

NEiTA 2009 ASG Inspirational Teaching Awards

State and Territory Award Recipient



Stephen Fresta

Certificate of Teaching, Bachelor of Applied Science (Physics)
Millaa Millaa State School, Millaa Millaa, Queensland
Nominated by: Parents and Citizens' Association

Position: Teaching Principal • Category: Primary • Level taught: Years 5, 6 and 7 • Years teaching: 34 years • Years at this school: 34 years • School type: Government • Town/Suburb: Millaa Millaa • State: Queensland • Postcode: 4886

Why teaching?

Teaching was not my first preference, but my family was poor so I accepted a scholarship as a two-year trained teacher in order to finance my tertiary education.

Within weeks of starting my career, it became obvious that I was able to relate well with students of all ages in a classroom environment and that teaching was my calling.

Creating a happy and safe learning environment

When Stephen Fresta came to Millaa Millaa Primary School three years ago as teaching principal, the school had an unenviable reputation in and within the local community. Poor discipline and a lack of respect were serious issues among the students. At the time, approximately 50 per cent of the pupils were either in targeted or intensive behaviour management systems. Since taking over as principal, Stephen has changed the culture of the school so that it is now 'a beacon of community pride'.

Stephen believes in finding and encouraging the positives in each child. He has a talent for understanding each student's particular situation and relating to it. While encouraging hard work, Stephen is also quick to offer praise and attempt to bring out a child's individual talents. Classroom projects are tailored to individuals' abilities giving every child the chance to succeed and gain further encouragement.

Stephen is actively involved in integrating the school into the wider community. He initiated and runs the school's flea market days, which not only provide much needed funds, but also have become a wonderful community meeting event. A recent fancy dress night organised by Stephen was attended by an estimated 20 per cent of the town. Back to School Day is another popular event where Stephen invites former students to come and speak at the school. This provides a great deal of historical and vocational information for current pupils. Annual school camps are also well attended by students and parents, and create learning experiences for child and adult alike.

Links have also been forged by Stephen between the school and other educational institutions, most notably with James Cook University which has agreed to provide academic and professional assistance when required. It is little wonder the town is proud of both its small local school and its principal.

Contact details:

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For further information, please contact:

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