



## Investing in education

To support the vital role played by public education in ensuring fair, equitable and high-quality education for all, you can donate to the Public Education Foundation. Donations are tax deductible and can be made online at [givenow.com.au/publiceducationfoundation](https://www.givenow.com.au/publiceducationfoundation).

The Public Education Foundation brings together governments, schools, parents, students, individuals and corporate and philanthropic organisations who share a commitment to improving equity and excellence in education in Australia.

Find out how you can help students reach their full potential: [publiceducationfoundation.org.au](https://www.publiceducationfoundation.org.au)

PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE TO MAKE A DONATION



**PUBLIC EDUCATION  
FOUNDATION**   
We Give Life-Changing Scholarships

## WHAT WE DO

**Support** students who face social and economic disadvantage to achieve their full potential through life-changing scholarships.

**Provide** professional development opportunities to educators and school leaders to enable them to extend their leadership and teaching skills.

**Enhance** the value and reputation of Australia's public schools, advocating for a high-quality, inclusive education.

### SCHOLARSHIPS

Please look at our various **scholarship opportunities** on our website.

Our scholarship application closing dates for students are:

Tertiary transition – 27 August 2025  
Secondary – 19 September 2025  
Primary – 26 September 2025

For educators, applications close on 10 October 2025.

All applications must be completed and submitted online.

-  [info@publiceducationfoundation.org.au](mailto:info@publiceducationfoundation.org.au)
-  105 Phillip Street, Parramatta NSW 2150
-  [publiceducationfoundation.org.au](https://www.publiceducationfoundation.org.au)
-  02 7814 2806  [Publicedfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/Publicedfoundation)
-  @PEFOZ  [facebook.com/pefoz](https://www.facebook.com/pefoz)
-  [public-education-foundation-ltd](https://www.linkedin.com/company/public-education-foundation-ltd)



# Public Education Awards 2025

IGNITE YOUR POTENTIAL



Education

**PUBLIC EDUCATION  
FOUNDATION** 

# Welcome



## Welcome to the 2025 Public Education Awards

### *Reimagining Public Education for Better Futures*

It is an honour and a privilege to welcome you to the 2025 Public Education Awards, held during Public Education Week. This special event is made possible through the support of the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning, the Hon Prue Car, and the Secretary of the NSW Department of Education, Mr Murat Dizdar PSM. We are grateful for their ongoing leadership and commitment to public education.

Public schools are the heart of our nation – places where students from all walks of life come together to learn, grow and imagine new futures. You can gauge the worth of a nation by its education system, and today we celebrate the people shaping that future: students, teachers, school staff, principals and community members across New South Wales.

At the Public Education Foundation, our mission is to support and celebrate the best of public schooling. The Public Education Awards are a major highlight in our annual calendar – a moment to honour the extraordinary achievements and stories that define our schools and communities.

This year's Awards reflect the depth and breadth of excellence across the State. From initiatives connecting students with Country and preserving the language and stories of Elders, to programs supporting young women in STEM, to efforts improving literacy and student engagement – these stories remind us of the powerful role public education plays in creating opportunity and belonging.

*We recognise the Ongoing Custodians of the lands and waterways where we work and live. We pay respect to Elders past and present as ongoing teachers of knowledge, songlines and stories. We strive to ensure every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learner in NSW achieves their potential through education.*

The Public Education Foundation is proud to work closely with the NSW Department of Education and our generous partners to ensure that students facing disadvantage have access to the opportunities they deserve. In 2025, we are supporting over **700 students**, with more than **\$1.9 million in scholarships awarded** across New South Wales.

As we reflect on the remarkable achievements of our public education community, we also look to the future. Applications for the 2026 scholarship round are now open for primary and secondary school students, as well as educators. Scholarships are available for students from refugee and Indigenous backgrounds, students with disability, and those pursuing VET or creative subjects. Educator scholarships are also open for early career teachers and principals. To learn more, please visit [publiceducationfoundation.org.au](https://publiceducationfoundation.org.au)

Thank you for joining us in celebrating the people and programs that are reimagining public education for better futures. We hope today inspires pride and possibility in all who read these pages.

We hope you enjoy the event.

**MANISHA AMIN**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Public Education Foundation

**CITY OF SYDNEY** 

The Public Education Foundation would like to thank the City of Sydney for their support and for allowing us to use the Sydney Town Hall.

# Order of Proceedings

## ARRIVAL ENTERTAINMENT

The Millennium Marching Band

## PRE-SHOW ENTERTAINMENT

Jason Tran  
Canley Vale High School

## WELCOME TO COUNTRY

Aunty Joan Bell

## WELCOME

Jane Caro AM

## OPENING REMARKS

Manisha Amin  
Public Education Foundation CEO

## MINISTER'S ADDRESS

The Hon. Courtney Houssos, MLC  
Acting Minister for Education  
and Early Learning and Acting  
Minister for Western Sydney

## AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Minister's Awards for Excellence  
in Student Achievement

Minister's Awards for Excellence  
in Teaching

## STUDENT SPEECH

Ruby Stafford  
Kyogle High School

## PERFORMANCE – HORUS

NSW Public Schools Boys State  
Dance Ensemble

## SECRETARY'S ADDRESS

Murat Dizdar PSM  
Secretary, NSW Department  
of Education

## AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Secretary's Award for Diversity,  
Inclusion and Belonging

Secretary's Living Our Values  
Award

## PERFORMANCE – I DREAMED A DREAM

Maryana Abdo  
Miller High School

## AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Secretary's Award for Excellent  
Service

Secretary's Champion of Service  
and Representation Award

Secretary's Outstanding School  
Achievement Award

Public School Parent and  
Volunteer of the Year Award

Alumni of the Year

Outstanding Advocate for Public  
Education

## PERFORMANCE – HOLD ON / RESPECT

Schools Spectacular Featured  
Artists and Dancers

The Public Education  
Foundation thanks the  
students from Burwood  
Girls High School who have  
volunteered their time as  
ushers at this event.



## Jane Caro AM

*Jane Caro AM is a Walkley award winning writer, author, lecturer, mentor, social commentator, columnist, workshop facilitator, speaker and award-winning advertising writer. She has a BA in English Literature from Macquarie University and has published over a dozen books. Jane regularly contributes articles and opinion pieces to a number of publications and appears as a panelist and an expert commentator on commercial and public broadcasters.*

**MONDAY**  
**4 AUGUST 2025**

**6PM TO 8PM**  
**SYDNEY TOWN HALL**

# Excellence in Student Achievement

## MINISTER'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Recognising outstanding high school students who have excelled in their secondary years across academic excellence, sports, cultural, community or leadership.

**MARYANA ABDO**

Miller High School

**TORI ADAMSON**

Hunter Sports High School

**ELEANOR ALONSO-LOVE**

Fort Street High School

**MAX BOWEN**

St Johns Park High School

**JOSHUA CATHIE**

Inverell High School

**ESTEBAN CERVERA**

Brisbane Water Secondary College  
– Woy Woy Campus

**SHREYA CHOUDHURY**

Merewether High School

**MARCUS CHU**

North Sydney Boys High School

**MATILDA COLE**

Wagga Wagga High School

**DANTE DIAZ**

Fort Street High School

**SOFIA DOMINGUES**

Lambton High School

**MICHAEL ELLIOTT**

NBSC Manly Campus

**MASINAS HADDAD**

Greystanes High School

**TALIA HINCAL**

Strathfield Girls High School

**TANJA HORNBY**

NBSC Mackellar Girls Campus

**PATRICK INNES**

Hunter Sports High School

**NADINE KHATIB**

Prairiewood High School

**SOPHIE LINDSAY**

Denison College of Secondary  
Education – Kelso High Campus

**YEVAN MALLAWA**

Glenwood High School

**EVE MCCARTHY**

Macleay High School

**ISABELLA MORRIS**

Denison College of Secondary  
Education – Bathurst High Campus

**ELLA MOUNTER**

Lambton High School

**JENNA OAKMAN**

Koorringal High School

**ALICIA PAN**

Prairiewood High School

**JAYNIE ALWIN**

PRABAKARADHAS  
Elizabeth Macarthur High School

**LUELLA ROBINSON**

Melville High School

**TAHIRA ROSHAN**

Merrylands High School

**JACK RUAN**

North Sydney Boys High School

**ELLA SINCLAIR**

Blayney High School

**EMILY SENTER**

Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College  
– The Entrance Campus

**RUBY STAFFORD**

Kyogle High School

**TOBY TYRRELL**

Blayney High School

**AIJANAH VALENCIA**

St Johns Park High School



Auburn North Public School

**RUPALI WADHWA**

Penrith High School

**RYAN WEN**

Penrith High School

**INDIANNA WILSON**

Leumeah High School

**AVA WRIGHT**

NBSC Mackellar Girls Campus

**MYA WU**

James Ruse Agricultural High  
School

**LAILA ZAKELJ**

Oak Flats High School

**CATHY ZHANG**

James Ruse Agricultural High  
School

# Excellence in Teaching

## MINISTER'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

Recognising teachers who deliver the highest quality education to their students and contribute to their professional communities.

**JADE BASSETT**

Rutherford Technology High  
School

**SARAH BRAY**

Elderslie Public School

**SAMUEL BURGIN**

Bomaderry High School

**LAUREN ELTON**

Waterfall Public School

**BILLIE-JO FISHER**

Merewether High School

**SUSIE HARKER**

Terranora Public School

**MARC JAMES**

Curran Public School

**KATE LIVIO**

Koorringal High School

**MEGAN MCCARTHY**

Hunter Sports High School

**DEL MCLACHLAN**

Tarrawanna Public School

**ALAN MTASHAR**

Prairiewood High School

**GM NAIDOO**

Chifley College Bidwill Campus

**SAMUEL DEIVENDRA PAKKIAM**

Granville Boys High School

**NICOLINA PERANTUONO**

Picnic Point Public School

**MARK PERUZZO**

Sarah Redfern High School

**DANIELA PHILLIPS**

Hunter School of the Performing  
Arts

**LISA PHILLIPS**

Orange High School

**RUTH RAU**

Cambridge Gardens Public School

**LIZ RUIS**

Windsor High School

**LIZETTE TAYLOR**

Gralee School

**SAMANTHA TRUMPER**

NBSC Freshwater Senior Campus

# Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

## SECRETARY'S AWARD FOR DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING – FINALISTS

This prestigious award recognises and pays tribute to NSW Department of Education employees who proactively advocate for and celebrate diversity, inclusion and belonging.

**CHLOE BAUMANN**

Sarah Redfern High School

**DANIEL FUSI**

Menindee Central School

**SARAH MARTIN**

Coniston Public School

**JULIE STREET-SMITH**

Aboriginal Education and  
Communities Directorate

**KATRINA STUVE**

Engagement and Corporate  
Reporting

**ANTOANET WARDA**

Prairieville Public School



Punchbowl Boys' High School



# Living Our Values

## SECRETARY'S AWARD FOR LIVING OUR VALUES – FINALISTS

Recognising the Department's support staff and teams who contribute to the NSW Plan for Public Education in service of success for our learners by demonstrating the Department's values of accountability, equity, excellence, integrity, service, and trust.

