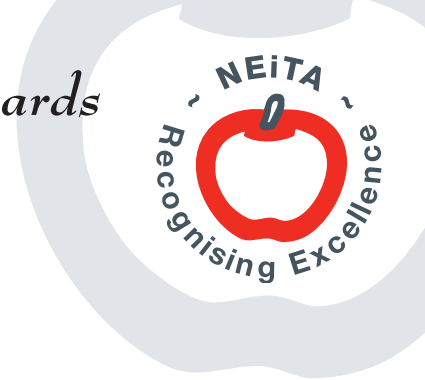


# NEiTA 2009 ASG Inspirational Teaching Awards

## State and Territory Award Recipient



## Debra Harrison

Bachelor of Education (Visual Art)  
**Elanora State High School**, Elanora, Queensland  
Nominated by: Parents and Citizens' Association

*Position: Head of Department (Arts) • Category: Secondary • Level taught: Years 8-12, Visual Art • Years teaching: 22 years • Years at this school/centre: 15 years • School type: Government • Town/Suburb: Elanora • State: Queensland • Postcode: 4221*

### Why teaching?

At the end of the 1970s, teaching provided me with a way to express my vision of an egalitarian world - a little naive perhaps, yet at the end of the first decade of a new century I still can't find a better reason for continuing to work with young minds.

Each individual is a source of growth for our society and each should be recognised for his/her contribution to the creative potential of the whole. My job is to ensure each student feels their contribution is valued, respected and recognised. My love of art began this journey and continues to inspire me today.

### Inspiring a wide range of artistic pursuits

As Head of the Department of Arts at Elanora State High School for the past 15 years, Debra Harrison has helped to create a vibrant art community within the school. Teachers, students and past students work together to motivate and stimulate each other in a range of artistic pursuits including Dance, Drama, Music, Photography and Visual Arts.

Debra devotes a huge amount of her personal time to running after school-hours' programs for her students. Every week during term, she runs an after-school Visual Arts Program that helps to introduce aspiring artists to the concept of a shared studio space and familiarise them with working cooperatively. Debra believes the ability to network with other artists is vital for anyone hoping to establish a professional Arts career. She promotes teamwork and cooperation by offering rewards such as a day at the Brisbane Show. Her after-school program has proven so popular that she now runs similar workshops during the school holidays.

Debra also runs full-day film-making workshops on four Sundays every term. She invites guest lecturers from the Film Making Department at Bond University to her classes on a regular basis. This link with the University can lead to scholarship programs and other benefits for her students. In addition, Debra contributes her personal time to host an annual two-day photography workshop in which industry professionals visit the school to explain the latest techniques and equipment to both students and teachers.

Not content with her busy schedule as Head of Department, Debra is also the Coordinator of both the School Instrumental Program, and School Facilities. Her responsibilities include maintaining and improving school grounds and buildings and writing submissions for government funding.

Debra organises many professional development sessions for other Arts' educators through her role as convenor of the Gold Coast Art Teacher's Cluster and Panel Chair for Visual Arts on the Gold Coast. She gives her passion, her time and her love to her work and is truly an inspirational teacher.

Debra's support for her students continues after they leave school. She encourages her staff to support students applying for scholarships, preparing for auditions, submitting portfolios or planning exhibitions. She regularly invites past students back to school to help her inspire, in her current pupils, a lifelong love of the arts.

#### Contact details:

Principal: Ms Fran Jones  
Phone: 07 5533 9299

Teacher: Debra Harrison  
Phone: 075533 9299  
Email: dharr38@eq.edu.au

#### For further information, please contact:

Janet Thomas, Public Relations, ASG on behalf of the NEiTA Foundation.  
Telephone: (03) 9276 7758 Mobile: 0402 837 758 Email: publicrelations@asg.com.au

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