

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT NATIONAL AWARDS FOR QUALITY SCHOOLING 2008 WINNERS

Excellence by a Teacher

Carolyn Hayden

Lambton High School
New South Wales
Outstanding science teaching

Carolyn Hayden, an outstanding and innovative head teacher of science at Lambton High School, inspires and motivates students to study science and perform at their highest level.

Through her skills, enthusiasm and dedication, she has had a profound effect on the quality and enrolments in science courses in the school. Many of her students have been encouraged to pursue fulfilling scientific careers. Thanks to her passion for her subject and her creative teaching, her students have gone on to achieve national recognition for their work. Carolyn's teaching methods are challenging and engaging and make science relevant, interesting and important to students.

She has forged strong links with the local community and scientific organisations. Through her efforts the school has established itself as a high performing school in end of school science results.

Excellence by a Beginning Teacher

Nicolette Burraston

Cowra High School
New South Wales
Quality science teaching and learning

Nicolette Burraston, a dedicated and dynamic teacher at Cowra High School, has engaged and motivated students of all abilities to experience success in science.

Her creative and interactive teaching strategies, rapport with students and colleagues and her commitment to professional learning has had a profound impact on science teaching and learning at the school. Nicolette's enthusiasm for learning, the intellectual challenges she sets and the encouragement she provides instils in students an excitement for science.

She is acknowledged for building links between the school and community and for the quality and relevance of ideas, strategies and opportunities she creates for students and colleagues.

Through her efforts, the profile of science in the school has been raised and student participation in science activities and courses at the school has increased significantly.

Excellence in Teacher Leadership

Richard Nash

Seven Hills State School

Queensland

Re-engaging the school and its community

Richard Nash, as Acting Principal at Seven Hills State School, is an outstanding example of how strong leadership energises and inspires school communities to work together to improve student outcomes.

Richard's strength has been to focus the whole school on student achievement. Based on the philosophy of multi-age education, Richard and his team have developed a balanced curriculum framework, introduced Information and Communications Technologies to the classroom and provided varied and exciting learning programs. Teachers have been involved in a diverse range of professional learning opportunities and taken leadership initiatives that encourage learners to strive for social and academic success.

Richard's community minded approach to school leadership has generated a supportive school culture that brings students, parents and teachers together in a vibrant learning community.

Excellence by a Principal

Peter Holcz

Mindarie Senior College

Western Australia

Building capacity in leadership

Peter Holcz's innovative and inspirational leadership of Mindarie Senior College since its foundation in 2003 has made it a world class learning environment for senior secondary students.

Peter has fostered a learning environment where teachers and students work together in the pursuit of excellence. Priority is given to learning through technology across the curriculum, shared school-wide pedagogy and to personalised learning with attention to the academic, emotional and social development of the college's young adults.

Peter's exceptional leadership is demonstrated through his close engagement with students, his support and encouragement for teachers, and his strong partnerships with the wider community. He builds leadership capacity in others, develops and renews plans for the future of the college and inspires and motivates students and staff alike. His leadership has led to a positive learning environment for young adults and significant successes in end of year results.

Excellence by a Support Staff member

David Simpson

Bonya School

Northern Territory

Supporting the Indigenous school community

As an assistant teacher, David Simpson makes an exceptional contribution to the happy and active learning environment of Bonya School, situated in a remote Indigenous community.

With enthusiasm and deep commitment, David supports students as they come to and from school, prepares classrooms and facilities, assists with classroom and extra curricular activities, and conducts his own classes with teacher support. His liaison role with the community is vital to connecting school and home, involving families in their children's education. David is committed to bringing out the best in students and encouraging them to succeed.

David is an excellent role model for the children, developing in them a sense of self worth and pride. He is also creative and resourceful in using his skills and knowledge to inform and influence staff and contribute to the effective running of the school.

Excellence in School Improvement

Owairtilla School. Canteen Creek

Northern Territory

Community commitment to quality education

The significant achievements of Owairtilla School, Canteen Creek are a tribute to the strong community commitment to school improvement over the past three years.

The considerable increase in student enrolments from transition (Kindergarten) to senior secondary, greatly improved attendance patterns and outstanding performance in literacy and numeracy have made the school a place of success for young people.

By forging strong links with the community the school has changed the focus from student behaviour and attendance to student achievement and success. Opportunities for the local community have opened up, with the school catering for all levels of primary school as well as offering middle years and a secondary program. It proudly provides clear pathways for its students to a better future.