### Accountability

#### NORTHERN RIVERS FLOOD RECOVERY TEAM

School Infrastructure NSW

#### TRANSITION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL TEAM

Early Childhood Outcomes

### Equity

#### BOX HILL TEMPORARY PRIMARY SCHOOL TEAM

School Infrastructure NSW

#### COMMUNITY AND MOBILE PRESCHOOL FUNDING TEAM

Early Childhood Outcomes

#### MERRAN WIGGINS

Education and Skills Reform

### Excellence

#### DIGITAL DECLARATIONS TEAM

People Group and Operations  
Group

#### LITERACY AND NUMERACY PRACTICE GUIDE PROJECT TEAM

Teaching, Learning and Student  
Wellbeing

#### SCHOOL-BASED APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS (SBAT) ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Education and Skills Reform

### Service

#### BRIANNA RODGER

Early Childhood Outcomes

#### CARA BURRELL

Public Schools

#### MANDATORY TRAINING TEAM

People Group

#### SECTOR PROGRAMS BRANCH

Early Childhood Outcomes

### Trust

#### LOU-ANNE LIND

Early Childhood Outcomes

#### PRESCHOOL TEAM IN EARLY LEARNING WITH PUBLIC EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Early Childhood Outcomes

#### SCHOOL EXPERIENCE PROGRAM TEAM

Public Schools



Box Hill Temporary Primary School opening

# Excellent Service

## SECRETARY'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENT SERVICE

Recognising NSW Department of Education employees (teaching and school operations) who have shown outstanding effort in improving the quality of teaching, learning outcomes and/or school environments in the NSW public education sector.

#### HAWRAA BEYDOUN

Bass High School

#### JODIE BIRD

Chatham High School

#### CHERYL BUTLER

Hannans Road Public School

#### BRUNA DOMA

Maclean High School

#### JODI HARRIS

Smithfield Public School

#### BENJAMIN HUBBARD

Jamison High School

#### BEN JONES

Tempe High School

#### AMANDA KOWALCZYK

Koonawarra Public School

#### MIA KUMAR

Burwood Girls High School

#### ROS MATTINGLY

Koorringal High School

#### CHRISTINE MUNRO

Corowa Public School

#### KYLIE PARSONS

Moruya Public School

#### MICHAEL PEDERSEN

Bass High School

#### PETER STEEL

Oak Flats High School

#### KRISTY SUTTON

Weston Public School

#### CORINA VOGLER-MCFARLANE

Wentworth Point Public School



Revesby South Public School



# Champion of Service and Representation Award

## SECRETARY'S CHAMPION OF SERVICE AND REPRESENTATION AWARD

Recognising employees who represented the department exceptionally in their service leading the Rural Students Cafe at the 2025 Sydney Royal Easter Show.

### PHILIPPA MORTIMER

Cafe Manager  
VET Curriculum Support Advisor

### PETER KELL

Kitchen Manager  
VET Trainer - Hospitality at Denison College Bathurst High Campus

### RACHAEL KELLY

Front of House Manager  
R/VET Curriculum Project Officer



Chef Peter Kell, VET Curriculum Support Advisor Philippa Mortimer and VET Curriculum Project Officer Rachael Kelly

Rooty Hill High School



# APPLY NOW

## 2026 Student Scholarship Applications

### Closing Dates

**Tertiary transition** 27 August 2025

**Secondary** 19 September 2025

**Primary** 26 September 2025

For further information visit  
[publiceducationfoundation.org.au](http://publiceducationfoundation.org.au)



## 2026 Teachers and Principals Scholarship Applications

# APPLY NOW

### Closing Date

10 October 2025

**PUBLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION**   
We Give Life-Changing Scholarships



Proudly sponsored by



**PUBLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION** 

 **Teachers Mutual Bank**

**TEACHERS HEALTH**   
We're for teachers



# Outstanding School Achievement

## SECRETARY'S AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

This prestigious award recognises NSW public schools that have successfully created a sustainable learning environment through a whole-of-school project or via a specific program. Schools receiving this award must demonstrate significant improvements in learning outcomes, excellence in student learning and community leadership.

### AJUGA SCHOOL

### GEORGES RIVER ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE

Ajuga School Green Guardians Initiative

### AUBURN NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL

Becoming Mathematicians Teacher Professional Learning Project

### AUBURN NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL

Lights on Literacy Project

### BALLINA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Berry Street Education Model

### BOMADERY HIGH SCHOOL

Bomaderry Employment Skills and Training (BEST) Program

### BRIAR ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL

Excellence in Aboriginal Education

### CENTENNIAL PARK SCHOOL

Centennial Park School Curriculum

### FAIRFIELD WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL

From Attendance to Achievement: The Fairfield West Public School Model for Success

### FAULCONBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Zones of Engagement

### GLENDORE PUBLIC SCHOOL

### BUDGEWOI PUBLIC SCHOOL

### CHARLESTOWN SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL

### THE ENTRANCE PUBLIC SCHOOL

### BLUE HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOL

### YATES AVENUE PUBLIC SCHOOL

### CHARLESTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOL

### VARDYS ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL

### GOROKAN PUBLIC SCHOOL

### NORTHLAKES PUBLIC SCHOOL

### TOUKEY PUBLIC SCHOOL

### KURRI KURRI PUBLIC SCHOOL

Explicit and Systematic Teaching (EAST) Mathematics Project

### HUNTER SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

Future Focused Personalised Learning

### JAMES MEEHAN HIGH SCHOOL

Middle School and Innovative Transition Program

### MURRUMBIDGEE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL - GRIFFITH

Deadly STEMers

### NARROMINE HIGH SCHOOL

Narromine High School Wellbeing Hub

### PUNCHBOWL BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL

Empower Me! Wellbeing Framework and Programs

### REVESBY SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL

Flourishing Wellbeing

### ROOTY HILL HIGH SCHOOL

Giving every student the opportunity to do their best

### WARILLA HIGH SCHOOL

Success Strategy

### WATERFALL PUBLIC SCHOOL

### BANGOR PUBLIC SCHOOL

### ENGADINE HIGH SCHOOL

### ENGADINE PUBLIC SCHOOL

### ENGADINE WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL

### HEATHCOTE EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL

### HEATHCOTE HIGH SCHOOL

### HEATHCOTE PUBLIC SCHOOL

### LOFTUS PUBLIC SCHOOL

### MARTON PUBLIC SCHOOL

### MENAI HIGH SCHOOL

### MINERVA SCHOOL

### THARAWAL PUBLIC SCHOOL

### WORONORA RIVER PUBLIC SCHOOL

### YARRAWARRAH PUBLIC SCHOOL

Leading with Heart

### WHITEBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

### CHARLESTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOL

### CHARLESTOWN SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL

### CHARLESTOWN EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL

### DUDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL

### REDHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOL

### KAHIBAH PUBLIC SCHOOL

Wiyellai Koa Community of Schools: coming together to provide excellence in public education

# Parent and Volunteer of the Year

## PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENT AND VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Public School Parent and Volunteer of the Year Award is a prestigious award presented to parents, guardians, caregivers and volunteers who have worked successfully as a partner with members of the school community to achieve the goals and priorities of their local NSW public school.

### LYN CLARK AND JOHN CLARK

Berry Public School

### KATHERINE EAGLE

Newbridge Heights Public School

### TREVOR GIBBONS

Orange High School

### KIRSTY HEWITT

Ruse Public School

### KATERINA KANIOURIS

Bald Face Public School

### KERREN KERNAGHAN

Lennox Head Public School

### JACKIE REAVIE

NBSC Cromer Campus

### SALLY RYAN

Winston Hills Public School

### TEREZ SHEETO

Harrington Street Public School

### BRINTTA THAVAKUMARAN

James Ruse Agricultural High School



Terez Sheeto, Harrington Street Public School



Brintta Thavakumaran, James Ruse Agricultural High School





Murrumbidgee Regional High School



Waterfall Public School Group



Fairfield West Public School



Faulconbridge Public School



James Meehan High School

# Minister's Award for Excellence in Student Achievement

## Recipient Citations



**Maryana Abdo**  
MILLER HIGH SCHOOL

Maryana Abdo is a visionary leader, gifted artist and dedicated scholar. As School Captain, she embodies excellence, resilience and integrity, demonstrating outstanding achievement across academics, leadership and cultural contributions. From excelling in gifted education programs to shining as a featured artist in 2024 NSW Schools Spectacular, her talents enrich both her school and community. Recognised in NSW Parliament for her contributions, Maryana's unwavering dedication and perseverance make her a true inspiration. Her impact extends beyond personal success as she uplifts others, fosters inclusivity and strengthens her school culture.



**Tori Adamson**  
HUNTER SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

Tori is an exceptional student who exemplifies academic excellence, elite athleticism and authentic leadership. As a 2025 Prefect and captain of the school's Hockey Squad, she leads with integrity, humility and determination. Her Band 6 result in Accelerated PDHPE placed her third in the state, and she continues to achieve top results across her HSC subjects. Tori represents her state and country in hockey while supporting younger students through mentoring and example. She is respected for her resilience, focus and willingness to serve her community.



**Eleanor Alonso-Love**  
FORT STREET HIGH SCHOOL

In her role as SRC President, and across a broad range of co-curricular activities, Eleanor demonstrates enthusiasm, integrity and inclusivity. She initiated Fort Street's Reconciliation Action Plan, bringing together a team of students and staff, and reaching out to First Nations community leaders. She demonstrates academic excellence, being Dux in Year 11 and now undertaking three Extension HSC courses. Eleanor excels in public speaking, debating and drama, participating in DET Arts Unit programs and directing the school's Senior Drama productions. She is a passionate advocate for public education and the diversity of opportunities it provides students.



**Max Bowen**  
ST JOHNS PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Max is a mature, dedicated young man who has consistently demonstrated academic excellence and strong leadership throughout high school. As School Captain, he leads with humility, integrity and a deep commitment to his school community. Max is passionate about promoting equality and inclusivity, ensuring all students feel heard and valued. He is highly respected by peers and teachers alike for his honesty, empathy and ability to lead by example. Max sets a high standard through his diligence, compassion and strong moral values, making him an inspiring role model and a truly admirable student.



**Joshua Cathie**  
INVERELL HIGH SCHOOL

Joshua Cathie is an exemplary Year 12 student, known for his academic excellence, leadership and community contributions. He consistently achieves top results in Advanced English and Mathematics, earning the Principal's Excellence Award each year. As School Captain, Chairman of the Inverell Youth Advisory Council, and a senior member of the Australian Air Force Cadets, Joshua was honoured with the Inverell Young Citizen Australia Day Award. He leads key community initiatives like the Festival Colour Run and charity fundraisers. A talented sportsman, dedicated student and passionate advocate, Joshua exemplifies integrity, responsibility and exceptional leadership.



**Esteban Cervera**  
BRISBANE WATER SECONDARY COLLEGE WOY WOY CAMPUS

Esteban Cervera is a passionate and talented student leader. Demonstrating integrity, leadership and dedication, Esteban excels in hospitality, public speaking and entrepreneurship. As an active and influential member of our school community, he co-founded a successful Artisan Biscuit business, expanding it from a small team to a thriving enterprise serving both school and community events. He has shown initiative by leading operations at the school's Industry Training Café and has represented the school at high-profile functions. Esteban exemplifies the values of public education through his commitment to service and excellence.



**Shreya Choudhury**  
MEREWETHER HIGH SCHOOL

Shreya Choudhury exemplifies academic excellence, leadership and integrity through her outstanding achievements and service to Merewether High School. As Year 11 Dux and an accelerated HSC Biology student achieving 96, she consistently ranks in the top 10% across all

subjects. A state medallist in ICAS English and public speaking champion, she also leads as debating captain and school Prefect, coordinating initiatives such as the \$128,000 World's Greatest Shave fundraiser. Shreya's dedication to inclusive leadership, cultural engagement and scholarly excellence reflects the highest ideals of public education and positions her as an inspiring role model within her school and wider community.



