

**13 AUGUST 2026**

## **REGIONAL LEADERS RECOGNISED AS BUSINESS NSW MARKS 200 YEARS**

From keeping local journalism alive in Western NSW to transforming a historic flour mill into a tourism destination, 10 business and community leaders have been recognised for their contribution to regional NSW.

Presented as part of Business NSW's 200th anniversary, the Service to the Region Awards celebrate individuals making a lasting difference across the state.

Among this year's recipients is Western NSW's Lee O'Connor, who has spent more than three decades supporting her community through economic development, local journalism and regional advocacy.

As the owner of *The Coonamble Times* and founder of the Western Plains App, Ms O'Connor has helped keep regional stories alive, connect communities and champion the businesses and people that make regional NSW such a strong place to live and work.

Business NSW President Joseph Carrozzi AM said the recipients embodied the values that have long defined regional communities across NSW.

"Across NSW, there are people who quietly get on with the job of making their communities stronger," Mr Carrozzi said.

"They create opportunities, support local businesses and bring people together."

Business NSW CEO Daniel Hunter said: "As Business NSW marks 200 years, it is fitting to recognise people whose leadership, enterprise and community spirit have made a lasting contribution to the places they call home."

The 2026 Service to the Region Award recipients are:

- Ian Pedersen (Hunter)
- Bree Katsamangos (Mid North Coast)
- Frank Sammut (Central Coast)
- Lee O'Connor (Western NSW)

- Neil Druce (Riverina Murray)
- Pamela Brook (Northern Rivers)
- Terry Wetherall AM (Illawarra Shoalhaven)
- Richard Fox (Western Sydney)
- Steven Pearce AFSM GAICD (Sydney)
- Tim Coates (New England North West).

**About Business NSW**

Formerly the NSW Business Chamber, ***Business NSW*** is the peak policy and advocacy body which has been representing businesses in NSW since 1826. We represent almost 50,000 businesses.

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