Excellence in Family-School Partnerships

Kuranda District State College

Queensland

Families as first teachers

Kuranda District State College's *Families as First Teachers* program has had a profound impact on engaging Indigenous families in their children's early learning and preparation for school.

Student enrolments in preschool and primary school have increased, record literacy and numeracy results have been achieved by Year 2 students and there is greater parent participation in school activities. There are also fewer behaviour problems and better relations between the school and community.

The school takes learning opportunities into the community where people feel at ease and comfortable engaging with education processes. Interactions between the school and geographically dispersed families have increased and many families have gained confidence and the skills to support their children's learning.

Excellence by a Teacher

Highly Commended

Kevin Bennett SC

Kent Street Senior High School
Western Australia
Aviation studies

In the specialised teaching area of aviation, Kevin Bennett has created an exceptional learning experience for Kent Street Senior High School students.

Kevin delivers an innovative and exemplary specialised education program to an ever increasing cohort of students. His strong technical knowledge is complemented by a passion for his subject, commitment to his students and an inspirational approach drawing on an array of teaching strategies. Kevin's efforts bring great results, with a number of graduates taking up high level careers in defence force and commercial aviation.

Kevin keeps the challenging program relevant through close liaison with industry and develops curriculum materials for wide use in aviation education.

Rebecca Chapman

St Benedict's Catholic Primary School
Western Australia
Achieving learning potential

Rebecca Chapman's exceptional passion and drive have led to a significant increase in the literacy achievements of students at St Benedict's Catholic Primary School.

Her extensive knowledge and skills in teaching literacy, her ability to draw on each student's potential, the involvement of families in their children's learning and the intensive support provided to learners have led to success in literacy results.

Rebecca's commitment to fostering learning extends to gifted and talented students. The enrichment program she provides enables students to participate in advanced academic courses in a range of subjects through local community organisations and at university.

Ramona Elliott

Willetton Senior High School
Western Australia
Gifted and talented education in science

Ramona Elliott has introduced Willetton Senior High School students to cutting edge technologies in science, leading her students to receive a number of national awards.

Her innovative teaching practices have increased student motivation and engagement in science. Her revision of the Year 9 Earth Sciences course introduced stimulating activities and generated new interest in Earth and Environmental Science in Years 11 and 12. Local industry has taken an active interest in classroom projects and research.

Ramona is an inspiring teacher whose professional practice, participation in professional learning, collaboration with colleagues and rapport with students and families provides exceptional educational experiences and opportunities for her students.

Kerri Furlong

Mitchelton State High School
Queensland
Japanese language education

Kerri Furlong's drive and enthusiasm for the teaching of languages is integral to the success of Japanese studies at Mitchelton State High School.

The marked increase in the number of students choosing to continue their study of Japanese is attributed to the opportunities Kerri provides for students to apply and extend their language learning. Kerri's classroom is a vibrant learning environment where students are engaged in Japanese cultural activities, use new technologies and connect with local community groups and native Japanese speakers.

Kerri's passion and commitment have strengthened student and community interest in Japanese and built a strong foundation for future language study opportunities.

Noel Gibson

Bracken Ridge State High School
Queensland
Information and Communications Technology

Noel Gibson's dedication and inspiring work have provided new vocational pathways for students and brought about an increase in student enrolments in Information and Communications Technology courses.

Through the use of interactive teaching strategies and resources, Noel fosters higher order thinking and problem solving skills and connects students to learning anywhere, anytime. The Year 10 transition course he introduced enables students to develop multimedia skills through self-paced online activities, providing them with successful pathways to senior learning courses.

Noel has greatly improved the way teachers work and communicate throughout the school and has influenced primary and secondary teaching of Information and Communications Technology across the state.

Graham Herlihy

Robina State High School
Queensland
Sport and life skills

Graham Herlihy, senior Mathematics teacher at Robina State High School, has had great success in re-engaging students in learning through a comprehensive program involving sport and life skills. His innovative approach has been highly successful in improving academic and behavioural outcomes for students.

Graham is an inspirational teacher with high expectations for all students. He links learning to social contexts. He supports students in their learning through group mentoring, tutorials and recognition of success. Graham's commitment has greatly assisted students to achieve results beyond their expectations, and experience success in the classroom and on the sporting field.

