




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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ADJOURNMENT

Telstra Business Women's Awards

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (11.45 pm): Every year we see more and more vibrant Australian businesswomen pushing the boundaries and challenging the status quo. From police commissioners to young entrepreneurs, CEOs, professors and Navy officers, the Telstra Business Women's Awards have been championing brilliant businesswomen for more than two decades. Now in their 22nd year, the Telstra Business Women's Awards are Australia's longest running and most esteemed women's awards program in Australia. They recognise and reward the courage, leadership and creativity of brilliant businesswomen.

I was very pleased to nominate 10 amazing women from Central Queensland for the 2016 Telstra Business Women's Awards. I was even more pleased that two of the women I nominated won in their respective categories. Patrice Brown took out the 2016 Telstra Queensland Business Women's Entrepreneur Award. Patrice is a woman of many passions: a business and commercial property owner, cattle producer, mother of three, and advocate for the protection of environmental and cultural values and land rights. I am proud to call Patrice a friend and my former boss.

With qualifications in engineering, science and business, she is passionate about the future of regional Australia and the need to trust science in the race to protect the Great Barrier Reef. Patrice established CQG Consulting, which provides practical environmental planning, precision drone services and engineering professional advice to clients throughout Australia and South-East Asia in the tourism, mining, agriculture, development and industrial sectors. Patrice is also a director on the CQUniversity Council, the Gladstone Area Water Board, and a founding director of two start-ups. Northern Ventures is a company that supports Aboriginal groups to achieve economic independence and Fortitude Infrastructure Development is a company formed to deliver green technologies.

Inspector Virginia Nelson took out the 2016 Telstra Queensland Business Women's Public Sector and Academia Award. Inspector Nelson has been a police officer for more than 26 years, having joined the Queensland Police Service at 18. She has served in regional and metropolitan locations and has worked in front-line policing, prosecutions, the Bureau of Criminal Intelligence and the Office of the State Coroner. Now, as an inspector, she is in charge of a patrol group of more than 150 officers in the Capricornia police district. As a commissioned officer and senior leader, Virginia shapes strategic thinking in the organisation by inspiring a shared sense of purpose and direction for her patrol group. She builds organisational capability and ensures crime trends are identified and operational responses are delivered to the community.

Patrice and Virginia are brilliant, passionate and courageous women who are thriving in their chosen fields. Not only do they have the courage to challenge the status quo; they also demonstrate exceptional business acumen and strong leadership skills. I wish Virginia and Patrice all the very best of luck when they travel to Melbourne for the national awards judging, culminating in a glittering gala dinner on the night of Wednesday, 16 November 2016. Congratulations, Virginia and Patrice; we are all so very proud of you.