



**Media Release:** Thursday 15 October 2015

## Tanya Whitehouse named winner of 2015 Justice Medal for work in domestic violence sector

The Justice Medal has been presented to Tanya Whitehouse for her commitment to protecting the rights of women and children affected by domestic violence in the Macarthur region of south west Sydney for 22 years. Head of the Macarthur Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (MWDVCAS), Tanya has led the expansion of frontline services and advocated for reform. The award was presented by NSW Attorney General Gabrielle Upton MP at the 17<sup>th</sup> annual Justice Awards at Parliament House in Sydney.

The Justice Awards recognise individuals and groups who have made an outstanding contribution to improving access to justice, especially for socially and economically disadvantaged people in NSW. Director of the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW Geoff Mulherin said, "Tanya Whitehouse has demonstrated extraordinary commitment to improving access to justice for women and children escaping domestic violence in Sydney's south west through her role at MWDVCAS. She has built extensive networks across other human services to provide truly holistic support. Her work has influenced policy at state and national levels."

Alistair Ferguson was named the winner of the Aboriginal Justice Award for his 20 years of work in the Bourke community, and in particular for his leadership of the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project which addresses Aboriginal disadvantage. The Law and Justice Volunteer Award was presented to Leonie Duroux for her 23-year fight for justice for the families of three Aboriginal children murdered in Bowraville. Leonie's efforts prompted a police taskforce, which in turn led to a parliamentary inquiry and change to the law.

Salvos Legal and Salvos Legal Humanitarian won the Pro Bono Partnership Award for their innovative model which provides pro bono services to disadvantaged and marginalised people.

There were also three other awards presented on the evening:

- The Law Society President's Award was awarded to Eric Butler for his outstanding contribution to the Law Society's Pro Bono Scheme.
- The Community Legal Centres NSW Award was presented to the volunteers at the Australian Centre for Disability Law, with the Criminal Justice Support Network volunteers at the Intellectual Disability Rights Service being highly commended in the same category.
- The Legal Information Access Centre (LIAC) Centre of Excellence Award was awarded jointly to Gunnedah Shire Library and Sutherland Shire Libraries.

Attended by 300 people, the dinner began with a Welcome to Country given by Aunty Norma Ingram, and former Federal Court judge and ex-President of the Australian Human Rights Commission the Hon. Catherine Branson QC delivered the 2015 Law and Justice Address.

### **About the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW**

The Law and Justice Foundation of NSW was founded in 1967 and improves access to justice for socially and economically disadvantaged people.

Visit [www.lawfoundation.net.au/justice\\_awards](http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/justice_awards) to download the [2015 Justice Awards program](#)

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