**Marcus Chu**  
NORTH SYDNEY BOYS HIGH SCHOOL

Marcus is an exemplary role model and leader, who has set the bar in so many areas he has been active in. His compassion and humanity have distinguished him as an exceptional leader, who embodies the school code of camaraderie, commitment, compassion, respect and integrity. He has consistently demonstrated his initiative and enthusiasm in all aspects of school life, making a real difference in many areas and is well-placed to do the same in society as a whole. A mature and well-respected young man, he has a bright future ahead of him and is an excellent ambassador for public education.



**Matilda Cole**  
WAGGA WAGGA HIGH SCHOOL

Matilda Cole is an exemplary student and genuine all-rounder. She has demonstrated extraordinary commitment to her responsibilities, representing the school and peers with integrity and dignity. Matilda has consistently demonstrated outstanding achievement in all areas of school life and as a senior student and School Captain, she has shown leadership and maturity beyond her years. Matilda has made a significant contribution to the whole school community. Wagga Wagga High School considers Matilda to be an outstanding student who exhibits personal qualities of honesty, integrity and determination.





**Dante Diaz**  
FORT STREET HIGH SCHOOL

Dante has been awarded several Fort Street Speech Day Leadership Awards, and was elected SRC Vice-President for 2024. He has also been a member of the Instrumental Music Program for six years, touring Spain and Portugal with the school in 2024. Dante's passion is football, and he is a referee, a member of the NSW Referee Development panel, and captain of the school's football and futsal teams. He is passionate about sharing his understanding of human health and football to improve the physical and mental health outcomes for migrant, indigenous and disadvantaged communities through access to football programs.



**Sofia Domingues**  
LAMBTON HIGH SCHOOL

Sofia is an outstanding student whose exceptional academic record, strong leadership and dedication to her school and community exemplify success and integrity. Consistently achieving 'A' grades, she ranks among the top students in her cohort, reflecting her commitment to excellence. As School Captain for 2024/25, she leads with maturity and empathy, motivating her peers with her inclusive approach. Sofia's dedication to personal growth and compassion for others is evident in her involvement throughout school life. Her recognition, including the 2023 Sharon Claydon Community Spirit and Leadership Award, underscores her role as a deserving model student in our community.



**Michael Elliott**  
NBSC MANLY CAMPUS

Michael's outstanding leadership skills across a range of school and community activities are evidenced through his successful participation in national and international model United Nations competitions, catalysing his leadership and driving of a school-based program for 50 students modelling United Nations processes. His mentoring has enhanced the knowledge of contemporary world issues, enabling students to demonstrate skills of diplomacy to navigate the global political landscape beyond school life. He has also achieved the highest Commonwealth Scouts accolade, The Kings Award and Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award recognising his dedicated commitment to service and developing the leadership capabilities of younger peers.



**Masinas Haddad**  
GREYSTANES HIGH SCHOOL

Masinas is an exceptional student, who possesses outstanding leadership skills. He has led multiple initiatives across the school to deliver improved school facilities and services, whilst also raising money for community charities. He is a young man who pushes himself to embrace new challenges that take him outside of his comfort zone. Masinas shows integrity and honour in all aspects of his endeavour, whilst setting high expectations of himself.



**Talia Hincal**  
STRATHFIELD GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

Talia Hincal is an exceptional leader and accomplished all-rounder who excels in every aspect of school life. She is service-driven and committed to creating positive change in local and global communities. Her unwavering commitment to service and community impact reflects a deep sense of responsibility to drive positive

change. With a resilient mindset and unwavering dedication, Talia actively champions social justice and inclusivity. Her academic excellence, leadership qualities, and ability to inspire others set her apart as an extraordinary student.



**Tanja Hornby**  
NBSC MACKELLAR GIRLS CAMPUS

Tanja is an exceptional student whose achievements in academic, sporting, cultural and leadership arenas are matched by her integrity, compassion and commitment to the values of public education. Tanja is a dedicated and compassionate student whose contributions to our school and broader community are exceptional. She consistently models integrity, resilience, and excellence and is a true ambassador for public education.



**Patrick Innes**  
HUNTER SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

Patrick is a young man of exceptional character, commitment and achievement. As 2025 School Captain of Hunter Sports High School, he leads with integrity, humility and purpose. Patrick excels academically, consistently ranking first in his subjects, and is an accomplished footballer playing at the elite level. His leadership on and off the field is inspiring, and his dedication to mentoring others, serving the school community, and upholding the highest standards of conduct makes him an outstanding role model. Patrick embodies the values of public education.



**Nadine Khatib**  
PRAIRIEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

Nadine Khatib demonstrates excellence across multiple public education and community platforms. As a School Prefect, she leads with integrity, compassion and inclusivity, empowering

her peers and enriching school life through active service. While excelling in her HSC studies, Nadine also contributes meaningfully to broader community initiatives that foster youth inclusion and student wellbeing. She is a thoughtful, articulate and deeply empathetic individual whose maturity and insight are well beyond her years. Nadine represents the best of public education.



**Sophie Lindsay**  
DENISON COLLEGE OF  
SECONDARY EDUCATION - KELSO  
HIGH CAMPUS

Sophie Lindsay is an outstanding student who consistently excels in academic, sporting and creative pursuits. Her strong leadership and commitment to community service further set her apart. Sophie embodies the values of excellence, integrity and service, demonstrating dedication, resilience and personal strength. Sophie is on track to achieve excellence in her HSC, with a goal of becoming a doctor in rural NSW to improve community health. Through her remarkable achievements and unwavering spirit, Sophie is an inspiration to students, staff and the wider community.



**Yevan Mallawa**  
GLENWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

Yevan Mallawa is an exceptional student and natural leader, currently serving as School Captain at Glenwood High School. He leads by example and through service, earning widespread respect from peers and staff. Academically outstanding, Yevan combines a strong work ethic with a genuine love of learning and self-improvement. His leadership extends across the SRC, Student Advocacy teams, debating and school sports. Known for his motivation, integrity and all-round excellence, Yevan is a positive role model who embodies the values of public education.



**Eve McCarthy**  
MACLEAN HIGH SCHOOL

Eve McCarthy exemplifies dedication and leadership. Following her participation in the 2024 USA Space Tour, she inspired her peers by presenting her experiences, fostering belief in their potential. Eve has taken on the role of mentor, particularly for younger female students, and leads the Connecting Minds STEM project, bridging a school in Australia with one in Japan. Her involvement in the ANTSO women in STEM work experience program and the Girls to Graduates STEM camp further highlight her commitment to empowering others and women in science. Eve's contributions reflect integrity, excellence and a passion for learning.



**Isabella Morris**  
DENISON COLLEGE OF  
SECONDARY EDUCATION –  
BATHURST HIGH CAMPUS

Isabella Morris' commitment to the core values of public education is unrivalled. Her dedication, devotion and attitude towards school and community service, academic learning and leadership are simply extraordinary. Isabella's desire to focus on developing others, places her in the top echelon of young people today. Exceptional leadership has allowed her to make a significant difference in the lives of many students. Isabella encourages others to stand-up for their beliefs, while encouraging her peers to reach their potential, which is rare in young leaders today. Isabella is an exceptional student who is very proud of our public education system.



**Ella Mounter**  
LAMBTON HIGH SCHOOL

Ella is an extraordinary student whose achievements in academics, sports, leadership and community service embody the values of integrity, excellence and compassion. She has consistently demonstrated her dedication to learning, earning several Academic Excellence and

ROSE Awards while ranking highly in her subjects. As a multi-time Australian Age Swimming Medalist and a committed assistant coach, she showcases exceptional athletic ability. Her position as a Prefect and her active participation in community service, including fundraising for the Mark Hughes Foundation, reflect her caring nature. Ella's approach to education and leadership positions her as an exemplary role model at Lambton High School.



**Jenna Oakman**  
KOORINGAL HIGH SCHOOL

Jenna is an exemplary student who not only excels academically but also shines as a talented singer and dancer. Jenna generously gives her time to represent our school at numerous events, showcasing her exceptional talents while inspiring her peers. Moreover, she takes on the role of a mentor, guiding younger students at our school and partner primary schools, fostering their growth and confidence. She actively promotes a positive school culture, contributing to an inclusive and supportive environment, extending far beyond the school gates.



**Alicia Pan**  
PRAIRIEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

Alicia Pan is an exceptionally intelligent, mature, and gifted student, driven by a deep passion for learning, academic excellence and community service. Her consistent ranking as the top student in her cohort highlights not only her capacity to excel in rigorous academic pursuits but also her outstanding organisational, communication and teamwork skills, refined through sustained involvement in both school and community leadership. As the 2024/25 Vice-Captain of Prefects and a dedicated community contributor, Alicia exemplifies the qualities of a well-rounded leader and scholar.



**Jaynie Alwin  
Prabakaradhas**  
ELIZABETH MACARTHUR  
HIGH SCHOOL

Jaynie is an exceptional representative of the best of public education. Jaynie has been accelerated in two subjects sitting her HSC in Tamil Continuers and Investigating Science last year while in Year 11. In both these subjects she achieved a band 6 result placing third in the state in Investigating Science and third in the state in the written component for Tamil. While excelling academically she also has dedicated herself to serving the school and community by representing the school in DOVES, Peer support and SRC as well as being elected Vice Captain.



**Luella Robinson**  
MELVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Luella has achieved a fine academic record at Melville High School. She has achieved excellent results through her enthusiastic application, intelligence and interest. Her schoolwork, like Luella, is punctual and well presented. It is also very thorough, mature and insightful. Luella is a considerate, courteous young lady who is reliable and trustworthy. At Melville High School, we actively encourage the development in our students of those qualities that Luella manifests – virtues such as honesty, generosity and integrity are highly valued, not easily taught and often rejected. Luella displays these attributes consistently.



**Tahira Roshan**  
MERRYLANDS HIGH SCHOOL

Tahira has flourished within our school community for years. She has excelled with her level of commitment and dedication through a range of opportunities such as the SRC, Leadership Team, Wellbeing Days, Orientation Days, Talent Quests, Harmony Days and Accelerated Course. Her academic excellence and maturity have been prominent through her inspiration to achieve,

pursue and promote integrity in all aspects of her life. Her story replicates unwavering courage, dedication and respect. Merrylands High School is excited to witness Tahira's future success and commitment to spread her positivity and care to society.



**Jack Ruan**  
NORTH SYDNEY BOYS  
HIGH SCHOOL

Jack is a mature and highly capable student who has achieved excellent academic results and is an excellent ambassador for the school. Jack has served the North Sydney Boys High School community with distinction. A highly valued member of our school community, Jack has shown great empathy, compassion and integrity in all that he does. As a school leader, he exemplified excellence, respect, fairness and responsibility. His active volunteering within and outside of the school, combined with his ability to show initiative and willingness to participate, make Jack a remarkable student.



**Ella Sinclair**  
BLAYNEY HIGH SCHOOL

Ella Sinclair exemplifies the spirit of public education through her outstanding academic performance, leadership and service. A consistent Honour Roll student, she has achieved outstanding results culminating in exemplary performance in the HSC year. As an inspiring School Captain, Ella leads with humility and compassion, inspiring the student body through her resilience and integrity. Her commitment to cultural pursuits, sport and community service—including mentoring, volunteering and church outreach programs, reflects her deep sense of responsibility and care.



