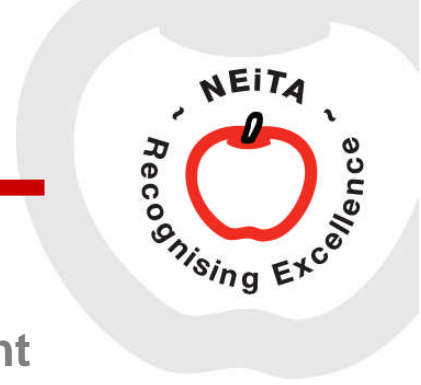


NEiTA MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL: 12 noon, Friday, 11 June 2010



Australia's Leading Teachers In The Spotlight

Today NEiTA (National Excellence in Teaching Awards), in partnership with the Australian Scholarships Group (ASG), will honour 10 of Australia's leading teachers at the NEiTA 2009 ASG National Teaching Awards ceremony held at the Windsor Hotel, Melbourne.

NEiTA's Chairman Mr Terry O'Connell said this year's national award recipients embody the theme *Great Teachers Lead the Way* and are an exemplary group of education professionals who are leaders in their education settings and local communities.

"The national award recipients this year display outstanding leadership qualities, including the important attributes of passion and dedication, and an admirable commitment to their profession and their students.

"NEiTA is Australia's only national, independent community-centred teaching awards program, and today these deserving representatives of teaching excellence come from across the broad education spectrum covering early childhood, primary and secondary education," Mr O'Connell said.

The NEiTA 2009 ASG National Teaching Awards will be presented to the teachers in three categories; leadership, innovation, and community engagement. (A detailed list of National Award recipients, including their profiles, is available from www.neita.com.au.)

The teachers to be presented with a NEiTA 2009 ASG National Teaching Award in the Leadership category are:

- **Bree Harvey formerly from Callaghan College, Wallsend Campus, Wallsend, New South Wales, now teaching at Hunter School of Performing Arts, Broadmeadow, New South Wales**
Bree is a committed educator who has developed programs in Aboriginal education, technology, literacy, middle years education, and gifted and talented education. Bree is recognised as a leader in middle years education. She has led many professional development sessions on the topic, and was the team leader of the *Tuggerah Lakes Learning Community Middle Years Action Research Project*.
- **Vicki Treble from Balgowlah North Primary School, North Balgowlah, New South Wales**
Vicki has proven to be an inspiring and dynamic educator. Her vision and enthusiasm for the school has brought out the best in both teachers and students. Vicki believes in lifelong learning and she actively encourages teachers to gain professional development across all areas of the education spectrum.
- **Kristy Thomson from Pittsworth State High School, Pittsworth, Queensland**
As Head of the Languages Department, Kristy demonstrates an infectious love of the English language that has inspired her many students. Kristy also tries to illuminate the possibilities offered by further education and university as a means of encouraging a love of learning among her students.

The teachers to be presented with a NEiTA 2009 ASG National Teaching Award in the Innovation category are:

- **Merrick Brewer from Chairo Christian School, Drouin, Victoria**
Merrick believes that each student's passions and interests hold the key to their learning potential. He keeps his teaching methods relevant by tapping into the passions of each individual student. His aim is to develop self-directed learners, and all learning styles are encouraged. Students are allowed to develop in their own manner, whether they be visual learners, bodily tactile or musical performance learners. Thematic studies and preferred pathways are also employed to bring out the best in each student.
- **Jane McQueen from Karama Primary School, Karama, Northern Territory**
Jane has not only been instrumental in implementing the Accelerated Literacy program, but also in increasing the self-esteem and educational horizons for many students. Through the Accelerated Literacy program, Jane incorporates a range of experiences for educators both within and outside her school, whether they are Indigenous assistant teachers, principals, administration officers, school coordinators or class teachers. She models techniques through joint lesson planning, team lessons, lesson observation, reflective video analysis of lessons, and data interpretation. In addition, Jane also offers a support service to several remote Indigenous Accelerated Literacy schools.

- **Stephen Measday from Keithcot Farm Primary School, Wynn Vale, South Australia**
As principal, Stephen's main aim was to reinvigorate the students and school community of Keithcot Farm Primary. He initiated the use of new learning technologies including interactive whiteboards, robotics, media studies labs, video linking and a range of technology tools used by students across the school. To encourage student engagement, Stephen made sure that the school's curriculum was relevant and appropriate to the everyday lives of students.

