

Ms Alison Megarrity MP

Member for Menai

Assistant Speaker, NSW Legislative Assembly

Media Release



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INSPIRATIONAL MENAI LOCAL NAMED NSW'S TOP WOMAN

Member for Menai, Alison Megarrity, has congratulated Menai local, Cheryl Koenig, for winning the prestigious NSW Woman of the Year Award for 2009.

“Cheryl has been a true inspiration to our local community for many years.

“Now with this award, I am confident that she will become an inspiration to men and women across this state and indeed, nation-wide.

“I am thrilled that Cheryl’s many years of dedicated efforts to raise awareness of brain injury has been recognised with this incredible award,” said Ms Megarrity.

“Cheryl was nominated for writing the book *Paper Cranes: A Mother’s Story of Hope Courage and Determination*, which chronicles her family’s journey following her son’s severe brain injury from a car accident.

“This is in addition to Cheryl’s extensive work in fundraising, her dedication to helping others, and caring for her son.

“It was an honour to be able to nominate such a passionate and committed woman from our local area,” Ms Megarrity said.

Minister for Women, Verity Firth MP said Ms Koenig was announced as the winner at a reception hosted by the Premier celebrating International Women’s Day, on March 5.

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“Ms Koenig’s devotion to the cause of brain injury awareness is one of the finest examples of selfless citizenship I have ever seen,” said Ms Firth.

“Ms Koenig was up against some of state’s most impressive women including Layne Beachley, Rhonda French and Wendy McCarthy AO,” she said.

“Narrowing the field to just ten finalists was an unenviable task, let alone choosing a winner.

“The Woman of the Year Award recognises the achievements of women and the leadership they provide as positive role models, particularly to younger women” Ms Firth said.

“87 nominations were received this year in recognition of the outstanding contributions that women across the state are making for the benefit of the whole community,” said Ms Firth.

“The diversity of experiences and commitments amongst the nominated women is truly impressive.

“All nominees should be incredibly proud of the contribution they make to NSW.

“Women across NSW are extremely grateful for the inspirational example these women provide to our communities”, Ms Firth said.

Premier Nathan Rees said the NSW Woman of the Year Award recognises the achievements of a group of exceptional, hard-working and dedicated women whose leadership and outstanding work benefits the entire community.

“Cheryl Koenig has displayed remarkable compassion, courage and commitment following her son’s brain injury in a tragic car accident,” Mr Rees said.

“Her story is an inspiration to all of us, delivering hope and strength to people with traumatic brain injury, their families and anyone who has experienced a tragic event.

“Not only has she cared for her son Jonathon for the past 11 years, she has tirelessly campaigned to raise awareness of brain injury by writing books and volunteering much of her free time to improving brain injury services.”