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Outstanding Service Honoured At GLBT Community Awards

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ACON congratulates the winners (front) and all the nominees (standing) of Honour Awards 2011

Longstanding community contributors and regional NSW were the big winners at this year's Honour Awards with seven people and organisations from across NSW being recognised for their service to the GLBT community at a gala awards ceremony in Sydney last night.

Now in their fifth year, the Honour Awards is an annual event which recognises outstanding achievements within or contributions to NSW's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) community. The awards are also a gala fundraising event for ACON, NSW's and Australia's largest GLBT health and HIV/AIDS organisation.

The winners were selected from a diverse field of 24 finalists and were presented with their awards at a ceremony last night at the Sun Room at the Ivy in Sydney. The event, which kicked off Sydney's first ever Big Gay Weekend, was attended by over 200 people and raised over \$45,000 for ACON's vital work in the community.

Dubbo-based **Dave Sergeant** won the Community Hero Award for over 35 years of service to the GLBT community as founder and director of Country Network, Australia's oldest association for GLBT people living in regional and rural Australia.

The other winners were:

- **The Bookshop Darlinghurst** (Business Award). Through this iconic Sydney business, proprietor Les MacDonald has delivered over 30 years of service to the GLBT community as well as supporting countless GLBT charities and events.
- **Gail Hewison and Libby Silva** (Business Award). Through their work at The Feminist Bookshop, Gail and Libby have been a pioneering force in the lesbian and same-sex attracted women's community for over 30 years.
- **Bernie Green** (Health and Wellbeing Award). Tamworth-based Bernie is a dedicated health promoter, mentor, carer, fundraiser, volunteer and community leader in New

England and North West NSW with over 30 years of service to GLBT communities in regional NSW.

- **Tropical Fruits** (Community Organisation Award). This Lismore-based group has provided over 20 years of outstanding social and cultural development for the Northern Rivers GLBT community.

- **Mark Alsop** (Media/Arts/Entertainment Award). Mark is an award-winning DJ with over 25 years of community service to GLBT charities and community organisations.

ACON President Mark Orr congratulated the winners and all the finalists on their achievements and community service.

"Last's night's event was a truly inspirational and thoroughly entertaining evening and a great celebration of the dynamic spirit of our community," Mr Orr says.

"I'd like to thank all the people who submitted nominations as well as all our guests for coming along last night and supporting ACON, especially our guests of Honour Marcia Hines and Peter Morrissey.

"I'd also to thank our event partners 360 Management Group, Foxtel, Sydney Gay and Lesbian Business Association, Sydney Star Observer, GLYDE Health, Merivale and Heineken as well as all the people, businesses and organisations which donated items for our silent auction. Their generosity and support is greatly appreciated."

2010 Honour Awards - Winners

Community Hero Award - David Sergeant

Dave Sergeant has provided over 35 years of service to the GLBT community as founder and director of Country Network, Australia's oldest association for GLBT people living in regional and rural Australia. David married in 1961, before he knew he was gay. Fortunately, his wife is a very understanding woman and they are still living happily together after 50 years. In 1976, they moved from Sydney to Dubbo, where they still live. Together they developed Country Network to address the social isolation experienced by GLBT people living in regional and rural NSW. The organisation rapidly expanded to have a national focus and over 30 years has provided a range of vital social, cultural and networking opportunities for thousands of GLBT people throughout NSW and Australia.

Business Award - The Bookshop Darlinghurst

The Bookshop Darlinghurst is Australia's leading LGBTI specialist bookshop. It was co-founded in 1982 by Les McDonald and will celebrate its 30th birthday next year. It stocks an extremely comprehensive range of LGBTI interest books, magazines and DVDs at their Oxford St location and also makes them available online. The Bookshop has a proud history of supporting LGBTI community groups and organisations over the decades, and in the days before the internet, the shop was an extremely important information hub for Sydney's gay community. It is also proud to have supported local LGBTI writers over the decades and seen the range of titles available flourish.

Business Person Award - Gail Hewison and Libby Silva

Gail and Libby have both recently retired after nearly 30 years of running The Feminist Bookshop with their other sister Jane Waddy. During this time, the business became a renowned centre of information, resources and support for the LGBT community in Sydney and beyond. Through their work as community business leaders, Gail and Libby have been involved in supporting the LGBT community in many ways, acting as mentors for young lesbians and same sex attracted women, helping women with the process of coming out, running book groups, giving generous donations to community groups and causes, and sourcing books and information for organisations such as ACON, PFlag, The Gender Centre and more. Both Gail and Libby have received an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for services to community.

Media/Arts/Entertainment Award - Mark Alsop

Mark Alsop has been a DJ on the gay scene for over 25 years. He has won many awards going back to the 1980's and recently was recognised at The 80's are Back exhibition at the Powerhouse Museum, listed as a "pioneering DJ" on Wikipedia, and named as "one of the world's best remixers and deejays" by German website hotdiscomix.com. Mark's expertise has often been used by ARIA to help compile the Official Australian Club Chart, and he continues to judge for the ARIA Awards. While he has long been known on the overseas circuit party scene, he has also worked nearly every gay club in Sydney, past and present. He has volunteered his services on for charity events on countless occasions.

Health and Wellbeing Award - Bernie Green

Bernie Green is an inspirational health promoter, mentor, carer, fundraiser, volunteer and GLBT community leader in New England and North West. In his current capacity as a Health Education Officer for the Hunter New England Area Health Service, Bernie covers an extensive area of remote, small communities and often drives long distances to provide support and advice. He has a passion for improving the health and wellbeing of GLBT people and people with HIV in regional areas and has helped set up a range of support networks. Bernie has been an instigator of an AIDS memorial service each year at Gunnedah, speaks against homophobia in schools and provides phone and mail support and literature for those GLBT living in isolation.

Community Organisation Award - Tropical Fruits

Tropical Fruits has been supporting and creating social inclusion and community development for GLBT communities of the Northern Rivers for the past 23 years. Tropical Fruits is one of the longest running independent regional grassroots volunteer LGBT community groups in Australia. Throughout the year, Tropical Fruits holds five major events including its annual New Year's Eve Festival which is world-renowned and attracts thousands of visitors. This is accomplished through the dedication of its 500 volunteers and loving community. This year they developed their first strategic plan and are in the processes of purchasing a building for community activities. Tropical Fruits also actively and financially supports local GLBT community organisations and groups.