Mark Howie

Penrith High School

New South Wales

Outstanding English teaching

As Head Teacher of English at Penrith High School, Mark Howie's creative and engaging teaching strategies combined with his exceptional command of his subject area have motivated students and nurtured their enthusiasm for learning.

Mark sets high standards for all students and supports them to achieve their potential. Students see him as an inspiring, memorable and influential teacher; a teacher who challenges them intellectually and equips them with the knowledge and confidence they need in their post-school endeavours.

Mark shares his knowledge generously across the profession. He proves that dedication, innovation and striving for excellence bring great results and open up a lifetime of opportunity for young people.

Julie Lambert

Seaford 6 – 12 School

South Australia

Middle Years of Schooling

Julie Lambert's innovative and stimulating approach to teaching middle year students at Seaford 6 – 12 School inspires students to enjoy learning and develop independent learning skills.

She is a dedicated and caring teacher who creates stimulating learning opportunities for all students. Her ability to build strong relations with students, the inclusion of everyday learning experiences in the curriculum and her knowledge of quality learning principles underpin the success students achieve in Julie's classes.

Julie supports beginning teachers and provides leadership and mentoring to colleagues in her role as District Quality Learning Consultant.

Sarah Long

All Saints Anglican School

Queensland

English communication

Sarah Long has inspired young people at All Saints Anglican School to develop a new interest and pride in their studies, achieve impressive academic results and take up tertiary studies and employment opportunities.

The English Communication program developed by Sarah has been instrumental in improving the educational and employment opportunities for students who had not previously experienced academic success.

Sarah's dedication to quality teaching and learning is demonstrated by her knowledge and understanding of educational issues, her creative range of teaching and assessment tasks and encouragement of students to succeed.

Rebecca Lowe

Murgon State High School
Queensland
Hospitality studies

Rebecca Lowe has significantly improved the learning opportunities and wellbeing of students at Murgon State High School.

Through her engaging teaching strategies, community partnership initiatives and the introduction of tertiary certificate courses, enrolments and retention of students in home economics and hospitality subjects have significantly increased.

Rebecca organises and supports camps, works closely with community groups and has developed a range of successful extra curricular activities at the school. Her initiative in linking young people with local industries has opened up access to post-school qualifications and to future employment in the community.

Ken McBeath

Campbelltown Performing Arts High School
New South Wales
Performing Arts

Ken McBeath has created a lively learning environment leading students to experience outstanding results in drama studies.

As Head of Performing Arts for four years, Ken has stimulated and developed a thriving department that hosts over thirty performances a year in a range of media including film, drama and musical theatre, dance ensembles, rock concerts and circus performances. Working with local elders he has transformed oral histories into dramatic productions.

Ken's commitment and exceptional ability have opened up a wealth of opportunities for learning both within and outside the school and attracted increasing numbers of students to the school.

Emma Medhurst

Salisbury High School
South Australia
Achievements in special education

Emma Medhurst, Assistant Principal at Salisbury High School, has shown passion and vision for improving the outcomes and future opportunities for special needs students.

Emma engages and motivates her students by involving them in the design of the curriculum and includes a wide range of staff and community members in their learning. Emma creates individual programs for a diverse range of needs, setting high standards of achievement. As a result students have stayed on at school to complete their senior studies, achieved beyond expectations and have gained a foundation for their future.

Emma's role in guiding her students to success is underpinned by her focus on student abilities rather than disabilities.

Robert Pratt

Campus Kindergarten
Queensland

Early childhood education for sustainability

Robert Pratt has led the transformation of the Campus Kindergarten into an exciting ecological learning community where young students enthusiastically contribute to the health of their local environment.

Through an integrated curriculum Robert provides practical ways for students to interact with the natural environment and engage in discussions that challenge their thinking and ideas about the world. The links Robert has established with the wider community, higher education institutions and professional associations have extended learning opportunities for students and colleagues.

Robert's dedication, expert knowledge and willingness to share has improved environmental awareness in the local community and has laid a strong foundation for quality early childhood education.

Kerry Short

Wanganui Park Secondary College
Victoria

Creative photography

At Wanganui Park Secondary College Kerry Short's passion for photography teaching has paved the way for future employment opportunities for students and national recognition of their work.

Kerry provides exceptional guidance to enable his students to communicate through the art of photography. He nurtures students, encouraging them to assist each other, develop their own style and follow their own paths of expression. This exciting learning environment is reflected in the high degree of interest in the College's photography course.