The teachers to be presented with a NEiTA 2009 ASG National Teaching Award in the Community Engagement category are:

- **Fiona Farren from South Bunbury Primary School, Bunbury, Western Australia**
Fiona has dedicated herself to assisting all parties to work together to improve a child's early education outcomes. She has developed the Linking Education and Families (LEAF) program. The program aims to assist each child in the transition to school, as well as raising parental awareness of the importance of the early years of learning.
- **Vicki Fortescue from Jervis Bay Preschool (Jervis Bay P-6), Australian Capital Territory**
As preschool coordinator and head teacher, Vicki works hard to ensure a harmonious learning environment for this diverse range of children. Vicki works collaboratively with the children and parents to structure individual learning plans for each preschooler. She has been instrumental in developing and maintaining the Booderee Junior Ranger Program, which is run in partnership with the nearby Booderee National Park to teach the preschoolers environmental and cultural awareness, and to learn about local flora, fauna, and cultural history.
- **Jane Hayward from Strathewen Primary School, Wattle Glen, Victoria**
Immediately after the Black Saturday bush fires in Victoria, in addition to classroom teaching and the leadership aspects of her role, Jane organised counselling, ensured that aid supplies were distributed to families in need, and coordinated volunteers. In the midst of all the trauma caused by the bushfires, Jane has helped to position Strathewen Primary as a stable and important place in the lives of students and their families. Jane has involved parents and members of the community in activities at the school, such as gardening, filmmaking, environmental science, chess, craft and music. In a time of great hardship for the local community, Jane has helped establish her school as a beacon of hope for the future.
- **Paul Fuller formerly from Orange Grove Primary School, Orange Grove, Western Australia, now teaching at Landsdale Primary School, Landsdale, Western Australia**
Paul believes in empowering his students and his community to develop their own voices in the world of 21st century communication - voices that can achieve remarkable social, environmental, and educational outcomes. The flagship project for Paul and his students is *Podkids Australia*, the most successful school-based podcast in the country. The *Podkids Australia* podcast provides an authentic worldwide audience for the students' writing and has subscribers in more than 50 countries. The students' work has been downloaded more than 60,000 times. Paul also holds regular parent and community workshops for anyone wishing to develop further technological skills, as well as mentoring other teachers in how they can use the latest technologies.

NEiTA is a pioneer in teaching awards and has worked in partnership with ASG and communities across Australia to help raise the profile and recognition of teaching.

Special keynote speaker at this year's award presentation is Professor John Loughran, Acting Dean of the Faculty of Education, Monash University. He is a highly-respected voice in education both in Australia and internationally, and the author and editor of a number of books, articles, and academic papers.

His most recently published book, *What Expert Teachers do: Teachers' professional knowledge for classroom practice* explores how teachers enhance student learning, and how they manage the dilemmas and tensions inherent in working with a classroom full of different students.

Professor Loughran said his long-held interest in teacher education began early in his career when he was a secondary school teacher. Over the years, his research work has led to his many professional collaborations with teachers and researchers both nationally and internationally.

"Teaching is a demanding and complex profession. Excellent teachers engage their students in ways that create a real 'need to know', and develop in them a desire to become active learners," Professor Loughran said.

Mr O'Connell said the findings from Professor Loughran's important research work are testament to the complexities of teaching and the many admirable attributes of an excellent teacher, one of which is leadership.

"Teachers call on their leadership qualities every day as they provide guidance, inspiration, support and encouragement to students, families, and colleagues, and as they dedicate themselves to building community connections and exchange," Mr O'Connell said.

It is with great honour that Mr O'Connell announces the NEiTA 2009 ASG National Teaching Award recipients. Now in its 17th year, the NEiTA teaching awards program continues to acknowledge and shine a light on Australia's outstanding teachers whose daily work and commitment makes important contributions to the lives of people in their community.

For further information about the NEiTA 2009 ASG National Teaching Awards recipients, NEiTA, and ASG, please visit www.neita.com.au

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Please note:

- The awards will be officially presented at the Hotel Windsor, Spring Street, Melbourne from 12.30pm to 2.00pm, Friday 11 June 2010.
- The ceremony will include a keynote address from Professor John Loughran, Acting Dean of the Faculty of Education, Monash University, Clayton campus.
- All media representatives are invited to attend the presentation ceremony. If attending, media representatives are asked to contact PR to advise of their attendance before the event commences.

Interview, Profiles and Images

- Award recipients, Professor Loughran, representatives from NEiTA and ASG, are available for interview and photographs at the official awards ceremony on Friday, 11 June 2010.
- Profiles, images and contact details for all national award recipients will be available on the NEiTA website: www.neita.com.au from Friday, 11 June 2010.

For more information, please contact:

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