Andrew Stoner MP
Deputy Premier of NSW
Minister for Trade and Investment
Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW ICT PIONEERS RECOGNISED AT PEARCEY AWARDS

NSW Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner has congratulated the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, Professor Mary O'Kane, on winning the prestigious 2014 Pearcey Medal.

Professor O'Kane received the medal at the official awards ceremony held in Sydney tonight. The medal recognises a distinguished lifetime of achievement and contribution to the development and growth of the ICT professions, research and industry.

In memory of Australia's great ICT pioneer Dr Trevor Pearcey, one Australian each year is honoured with the Pearcey Medal and two others are admitted to the Pearcey Hall of Fame, for their lifetime contribution to the Australian ICT sector.

"Professor O'Kane has been a leading figure for many years in artificial intelligence, incorporating her knowledge of ICT into important research and policy developments in Australia," Mr Stoner said.

"She was a pioneer in the field of automatic speech recognition and has continued to be a strong advocate for high tech ICT-based research and industry partnerships throughout her career in higher education and government".

O'Kane has held senior academic positions in several Australian universities, including Vice-Chancellor of the University of Adelaide from 1996-2001, and was appointed NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer in 2008.

Professor O'Kane was joined by two other New South Wales scientists, Dr Bob Frater and Peter Vogel who received the distinguished Pearcey Hall of Fame awards.

Dr Bob Frater is an eminent scientist and electrical engineer who has contributed significantly to the fields of radio, television and astronomy, working early in his career on the electronics for the Mills Cross Radiotelescope.

Dr Frater went on to be an academic in electrical engineering working on the country's second ever computer in the 1950s. He was appointed Head of CSIRO Radio Physics in 1981 where he was successful in gaining funding for the Australia Telescope in Narrabri. He was later Deputy Chief Executive of CSIRO and then a leading figure in Resmed.

Computer designer and electronics pioneer, Peter Vogel is famous in Australia for developing the world's first commercial sound sampling musical instrument, the Fairlight CMI. During the eighties the Fairlight CMI was used by recording superstars

such as Stevie Wonder, Kate Bush and Peter Gabriel and has been described as transforming the music, post-production and broadcast industries.

Vogel has also designed a wide range of consumer and industrial devices including 'Vitalcall', a personal medical emergency alarm which is still the market leader and continues to save lives.

"I congratulate all three winners on their outstanding contributions through ICT excellence to the state of NSW and indeed the country and beyond", Mr Stoner said.

The Pearcey Medal is Australia's most prestigious national annual award made to an individual in our national ICT industry. It provides recognition to someone who has demonstrated a distinguished lifetime of achievement and contribution to the development and growth of the ICT professions, research and industry.

The Pearcey Hall of Fame includes the Pearcey Medallists, and up to two individuals in any one year, who have made very significant lifetime contributions to Australia's ICT Research, Industry, or Professional development.

More information can be found at www.pearcey.org.au

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