

**18 March 2016**

## **Disability inclusion for students wins national teaching award**

A teacher who is passionate about achieving student outcomes and creating a positive school climate through community engagement will receive a national award at the ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards (NEiTA) today at a ceremony in Melbourne.

Jarrold McGrath from The Woden School in Canberra will join 11 other outstanding educators from across Australia in receiving the top awards. Selected from more than 1100 nominations in 2015, the 12 national award recipients will be honoured for their inspiring and innovative contribution to teaching.

Mr McGrath has been teaching at the specialist school for three years and was nominated by the parents association for his service to students with intellectual and physical disabilities. He will receive an Innovation Award for fostering the development of students' social, vocational and academic skills through a strong connection of community and family. Mr McGrath is also the recipient of the Disability Inclusion Grant.

Mr McGrath has been instrumental in creating programs which help give students with disabilities employment skills and has established wider vocational opportunities by organising work experience placements and offering a work ready course.

He says it's about continuing their learning and engagement, and preparing these students for post school life.

"My networking skills with parents and providers establish relationships supporting the transition of students from the school community to the wider community and that transition can be daunting for people with disabilities and their families."

ASG NEiTA Chairman Allen Blewitt says Mr McGrath is a wonderful ambassador for the teaching profession who has earned much respect and praise from his school and parent community.

"Parents are really appreciative of Mr McGrath's passion for ensuring students with a disability have the same high school experiences that mainstream students take for granted. Mr McGrath also coordinates mentoring programs with mainstream schools where students are supported by their peers and also provides personal development and social/emotional learning achieved through supporting people with disabilities. I congratulate Mr McGrath on his achievements and continuing to put a sense of pride in young students through 'Wodenstock,' an annual music festival for young people with disabilities."

Mr McGrath says music helps to reinforce positive relationships.

"I believe their passion and enthusiasm for music unites them and promotes inclusion. Wodenstock combines many community engagement strategies as mainstream peers run activities and perform, ex-students and disability service providers attend, local businesses are involved and many parents attend. My students get the age appropriate experience of attending a music festival, young musicians get to perform for an engaged audience and diversity and inclusion are celebrated and promoted."



# Media Release

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Parents, grandparents, secondary student councils, school boards, councils, parent associations, committees of management and community organisations throughout Australia nominated these inspirational recipients.

Chief Executive Officer of ASG NEiTA, John Velegrinis says the ASG NEiTA recipients make supporting children's education possible and they understand the huge responsibility of educating tomorrow's leaders.

"I congratulate Mr McGrath along with the other NEiTA recipients. It is an absolute pleasure to have them as our ASG NEiTA ambassadors and they represent the true epitome of dedicated teachers who genuinely care about the educational success and wellbeing of their students. They are education heroes in their own right and I am deeply touched when the parents tell us their faith has been restored in the education system when they had started to lose hope.

"Instilling a passion for education and a desire to learn is truly one of the greatest gifts that a young person can receive, while education is one of the most important investments that parents, families and communities can make. This is why ASG NEiTA has thrived for the last 22 years thanks to the contribution of passionate teachers."

The national awards are divided into three categories: leadership and development, innovation and community engagement. For more information on the 12 national awardees, including profiles go to: <http://www.asg.com.au/neita>

Eleven national award recipients will receive \$5000 professional development grants with one teacher getting the incredible opportunity to go to Space Camp in the U.S. One teacher is also awarded a \$2000 Disability Inclusion Grant.

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**For more information, please contact:**

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**Editors notes:**

*The Australian Scholarships Group (ASG) is a member owned organisation, helping to create educational opportunities for children. ASG has been helping families and their children for more than 40 years. During this time, more than 520,000 children have been enrolled with ASG and more than \$2.3 billion in education benefits and scholarship payments returned to members.*

*The ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards (NEiTA) started in 1994 in Australia and 1996 in New Zealand. Since inception, more than 30,000 teachers have been nominated by the community in the two countries, with more than 1000 teachers receiving about \$182,000 in professional development grants, prizes and endowments.*

For more information visit: [www.asg.com.au](http://www.asg.com.au)

