

# Tribute to all women

BY KYLIE STEVENS

THERE was no shortage of girl power last week when Parramatta celebrated International Women's Day.

At Parramatta's Our Lady of Mercy College (OLMC), federal Senator Deborah O'Neill encouraged girls to be bold, back themselves and step forward.

"If you don't, a bloke will and chances are he is no more qualified than you," she told the girls.

At OLMC, every day feels like International Women's Day, according to head girl Dunya Vasic. "The way in which we are educated and exposed to a world of opportunities gives us hope, confidence and belief in our abilities - to the point that we can truly say that we feel the possibilities for us are endless," Dunya said.

Globally, only 47 per cent of women have an account at a financial institution. Less than 20 per cent of landholders are women, while just 23 per cent represent of national parliaments worldwide, according to OLMC principal Stephen Walsh.



**GIRL POWER:** Federal Senator Deborah O'Neill visited OLMC. "We still don't have gender equity. There are still many fields where women are under-represented and it's simply a waste of talent and capacity - we can do better!"

Stella Ersotelos was named Parramatta Local Woman of the Year for her voluntary work with St Ioannis Greek Orthodox Church, which spans more than 40 years.

Mrs Ersotelos has served 40 years as president of the parish communities ladies auxiliary. From preparing Christmas hampers and raising money to help the most

vulnerable to helping keep Greek culture alive, she has made a significant contribution to her community.

Joining Mrs Ersotelos at the NSW Women of the Year awards at Parliament House was Granville Local Woman of the Year Mona Yaghi.

The Granville Boys High School P&C president brought the school commu-

nity together to raise more than \$20,000 towards new airconditioning.

Tributes continued on Saturday when a Women in Sport function kicked off the Sydney racing carnival at Rosehill.

Western Sydney University (WSU) will host its Women of the West awards on Friday at Sydney Olympic Park.

Greystanes real estate agent Frances Sidarous is a finalist in the business category. She also studies at WSU, where she has been an exemplary volunteer 'buddy' in the law faculty. She's also involved with multiple community organisations and holds fundraisers to raise money and awareness for animals in need.