Kerry's commitment to teaching and his belief in each student's potential have made a difference to the lives of many young people at Wanganui Park Secondary College.

Andrew Thomson

Balgowlah North Public School
New South Wales

Authentic learning

Andrew Thomson is a dedicated teacher at Balgowlah North Public School who makes an outstanding contribution to the lives of students. He engages students in learning and promotes a love of learning.

By developing an environment high in social support, he has inspired students with the confidence to gain new skills. With a strong understanding of the diverse needs of students in his classroom, he has developed effective ways of promoting high order thinking skills across the curriculum.

Andrew's professionalism, teaching skills and leadership qualities inspire colleagues, parents and students.

Excellence by a Beginning Teacher

Highly Commended

Jennifer Bergstrum

St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School
Queensland
Excellence in music

Jennifer Bergstrum inspires students at St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School to strive for excellence in music. This has led to increased student participation in a range of choral and performance programs.

Jennifer prepares students to perform to a high standard, encourages artistic expression and fosters student leadership. Her influence is seen across the school by improved performance standards in Years 8 and 12 music programs.

Her dedication to music is evident by her ongoing pursuit of professional learning and her work on the school's music extension syllabus and student resources, directing school performances and establishing community and school choirs.

Excellence in Teacher Leadership

Highly Commended

Deborah Gilbert

Bulahdelah Central School
New South Wales
Engagement in the middle years

Deborah Gilbert's exceptional leadership as Head of Student Welfare and Middle School Coordinator at Bulahdelah Central School has played a major role in breaking down the barriers to learning for young people.

The focus of Deborah's endeavours is to create the best educational opportunities for all students. She has taken a lead role in increasing access to education for Indigenous students; set up school and district wide counselling networks and addressed issues of isolation experienced by rural students.

Deborah leads and influences by example to forge new thinking about teaching and learning, and her educational leadership skills are recognised state wide.

Elena Hawkins

Kirwan State High School
Queensland
Vocational education

As head of Department of Vocational Education and Training at Kirwan State High School, Elena Hawkins has had outstanding success in increasing the opportunities for students in vocational education.

Elena has brought passion, commitment and energy to a program of work experience and industry placement for a large cohort of students. School based trainees and apprentices have won numerous awards and have enjoyed recognition for their skills.

Elena works with the vocational education and training sector, with industry groups and employers, with parents and the community and with colleagues to produce outstanding resources for the program. This dedication has seen the popularity of vocational education courses in the school increase significantly.

Suzan Hirsch

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Asquith
New South Wales
Boys' education

Suzan Hirsch, teacher and Boys' Education Coordinator at St Patrick's Catholic Primary School and for the Diocese of Broken Bay, has made a significant contribution to the learning opportunities of students.

Suzan's passion and commitment to research and teaching practice has inspired teachers to explore new teaching methods that engage a diversity of students' abilities. Her evidence-based approach to planning enables teachers to monitor the changes and shifts in student learning and adapt programs appropriately.

Suzan's outstanding leadership in boys' education is highly regarded by the profession and the community as having a lasting impact on the opportunities and achievements of students.

Debra Turley

Salisbury High School
South Australia
Engaging students in science

Debra Turley, Assistant Principal at Salisbury High School, has revitalised the teaching of Science and substantially increased the number of students involved in science based courses.

The implementation of an improved Science curriculum by Debra dramatically increased the engagement, opportunities and achievement of students. Science education moved from a traditional classroom approach to an exciting program that includes robotics, electronics, horticulture and engineering. These innovations, along with industry partnerships, created new science and engineering pathways for students, leading to future employment opportunities.

Debra's enthusiasm and leadership has built a strong team of enthusiastic science teachers who provide diverse and exciting options for students.

Leanne Randolph

Forest Lake State High School
Queensland
Vocational opportunities

Leanne Randolph, Head of Senior Schooling at Forest Lake State High School, significantly increased the number of students enrolled in workplace training and apprenticeships.

Leanne's exceptional leadership ability enabled students to select from a variety of career pathways. She initiated and led a wide range of vocational programs that cater for students' interests and needs; and established links with local employers, industry, training organisations and universities. She successfully trained colleagues to effectively lead vocational programs in the school.

Leanne's commitment and passion have made a real difference to opportunities for young people resulting in an increasing number of students gaining worthwhile vocational experience.

