



MEDIA RELEASE 19 OCTOBER 2017

Leading community lawyer Prue Gregory named winner of 2017 Justice Medal

A lawyer providing free legal assistance for people who have experienced child abuse has been awarded the **2017 Justice Medal**. Prue Gregory won the prestigious award for her outstanding work in providing legal assistance to disadvantaged people for more than 20 years, most recently in her role with Knowmore, a free legal service for people engaging with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

“From her early work establishing a legal advice clinic for homeless and vulnerable people at St John’s in Darlinghurst, a model she later adapted to meet the legal needs of residents of the Claymore and Macquarie Fields housing estates, through to her recent work with survivors of child sexual abuse, Prue Gregory has been a committed advocate for access to justice,” said Geoff Mulherin, Director of the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW, which hosted the 19th annual Justice Awards at Parliament House in Sydney on 19 October 2017.

“Prue has dedicated herself to providing legal representation for clients who would otherwise have fallen through the cracks and lobbied for systemic change at state and federal level.” Knowmore is a program of the National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC).

Tony McAvoy SC presented the **Aboriginal Justice Award** to Rick Welsh, coordinator of The Shed in Western Sydney, a drop-in and referral centre for Aboriginal men who have problems with the justice system, health issues or family problems. The Shed was established in 2004 as a partnership between the Men’s Health Information & Resource Centre at the University of Western Sydney and Holy Family Church at Mt. Druitt.

The **Law and Justice Volunteer Award** was presented to the Women’s Justice Network (WJN) volunteers by Kara Shead SC. Formerly known as WIPAN, WJN provide mentoring support to women leaving prison to assist them to transition back into the community and avoid reoffending. The **Pro Bono Partnership Award** went to the Dharriwaa Elders Group, the Aboriginal Legal Service in Moree and Gilbert + Tobin, for the Housing Repairs Project which has resulted in improved housing conditions for many disadvantaged Indigenous people in Moree and Walgett. For more details, see the 2017 Justice Awards program [here](#).

About the Justice Awards

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. Attended by around 300 people, the dinner began with a Welcome to Country given by Aunty Norma Ingram. The Hon. Sir Anthony Mason AC KBE GBM delivered the 2017 Law and Justice Address which is available [here](#). The Justice Medal was presented by NSW Attorney General, Mark Speakman MP SC.



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Other Awards

Three other awards were presented on the evening.

- The **Law Society President's Award** was won by John Capsanis of J P Capsanis & Co Lawyers.
- The **Community Legal Centres NSW Award** was presented to the 'Group of 6' volunteer solicitors (Robert Davidson, Mick Davies, James Isabella, Kerry Kyriakoudes, Michael McGrath and Linda Wright) who have volunteered at the Illawarra Legal Centre for more than 30 years. In the same award category, Elise Briggs, Hunter Community Legal Centre, and Sue Whitehead, Refugee Advice and Casework Service, were highly commended.
- The **Legal Information Access Centre (LIAC) Centre of Excellence Award** was awarded jointly to Blacktown City Libraries and Campbelltown City Library.

About the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW

The Law and Justice Foundation of NSW was founded in 1967. Its purpose is to improve access to justice for the people of NSW. For more information go to lawfoundation.net.au

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The Justice Awards are part of the Foundation's 2017 Anniversary Program marking 50 years of improving access to justice. We would like to acknowledge and thank our sponsors.

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50th Anniversary Grants Program recipients announced

To mark its 50 year anniversary in 2017, the Foundation held a special grants program. The 2017 Anniversary Grants Program was designed specifically to support a project that identified a priority legal need in the community and a strategy to address it. The project outcomes had to be capable of producing lessons which can be applied across the sector. From a very competitive field of applications, two projects were awarded funding.

- **Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre – LinkUP project.**

The Centre will trial a service that provides specialised legal advice, education and support to young people transitioning from out-of-home care to independence and adult legal responsibility in the Mid North Coast FACS region.

Amount approved: Up to \$145,000.00

- **Tenants' Union of NSW – 'Change management' - making the transfer of social housing management better!**

This project aims to minimise negative outcomes and foster best practice in law and policy during the transfer of tenancies from public to community housing providers. The intention is that this will lead to early intervention in resolving legal issues and improved tenant outcomes.

Amount approved: Up to \$69,123.00.