



2024 Orange electorate Local Woman of the Year

Member for Orange Philip Donato MP today, Thursday 22nd February, announced the recipient of the 2024 Local Woman of the Year Award - Mrs Paula Townsend of Orange.

"There are lots of people who have opinions about how to tackle big issues in our community, but there only a few people who are willing to roll up their sleeves and put plans into action - and even fewer still who are willing to sacrifice their time and effort for the betterment of community.

"Paula Townsend is an inspirational woman, and thoroughly deserving of this year's Local Woman of the Year Award.

"In 2007, following community concerns and frustrations regarding social issues affecting the neighbourhood of Bowen, Paula helped by establishing and managing the Bowen Community Technology Centre (CTC).

"As a former police officer, I have increased appreciation for community being an important, and in cases such as this, an effective element in the longer-term reduction of certain crime and anti-social behaviour.

"Paula designed the CTC to provide a safe and welcoming space for locals to access computers and other resources that would enhance learning skills, employment opportunities and social connections.

"Benefits of the CTC include life skills, peer support, typing and reading assistance - which also assisted in reducing the social problems and costs associated with crime, unemployment, poverty, health issues, and social dislocation.

"Paula has volunteered much of her time over the past 17 years to this community-based service and has relentlessly pursued grants to keep the service going.

"Paula has ensured the CTC doors are open to continuously provide this service to the local community, catering to the needs of both adults and children, maintaining a strong educational focus by encouraging all students to aspire to higher learning and support through one-on-one tuition.

"The CTC provides homework assistance for school children, helping improve their study habits, organisational skills, confidence and motivation.

"Paula's initiative has aligned with her vision, and the service she has lovingly nurtured has become the hub of Bowen; a community grown resource and support network which has been effective in improving the community and those who live in it, Mr Donato said.

Last year's Local Woman of the Year Amorette Zielinski joined the announcement to personally congratulate Mrs Townsend on this most deserved recognition.

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