillor Paul Harmer and his wife Meredith, ladies and gentleman, boys and girls.

It is an honour to be representing Armidale Dumaresq Council today at this church service awards ceremony. Congratulations to all the nominees of the award; just to be acknowledged for a community award such as this says much about that person or community group, all of whom this community are so reliant on. In this instance can I give a special acknowledgement to Aline Christenson and recognise her years of dedication to theatre, music, dance, writing and art in our community. The arts are so strong in Armidale and help to give our city the cultural reputation, which we are well known for.

There is no doubt that the council and the greater community of Armidale owe a debt of gratitude to Alwyn Jones for his years of service to our community. He led a full and complete life and was involved with so much, however the area that he is particularly remembered, is for giving Armidale its vibrant colour. By this of course I mean our deciduous trees, which are now synonymous with Armidale. Alwyn started the tree planting committee on Armidale City Council and the result is on display today for all to see and enjoy, with a blaze of autumn colour in our streets and parks.

Debra, from our Visitor's Information Centre, told me that people start to call in from other areas in March, to see if the leaves have started turning so they can plan their visit here- she called it 'leaf watch'. This how famous our street trees have become.

Of course the other huge event that has been triggered by our autumn leaves is the Autumn Festival, which was begun in 1994 and made what it is today by the wonderful John Canon.

Today is a dedication to those in our community who do something special. Of course there are hundreds of people who do amazing things for this community every day, and we are recognizing some of those individuals and groups, without whom the Armidale Dumaresq area would not be the fantastic community, city, and area that it is.

One of the last times that I saw Alwyn Jones was at his nomination ceremony when he was made Freeman of the City, in 2002. At that stage I was chairman of the Autumn Festival Committee and was able to thank him for his energy and foresight enabling this wonderful event to be linked to a season, which he has helped make famous in our city. He was a gracious man and a thorough gentleman, and he would be delighted to know that this particular community award continues, not because it bears his name, however because he understood that service is the lifeblood of a community.