Excellence by a Principal

Highly commended

Amanda Bell

Brisbane Girls Grammar School
Queensland
Innovative school development

Amanda Bell's influential leadership has helped broaden the opportunities available to students at Brisbane Girls' Grammar School.

Innovative science and creative arts programs, new information technology subjects, overseas activities for students and staff and considerable professional development and leadership opportunities have had a significant impact on students' social and academic achievements. The strong community spirit apparent in all aspects of the school is a result of the exemplary standards set by Amanda.

Amanda's collaborative work with colleagues, parents and the community and her constant endeavours to provide challenging learning experiences have opened up a lifetime of opportunities for students.

Gail Dyer

Belmore South Public School
New South Wales

Improving student learning opportunities and outcomes

Gail Dyer has successfully built Belmore South Public School into a showcase of creative, innovating learning.

Under Gail's leadership, Information and Communication Technologies have been embedded in all classroom practices. Teachers work together to create a stimulating learning environment with a focus on the priority areas of literacy, numeracy and critical thinking. Students, most of whom are from non-English speaking families, have made impressive advances in literacy, debating, mathematics, chess and digital technologies.

The school attracts national and international interest as an example of what a school of the future might look like.

Paul Erickson

Kingswood High School
New South Wales

School change and renewal

Kingswood High School Principal Paul Erikson has initiated significant change and renewal in the school, leading to successes in student achievements.

Innovations and programs that cater for the diverse student body have increased enrolments, and the school has won recognition for its achievements in sport, the performing arts, technology and innovation, and agriculture. Learning opportunities and extension classes have fostered academic achievement, and literacy and numeracy training initiatives for teachers have improved student outcomes.

Working closely with teachers, students, parents and local community networks, Paul has overseen an enormous turnaround in the opportunities and experiences Kingswood High School provides.

Cherie Lutton

Fraser Primary School
Australian Capital Territory

School renewal through collaboration

Cherie Lutton has created a vibrant school of engaged and motivated students whose numeracy and literacy achievements have improved significantly.

Cherie has given strong support to the needs of students and teachers. New directions in curriculum, the introduction of stimulating learning activities and school and community partnerships have contributed to students' success. Through professional learning, creative thinking and collaborative decision making the school has achieved its aim of 'learning together and achieving together'.

Cherie's leadership has improved opportunities and outcomes for all students, turned around behaviour issues and attracted students to the school.

David Morris

Northern Beaches State High School

Queensland

Leadership of whole school improvement

David Morris is a progressive and inspirational school leader.

Through restructuring the school, increasing leadership opportunities for teachers and students, developing relationships with the school community and fostering professional development David has created a dynamic learning environment. His leadership has inspired engagement in professional development, increased staff retention rates and reduced student absences.

David's leadership has led to whole of school improvements, culminating in student literacy results and learning outcomes improving dramatically.

Gavin Power

Springfield Primary School

Western Australia

Collaborative school culture

Gavin Power's innovative and energetic leadership has established a high standard of student achievement at Springfield Primary School.

The reorganisation of classes, timetables and teaching teams; and the introduction of challenging programs and extra curricula activities have improved social and academic outcomes across the school. Gavin's commitment to pastoral care, professional learning for teachers and open communication with parents and the wider community have helped make the school's aim of 'working together- achieving more' a reality.

Gavin acts as a strong advocate for students and teachers. His participation in broader education initiatives and mentoring of Principal colleagues is highly regarded.

Steven Salamon

Maylands Peninsula Primary School

Western Australia

School renewal

Steven Salamon's leadership, placing relationships at the forefront, has been integral to the successful establishment of a dynamic new school created through the amalgamation of two schools.

At Maylands Peninsula Primary School teachers work together and participate in professional planning and learning. The curriculum is responsive to the individual needs of all students, providing support and extension opportunities. The effectiveness of the school focus on literacy through Information and Communications Technologies is reflected in marked student improvements.

Steven's dedication has encouraged students to strive for excellence and take up the diverse and exciting learning opportunities Maylands Peninsula Primary School provides.

Excellence by a Support Staff member

Highly Commended

Maureen Bailey

Australind Senior High School
Western Australia
School learning environment

In addition to her role as Business Manager, Maureen Bailey uses her energy and imagination to support students in a wide range of extra curricular activities.

