

NEiTA MEDIA RELEASE



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Queensland teachers receive national awards

Three Queensland teachers will receive national awards in the ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards (NEiTA) today at a ceremony in Melbourne.

Judy Scotney from Edens Landing State School, Deb Derrick from Robina State High School, and Michael Harris from Kairi State School, join nine other outstanding educators from across Australia in receiving the top awards.

Selected from more than 1000 nominations in 2014, the 12 national award recipients will be honoured for their inspiring and innovative contribution to teaching.

Ms Judy Scotney is the principal of Edens Landing State School and was nominated by parents for her tireless work and devotion to her 760 students, their families and teachers. She will receive an ASG Leadership and Development Award, which is for achieving outstanding learning outcomes for students and showing outstanding leadership qualities as a teacher.

For Ms Scotney, it is not about where you start, but where you finish.

When she started in 2010, student NAPLAN results were lower than the state and national means, behavioural issues dominated teacher conversations and there was a belief that students could not achieve well because of the stigma attached to the Logan postcode, which has a high percentage of low income families from different nationalities.

Now the school's strong learning ethos has earned it accolades with the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority who have cited Edens Landing as one of the most improved schools in Queensland.

ASG Chairman Allen Blewitt says Ms Scotney's commitment is commendable.

"It is truly inspirational when you have a leader and educator like Ms Scotney, who is able to transform a negative culture and attitude within a school, and reverse the psychology to improve student outcomes. I congratulate Ms Scotney for successfully inspiring others, allowing staff opportunities to innovate and collaborate and eliminate barriers to learning. This sort of approach adds to the quality of education that children can access in schools and is a credit to the value-add our ASG NEiTA teachers bring to education."

Ms Deb Derrick from Robina High School was nominated by the school's Parent Association and will receive an ASG NEiTA Innovation Award, incorporating the arts into a boys 'at risk' program. This award is for introducing new methods or ideas to create positive change in the school's programs, and in students' thinking and learning processes.

In 2006, Ms Derrick helped develop the League for Life (LFL) Program for male students who are disengaged from their classroom learning and struggle to meet the minimum standards in literacy, numeracy and curriculum. Based on boys' education philosophies, the program has helped more than 600 students, which covers welfare, local community involvement and a leadership and mentoring component across four subject areas. The LFL Program, which also utilises interest in sport and the arts, is a very important component to challenge stereotypes associated with boys and the arts.

Mr Michael Harris from Kairi State School was nominated by parents for his inspiring teaching and unwavering commitment to their children's education. He will also receive an ASG NEiTA Innovation Award.

Mr Harris' teaching techniques are based on designing and building resources for students to help them prepare for their futures, cater for learning difficulties and making an imagined, virtual and invisible world observable. His innovative ideas include building a bicycle electricity generator, a digital radio station, a homework folder scanner and an attendance recorder to assist, reward and boost student attendance and the return of homework on a daily basis.

Mr Blewitt says he is impressed by the level of creativity, flair and skill demonstrated by Mr Harris and Ms Derrick.

"These are specialist educators who understand that a meaningful and relevant education has a fundamental role for students' personal and social development. Being able to also adapt their teaching strategies based on how students are engaging and learning is a powerful and effective tool that is ably deployed by Mr Harris and Ms Derrick in their classrooms."

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 he is humbled by the teaching calibre and the depth of experience of the award recipients.

"I congratulate Ms Scotney, Ms Derrick and Mr Harris along with the other NEiTA recipients. Their dedication, leadership and initiative is a true reflection of what NEiTA represents, celebrating quality educators in Australia. There is compelling evidence linking teacher quality to student achievement, and accomplished teachers demonstrate inspiration and enthusiasm for teaching and student learning. This is why NEiTA has thrived for the last 21 years, because the community thinks these teachers deserve recognition.

"All of our national award recipients are passionate about the need for greater quality pre-service teaching programs and they are teachers who also continually strive to better themselves, pushing the status quo and learning and adapting with their students."

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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