Challenger Institute of Technology chief executive officer Liz Harris has received a prestigious national award for outstanding public service.

Ms Harris, of Cottesloe, was among just three Western Australian public servants to receive a Public Service Medal in the 2014 Australia Day Honours List. The awards were announced on Australia Day.

Challenger Institute Governing Council chair Paddi Creevey said Ms Harris’ medal was testament to her strong and inspirational leadership of Challenger Institute, and a worthy acknowledgement of her commitment to the public training sector.

“Liz is responsible for leading Western Australia’s most diverse provider of vocational education and training and has brought to the role a breadth of experience, having worked in both the training and university sectors and in the international, national and state vocational education sectors,” Ms Creevey said.

“She has led Challenger to win a number of significant awards, among them two WA Premier’s Awards, the WA Large Training Provider of the Year Award and, most recently, the 2012 Australian Large Training Provider of the Year Award.

“Under Liz’s leadership, training delivery at Challenger Institute has expanded and diversified and the organisation now generates commercial revenue from large business contracts both in WA and internationally. In addition, the collective capability of her 1,000 staff has grown significantly because of her focus on continuous learning.”

A Western Australian Telstra Business Women’s Award winner in 2009, Ms Harris is an accomplished business and community leader. Her professional interests include building partnerships across educational, industry and community sectors, both within WA and internationally, to encourage learning and career development.

Recently she has spearheaded a corporate social responsibility program at Challenger Institute, which involves scholarships for disadvantaged students and the opportunity for teaching staff and students to undertake skills-enhancement and training programs in developing countries.

Ms Harris said she was honoured to receive recognition for her life-long passion for changing lives through education.

“I have been very fortunate in my working life to have built a career in a field that provides so many opportunities to unlock individual potential and see people change their lives,” she said.
Media Statement

“I am keen to share these experiences with others in the public service, and inspire them to achieve their leadership potential, to succeed and to make a difference.”

The awards in the Australian Honours System represent the highest level of recognition for outstanding achievement and service. They are announced by the Governor General of Australia on Australia Day each year.

ENDS

Note to editors:
Photograph attached – Liz Harris