Maureen has initiated and driven programs to revitalise the school's grounds, creating an inviting learning environment that contributes to the well being of the school community and promotes school pride and a great school spirit. She is imaginative and resourceful in addressing the needs of students, staff and families.

Outside her Business Manager role, Maureen contributes to a thriving program of extra curricular activities, including art projects, school community events, excursions, professional development and sporting events.

Vicki Belletty

Kawana Waters State College
Queensland
International student welfare

Vicki Belletty's commitment to international students over more than ten years as International Student Liaison Officer has been integral to the success of the international student program at Kawana Waters State College.

From her initial welcome to new students through to exceptional support and care during their stay, Vicki fosters international friendships and cultural understanding. International students have gone on to achieve outstanding results in academic and extra curricular activities and place great value on their schooling experience in Australia.

Vicki has managed overseas student requirements and homestays with exemplary skill and efficiency, including creating opportunities outside of the school boundaries.

Helena Hewish

Seaford 6-12 School
South Australia
Special education

Helena Hewish has made a significant contribution to dramatically improved learning outcomes for students with disabilities.

As Special Education School Support Officer, Helena has achieved exceptional results for students with severe and multiple disabilities, using cutting edge methodologies to increase learning opportunities and inspire students. She makes students feel safe and supported so that they enjoy learning and achieve social and educational successes. By working closely with staff and community agencies, Helena has embedded successful practices throughout the school.

Helena has shared her skills and experience with teachers from other schools and has developed resources that have achieved local and international recognition.

Desley Insall

Collingwood College
Victoria
Health and welfare

Desley Insall fosters the wellbeing of the Collingwood College school community by inspiring students and staff to have healthy eating habits.

Desley's innovative Kitchen Garden Program has been recognised nationally and develops students' skills and knowledge to make a lifetime of healthy eating choices. At the same time, the program also builds social skills, increases awareness of environmental sustainability and forges cultural respect in a diverse student population.

Desley supports delivers and informative and enjoyable food program and creates joyful and challenging education experiences. A large team of volunteers and a vibrant, welcoming kitchen are a drawcard for students and the community.

Trevor Muller

Murgon State High School
Queensland
Quality school facilities

Trevor Muller's work as groundsman at Murgon State High School has improved the grounds of this small remote school. Despite the drought, the school environment instils great pride and spirit in the school community.

Under Trevor's care, the school gardens flourish, the school's facilities expand and extra curricular activities grow. Trevor has driven a number of projects for improvement, from fences to storage sheds to landscaping. His commitment to the school's sporting facilities laid the foundation for a proud record of achievement in sport.

Trevor harnesses the energy of the school community and encourages a strong sense of community mindedness.

Margaret Papertalk

Aranmore Catholic College
Western Australia
Indigenous student welfare

As head of Aranmore Catholic College's Indigenous student support team, Margaret Papertalk has made a remarkable contribution to the welfare of Indigenous students.

Margaret has been instrumental in building the school's reputation for its strong academic and pastoral care program for Indigenous students. Through academic support, liaison with teachers and outreach to families, she has helped Indigenous students to gain the skills, knowledge and resilience to lead successful lives.

Initiatives include a homework centre, remedial reading and mathematics classes and mentoring programs. These initiatives have contributed to the school's success in attracting and retaining Indigenous students, and their high levels of achievement in various fields.

Karen Thomson

Blackwood Centre for Adolescent Development
Victoria
Student welfare

In her position as Administrative Officer and bursar at the Blackwood Centre for Adolescent Development, Karen Thomson provides invaluable support for young people at risk.

Turning her hand to all areas of support, including administrative support for the teaching team, relationships with students, meeting complex regulatory and reporting requirements and securing funds and corporate sponsorship, Karen works tirelessly to help create a setting of excellence for young people at risk.

In a challenging environment, Karen has brought skills, compassion and empathy to inspire the teaching team, support families in difficult circumstances and create a sense of belonging and stability for youth at risk.

Excellence in School Improvement

Highly Commended

Bellaire Primary School

Victoria

Building teacher capacity

Bellaire Primary School staff have been innovative and creative in exploring quality teaching practice to provide the best outcomes for students.

The strong team approach has led to substantial improvements in students' English and Mathematics outcomes. Coaches assist staff as they explore teaching in flexible open learning areas, try new teaching strategies, work and learn in teams and implement personalised learning for students.

The school's commitment to supporting staff through a coaching model for teaching and learning has had a positive influence on teachers and the community and has laid the foundation for sustained change and improved student learning.