**Emily Sonter****TUGGERAH LAKES SECONDARY COLLEGE – THE ENTRANCE CAMPUS**

Emily is an outstanding, highly motivated student who embodies the values of public education. She approaches her studies with an enquiring mind, reflected in her outstanding achievements in all HSC subjects and in completion of University courses pursuing her passion for Marine and Environmental Science. Emily shows determination to be of service to others in the school and local community and has led initiatives as a positive role model through her leadership in the SRC and Senior Leadership Team. Emily is passionate about the environment and is recognised for her advocacy while volunteering at the Coast's Marine Discovery Centre.

**Ruby Stafford****KYOGLE HIGH SCHOOL**

Ruby is an exemplary student who demonstrates commitment and contribution within school. In 2024 Ruby was lead and backing singer of powerful performances for Kyogle High School's NAIDOC celebrations. Within Kyogle High School, Ruby has worked with a team to reinvigorate the Student Representative Council. She has mentored younger students and is active in planning and promoting events to continue to develop a strong sense of belonging, respect, inclusivity and pride within the school. Ruby is held in high regard by her peers and staff who acknowledge the commitment she demonstrates to her studies, her school and the wider community.

**Toby Tyrrell****BLAYNEY HIGH SCHOOL**

Toby Tyrrell is an exceptional student whose academic excellence, leadership and resilience are praiseworthy. A consistent high achiever and recipient of numerous academic, sporting and service awards, Toby has demonstrated unwavering dedication to his school and community. His strength of character shone through following a life-threatening heart condition, where he overcame immense challenges with courage and determination, continuing his studies with distinction. A compassionate leader, school prefect, active volunteer and role model, Toby lives the values of public education – integrity, respect, and perseverance.

**Aijannah Valencia****ST JOHNS PARK HIGH SCHOOL**

Aijannah is an inspiring young woman who consistently demonstrates determination, resilience, and a genuine love of learning. She has maintained outstanding academic performance throughout high school and remains deeply committed to achieving her goals. As School Captain, Aijannah leads with empathy, honesty and dignity, earning the respect of both peers and staff. She is highly regarded for her strong moral character, motivation and ability to overcome challenges with grace. Aijannah embodies the qualities of an exemplary student and leader, making a lasting impact on her school community through her dedication, integrity and pursuit of academic and personal excellence.

**Rupali Wadhwa****PENRITH HIGH SCHOOL**

Rupali has made a profound impact on school culture through inclusive leadership and service. She is a truly exceptional student, with impressive HSC rankings across a diverse range of subjects highlighting her academic versatility and drive. Her academic excellence is matched by her community spirit. As School Captain, she champions equity through social justice campaigns, spearheading drives for vulnerable communities and homelessness support. Rupali leads with empathy, strengthening student voice and wellbeing across the school. Her ability to balance academic distinction with meaningful contribution makes her an exceptional young leader whose impact will be felt long beyond her school years.

**Ryan Wen****PENRITH HIGH SCHOOL**

As School Captain, Ryan leads with integrity, humility and a strong commitment to balance. He models how elite sporting achievement and academic excellence can coexist, earning top HSC rankings and major athletic awards. Ryan empowers his peers through collaborative leadership, making inclusive, team-based decisions and working closely with alumni to support student growth. His ability to unite others around shared goals has strengthened student voice, wellbeing and school culture. Ryan's dedication to excellence and service makes him a respected role model whose leadership continues to inspire and uplift the wider school community.

**Indianna Wilson****LEUMEAH HIGH SCHOOL**

Indiana has demonstrated extraordinary commitment to her responsibilities, both at school and externally in the sporting arena. Indiana is a genuine hardworking all-rounder. She has represented the school and her peers with dignity and maturity as a school leader and has made a significant contribution to the school community. Indiana consistently demonstrates outstanding achievement in all areas of school as well as breaking down stereotypes in her chosen sport of weightlifting, where she has achieved various medals and accolades. Leumeah High School considers Indiana to be an excellent student who exhibits personal qualities of honesty and determination.

**Ava Wright****NBSC MACKELLAR GIRLS CAMPUS**

Ava exemplifies the highest standards of academic, creative, and civic engagement. Her achievements are matched only by her integrity, leadership, and tireless commitment to her school and wider community. Ava leads with compassion, participates with enthusiasm and consistently demonstrates respect, fairness, cooperation and resilience. Ava is a role model to her peers and a credit to public education.



**Mya Wu**

**JAMES RUSE AGRICULTURAL  
HIGH SCHOOL**

Mya Wu is an exceptional student whose academic brilliance, principled leadership and unwavering commitment to social justice embody the values of public education. A national prize-winner in History and an articulate public speaker, Mya balances intellectual excellence with powerful advocacy. As founder of Youth 4 Difference and Vice President of Amnesty International, she has mobilised peers for real-world impact. Her initiatives in public speaking, civic engagement and student mentorship reflect a thoughtful, values-driven approach to leadership. Mya is not only an outstanding scholar but a changemaker.



**Laila Zakelj**

**OAK FLATS HIGH SCHOOL**

Laila Zakelj is an outstanding student leader whose academic excellence, integrity and commitment to service have profoundly enriched her school and community. As 2025 School Captain, she exemplifies inclusive, values-driven leadership. Laila has represented her peers locally and statewide, including as a member of the NSW Regional Youth Taskforce. Her achievements include the ADF Youth Leadership Award and the Stephen Jones MP Active Citizenship Award. Beyond school, she supports aged care residents with compassion and maturity. Laila's dedication, intellect and empathy mark her as a future leader on a broader stage.



**Cathy Zhang**

**JAMES RUSE AGRICULTURAL  
HIGH SCHOOL**

Cathy Zhang exemplifies the highest ideals of public education through her extraordinary academic achievement, visionary leadership and deep commitment to community. A top scholar and School Captain, Cathy is a national award-winning science researcher, accomplished musician and inclusive leader who inspires excellence in others. Her achievements – ranging from international science representation to founding an accessible music education platform – reflect her intellect, creativity, and compassion. Whether leading cadets, mentoring peers or driving whole-school initiatives, Cathy consistently upholds the values of integrity, service and innovation. She is a remarkable young woman whose impact extends far beyond the classroom and whose future is exceptionally bright.

Ballina Public School



# Minister's Award for Excellence in Teaching

## Recipient Citations



**Jade Bassett**

**RUTHERFORD TECHNOLOGY  
HIGH SCHOOL**

Jade Bassett is an exemplary teacher at the beginning of her career. She is inquisitive, solves problems and is always looking to do more for students. She exemplifies collaborative professionalism through her leadership of the RTHS Women in STEM Program, consistently sharing expertise and learning alongside colleagues across school and system levels. Jade has helped build teacher capacity, expand student access to enriched learning and strengthen networks across schools and industry, working well beyond her teaching role to uplift public education through collective expertise. Jade is a future leader in the making.



**Sarah Bray**

**ELDERSLIE PUBLIC SCHOOL**

Sarah Bray is an outstanding beginning teacher, who demonstrates exceptional passion and dedication, especially for students with additional needs. Her commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment is evident in her daily interactions and innovative teaching strategies. Sarah sets high expectations, inspiring her students to achieve their best and developing strong, meaningful relationships that create a positive classroom atmosphere. She has also made significant contributions to our support unit and school community, collaborating effectively with colleagues and creating social stories that benefit many classes.



**Samuel Burgin**

**BOMADERY HIGH SCHOOL**

Sam Burgin is an exceptional TAS teacher whose passion for Engineering Studies has transformed student outcomes at Bomaderry High School. Through innovative, inclusive and future-focused teaching, Sam empowers every student to succeed, many of whom are now pursuing engineering pathways they had never imagined. He is a collaborative leader, a mentor to colleagues and a champion for public education. Sam exemplifies the values of excellence, equity and aspiration and has made an enduring impact on students, staff and the wider community.



**Lauren Elton**

**WATERFALL PUBLIC SCHOOL**

Lauren exemplifies a commitment to high-quality education, achieving 100% measurable learning growth in her diverse K-6 class. She employs high-impact teaching strategies and fosters collaboration among colleagues, enhancing professional practice. Her leadership in assessment and targeted literacy initiatives has significantly improved student outcomes. Lauren's integrity and dedication to equity and excellence in education make her an exemplary teacher who embodies the values of the NSW Department of Education.





**Billie-Jo Fisher**  
MEREWETHER HIGH SCHOOL

Billie-Jo Fisher is an extraordinary educator whose visionary teaching, inclusive pedagogy and unwavering dedication have transformed student learning and teacher practice. Her impact extends well beyond her own classroom, driving curriculum innovation, leading statewide professional learning and championing student voice. At Merewether High School, she inspires excellence, cultivates deep thinking and mentors colleagues with generosity and insight. Under her guidance, students consistently achieve outstanding HSC results and develop confidence, agency and aspiration. Respected by peers, cherished by students and trusted by families, Billie-Jo exemplifies the very best of public education. She is a truly transformative force in NSW education.



**Susie Harker**  
TERRANORA PUBLIC SCHOOL

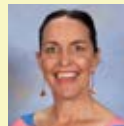
Susie Harker is a long-standing Kindergarten teacher renowned for her exceptional ability to know her students as individuals. With expert planning, she effectively brings out their strengths, fostering a supportive and engaging learning environment. Her collaborative nature and leadership as an expert classroom practitioner exemplify her commitment to education. Susie's passion for teaching shines through as she goes above and beyond, ensuring every child is engaged in their learning through fun, explicit instruction and high expectations. She is highly respected by the parent community for her dedication and positive impact on their children.



**Marc James**  
CURRAN PUBLIC SCHOOL

Marc James is an exemplary educator who expertly differentiates learning to accommodate students with diverse needs, ensuring an inclusive classroom

environment. His commitment to student voice is evident in his teaching and learning programs, empowering students to actively participate in their educational journey. Additionally, Marc's innovative use of technology enhances engagement and facilitates personalised learning experiences. He plays a pivotal role in leading the implementation of learning dispositions across the school, fostering a culture of growth and resilience among students. Through his efforts, Marc not only supports individual learning pathways but also cultivates a collaborative and dynamic learning community.



**Kate Livio**  
KOORINGAL HIGH SCHOOL

Kate Livio is an outstanding educator whose commitment to excellence in teaching is evident in her classroom. She skillfully differentiates instruction to meet the diverse needs of her students, ensuring that every learner, from those requiring remediation to High Potential and Gifted Education students seeking challenge, achieves their best outcomes. Kate's dedication to fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment inspires her students and elevates educational standards within her school community.



**Megan McCarthy**  
HUNTER SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

Megan McCarthy is an exceptional educator whose influence at Hunter Sports High School has been transformative. As a foundation teacher in two of our most innovative academies, Megan has redefined what inclusive, student-centred learning can look like. Her work with disengaged learners is driven by deep compassion, creativity, and pedagogical skill. Megan's collaborative leadership, curriculum design expertise, and unwavering commitment to equity have made her a role model for staff and a trusted advocate for students. Her impact reaches far beyond her classroom, shaping practice and culture across the school.



**Delphine McLachlan**  
TARRAWANNA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Delphine McLachlan is an outstanding educator whose leadership in early learning has transformed transition to school and driven lasting improvements in student outcomes. Her innovative transition program, preschool outreach and Kindergarten Expo have strengthened family engagement, reduced school refusal and contributed to a 66% rise in enrolments. A lead learner, Del introduced explicit phonics instruction, laying foundations that continue to lift reading achievement. Her calm, inclusive classroom and mentoring of early-career teachers exemplify excellence. Del's work reflects deep care, strategic insight and unwavering belief in every child's potential – making her an influential and highly respected leader in public education.



