

OAM recipient Merle Thompson honoured for her service to the community

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Alanna Tomazin



OAM RECIPIENT: Merle Thompson is overwhelmed, honoured and excited to receive an OAM. Picture: ALANNA TOMAZIN.

Overwhelmed and honoured 74-year-old Merle Thompson said she couldn't believe she was a recipient of an Order of Australia (OAM) medal.

Ms Thompson's award came after her dedicated service to the community through a range of organisations including Polio NSW, Australian Federation of Graduate Women and Australian Plants Society NSW (APS NSW).

Ms Thompson said she spent from the age of 21 to the age of 55 working in the NSW Public Service in counselling and administrative positions but her OAM was for her non-paid work.

The three organisations were a major part of Ms Thompson's life after she left work.

"I am a polio survivor, I started with Polio NSW as a member myself, but I'm just not good as a member, I needed to be a contributor, so I was on the committee as vice president and then secretary," she said.

Ms Thompson has been part of the Australian Federation of Graduate Women for 15 of the last 18 years where she focuses on the well-being, health and education of women and girls.

She has also been a part of the APS NSW in group level from the 1970s then state level from 1980.

“I do all these things, despite having a disability and I think it impresses people,” she said.

Ms Thompson said she thought someone put her name forward because they respect the things she does.

“It’s an honour, also a recognition that people appreciate what you do, they think enough of what you do, their respect is the most important thing.

“I don’t believe in being a passenger, if you’re a member be involved,” she said.

Ms Thompson also said it had been a roller coaster and she felt wonderful that she was recognised for the things she’s passionate about.

“I had to keep quiet for 100 days, so when Australia Day came around I was very excited to tell everyone.”

Ms Thompson will attend a function at NSW Government in May where she will be presented with her OAM.

<https://www.lithgowmercury.com.au/story/5879905/proud-and-overwhelmed-lithgows-merle-thompson-honoured-with-oam/>