



## MEDIA RELEASE

6 October 2005

### **Australia's Most Customer Focused Politician receives CSIA Award The winner is... the Honourable Joe Hockey MP!**

International Customer Service Week Event  
3 – 7 October 2005

Australia's peak customer service association, the Customer Service Institute of Australia (CSIA) has presented the **Federal Minister for Human Services, the Hon. Joe Hockey MP** with the Australian Service Excellence Award for being **Australia's Most Customer Focused Member of Parliament** as part of International Customer Service Week, 3 – 7 October 2005.

The CSIA is asked the question: What level of service do Australians get from their elected representatives? The response from the public and government employees in Local, State and Federal government has been tremendous within nominees from all levels of government across Australia.

Nominees were judged against customer service criteria, including accessibility, responsiveness to constituents, consumer protection/advocacy, customer focused policy and legislation, and for Ministers, the quality of customer service provided by their department.

Presenting the Award CSIA Executive Director, Brett Whitford commended the Minister on his customer focus and pointed out how important striving for service excellence was in the Department of Human Service which directly affects so many Australians.

"Minister Hockey's Department is working hard under his direction to raise service standards. Millions of Australians have dealings with **Centrelink and Medicare Australia** each week and providing the leadership to keep improving service has been a key focus of the Minister."

"While this Award may appear to be just a bit of fun to celebrate International Customer Service Week, there is a serious side," says CSIA Executive Director, Brett Whitford.

"Australian government service providers and agencies have a massive impact on Australians and when these Public Service organisations get it wrong the impact can be devastating."

The Minister was delighted to receive the recognition and was quick to share the credit praising the staff in his Department:

"This is for all my agencies – including the Centrelink staff, the Medicare Australia staff and Child Support Agency staff there's 40,000 of them. I'm very proud of every one of them, what they do. We don't always get it right, but we try."

The CSIA hopes that by recognising those MPs delivering high standards of service to their constituents and by encouraging government departments to improve service standards in Australia, all parliamentarians will think about how they can do better.

A Highly Commended Award in Queensland was presented to Mayor Les Tyrell of Thuringowa City Council. The Mayor was nominated by staff because of the customer service achievements of the Council over recent years.

'There are International Standards that provide the framework for organisations enabling them to measure and address these issues – these have been available in Australia since 1999. It is great that Australian Governments are beginning to understand that service excellence is as important as sporting excellence, and is investing in fixing this hidden drain on national productivity," says Whitford.

The CSIA recognises excellence in customer service through the Australian Service Excellence Awards each year. Recent recipients include individuals and organisations such as ANZ, Transfield Services, AAMI, Pacific Internet, Westpac, Queensland Rail, Emirates and Fone Zone.

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#### **ABOUT CSIA**

The Customer Service Institute of Australia was established in 1997 to serve the needs of all Australians who work in customer service. Today, it is our nation's peak customer service body and secretariat for the International Council of Customer Service Organisations. ICSSO is an international collective of organisations promoting service excellence through the International Customer Service Standard certification program and the International Service Excellence Awards.

Our members include CEOs, business owners, government employees and customer service professionals. Corporate members include leading multi-nationals, SMEs and Government departments. High quality customer service is universally regarded as imperative for long-term

business success. We are driven by and committed to the development of people, systems and standards to improve customer service. The CSIA also manages the prestigious Australian Service Excellence Awards (since 2001).

Australia's only official national customer service awards were heralded by the Prime Minister, the Honourable John Howard MP, as: "Showcasing organisations and individuals that have demonstrated excellence in the realm of customer service" and playing "an important role in promoting the highest standards of professionalism and responsiveness within the Australian business community".

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