**Alan Mtashar**  
PRAIRIEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

Alan Mtashar, a dedicated educator in the HSIE faculty at Prairiewood High School, has transformed public education over the past decade. His innovative teaching and deep subject knowledge have led his students to exceptional achievements, including first place in the 2024 NSW VET Retail Course. Alan's engaging style creates an inclusive classroom where every student succeeds, fostering a supportive and dynamic learning environment. His commitment to excellence goes beyond the classroom, consistently implementing strategies that enhance educational outcomes.



**Goonaseelan Naidoo**  
CHIFLEY COLLEGE –  
BIDWILL CAMPUS

GM is an exceptional educator whose skills in identifying and addressing individual need, both learning and wellbeing, is truly outstanding. He achieves enormous impact in very limited time frame and extends this influence throughout

the schools of western Sydney, improving the outcomes and lives of countless students. GM's connection to students, especially those with complex needs help him to build resilience and encourage self actualisation and responsibility. He continues to serve the most disadvantaged of students with resounding success and is deeply respected by all with whom he engages.



**Samuel Deivendra Pakkiam**  
GRANVILLE BOYS HIGH SCHOOL

Samuel Pakkiam demonstrates outstanding dedication to excellence in teaching and learning. His tireless support of Stage 6 mathematics students offering sessions before school, after school, and during holidays reflects his deep commitment to student success. His innovative teaching practices, collaborative leadership, and mentorship of colleagues have significantly enhanced student outcomes and strengthened professional capacity within the school. Mr Pakkiam embodies the values of public education through his integrity, generosity, and pursuit of academic excellence for all learners. He is a highly respected educator whose impact extends well beyond the classroom.



**Nicolina Perantuono**  
PICNIC POINT PUBLIC SCHOOL

Nicolina Perantuono is a highly accomplished educator for over 30 years of service, more than 20 of those in the Opportunity Class, have significantly advanced outcomes for HPGE students at Picnic Point Public School. Through differentiated, interdisciplinary programs, Nicolina challenges students to excel, fostering critical thinking, creativity and resilience. Her students consistently thrive both academically and personally. A respected mentor and leader, Nicolina shares her deep expertise through professional learning, policy contributions and OC teacher networks. Her exceptional dedication, innovative teaching and sustained impact on learners exemplify the highest standards of the profession.



**Mark Peruzzo**  
SARAH REDFERN HIGH SCHOOL

Mark Peruzzo embodies the characteristics of an outstanding educator. He is highly regarded and a role model to those who he works alongside as he skillfully builds the capacity of others, in particular early career teachers through the PeX initiative. The students at Sarah Redfern High School have been positively impacted by Mark as he consistently presents outstanding high impact teaching strategies. He is fostering and building the next generation of lifelong learners. The impact of Mark's commitment to the students in his classroom and those he mentors in the teaching profession will be felt for years to come.



**Daniela Phillips**  
HUNTER SCHOOL OF THE PERFORMING ARTS

Daniela Phillips is an outstanding teacher of French, Italian and Japanese, known for her innovation, dedication and passion for student learning. Her creative approach connects students with authentic cultural experiences, from French cooking and film festivals to real-world listening tasks and immersive excursions. She is a generous mentor, trusted by colleagues and students alike. Daniela's sustained contributions to Aboriginal education, international partnerships and whole-school collaboration reflect her unwavering commitment to excellence. She embodies the very best of our profession.



**Lisa Phillips**  
ORANGE HIGH SCHOOL

Lisa is an outstanding educator. As a TAS teacher specialising in Textiles and Food Technology, she delivers innovative, differentiated lessons that consistently drive student success, including exceptional 2024 HSC results. Lisa creates inclusive, respectful classrooms where students thrive, guided by clear learning goals, explicit teaching and effective feedback. As a collaborative leader, she mentors early career teachers, contributes to

whole school improvement through her executive leadership, and shares best practices across faculties. Lisa's deep commitment to inclusion, student learning, staff development, and continuous improvement makes her a much loved and respected role model in the Orange High School community.



**Ruth Rau**  
CAMBRIDGE GARDENS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ruth Rau is a dedicated and outstanding teacher whose deep commitment to education leaves a lasting impact on her students. She consistently inspires young minds to pursue knowledge, overcome challenges and reach their full potential. Ruth's heartfelt concern for each student's wellbeing is evident in every interaction she has, fostering a welcoming and supportive classroom environment. Her encouragement and consistent presence have guided many students toward exceptional academic and personal achievements. Ruth is a source of inspiration and a driving force for meaningful, lasting change in the lives of those she teaches.



**Elizabeth Ruis**  
WINDSOR HIGH SCHOOL

Elizabeth Ruis exemplifies excellence in education through her unwavering commitment to student learning and extensive contributions in Agriculture and Primary Industries. With 33 years of experience, she fosters strong relationships with students that enhances engagement and curiosity. Her integration of the Paddock to Plate ethos into curriculum provides practical experiences. As a dedicated member of the HSC Examination Committee and Editor of Australian Goat World, she actively contributes to her profession, ensuring fair assessments and promoting continuous improvement. Her innovative teaching strategies and passion for agriculture inspire students and empower colleagues, making her an exceptional educator.



**Lizette Taylor**  
GRALEE SCHOOL

Lizette is an exceptional teacher whose dedication has significantly impacted a student with childhood dementia. Over 18 months, she crafted tailored learning programs aligned with curriculum standards, while actively involving the student's parents in the education process. Her commitment to fostering professional dialogue and building partnerships has been invaluable, especially for the grateful parents, both educators themselves. Lizette's innovative practices, compassionate approach, and unwavering support have transformed the educational experience for her student and the broader school community, exemplifying the qualities of an outstanding educator.



**Samantha Trumper**  
NBSC FRESHWATER SENIOR CAMPUS

Samantha is a highly accomplished teacher whose inclusive, student-centred approach has transformed dance education at Freshwater Senior Campus. She leads innovative, high-impact teaching that fosters creativity, confidence, and exceptional HSC results, with students regularly selected for Call Back. Her inclusive Dance Ensemble program has expanded access to the arts and empowered students of all abilities. A committed mentor and collaborator, Samantha strengthens professional practice across faculties and models the Department values of Excellence, Equity and Respect. Her leadership enriches school culture, uplifts colleagues and inspires students—making a profound and lasting contribution to public education and student success.



Briar Road Public School



# Secretary's Award for Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

## Finalist Citations



**Chloe Baumann**  
SARAH REDFERN HIGH SCHOOL

Chloe Bauman is a dedicated educator who leads the way in ensuring that student wellbeing is a priority at Sarah Redfern High School. She is compassionate and has a deep understanding of the school community she serves. Chloe creates and implements wellbeing initiatives that respond to the needs of students and families. This has led to the strengthening of relationships and a strong sense of student belonging. Chloe builds the capacity of staff and through effective coaching, she has established that wellbeing is at the forefront of the schools focus so that students can be the best version of themselves.



**Daniel Fusi**  
MENINDEE CENTRAL SCHOOL

Daniel's journey at Menindee Central School began in 2007 as the Aboriginal Male Educator, before stepping into the role of Senior Leader Community Engagement with the introduction of the Connected Communities Strategy. Over nearly two decades, Daniel has become a cornerstone of transformational change at Menindee Central School, playing a vital role in reconnecting families with the school and reshaping perceptions of education within the local Aboriginal community. Daniel is the heart of Menindee Central School. He leads with integrity, models care and cultural pride, and is a powerful advocate for inclusion, trust and belonging in public education.

Narromine High School



**Sarah Martin**  
CONISTON PUBLIC SCHOOL

Sarah Martin is highly respected and regarded throughout the Wollongong Network of Schools and beyond, in her role as Assistant Principal, Learning and Support. Sarah consistently displays an exceptional level of integrity, professionalism and empathy as well as a deep consideration for the needs of the individual student, their family and the school. Sarah's superlative guidance is testament to her extensive knowledge and skills, ability to draw on relevant expertise, and high level organisational and communication skills.

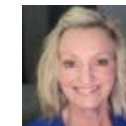


**Julie Street-Smith**  
ABORIGINAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE

Julie has always championed diversity and inclusion, promoting respect for Aboriginal Education, Indigenous cultures and perspectives. She assists schools create an environment where all students feel valued and connected. This approach has fostered understanding and appreciation among students, staff and community from all backgrounds, encouraging collaboration and empathy. Her work consistently enhances the learning experience by engaging with local Aboriginal communities and elders, ensuring that education is relevant and meaningful. By consistently prioritising diversity, inclusion and belonging in Aboriginal Education, Julie has empowered students, strengthened cultural identity and contributed to a more equitable and harmonious society.



Northern Rivers Flood Recovery Team



**Katrina Stuve**  
ENGAGEMENT AND CORPORATE REPORTING

Katrina Stuve is a visionary leader and fierce advocate for student voice, diversity and inclusion. As Senior Adviser, Ministers Council, she has transformed how the NSW Department of Education listens to and empowers students, particularly those from underrepresented communities such as Schools for Specific Purposes, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and students with disability. Katrina's courageous leadership, innovative collaborations and commitment to authentic engagement have elevated student perspectives in key reforms and national conversations. Through her work, Katrina exemplifies the Department's values, ensuring every student feels seen, heard and able to shape an equitable, inclusive future for NSW education.



**Antoanet Warda**  
PRAIRIEVALE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Antoanet is a skilled community engagement officer who has designed and implemented systems that strengthen collaboration between the school, families and external agencies. She has led initiatives that promote school life as a foundation for wrap-around support, particularly benefiting refugee and migrant families. Her inclusive approach has successfully bridged cultural and communication gaps, empowering parents to become confident partners in their children's education. She fosters empathy and community understanding by actively listening and sharing family stories with care and permission. Her work ensures that inclusion is not aspirational but embedded in the school culture, with lasting, measurable impact on engagement.

# Secretary's Award for Living Our Values

## Finalist Citations

### Accountability

#### Northern Rivers Flood Recovery Team

##### SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE NSW

The work of the School Infrastructure Flood Recovery Delivery Team, led by Martyn, Adam, Ash and Jen, exemplifies the importance of accountability when it comes to delivering new schools for the flood impacted Northern Rivers. Through strong partnerships with school leadership and school communities, determined collaboration with numerous external stakeholders, including Councils and NSW Reconstruction Authority and the Local Regional Planning Panel, and innovative designs and construction methods, this team has ensured that the communities of the Northern Rivers will have access to high-quality public school infrastructure that is innovative and flood resilient for generations to come.

### Transition to Primary School Team

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD OUTCOMES

The Transition to Primary School Team in the Early Learners unit drew on their expert knowledge of early childhood pedagogy and the current transition to school evidence base to provide high quality resources, Professional Learning and transition to school guidelines. The resources and PL equip school leaders with practical, evidence-based strategies to inform and guide transition to school improvement planning which fosters collaboration and community engagement to enhance transition practices between early childhood education and primary school giving children the best start in learning. Schools were kept accountable thanks to this valuable work.

Transition to Primary School Team

### Equity

#### Box Hill Temporary Primary School Team

##### SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE NSW

The combined effort of teams within School Infrastructure working as one unit with leadership from Public Schools led to the delivery and opening of Box Hill Public School in temporary facilities in record time. As a result of the collaboration and determination of the teams to overcome the many challenges to delivery, construction was completed in just 45 days to meet the need of a growing population, ultimately leading to 150 students being able to attend a local public school in their area on Day 1 Term 1 2025.

