

# PIPE BANDS AUSTRALIA

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## First long-service certificate presented

The first of Pipe Bands Australia's player recognition awards has been presented to Horsham City Pipe Band's Ron Abbott at a dinner celebrating the former pipe major's 70 years with the band.

PBA has instituted awards for 25 and 50 years of service by players to the band movement and Ron's enthusiasm and energy for piping may well see him reach 75 years!

Horsham newspaper The Wimmera Mail-Times published an article on Ron ahead of the weekend's dinner.

*HORSHAM'S Ron Abbott has been playing the bagpipes at marches, football matches and funerals for 71 years.*

*A diligent student and then a teacher, Mr Abbott has made it to almost every practice session with the Horsham City Pipe Band.*

*"I enjoy practising," he said.*

*"I always used to ask the Pipe Major if we could play one more.*

*"I said that so often they started calling me 'One More Ronnie'. I think that nickname will stick with me until the day I die."*

*Mr Abbott's dedication to the pipes was recognised last week at the Horsham Pipe band annual general meeting.*

*There will also be a dinner later this month in his honour.*

*"I was born in 1936 and when I was nine I first heard the pipes being played," he said.*

*"I asked my mother what they were and she said they were bagpipes. I misheard her and called them magpies."*

*The year was 1945 and Horsham held celebratory marches to mark the end of World War Two.*

*"Everyone was making the 'V' for victory sign," Mr Abbott said.*

*Mr Abbott joined a class of 12 other hopefuls but he was the only one to stick with it and join the band.*

*"It's not easy to learn," he said.*

*"It's getting harder to find young people willing to take it up.*

*"They're all distracted by technology."*

*Mr Abbott has also received a certificate from Horsham Rural City Council and Mayor Heather Phillips congratulating him 70 years of continuous service.*

*"Through your music, you have made an enormous contribution, not just to the band but to the entire Wimmera community," Cr Phillips stated on the certificate.*

*"The bagpipes are not an easy instrument to play, let alone to march and play.*

*"You have been able to pass these skills on to countless 'learners' over the past."*

*Mr Abbott said he has learned by heart all the Australian Football League team anthems.*

*"Back when Horsham used to win grand finals I was always out there playing 'It's a Grand Old Flag'," he said.*

*Mr Abbott has also visited the home of bagpipes, Scotland, where his playing skills got him invited to Argyll's Inveraray Castle and a bagpipe tournament.*

*"They had 80 pipe bands. They asked me to march with them at the end," he said.*

Application forms for the service awards are available on the PBA website



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