Birrong Girls High School

New South Wales

Literacy and numeracy

Birrong Girls High School is a leading example of a school dedicated to continued improvement.

Changes to classroom and teaching arrangements and professional learning programs targeting literacy and numeracy have led to significant growth in Year 7 and Year 8 achievement. Strong community support for the school is reflected in the increased enrolments in Year 7.

The school has drawn on research on quality teaching and adopted strategies to achieve impressive improvements in literacy and numeracy. Teachers and parents have a strong commitment to sustaining the strategies the school has implemented to achieve both academic excellence and success in other fields.

Boondall State School

Queensland

Sustainable school improvement

The commitment of Boondall State School to a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to sustainable school improvement has led to significant increases in student achievements.

University partnerships and the integration of literacy and technology and cross curricular programs have provided students with intellectual challenges. Participation in online events has led to significant improvements in writing and reading achievements. The chess development program has enhanced students' social skills, strengthened practical mathematic concepts and boosted academic results.

The dedication of the staff to an agenda of continuous improvement, high community support and improved student attendance and retention underpins the success of the school.

Boulder Primary School

Western Australia

Building relationships to improve student achievement

Boulder Primary School has achieved considerable success in revitalising the school environment, improving student wellbeing and creating meaningful learning opportunities for students. Strong community relationships have vastly improved students' understanding and appreciation of learning.

Students are excited about learning and have become confident and resilient problem solvers. Student welfare has improved substantially and parents are meaningfully engaged with the school and influence their child's learning.

The community was inspired to become involved through school initiatives such as participative decision making, cultural nights, *Circle of Friendship* events and workshops.

Canberra College

Australian Capital Territory

Education of young parents

Canberra College has provided a remarkable alternative education program that has attracted young people back to schooling.

The flexible approach and strong community networks have enabled many young people to complete their education and maintain independent living skills while also equipping them for future employment.

The school conducts successful Individual Learning Programs for young pregnant and parenting students, enabling young people to realise their education potential. As a result of the commitment and enthusiasm of staff, many young people have returned to schooling and given themselves and their young families the best possible start in life.

Carroll College

New South Wales

Improved literacy

Carroll College's Targeted Literacy Program for middle school years has led to major improvements in literacy and has provided education benefits to students across the curriculum.

Students' understanding of the process of learning has assisted them to become more confident, to approach learning independently and to apply higher order thinking skills in their studies.

Teachers work collaboratively to implement quality teaching and learning strategies that address the literacy needs of individual students in all curriculum areas. Carroll College's approach to literacy has extended and enriched student learning and created opportunities for student success.

Copperfield College

Victoria

Improving academic performance

Copperfield College has significantly improved students' academic performance and increased the number of students going on to tertiary studies.

Staff, parents and students have created a learning environment where students succeed. Students are supported by supervised study periods, participation in mentor groups and study skill seminars. Along with higher student aspirations and academic achievements, attendance at Copperfield College have increased markedly.

The endeavours of staff and leaders across the college, the restructure of school timetables, review of policies and introduction of comprehensive professional support for students has created an environment that values performance and celebrates excellence.

Eastwood Heights Public School

New South Wales

Mathematical and technological innovation

Eastwood Heights Public School has dramatically improved student learning outcomes in numeracy. A strong focus on technology and mathematics has transformed the school into an innovative learning community.

Learning numeracy through technologies has been the catalyst for creative and exciting teaching and learning opportunities. Academic performance has improved remarkably and students' self esteem, decision making skills, critical thinking and technological and communication skills have strengthened.

Restructure of the school environment, professional growth of teachers and learning partnerships with parents have established Eastwood Public School as a high achieving school.

Keithcot Farm School

South Australia

New learning opportunities

Keithcot Farm School has considerably improved learning opportunities for students.

An inspiring Japanese language and international program has enriched students' learning experience. The establishment of a middle school, a support program for students with special needs, new curriculum offerings and improved technology have all significantly contributed to greater student engagement.

The leadership team has taken the school in new directions and increased the attractiveness of the school to students and families.

Solomontown Primary School

South Australia

School community wellbeing

The Solomontown Primary School community has worked enthusiastically to provide pathways to successful learning for all students. Its focus on the wellbeing of students, staff and families has had a strong impact on student achievement.