### Community and Mobile Preschool Funding Team

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD OUTCOMES

The Community & Mobile Preschool Funding team stands out for their unwavering commitment to delivering funding, giving children the best start



in learning. As an engine behind Start Strong, they expertly balance sector need with government priorities - supporting services with clarity, empathy, and technical precision. Their leadership in refining processes like fee relief provision ensures policy is shaped by current practice and data. Trusted across the department and the sector, they consistently deliver high-impact work that sustains service delivery while drawing upon practical insights to lay groundwork for all NSW children, now and future, to participate in early childhood education.



Community and Mobile Preschool Funding Team



### Merran Wiggins

**SCHOOL BASED APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINEESHIP ENGAGEMENT OFFICER, EDUCATION AND SKILLS REFORM**

Merran is a School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship (SBAT) Engagement Officer for the Educational Pathways Program, designed to improve the education and career outcomes for NSW public school students. Merran's work in building industry partnerships to broker employment opportunities, has resulted in a 63% increase in SBAT participation across Lake Macquarie schools. It is Merran's individualised approach to supporting students throughout their SBAT journey that has contributed to her success. Merran's commitment has been recognised through local awards and stakeholder testimonials highlighting her commitment to go above and beyond for quality student education and vocational outcomes.

### Excellence

#### Digital Declarations Team

##### PEOPLE GROUP AND OPERATIONS GROUP

In Term 4 2024, Digital Declarations was launched which streamlines the screening of non-employees such as volunteers, contractors, parents and carers. Digital Declarations removed the need for paper forms and duplicate screening across schools through digital submission (via a phone) as well as central storage of declarations. Digital Declarations allows instant verification of WWCC, simplified screening outcomes, audit log, and the ability to upload supporting documents. This means faster, clearer, and more compliant screening while reducing administrative burden on schools. Digital Declarations was trialled by 300 schools in T3 2024 and is now being used by over 1600 schools with over 45,000 Digital Declarations submitted.

Digital Declarations Team







Literacy and Numeracy Practice Guide Project Team

## Literacy and Numeracy Practice Guide Project Team

### TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT WELLBEING

The L&N Practice Guide project team worked to research, test, build, refine and release a comprehensive online resource, The L&N Practice Guide, supporting schools in their literacy and numeracy improvement work. Aligned to the SEF and Our P4PE, the guide presents literacy and numeracy priorities, indicators of effective practice, observable behaviours of teachers and leaders, supporting resources and evidence sources. Excellence was demonstrated through a strong commitment to quality, the collaborative way they work, engaging partners and critical friends to ensure it meets school needs. It has had over 10,000 views in the Universal Resources Hub since the launch.

## School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBAT) Engagement Team

### EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS PROGRAM – EDUCATION AND SKILLS REFORM

The School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBAT) Engagement team underpins the actions of Our Plan for NSW Public Education

supporting students to engage in meaningful pathways through the implementation of quality SBAT programs. In 2025, there are 31 SBAT Engagement Officers who focus on increasing stakeholder engagement and provide localised support across a group of schools. The team has significantly impacted growth in SBAT participation, driving a 19% increase in SBAT participation from 2022 to 2024. The team demonstrates Excellence every day through their dedication, adaptability, and collaboration that drive their incredible results.

School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBAT) Engagement Team



## Service



**Brianna Rodger**  
SENIOR PROJECT OFFICER,  
EARLY CHILDHOOD OUTCOMES

Brianna is a subject matter expert and project lead for the delivery of fee relief to community and mobile preschools under the Start Strong program. Through the provision of high-quality communications and resources to support services and a collaborative approach to delivering payments and collecting fee relief data, Brianna has led the equitable delivery of fee relief funding to where it is needed most and has allowed preschools to provide affordable, quality preschool to thousands of families enrolled in community and mobile preschools across NSW.



**Cara Burrell**  
SENIOR PROJECT OFFICER,  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Cara Burrell is a Senior Project Officer, leading the workforce and recruitment component of the School Admin Reduction Program (SARP). SARP is a key initiative in delivering on Our Plan for NSW Public Education, contributing to strengthening trust and respect for school support staff and addressing workload pressures. Cara embodies the value of Service across all elements of her role, providing point-in-time support with team members, schools, and stakeholders across the department. She has single-handedly supported all 723 schools participating in the program to utilise their funding allocation to hire temporary school administrative and support staff.

Sector Programs Branch



Mandatory Training Team. We would like to acknowledge our colleagues who are not pictured here: Peta Pocock, Kyle Egan, Donna Britten, Liana Katic, Pieter Van Keppel, Heidi Okkonen, Pouthida Ngeth, Marcio Salgado, Emma Whiting and Melissa Smith

## Mandatory Training Team PEOPLE GROUP

The Mandatory Training Team has exemplified the value of Service by delivering a streamlined and innovative training framework that aligns with the Plan for NSW Public Education. Through collaboration, data-driven strategies, and responsiveness to stakeholder needs, the team reduced the training burden, improved compliance rates, and enhanced professional development opportunities. Their efforts have directly supported the teaching workforce, enabling staff to focus on leadership, teaching, and learning, while fulfilling the NSW government's commitment to reducing administrative workload in schools.

## Sector Programs Branch EARLY CHILDHOOD OUTCOMES

Sector Programs Branch embodies excellence in advancing access, equity and quality in early childhood education through dedicated, expert program delivery at scale and pace. Their efforts contributed to the successful delivery of key initiatives, including fee relief programs, the funding allocation over \$870 million, and the rollout of innovative grants making a tangible, positive impact on the sector. Through their leadership, over 740 community and mobile preschools and 3,500 long day care services benefited, impacting over 200,000 children every day. Their humble work in supporting service innovation, operational efficiency and responsive service delivery demonstrate the best of NSW public service.

## Trust



**Lou-Anne Lind**  
DIRECTOR LOCAL OPERATIONS,  
EARLY CHILDHOOD OUTCOMES

Lou-Anne Lind is a highly experienced public service Executive who has left an indelible mark on Early Childhood Outcomes as a trusted and highly collaborative practitioner and champion. Known for her frank and fearless approach to ensuring equity for all children across NSW communities, Lou-Anne operates with transparency and is always a friendly face ready to listen. A curious soul, she has consistently demonstrated a skilful ability to authentically connect with all stakeholders, even amidst contention and in the face of her own challenges. Lou-Anne exemplifies trust to the core and represents the very best of NSW public education.

## Preschool Team in Early Learning EARLY CHILDHOOD OUTCOMES

The Early Learning team in Early Childhood Education and Care manage the responsibility of the department as Approved Provider of NSW public preschools. The preschool team within Early Learning are qualified early childhood teachers who draw on their expert knowledge of the National Quality Framework and their experience as preschool teachers or school leaders to support schools with public preschools to engage in ongoing continuous improvement practices ensuring all public preschools meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework, are compliant with the National Law and Regulations, and meet or exceed the National Quality Standards.



School Experience Program Team



Preschool Team in Early Learning

## School Experience Program Team PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Experiencing the day-to-day operations of a school is a way for Education support staff to gain a better understanding of school life. Education Support Staff learn more about how their role can support schools by observing the great work being done and experiencing the challenges our schools face. With more than 1,280 Education Support Staff engaging across nearly 600 schools, the School Experience Program Team plays a crucial role in the seamless coordination of these programs statewide. The SEP builds trust and enhances effective partnerships between Education support staff and schools.

# Secretary's Award for Excellent Service

## Recipient Citations



**Hawraa Beydoun**  
BASS HIGH SCHOOL

As our Community Liaison Officer at Bass High School, Hawraa has been instrumental in bridging the gap between our school and the community through organised school community cultural events. Hawraa has developed strong partnerships with local organisations, enhancing support for our students and families through parents and citizens meetings and projects. Through her dedication and proactive initiatives, Hawraa has fostered a sense of belonging and engagement, ensuring that every voice is heard. Hawraa's unwavering commitment to our school community truly exemplifies the spirit of this award.



**Jodie Bird**  
CHATHAM HIGH SCHOOL

Jodie Bird is the human heartbeat of Chatham High School and its rural Mid-Coast community. She knows every student, parent, Elder and sponsor by name and forges partnerships that change lives. Service shows in dawn bus runs, late-night grant writing and calm phone calls to families in crisis; Equity in Luminosity scholarships and no-shame starter packs; Excellence in the café trailer she turned into a living classroom that yields barista skills and VET credits. As secretary to nine network schools and a voice on the Learning Advisory Group, Jodie lifts others first and embodies every pillar of public education each day.



**Cheryl Butler**  
HANNANS ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL

Cheryl Butler is an exemplary leader who has demonstrated excellence in high-potential and gifted education through her role as Principal and Coordinator of the CREATE program. The CREATE program, an established HPGE initiative for students in Years 4-6 has been operating for over 20 years across two Public School directorates. Cheryl has consistently championed innovative teaching practices and fostered a culture of high expectations that has directly enhanced student outcomes. Under Cheryl's leadership, the CREATE HPGE program has flourished, particularly in the Arts, where her passion for drama has inspired countless students and teachers.



**Bruna Doma**  
MACLEAN HIGH SCHOOL

Bruna Doma is a distinguished language teacher at Maclean High School, where she has served for 28 years, significantly enhancing the school's vibrant culture and commitment to language education. Her passion has led to outstanding HSC results, ensuring languages has been taught consistently over the last 28 years. Bruna's dedication to equity ensures that students from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to enriching experiences, significantly broadening their horizons. As a staunch advocate for public education, she promotes MHS as the premier choice for families in the Clarence Valley. Bruna embodies excellence in service and serves as an inspiring role model.





**Jodi Harris**  
SMITHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL

Jodi Harris is an exceptional primary school Principal known for her passion, dedication and tireless commitment to public education. As Vice President of Fairfield PPC and a valued member of the NSW PPA Early Childhood Standing Committee, she consistently goes beyond her role to support colleagues across the network. Her systems-based leadership ensures smooth school operations, and she approaches every challenge with determination and professionalism. Jodi's unwavering support, collaborative spirit and pursuit of excellence make her a respected and inspirational leader. She is a true asset to her profession and a strong advocate for quality education in every setting.



**Benjamin Hubbard**  
JAMISON HIGH SCHOOL

Through his innovative integration of technology, Benjamin Hubbard has transformed the learning environment at Jamison High School, fostering active participation and collaboration among students. His development of centralised communication platforms has streamlined interactions between teachers, students and parents, ensuring everyone stays informed and engaged. Benjamin's commitment to inclusivity is evident in his creation of accessible signage, which enhances the school's environment for all students. By automating administrative tasks, he empowers educators to focus on teaching, ultimately improving academic outcomes. Benjamin's holistic approach not only enriches learning experiences but also equips students with critical skills for success in a digital world.



**Ben Jones**  
TEMPE HIGH SCHOOL

Ben consistently shares his extensive content knowledge with his colleagues in NSW public schools. As a key contributor to the professional learning initiatives delivered by Secondary Curriculum, he equips our teachers to effectively teach new, diverse and technically challenging syllabus content. His ongoing collaboration and networking with Software Engineering teachers, along with our team, empowers teachers to deliver high-quality teaching for every student in their classroom.



**Amanda Kowalczyk**  
KOONAWARRA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Amanda Kowalczyk has worked tirelessly to establish a culture of excellence at Koonawarra Public School, setting a high standard for the entire school community. Through her leadership, she has cultivated an environment where students, teachers and staff are inspired and supported to achieve their best. One of Amanda's greatest strengths is her ability to actively promote the school within the broader community. She consistently thinks creatively and strategically, forging meaningful partnerships with interagencies, local council, local members of parliament, sporting organisations and local industries — all with the goal of enriching student opportunities and outcomes.



