

Australia's most outstanding educators revealed – ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards

3 April 2020, Melbourne: Twelve of Australia's most outstanding early childhood, primary and secondary educators have been recognised in the ASG-supported National Excellence in Teaching Awards (NEiTA).

These talented committed and caring teachers all demonstrate the excellent personal qualities, skills and passion required of educators in a fast-changing uncertain world.

Winner	School	Category
Katrin Cornell	Lindfield Learning Village, Lindfield	Early Childhood
Blake Stewart	St Luke's Preschool, Dapto	Early Childhood
Lucy Nilsson	Spring Road Community Kindy, Kalamunda	Early Childhood
Melinda Golinski	Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School, Bunbury	Early Childhood
Kylie Chatto	All Saints' College, Bull Creek	Primary
Rebecca Lambrose	Rochedale South State School, Rochedale South	Primary
Bek Duyckers	Perth College, Mount Lawley	Primary
James Kristof	Cambridge Gardens Public School, Cambridge Gardens	Primary
Geoff McNamara	Academy of Future Skills ACT Education Directorate, Stirling	Secondary
Heather Fraser	Pimlico State High School, Pimlico	Secondary
Lainie Shimell	The Ponds High School, The Ponds	Secondary
Sarah Eve	Perth Modern High School, Subiaco	Secondary

NEiTA Chairman Allen Blewitt says this year's National Excellence in Teaching Awards winners are outstanding educational role models. "Each year, I am honoured to see the great work of many teachers through NEiTA. These teachers are leaders and innovators in the classroom and in the

teaching profession. I know they are already rising to the challenge of today’s difficult environment as they continue to change lives through their teaching and by their good example.”

ASG CEO, Ross Higgins, said the 2019/20 National Excellence in Teaching Awards winners are an inspirational group who make students want to learn. Higgins added that a NEiTA nomination is proof that members of the school community acknowledge the contribution of a teacher and value it. “The current climate of uncertainty highlights how valuable teachers are and the critical role they play, especially when students are feeling stressed or anxious.”

“I congratulate all the NEiTA recipients. They represent all the dedicated teachers across Australia who genuinely care about the educational success and wellbeing of their students. They are education heroes in their own right,” Higgins said.

NEiTA Chairman Blewitt remarked that: “It is NEiTA’s 25th anniversary, and it’s wonderful that parents, in particular, when nominating a teacher are recognising and applauding inspirational educators who are making an outstanding contribution to their children and to their community. And, it is wonderful that ASG, as an organisation advocating on behalf of parents, has long supported these Awards.”

NEiTA is the only nation-wide teaching award where nominations are community-based, predominantly by parents and school communities.

Winner	Bio
Katrin Cornell	<p>Katrin Cornell established programs at Lindfield Learning Village based on an innovative model where students are taught by stage not age.</p> <p>Teachers co-teach in open learning spaces and there is no bell to announce the end of a class.</p>

	<p>Katrin’s aim is to make school the most joyous part of a student’s day and aims to build wonder and curiosity in learners, so they love coming to school. She also motivates and inspires her colleagues to be expert educators who put the needs of their students first.</p> <p>To promote leadership, collegiality and educational growth among teachers, Katrin established a mentoring program at Lindfield Public School and implemented a range of whole-school wellbeing programs.</p>
<p>Blake Stewart</p>	<p>Blake Stewart develops individual learning plans and goals for his students, in collaboration with the child, the child’s family and allied health professionals including occupational therapists and psychologists.</p> <p>As St Luke’s lead educator for the Early Learning STEM Australia (ELSA) Pilot Program, Blake works alongside his colleagues, community and other preschools to embed STEM concepts into everyday practice.</p> <p>As a leading advocate for the presence and support of men in early childhood education, Blake established a networking group which actively encourages men to consider opportunities in the early childhood education sector.</p> <p>Local TAFE and universities also seek Blake out to mentor or supervise pre-service male educators, so they can have a positive experience in the early stages of their career.</p>
<p>Lucy Nilsson</p>	<p>Lucy Nilsson believes her job is to make sure children feel happy and safe during their introduction to schooling.</p> <p>For Lucy, it’s essential that young children have a sense of belonging, feel safe to take risks with their learning and do not feel the pressure of data-driven expectations.</p> <p>Lucy believes that the most innovative teaching strategy of our time is the provision of play-based learning for young children. Access to engaging, age-appropriate learning experiences create confident, enthusiastic, lifelong learners who are equipped to tackle the 21st century.</p>

<p>Melinda Golinski</p>	<p>Melinda Golinski is convinced it's the individuality of her students that fuels her commitment to be the best educator she can be.</p> <p>Melinda has developed a professional learning program called STEM Leaders which develops teacher self-efficacy.</p> <p>The program, which has been supporting female teachers from government, Catholic and independent schools across the Bunbury region for the past three years, demystifies STEM and helps teachers learn about different types of inquiry-based pedagogies.</p> <p>Melinda also coordinates a yearly STEM conference which allows teachers to share their experiences about the implementation of successful programs with other educators.</p>
<p>Kylie Chatto</p>	<p>Kylie Chatto believes it is an exciting time in education as we move away from more traditional styles and concepts of what it means to teach and learn.</p> <p>To respect the development of her students as individual agents of their learning, she sees her role as a facilitator, networker, mentor, guide and co-learner, and as someone who can support students to develop their own learning.</p> <p>She has helped her students start their own small business using a startup of \$2. Money raised from this entrepreneurial venture was donated to maintain an art program for the residents of a local disability services (Nulsen's Disability Services).</p> <p>Kylie has also helped implement a model of project based/inquiry learning that involves collapsing the timetable for three days to allow students to work seamlessly on one project.</p>