Students have formed strong relations with their peers and teachers, behaviour referrals have reduced, attendance has increased, student involvement in a range of community events has expanded and literacy and numeracy results have improved.

The school's commitment to fostering social, personal and academic outcomes has given students a more positive attitude to school and established a strong foundation for future study.

St Paul the Apostle Primary School, Winston Hills

New South Wales

Social skills development

St Paul the Apostle Primary School has implemented highly effective and innovative pastoral care strategies which have had a significant impact on the social and emotional wellbeing of students.

The success of the strategies is reflected in positive changes to student behaviour and significant improvement in social skills for many special needs students. Anti-bullying strategies, playground incentives and social skills development activities across the school have increased positive student interactions in classrooms and the playground.

This outstanding work has created a safe and stimulating environment for all students.

St Thomas the Apostle Primary School

Australian Capital Territory

Effective support for literacy learning

St Thomas the Apostle Primary School's focused approach to literacy and the work of the Learning Support Assistants has led to marked improvements in reading results across the school.

Changes to literacy teaching were based on extensive research and data on student literacy learning needs. Teaching strategies moved from withdrawing students for intensive sessions to small group work in the classroom. Comprehensive professional learning, implementation of collaborative and reflective practices and extensive involvement of parents and learning assistants have made a significant difference to the lives of all students at St Thomas the Apostle Primary School.

Torquay Primary School

Victoria

Building capacity for cultural understandings

The introduction of Indigenous studies to the Torquay Primary School curriculum has had a profound effect on the whole school community.

Through the Bierr (Corroboree) initiative, students and teachers take part in cultural activities that strengthen links with the local Indigenous community. Storytelling, drama, dance and artistic pursuits have all served to foster an appreciation of cultural differences and a sharing of traditional knowledge and skills.

The learning environment at the school is extremely positive, students are highly motivated and there is a notable improvement in Indigenous students' and boys' interaction with learning initiatives.

Wallan Primary School

Victoria

School approach to literacy and numeracy

Wallan Primary School has achieved remarkable improvements in reading, writing and numeracy results from Prep to Year 6. Students have surpassed the school's targets and results are equal to or exceed state norms.

The involvement of teachers in the development of the school's new directions and their commitment to professional learning have led to more effective teaching across the school. Student attendance and wellbeing have improved significantly.

Family participation in literacy and numeracy events, links with Koorie families and shared professional learning with regional schools have strengthened community ties and expanded learning opportunities for students.

Excellence in Family-School Partnerships

Highly Commended

Greenwich Public School

New South Wales

Family-school community

Greenwich Public School's partnership initiatives have created a united school community across a dual campus. Teacher, family and school cooperation is a strong feature of daily school activities.

Parents participate in school life through a highly effective volunteer system, which supports literacy learning in the classroom and provides adults to accompany students walking to and from school. This program also allows students to enjoy stimulating learning opportunities through extra curricular programs in literacy, sport and creative and performing arts.

The open communication between school and families, the collaborative decision making processes and the involvement parents have in student learning is valued by the whole community.

Longreach School of Distance Education

Queensland

Quality education for isolated families

The positive partnerships established between Longreach School of Distance Education and its families have led to improved learning outcomes and opportunities for isolated students.

The families of students have a significant influence on the learning programs and social experiences of their children. They are involved in school decision making and share responsibility for their children's academic and social development.

Regular communication strategies, stimulating learning programs, as well as face to face events such as camps, sports carnivals, home visits and mini schools support families and home tutors in their delivery of quality learning opportunities for students.

St Michael's Parish Primary School

Victoria

Building family-school partnerships through literacy

Together parents and teachers of St Michael's Parish Primary School have played a significant role in assisting families from a range of cultural backgrounds to actively participate in their children's learning.

Parents' confidence has increased as they develop understandings about the learning process, participate in their children's classroom and join in family events hosted by the school. Increasing parent involvement has given rise to significant improvements in literacy achievement, reduced absences and positive relationships between families and the school.

The turn-around of perceptions about the role of non-English speaking families in children's literacy learning has played a significant role in shaping the future learning opportunities for students.

Medal of Distinction

Nicolette Burraston - Cowra High School

The 2008 Medal of Distinction is awarded to Nicolette Burraston from Cowra High School, NSW for her exceptional achievements as a beginning science teacher.

The Medal of Distinction is awarded by the Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education to one of the Best National Achievement winners to recognise outstanding excellence.