



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 4 March 2021

Local sectors join to celebrate International Women's Day

State and local government and the community services industry joined forces today to celebrate the achievements of their peers through the awarding of the 2021 Tasplan International Women's Day Awards for Excellence.

A highlight of the event was guest speaker Ms Grace Tame, Australian of the Year 2021. Grace shared her story of extraordinary courage; using her voice to push for legal reform and raise public awareness about the impacts of sexual violence, as well as being an advocate for all vulnerable groups in our community.

As guest speaker for the event Grace Tame said:

"It is so encouraging to see women recognised for the incredible work they do and always have been doing. International Women's Day is both a celebration and a chance to reflect on the progress we've made as well as the challenges we're yet to overcome in the pursuit of gender equality."

The winners of the Tasplan International Women's Day Awards for Excellence 2021 were announced as follows, across six cross-sector awards categories:

1. **Local Government: Inspirational Leader (Elected Member)** – Mayor Mary Knowles, Northern Midlands Council
2. **Local Government: Inspirational Leader (Officer)** – Karen Hampton, Community Services Manager, Devonport City Council
3. **State Service: Inspirational Leader** – Sophie Muller, COVID-19 Coordination Centre, Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management/Department of Premier and Cabinet
4. **State Service: Aspiring Leader** – Lisa Baker, Manager Information Management Support Services, Department of Education
5. **Community Services Industry: Inspirational Leader** – Jami Bladel, Chief Executive Officer, Kickstart Arts
6. **Community Services Industry: Aspiring Leader** – Sarai Lawson, Team Leader Mish Services, Launceston City Mission

LGAT CEO President Mayor Christina Holmdahl said the awards were designed to support the wonderful work women are doing across all sectors in Tasmania:

“The International Women’s Day campaign theme for 2021 is #ChoosetoChallenge. A challenged world is an alert world. We can choose to challenge and call out gender bias and inequity. We can choose to seek out and celebrate women's achievements. These awards are an excellent way to celebrate the achievements of Tasmanian women and we have some wonderful examples amongst our winners and nominees today.”

Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet Ms Jenny Gale noted the awards are a perfect example of how state and local government and the community services industry can work together to celebrate women and continue to improve gender equality:

“This Tasmania-specific forum is designed to recognise and encourage the achievements of Tasmanian women who are aspiring to create a better and more balanced working world.”

“Our partner organisations are committed to achieving gender equity, including supporting and recognising women in their leadership aspirations.

TasCOSS CEO Ms Adrienne Picone lauded the spirit of collaboration between local government, State Government and the community services industry:

“The event provides a fantastic opportunity for women across the state to connect with their peers and recognise the significant contributions of women to their sectors and the community.

“Women in the community services industry undertake a wide range of important roles and today is about celebrating these achievements.”

Local Government Professionals Australia Tasmania President Mr Gary Arnold said:

“The calibre of nominees has been outstanding with award winners demonstrating they had gone above and beyond their expected roles to make a significant contribution to their employer, their local community and the broader Tasmanian community.”

ENDS

Media Contacts:

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Interview Requests with Awards Winners:

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Attachments

Photographs — Supplied

Tasplan International Women's Day Awards for Excellence 2021 Winners

State Service Award Winners

Sophie Muller: Winner of the Tasplan International Women's Day Award for Excellence 2021 for inspirational leadership in the Tasmanian State Service

Sophie's policy advice and expertise as part of the State Government COVID-19 Coordination Centre have been instrumental in controlling COVID-19 infections in Tasmania and protecting the Tasmanian public, business and industry. Her strategic policy input into border controls and a range of public health measures have made an enormous contribution to Tasmania's achievements in responding to the COVID-19 threat. Sophie inspires those who work with her by always providing clear direction and purpose for her team.

Lisa Baker: Winner of the Tasplan International Women's Day Awards for Excellence 2021, for aspirational leadership in the Tasmanian State Service

Lisa is a leader in the Information Management space in the Department of Education. Currently her team provides support to government agencies requesting searches and disposal of records to assist in civil and redress evidence requests as a result of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Her approach has provided both support and leadership to other State Government agencies in dealing with sensitivities associated with Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Lisa's leadership is authentic, individualised and by example delivers what is achievable and the results required.

Community Services Industry Award Winners

Jami Bladel: Winner of the Tasplan International Women's Day Award for Excellence 2021 for inspirational leadership in the Community Services Industry

Jami Bladel set out to establish a new precinct for arts, health and wellbeing. She identified a site and with the support of her board, produced a working paper setting out a vision for St Johns Park, Kickstart Arts, the wider arts and health communities and the general public. Through her passion, determination, highly developed organisational skills, ability to inspire and lots of hard work, almost all of that vision is now achieved. Jami has been an inspiration to her board members, politicians including ministers and three premiers, senior bureaucrats in the Tasmanian State Service, employees, artists and other practitioners, community service industry partners, community participants and sponsors.

Sarai Lawson: Winner of the Tasplan International Women's Day Award for Excellence 2021 for aspirational leadership in the Community Services Industry

Sarai Lawson is known for her exceptional leadership skills and passion, and for helping young people aged between 13 and 25 engage with their community. Sarai completely redesigned Launceston City Mission's Mish Maker program, creating courses around design, making and selling as well as engaging more external facilitators to share their skills,

experience and knowledge. Sarai is a writer and disability advocate, mentoring several young women on the NDIS to increase their capacity for independence.

Local Government Award Winners

Mayor Knowles, Northern Midlands Council: Winner of the Tasplan International Women's Day Award for Excellence 2021 for inspirational leadership by a Local Government Elected Representative

Mary is a strong advocate for preventing violence against women, campaigning for a women's shelter to be located within the Northern Midlands. She is an LGAT representative on the Family and Sexual Violence Consultative Group and continues to raise awareness and advocate to end violence against women. Mary is an active member of the community, not just restricted to the Northern Midlands, and donates her time attending community events and meetings to ensure the community is being heard on a local, state and federal level.

Karen Hampton, Devonport Council: Winner of the Tasplan International Women's Day Award for Excellence 2021 for inspirational leadership by a Local Government Officer

Karen has provided outstanding leadership to guide Devonport Council's Community Services team in delivering events and services that resulted in substantial benefit to the community during COVID-19. Karen drove a revised funding approach with Elected Members to focus on smaller community events and social recovery actions to assist those members of the community who may have been vulnerable and struggling because of COVID-19. Karen balanced a performance driven approach with genuine empathy and concern for the community and in doing so, she inspired her team and provided them with challenging and rewarding work.