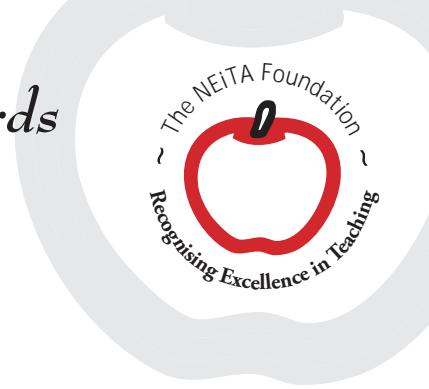


# 2007 National Excellence In Teaching Awards

## State and Territory Teaching Excellence Award Recipient



## Marilyn Gardner

Diploma of Primary Teaching  
Mossgiel Park Primary School, Endeavour Hills, Victoria  
Nominated by: School parent

Position: Physical Education Teacher • Level taught: Specialist Primary • School type: Government • Town: Endeavour Hills • Category: Primary • State: VIC

### Giving all students a sporting chance

For 10 years Marilyn Gardner has inspired and encouraged the students of Mossgiel Park Primary through her role as the school's physical education teacher. During that time, she has coached and mentored many athletes and swimmers to State Championship level, and encouraged a sense of teamwork and inclusion in her classes and after-hours sports programs.

Marilyn uses sports-based programs to innovatively encourage the wellbeing and self-esteem of the students. When the school had a problem with students arriving late, Marilyn established an early-morning fitness club. Student participation in the club has led to a huge reduction in the number of children arriving late to school.

Marilyn also provides leadership to other teachers through her role as president and secretary of the Endeavour Hills Primary Schools' Sports Association.

### Insight

Q: In your opinion, what makes a good teacher?

A: A good teacher strives to offer a varied program that provides opportunities for success and enjoyment for all students in a supportive and caring environment.

Q: How do you maintain your enthusiasm for teaching?

A: The children make every day interesting. Sharing their achievements and receiving feedback as they challenge themselves with a new task, or improve their skills in a sport they enjoy, keeps me enthusiastic.

Q: In hindsight, what do you wish your training provided you with more of?

A: More in-school experiences. Teachers possess a wealth of skills, experience and innovative ideas that would benefit students greatly by working with them for longer.

Q: What is the most difficult aspect of teaching today?

A: Delivering a program that meets the needs of all students who have different abilities and come from diverse cultures. Providing the extra programs required means difficulty in balancing home and school time.

Q: What is your greatest challenge as a teacher?

A: There is never enough time in the day to be an administrator, teacher, organiser, friend, advisor and an extra parent.

Q: How has teaching changed over the years?

A: Increased responsibilities, accountability and risk-management, and the introduction of new technology. For Physical Education, there is a greater need to develop children's fitness because of the importance it will play in their future.

Q: What is the single most important thing you, as a teacher, can do to connect with individual students?

A: It is hard to pin-point one thing as I feel it encompasses many things – being a good listener, being observant and compassionate, and having a genuine interest in individual students' circumstances.

Q: If you were the Minister for Education, Science and Training for a week, what would you try to change?

A: Provide funding so all students can attend after-school programs to keep them active. Many children miss out on after-school sport as their parents work.

Q: What keeps you awake at night?

A: Thinking about whether the activities I am running at school are engaging for all students. I also run through the organisational aspects of various school and district programs.

Q: If your students could describe you in three words, what would they say?

A: Happy, kind and fun.

#### Contact Details:

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