



Hon Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General
Minister for Justice

MEDIA RELEASE

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JUSTICE AWARDS RECOGNISE WORK ON ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

The NSW Attorney General, Greg Smith SC, has congratulated Aboriginal rights campaigner John McKenzie for being awarded the 2011 Justice Medal tonight.

Mr McKenzie, who was a principal solicitor to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1987, has worked tirelessly over the past 30 years to ensure that Aboriginal people have access to proper legal representation.

Former High Court Chief Justice Sir Anthony Mason presented Mr McKenzie with the highest honour of the annual Law and Justice Foundation awards, held at NSW Parliament House.

“Where many others have fought and then moved on, John remains dedicated and passionate to law reform, and he retains a fresh, innovative approach to legal service delivery,” Sir Anthony said.

The Attorney General presented the 2011 Aboriginal Justice Award to Ms Jan Fennell for her work as a liaison officer with NSW Police in Menindee, a remote rural town in the State’s far west.

Mr Smith said the community was challenged by issues such as truancy, anti-social behaviour, crime, and alcohol.

“Jan has been instrumental in running projects to bring the community and police together, and fostered a healthy relationship between them so that together, they can tackle the many issues their community faces,” Mr Smith said.

The night’s other major award, the Pro Bono Partnership Award, went to a partnership between Women’s Legal Services NSW, law firms Blake Dawson, Clayton Utz and Freehills, the NSW Bar Association and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for increasing access to justice for victims of sexual assault.

For the list of nominees and winners go to www.lawfoundation.net.au/justice_awards