**Mia Kumar**  
BURWOOD GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

Mia Kumar is an exceptional educational leader whose 50+ years of service have profoundly shaped generations of students and educators. As Principal of Burwood Girls High School, she champions student voice, fosters inclusive excellence and builds enduring connections with families and community. Her fierce advocacy for young women, commitment to collaboration and passion for education have created a thriving school culture where every student is valued and empowered. Mia's legacy is one of compassion, vision and tireless dedication. Mia is an extraordinary role model whose leadership exemplifies the very best of public education.



**Ros Mattingly**  
KOORINGAL HIGH SCHOOL

Ros Mattingly is an outstanding educator whose dedication to student wellbeing is exceptional. She has been instrumental in restructuring our wellbeing programs, ensuring they are effective and responsive to individual needs. Ros consistently goes above and beyond to support every student requiring assistance, tailoring programs to foster their growth and resilience. Her guidance and support have been invaluable to our entire wellbeing team, promoting a collaborative and compassionate approach to student care.



**Christine Munro**  
COROWA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Christine Munro is recognised for her outstanding dedication and service spanning 38 years with the NSW Department of Education. Through her successful grant applications, she has secured \$343,872 to support student wellbeing, enhance student and teacher learning, engage the community and improve learning environments across Corowa Public School. Christine's leadership in the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program earned a National Sustainability Award, presented at Parliament House in 2024. Additionally, her support of the P&C and community engagement projects highlights her unwavering commitment to public education and her passion for fostering a thriving educational community.

Centennial Park School





**Kylie Parsons**  
MORUYA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Kylie works with staff, students, parents and community members to ensure that the provision of education is connected to students' culture as well as their individual learning needs. Kylie's work with community members has increased the number of parents attending school events. Kylie's community Dhurga language lessons compliment the lessons that students participate in at school and allow families to reconnect with their language, culture and heritage. Kylie is deeply committed to her work and supports all students, staff and community members in understanding and connecting with Aboriginal culture to enhance outcomes for all students.



**Michael Pedersen**  
BASS HIGH SCHOOL

In his dual role of General Assistant and School Learning Support Officer, Michael Pedersen brings extensive vocational knowledge and skills that inspire student participation in Music and Industrial Technology Timber. His deep understanding of our local community allows him to tailor learning experiences that resonate with students. Through strong instructional skills and a nurturing approach, Michael motivates and develops emerging talent, fostering a passion for learning and creativity. Michael's dedication truly enhances the educational experience for all students. As a General Assistant he has been instrumental in designing and establishing the hairdressing salon and auto workshop as school learning resources.



**Peter Steel**  
OAK FLATS HIGH SCHOOL

Across his 33 years of excellent service to public education, Peter Steel has dedicated his career to empowering students in low socio-economic communities, ensuring equitable opportunities

for all, particularly those at risk. His student-centered approach fosters growth, curiosity, and connection, while his leadership as Year Adviser and Behaviour Mentor has transformed the lives of countless students. Peter's expertise, mentorship, and commitment to excellence have shaped our school culture, leaving an enduring legacy. His work exemplifies the best of public education, making him an invaluable asset to our school community.



**Kristy Sutton**  
WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOL

Kristy Sutton has demonstrated exceptional initiative and compassion in developing and leading programs that nurture the emotional, social, and mental wellbeing of both students and staff. Through her vision and dedication, she has worked with the leadership team to create safe, supportive spaces that foster resilience, connection and personal growth. Kristy has successfully implemented Positive Behaviour for Learning, the Coach to Cope Program and proactive wellbeing initiatives. A passionate educator, Kristy continually models empathy, active listening and a deep understanding of the challenges facing today's learners. Her leadership has inspired others to prioritise wellbeing as a foundation for learning.



**Corina Vogler-McFarlane**  
WENTWORTH POINT  
PUBLIC SCHOOL

As an exceptional school psychologist, Corina profoundly impacts our community by supporting the social, emotional and academic needs of students. Corina connects with students, fostering trust and safety, which encourages their engagement and personal growth. She collaborates with families, providing essential resources and support, strengthening our community. Additionally, Corina supports our staff through guidance and professional development on mental health issues, fostering a culture of awareness and empathy.

# Secretary's Award for Outstanding School Achievement

## Recipient Citations

### AJUGA SCHOOL GEORGES RIVER ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE

#### Ajuga School Green Guardians Initiative

GREEC was proud to partner with Ajuga School, fostering a collaborative environment that values both students and staff. Throughout this project, students have shown remarkable dedication and curiosity, engaging deeply with each initiative and understanding the significance of their contributions. This commitment has enriched their learning experience and promoted a culture of knowledge sharing within the community. Ajuga School exemplifies respect and personal growth, as seen in the students' dedication to the project. This partnership highlights the positive impact of collaborative educational initiatives, and we look forward to further opportunities for growth together.



Ajuga School and Georges River Environmental Education Centre

### AUBURN NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL

#### Becoming Mathematicians Teacher Professional Learning Project

This project was developed in response to the implementation of the new K-2 Mathematics Syllabus, internal and external student data, and variability in teacher confidence in planning and delivering core mathematical concepts. Strategies to improve teacher knowledge and skills included Instructional leaders and K-2 teachers engaging in 10 high-impact, practical workshops, collaborative planning sessions, and a four-week inquiry cycle called BM2. Data demonstrated the project led to a significant improvement in teacher capacity and confidence to plan and deliver quality mathematics lessons aligned with the new syllabus and improved student learning outcomes.

### AUBURN NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL Lights on Literacy Project

Auburn North's 'Lights on Literacy Project' was developed in response to the Department's new 3-6 English curriculum, internal and external student data, and variability in teacher confidence in planning, implementing and assessing literacy. Strategies to improve teacher knowledge and skills included Instructional leaders and 3-6 teachers engaging in 14 high-impact, practical workshops, the development of scope and sequence documents, diagnostic assessments, new writing rubrics, collaborative planning and individual coaching. Workshops were filmed for facilitator self-reflection and sustainability of practice. Data demonstrated this project significantly improved teacher capacity and confidence to plan and deliver evidence-based literacy programs, and improved learning outcomes.



## BALLINA PUBLIC SCHOOL

### Berry Street Education Model

Ballina Public School staff have made a purposeful and universal commitment to the implementation of the Berry Street Education Model. It has had a profound impact across the academic, social and wellbeing areas of the school community. The focus on explicit teaching and trauma informed practice has increased a sense of belonging in the school and community, increased student attendance greater than 90% reduced days lost to learning through behaviour concerns and reduced the percentage of students needing additional support in reading and numeracy. The universal mantra of the staff is Consistency, Predictability and Routine.

## BOMADERRY HIGH SCHOOL

### Bomaderry Employment Skills and Training (BEST) Program

The Bomaderry Employment Skills and Training (BEST) Program is a transformative initiative that empowers students to build meaningful, individualised pathways to further education, training and employment. By connecting students with industry, vocational learning and career mentoring, the program supports informed decision-making and real-world readiness. BEST has significantly improved engagement, confidence and outcomes for students, particularly those from equity cohorts, by embedding aspiration into every stage of schooling. Its alignment with our Strategic Improvement Plan and the Department's values ensures every student is supported to reach their potential and transition successfully into life beyond school.

## BRIAR ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL

### Excellence in Aboriginal Education

Briar Road Public School's journey in Aboriginal Education has been extensive and impactful. The school is known for its authentic, community-driven approach and commitment to embedding cultural competency in daily practice. With improved NAPLAN outcomes for Aboriginal students, nationally recognised programs and a transformative Cultural Immersion initiative, Briar Road Public School sets a benchmark for culturally responsive education. Its influence extends beyond the school, shaping state-wide professional learning and contributing to local, national and international platforms. The school's work in reconciliation, early childhood education

and community collaboration demonstrates a deep, lasting commitment to equity and cultural understanding.

## CENTENNIAL PARK SCHOOL

### Curriculum

Centennial Park has a long tradition of quality work, supporting students' acute psychological needs and keeping them attached to school. The school resolved however, irrespective of their SSP status, that all students must be fully engaged, realise their talents, and, have post-school options that fulfil the humanity of a long life that can be well lived. To this end, they have made a profound change to their whole school curriculum model. The school has upskilled staff, nearly doubled attendance, instilled pride, individualised learning, promoted teacher efficacy, celebrated expanded HSC pathways, and prioritised wellbeing as learning. It is a conspicuous success!

## FAIRFIELD WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL

### From Attendance to Achievement: The Fairfield West Public School Model for Success

"From Attendance to Achievement: The Fairfield West Public School Model for Success" demonstrates how outstanding outcomes are achieved through unique, tailored and culturally responsive programs driven by a commitment to equity. This project was aimed at increasing student academic outcomes. Underpinned by inquiry, the project was contextually based to drive student achievement through focusing on enhanced student attendance, wellbeing practices and parent partnerships. The success became evident through improvements in student learning outcomes, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The school was acknowledged by ACARA as a "School Making a Difference" as measured by the outstanding 2024 NAPLAN results.

## FAULCONBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL

### Zones of Engagement

The Zones of Engagement initiative at Faulconbridge Public School is a whole-school framework developed in response to low student belonging and disengagement. Grounded in Dr Amy Berry's research, the model introduces four Zones—Driving, Investing, Participating and Withdrawing—to create a shared language around engagement. Embedded in everyday classroom

practice, assessment and reporting, the Zones support students in self-reflection and goal-setting, while fostering collaboration with families. Since implementation, student belonging has risen from 39% to 71%. The initiative has transformed school culture from behaviour compliance to one of agency, ownership and meaningful engagement in learning across the whole school.

## GLENDORE PUBLIC SCHOOL

## BUDGEWOI PUBLIC SCHOOL

## CHARLESTOWN SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL

## THE ENTRANCE PUBLIC SCHOOL

## BLUE HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOL

## YATES AVENUE PUBLIC SCHOOL

## CHARLESTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOL

## VARDYS ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL

## GOROKAN PUBLIC SCHOOL

## NORTHLAKES PUBLIC SCHOOL

## TOUKEY PUBLIC SCHOOL

## KURRI KURRI PUBLIC SCHOOL

### Explicit and Systematic Teaching (EAST) Mathematics Project

The EAST Mathematics Project Team have contributed tremendously to practices for explicit teaching in classrooms across NSW. With proven

expertise, the team have designed an outstanding explicit teaching resource to support the implementation of the new mathematics syllabus. Their commitment to the values of service and equity has seen a complete set of explicit teach plans made available to all NSW public schools, with over 250 schools now utilising their resources. The EAST mathematics resources were recently highlighted in the 2025 Grattan report on effective practices for mathematics.

## HUNTER SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

### Future Focused Personalised Learning

Future-Focused Personalised Learning at Hunter Sports High School is a whole-school initiative that delivers individualised learning pathways through a diverse academy model. Embedded in the school's excellence plan, it supports the NSW Department of Education's commitment to equity, excellence and the High Potential and Gifted Education Policy. The initiative empowers all students—across all domains of potential—to thrive through personalised curriculum, learner profiles and real-world skill development, preparing them for success beyond school.