Winner	Bio
Rebecca Lambrose	<p>Rebecca Lambrose has created a learning environment where students of all abilities work together, support each other and celebrate each other's successes.</p> <p>Rebecca's 'Oh Snap' system allows students to request a 'selfie' of their work to show their family or post on an online blog when they reach a goal or are proud of their progress.</p> <p>Her lunchtime 'Friendship Club' helps students to develop social skills, improve self-regulation and feel valued. The initiative has significantly improved her students' communication skills and self-regulation during times of conflict.</p> <p>Rebecca's students also love 'Lunch with Mrs L', which allows Rebecca to meet with students individually and check-in on all aspects of their school life.</p>
Bek Duyckers	<p>Bek Duyckers played a key role establishing the Imaginarium initiative at Perth College, which supports the holistic development of gifted girls in Western Australia.</p> <p>Through the Imaginarium initiative, Bek supports exceptional students, who are naturally creative thinkers and learners, but struggle with learning difficulties and disabilities which are often overlooked or misdiagnosed.</p> <p>The flexible nature of the Imaginarium program fosters and supports the natural curiosity of gifted girls and allows them to delve deep into topics and follow their own path.</p>
James Kristof	<p>James Kristof believes gaining a deep understanding of every student, their background and mental health is the first step to figuring out what that student needs in order to succeed.</p>

	<p>James leads by example and co-oversees the Kitchen Gardens program, an initiative which gives students with learning and mental health needs access to a positive, safe, calm and active environment to learn and self-regulate their behaviour.</p> <p>James also headed-up the Story Trader program at Cambridge Gardens Public School, which helps students engage in critical and creative thinking activities, such as solving a series of ongoing mysteries around the school. Participation in the program has increased student engagement and decreased the incidence of negative behaviour in classrooms.</p>
Geoff McNamara	<p>For the past decade, Geoff McNamara has been trying to dispel the misconception among many students, that they can't become a scientist because they are not smart enough.</p> <p>His efforts have centered around breaking down barriers between young students and scientists and engineers.</p> <p>Geoff's program, Science Mentors ACT, tailors individual partnerships and learning programs for ACT students according to their interest and ability. Under the guidance of specialists, students learn to design, perform and report on their own research questions (the program currently supports the ideas of 54 students).</p> <p>Geoff has also established the McNamara-Saunders Astronomical Teaching Telescope (MRATT), a professional-grade teaching facility designed specifically for students, which allows them to calculate the speed of light and the evolution of galaxies.</p>
Heather Fraser	<p>Heather Fraser believes great educators must have insatiable desire to accumulate new knowledge and inspire students.</p> <p>As President of the English Teacher's Association of Queensland (Townsville Branch), Heather facilitates learning for her fellow teachers by organising professional development workshops for other English educators.</p>

	<p>To succeed as a teacher, Heather believes educators should never stop exploring and learning, at all times stay current and connected, attend professional development workshops and take every opportunity to stretch themselves.</p>
Lainie Shimell	<p>Lainie Shimell is passionate about inclusive education. Her aim is to provide students with enough support to achieve their goals while allowing them the flexibility to improve their confidence and sense of self-efficacy.</p> <p>In an effort to support her students she has modified classrooms to ensure their safety, developed interactive booklets and worksheets that allow students to take control of their own learning, trained students and educators to use programs such as Natural Reader to access classwork, textbooks and novels, and initiated the use of interactive PDFs with sound files to enable the students to complete assessment tasks.</p> <p>Lainie believes the adoption of research-based techniques and best practice delivery methods are essential for all students, including those with special needs, to reach their potential.</p>
Sarah Eve	<p>Sarah Eve's love of teaching is driven by the joy that visual arts brings to the lives of her students.</p> <p>The secondary teacher is passionate about creating immersive learning opportunities to provide real-world experiences to her students.</p> <p>She recently changed the disengaged attitude of a class of Year 10 boys through the use of kinesthetic activities based on the group's collective love of cars and bikes while challenging them to understand new concepts.</p>

The NEiTA selection process is rigorous, including a comprehensive nomination outline, a written paper and video presentation by the nominated teacher. Parents, grandparents, secondary

student councils, school boards, parent associations, committees of management and community organisations throughout Australia nominated over 1,700 teachers of whom the 12 recipients were selected to receive the awards for 2019/20. The recipients each receive a \$5,000 professional development grant.

Since their inception in 1994, the NEiTA Foundation has contributed more than \$1 million in professional development grants to outstanding teachers in Australia and New Zealand.

The national Award winners go through multiple stages of judging with recipients selected by a panel of industry-experienced judges including NEiTA Foundation Chairman Allen Blewitt and Manager of Policy, Advocacy and Stakeholder Relations at ASG David Michell.

Media contact

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Editor's 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 45 years. During this time, more than 557,000 children have been enrolled with ASG and more than \$3.35 billion in education benefits and scholarship payments returned to members.

ASG offers a range of education savings and investment products, which are designed to provide families with a tax-effective means of meeting future education costs.



MEDIA RELEASE

The ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards (NEiTA) started in 1994 in Australia and 1996 in New Zealand. Since inception, more than 40,000 teachers have been nominated by the community in the two countries. More than 1,050 teachers have received \$1,000,000 in professional development grants, prizes and endowments.

For more information visit: <http://www.asg.com.au/neita>