



Hon Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General
Minister for Justice

MEDIA RELEASE

15 July 2011

ATTORNEY GENERAL SUPPORTS JUSTICE AWARDS

Attorney General Greg Smith SC has thrown his support behind the annual New South Wales Justice Awards, which honour the extraordinary efforts of those who help the disadvantaged.

Nominations for this year's awards close in two weeks and Mr Smith is urging everyone in the community to think about who might deserve recognition for improving access to justice in NSW.

The categories are: Justice Medal, Aboriginal Justice Award, Pro Bono Partnership Award, and Law and Justice Volunteer Award.

"The Awards recognise unsung heroes in the community – be they lawyers or non-lawyers," Mr Smith said. "In fact, most disadvantaged people don't turn to a lawyer when they have a legal problem. They usually rely on friends, community organisations and non-legal professionals for assistance."

Mr Smith said he was pleased the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW, which has been organising the awards for 12 years, had invited him to present this year's Aboriginal Justice Award. Former High Court Chief Justice Sir Anthony Mason has been asked to present the Justice Medal.

Rachael Martin, of the Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre – a Statewide service based in inner-city Marrickville - won the Justice Medal last year for her work in making the legal and justice system more accessible for Aboriginal women.

Roy "Dootch" Kennedy, a member of the Yuin-Kurie people of the South Coast who has been an advocate for Aboriginal rights, his community and the environment over the past 30 years, won the Aboriginal Justice Award.

The Pro Bono Partnership Award went to the team of Blake Dawson and Lou's Place, which provides legal assistance to women in the heart of Kings Cross. Estrella McKinnon, who has been helping those vulnerable to violence or abuse in the Illawarra region for the past 25 years, received the Volunteer Award.

The awards ceremony will be held on October 24 at Parliament House.

Nominations close on July 29. For more information go to www.lawfoundation.net.au/justice_awards.