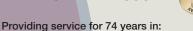
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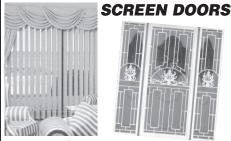


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Award for defender of city

By Anne Tarasov

LIVERPOOL City Council Young Citizen of the Year Natasha Lay says she's tired of western Sydney being thought of as a bad area.

Ms Lay, who's 19 and who lives in Cartwright, was presented with the award by Liverpool Australia Day Ambassador Wayne Scott Kermond for her work as a representative of the young people of the city.

"I've always been passionate about helping the Liverpool area and especially expanding the opportunities of young people who live here," Ms Lay said. "But before I joined the Liverpool Youth Council, I

knew very little about the services, groups and activities available."

It was in 2004 that Ms Lay joined the youth group, which was started by Liverpool Council. She's been chairperson since 2006.

'The Liverpool Youth Council has given me so many opportunities to get involved in what's going on in the community and learn about how local politics works," she said.

Ms Lay, who went to All Saints Catholic Senior College in Liverpool, is now in her second year at the University of Technology Sydney studying for a double degree - bachelor of arts in communication and bachelor of law.

'It's amazing how bad a reputation western Sydney has with most people who live in other areas," she said. "They just think there aren't any capable and talented people out her, and that's very offensive.

"My aim is to make young people realise they're capable of achieving a lot more than they think and that they have lots of potential.



Young spirit: University student Natasha Lay was declared the Liverpool City Council Young Citizen of the Year on **Picture: Elliott Housego**

"We organise various events for the young people in the area every year including the recent YOUTHink event which included workshops and seminars on important issues such as human rights, the environment, politics and many others to increase youth awareness of this issue."

In the swim at the right end

SWIMMER Zoe Diamond said that winning the Liverpool 2008 Australia Day Sports Award on Saturday was a humbling experience.

Zoe, who is 14 and who lives in Austral, thanked the man who nominated her – Liverpool Swim Club life member George Cunningham, who's a prominent and admired figure in swimming.

Zoe, 14, is a member of the Justin Rothwell Swim Academy, which is based at the Whitlam Leisure Centre.

Zoe couldn't accept the award herself because she was at a training camp with the Australian Institute of Sport in Thedbo.

Liverpool Council gave the club \$4000 for high-altitude training in Thredbo.

Zoe's younger sister, Kate, 10, accepted the award on her sister's behalf.

Zoe will represent NSW in March at the New Zealand age championships.

I am honoured and humbled to receive the award and I thank my family and George Cunningham," she said in the message read by Kate. "I also thank all my swim club members and coaches for their support and guidance."

Kare and the girls' brother – 12-year-old Zac Diamond – are also members of Justin Rothwell's academy.

Zoe said that her parents -Anne and Laurie – ĥad been her inspiration.

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