

Law Council of Australia President's Medal 2014

In 2007 the Law Council of Australia (LCA) introduced the Presidents Medal; an award recognising an individual for their outstanding contribution to the legal profession.

On 28 November 2014, outgoing LCA President Michael Colbran QC presented the medal to former Territory barristers Hon Geoffrey Eames AM QC and Raelene Webb QC as the first ever joint winners.

Mr Eames and Ms Webb join Colin McDonald QC, who was awarded the medal in 2010 as the only recipients of the medal with connections to the Northern Territory.





Far Left: Geoffrey Eames AM QC and Raelene Webb QC.
Left: Geoffrey Eames AM QC, Michael Colbran QC and Raelene Webb QC.
Below: Michael Colbran QC and Raelene Webb QC.

Hon Geoffrey Eames AM QC

Mr Eames received the medal in recognition of his longstanding commitment to making a difference in the law and in particular in its application to the Australian Indigenous community.

Mr Eames joined the Victorian Bar in 1969 and was a foundation member of the Fitzroy and Nunawading Legal Services. He was the first lawyer to work with the Central Land Council in Alice Springs in 1975. He later worked for the North Australian Legal Aid Service and was a member of the Northern Territory Bar.

Mr Eames was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1989 and was Senior Counsel assisting the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody from 1988 - 1991. He was a judge of the Supreme Court of Victoria from 1992 – 2002 and judge of the Court of Appeal until his retirement in 2007. At that time he was appointed as an Acting Judge of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory.

More latterly he was Chief Justice of Nauru. In presenting Mr Eames with the medal Mr Colbran said, "Geoff has courageously, and at considerable personal cost, stood up publicly for the rule of law and in the public interest of Nauru ... A man of passion and commitment, a great lawyer, and an excellent role model for all lawyers, he is a very worthy recipient of this award."



Raelene Webb QC

Ms Webb was awarded the medal for her extraordinary leadership within the legal profession, contribution to constitutional and native title law issues and contribution to women in the law and reconciliation for all Australians.

Ms Webb is the currently the President of the Native Title Tribunal. She was a barrister at William Forster Chambers in the Northern Territory and was the President of the Northern Territory Bar Association from 2009 to 2012. Prior to joining the Bar Ms Webb was crown counsel in the NT Solicitor General's Chambers and participated in a number of significant cases in the High Court, many of them in the native title jurisdiction.

In presenting the medal to Ms Webb, Mr Colbran noted she was an exceptional lawyer and one

of the leading native title lawyers in Australia. Mr Colbran said, "Over two decades Ms Webb has remained one of very few women who has addressed the High Court on a regular basis from the central rostrum and is possibly the only woman to have done so continuously for this period."

Ms Webb was instrumental in the development of a bar reader's (training) course for the legal profession in the Territory during her term as President of the NT Bar Association. Her vision was realised in July 2014 when the first such course was undertaken by the Bar Association.

Law Society Northern Territory congratulates both Mr Eames and Ms Webb on their joint award of the President's Medal. ●