Hunter Sports High School

Auburn North Public School



## JAMES MEEHAN HIGH SCHOOL

### Middle School and Innovative Transition Program

The innovative Transition Program, at the heart of the Middle School, is exemplary. It brings together students, parents, teachers and leaders in shared academic and co-curricular experiences that promote excellence, belonging and pride in public education. The Middle School's structures homerooms, a strong learning culture, high expectations and a teaming approach have broken down silos, fostered collaboration, and enhanced teacher practice. The impact is evident in rising enrolments, progressive NAPLAN growth and a revitalised community perception of JMHS. James Meehan High School has demonstrated visionary leadership, sustained improvement and a commitment to delivering excellence in public education.

## MURRUMBIDGEE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – GRIFFITH

### Deadly STEMers

Murrumbidgee Regional High School has built an amazing STEM program that has had a significant and positive impact on rural students, and in particular, Indigenous students. The program has experienced rapid growth across the State allowing students to immerse themselves in high impact STEM programs and competitions. This has resulted in the Deadly STEMers working to a high level and winning the Secondary division of the Aeronautical Velocity Challenge in 2024. This program has allowed students to use real hands-on experiences to develop skills and attempt to solve real world complex problems.



Whitebridge High School

## NARROMINE HIGH SCHOOL

### Narromine High School Wellbeing Hub

The Wellbeing Hub at Narromine High School has initiated transformative changes by integrating diverse health services, including a GP, paediatrician, exercise physiologist and mental health support. The initiative fosters collaboration among health professionals, educators and families, significantly enhancing student engagement and wellbeing. The Hub has notably improved attendance rates and academic performance, particularly among Aboriginal students, by providing them with culturally safe, accessible education and healthcare. This commitment to holistic student support has created a thriving school community, ensuring that every student has the resources to succeed academically and personally, making a profound difference in their lives and futures.

## PUNCHBOWL BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL

### Empower Me! Wellbeing Framework and Programs

The Empower Me! framework and program is a proactive wellbeing initiative designed for mainstream and specialist schools, focusing on the explicit instruction of positive behavioural choices. This program addresses issues such as non-compliance, anger management and emotional self-regulation, serving as essential teaching and learning materials for preventative mental health. By emphasising the significance of student wellbeing and voice, Empower Me! aims to enhance student engagement and empower learners to make informed, positive choices. This resource reflects a commitment to fostering a supportive educational environment that prioritises student wellbeing, mental health and the development of essential life skills.



Explicit and Systematic Teaching (EAST)  
Mathematics Project

## REVESBY SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL

### Flourishing Wellbeing

Revesby South Public School has experienced the transformative effect of our innovative wellbeing approach. By integrating a holistic wellbeing system that focuses on both promoting wellbeing and preventing illbeing, we have developed an environment in which students and staff feel valued, nurtured and empowered to flourish. The SEARCH framework has enhanced individual and collective resilience, encouraged healthier working relationships between students and colleagues, and provided an inclusive school environment. This has led to measurable gains in student engagement and performance. Placing this approach at the heart of everything we do will see educational excellence and long-term success continue at the school.



Warilla High School

## ROOTY HILL HIGH SCHOOL

### Giving every student the opportunity to do their best

Since 2015, RHHS has driven its purpose to give students the opportunity to do their best through personalised learning, expansive learning, student agency and personalised "learning journeys". All students at this school can expect to have a personalised learning plan, set their own goals, evaluate their progress, use their learning profile for planning, engage in a range of purpose designed programs that build their skills, capabilities and dispositions, write powerful applications for work and further study, and have confidence that their learning journey through high school is planned around their needs and adapted to their progress, growth and expectations.

## WARILLA HIGH SCHOOL

### Success Strategy

The "Success Strategy" is a multi-faceted program of Stage 6 support designed to address student needs and respond to widening equity gaps. It fosters deep partnerships between schools and families, ensuring that students receive comprehensive assistance. The program embeds a multitude of initiatives beyond the classroom, including the Senior Study Club, Thrive Mentoring, Holiday Study Club and The Hive Study Resource Club. Additionally, it offers subject-specific support through the popular Maths & Milo and English Muffins programs. As a result, there has been a significant shift in student engagement and higher expectations, leading to improved HSC results.





Whitebridge High School

WATERFALL PUBLIC SCHOOL  
BANGOR PUBLIC SCHOOL  
ENGADINE HIGH SCHOOL  
ENGADINE PUBLIC SCHOOL  
ENGADINE WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL  
HEATHCOTE EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL  
HEATHCOTE HIGH SCHOOL  
HEATHCOTE PUBLIC SCHOOL  
LOFTUS PUBLIC SCHOOL  
MARTON PUBLIC SCHOOL  
MENAI HIGH SCHOOL  
MINERVA SCHOOL  
THARAWAL PUBLIC SCHOOL  
WORONORA RIVER PUBLIC SCHOOL  
YARRAWARRAH PUBLIC SCHOOL

#### Leading with Heart

The HPGE Social-Emotional Program has led to significant, measurable improvements in student engagement, inclusion and wellbeing across the Woronora River Network. The program involves students from a range of primary schools, fostering cross-school collaboration and a wider sense of community connection. Students from participating schools report increased confidence, resilience and emotional regulation. The program's structure – where high school mentors lead younger students – creates a safe, supportive space for primary students to engage in leadership-style learning and take positive social risks. Teachers across the network have observed improved classroom behaviour, stronger peer relationships, enhanced engagement particularly among neurodiverse and Aboriginal students.

WHITEBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL  
DUDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL  
REDHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOL  
KAHIBAH PUBLIC SCHOOL  
CHARLESTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOL  
CHARLESTOWN SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL  
CHARLESTOWN EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL

#### Wiyellai Koa Community of Schools: coming together to provide excellence in public education

Through "Coming Together," the Wiyellai Koa Community of Schools has achieved an elevated community profile, strengthened partnerships between schools, and collectively represents the values of public education. The project celebrates outstanding K-12 learning pathways and successfully provides students, staff and the Whitebridge-Charlestown school community with a greater sense of belonging and pride. The Wiyellai Koa identity offers a culturally rich and well-facilitated journey towards improved engagement and well-being for all stakeholders. Wiyellai Koa celebrates partnerships with Minimbah AECG and exemplifies the passion, dedication, and commitment of the seven partner schools, positively impacting and promoting excellence across the learning community.

# Public School Parent and Volunteer of the Year Award

## Recipient Citations



**Lyn Clark  
and John Clark**  
BERRY PUBLIC SCHOOL

Few people have the volunteering commitment to match the efforts of Lyn and John Clark. Together they have inspired and led our school community to achieve our vision for "Plant Prop". Each week they create rich learning experiences that directly contribute to our school plan. They bring passion, purpose and a wealth of knowledge to share with students and staff in science lessons co-delivered with teachers. Lyn and John coordinate events that bring our community into the school to share the Plant Prop experience and promote Public Education. They truly inspire current and future generations in Science and Environmental studies.



**Katherine Eagle**  
NEWBRIDGE HEIGHTS  
PUBLIC SCHOOL

Katherine embodies the spirit of advocacy for public education. She is a passionate supporter of our school's mission and values, always advocating for the needs of students and ensuring parent voices are heard. Her proactive approach to communication and collaboration has inspired other parents to engage more deeply with the educational process, creating a more vibrant and supportive environment for our children. Katherine's contributions extend beyond her volunteer work; she is a tireless champion for public education, advocating for resources and programs that benefit students.



**Trevor Gibbons**  
ORANGE HIGH SCHOOL

Trevor Gibbons has made an exceptional contribution to Orange High School through his service as a dedicated P&C member, including roles as President and Vice President. As a very proud father, Trevor and his family have consistently given their time to support all P&C events, building strong connections across the school community. Trevor's leadership of the canteen committee has ensured sustained revenue for a range of school programs. Always generous with his time and resources, Trevor truly represents the values of Orange High, supporting student wellbeing, learning opportunities and parent engagement with integrity, energy and commitment.



**Kirsty Hewitt**  
RUSE PUBLIC SCHOOL

As our P&C president, Kirsty has engaged our school community through her unwavering service, commitment, and leadership. She revitalised parent involvement, increasing attendance at P&C meetings to up to 40 engaged parents each term. Kirsty successfully led the launch of breakfast club, significantly improving student attendance and fostering community spirit. Her initiatives, including the Second-Hand Uniform Shop and grant writing for essential resources, highlight her dedication to enhancing the educational experience for all students. Kirsty is a remarkable advocate for our school and an invaluable asset to our community.



**Katerina Kaniouris**  
BALD FACE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Katerina's leadership as a member of the P&C has been instrumental in reshaping the partnership between parents and school at Bald Face Public School. She is a key member of a dynamic team who lead parent and P&C fundraising initiatives such as the Bald Face Public School's 75th anniversary fair, school colour run, state and federal elections and Year 6 fundraising. Katerina displays humility and a deep commitment to building the profile of the school community, supporting teachers and enhancing opportunities for students to succeed and thrive.



**Kerren Kernaghan**  
LENNOX HEAD PUBLIC SCHOOL

Kerren Kernaghan has been strongly involved with Lennox Head Public School since 2005 when the first of her four children were enrolled. Kerren is a former student and as a parent has been a P&C member, volunteer, recruitment panel member, canteen volunteer, dance teacher and sports administrator. Her last child moved into high school in 2021, and her commitment has continued. She is currently the P&C rep on the LHPS new build Project Reference Group. She is an insightful and collaborative community member who genuinely promotes and champions the values of public education widely in the Lennox Head community.



**Jackie Reavie**  
NBSC CROMER CAMPUS

Jackie Reavie has been an exceptional leader and partner in education since becoming our P&C President in 2021. Her commitment, innovation and collaborative spirit have delivered lasting improvements across all areas of school life. Jackie revitalised our school canteen into a thriving, healthy and profitable service, led major fundraising efforts, supported staff wellbeing, doubled the membership of our P&C and strengthened community engagement. She has worked tirelessly with staff, parents and local partners to ensure our students and teachers thrive. Jackie's impact is deeply felt, and her contribution exemplifies the very best of the public-school parent and volunteer leadership.



**Sally Ryan**  
WINSTON HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Sally has made outstanding contributions to our school community over the past eight years. As Vice President, she has tirelessly dedicated herself

to enhancing our school environment. Sally has successfully coordinated the uniform shop and organised numerous fundraisers, significantly benefiting our students and families. Her commitment to creating an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere is truly commendable; she goes above and beyond to support all parents and recognise school staff, ensuring they feel valued and part of a community. Sally's passion and leadership have made a lasting impact for the students, staff and parents at Winston Hills Public School.



**Terez Sheeto**  
HARRINGTON STREET PUBLIC SCHOOL

Terez is a passionate and committed parent whose leadership has greatly enriched the Harrington Street Public School community. A long-standing member of our P&C and former Vice President, she has supported numerous initiatives including fundraising events and Breakfast Club. Terez actively advocates for inclusivity, translating for Arabic-speaking families and encouraging their involvement. Her efforts have improved student wellbeing, boosted parent participation and strengthened school-community connections. Terez leads with warmth, generosity and dedication. Her resilience and tireless commitment inspire all who know her.



**Brintta Thavakumaran**  
JAMES RUSE AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL

Brintta Thavakumaran exemplifies the values of public education through her tireless leadership, generosity and community spirit. As P&C President, Brintta has revitalised parent engagement, leading key initiatives such as Multicultural Food Day and the annual P&C raffle, while also stepping in as Relieving Canteen Convenor. A dedicated GP, Brintta still finds time to mobilise volunteers, support school operations and foster a culture of inclusivity and collaboration. Her leadership has healed division, strengthened partnerships and ensured that parents play an active, valued role in our school community.



Bomaderry High School