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**WA teachers earn national recognition with awards
'Investing in student voice' & 'keeping up with the changing face of
technology'**

Two teachers from Western Australia will receive national awards at the ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards (ASG NEiTA) today at a presentation ceremony in Melbourne.

Lee-Anne Marroccoli from Emmanuel Catholic College in Success and Shaloni Naik from Ashdale Secondary College will join another 10 fine educators from across Australia in receiving the top awards.

Selected from around 1450 nominations in 2017, the 12 national award recipients will be honoured for their inspiring and innovative contribution to teaching. Now in its 23rd year, the ASG NEiTA awards have contributed more than \$1 million in professional development grants to outstanding teachers in Australia and New Zealand.

Lee-Anne Marroccoli was the Head of Year 12 at Emmanuel Catholic College and is making a significant difference with her leadership capabilities to ensure that students don't get left behind in education.

"Personally, I saw my twin nephews struggle with learning difficulties, and wanted to ensure that no student fell through the cracks within the education system. That inspired me to become a teacher, and I also wanted to inspire other students to open their minds to problem solving and learning opportunities that could challenge and enrich their lives into the future."

Teaching at the school for three years, she was nominated by a parent who says Lee-Anne's teaching style engages even the most difficult of children.

"Her pastoral care is exceptional. She has the ability to recognise when someone is not in a good headspace and goes out of her way to help them. My son found school life difficult and told me that he doesn't know how we would have survived years 11 and 12 without her."

Lee-Anne says listening to 'student voice' is critical to improving teacher practice and student achievement.

"By getting to know how students feel, their sense of belonging and connectedness, this can transform school culture. Building strong relationships and truly 'knowing' my students has allowed me to be approachable and set a climate for students to extend their own academic achievements".

Eager to seek feedback, Lee-Anne created her own video on quality education and interviewed several students to find out what they actually want within a lesson.

"This was significant in listening to student voice and following the video, I adjusted lessons and programs to utilise applications within the classroom that allowed students to feedback their learning and critique the lesson."

Digital applications, the 'Traffic light' system and 'Show me boards' have been introduced into classrooms where students can provide instant feedback about their understanding.

"These applications create a form of trust within the classroom, where judgement of or from peers is limited and differentiation can occur once staff are aware of individual needs".

She also created a self-assessment tool, 'Principals of Good Teaching' to engage staff to think and reflect on their current practice and what improvements needs to occur moving forward.

Shaloni Naik is the digital technologies teacher and STEM Leader at Ashdale Secondary College, a technology specialist school which opened in 2009.

She was nominated by an association member who says Shaloni is always engaging with the cutting edge of technology and innovation and her leadership extends into local and global teaching communities.

"Shaloni was the first WA teacher to be involved with the ICT Mentors in Schools Program developed by the CSIRO Education. As a result of the success of this program, Shaloni was invited to a CSIRO national meeting to assist with expanding the initiative to teachers across Australia".

Shaloni is on a journey to drive transformative teaching to create 21st century learners.

"Teaching computing and technology is always a challenge, as the content is ever changing. Every day there are new technologies, products, software and computing products being created. As the content changes and new technologies emerge, so does new teaching and practices.

"I link all learning to real life and industry so students can have an enriched, deeper learning experience."

Fostering students' creativity and entrepreneurial skills, Shaloni introduced the Just Start It program in conjunction with Curtin University. The program directly connects students to an industry mentor and allows students to use exploration, problem thinking and creativity to structure a new technology business as a start-up.

"My mentor commended my leadership of the program within my college, and my support in enabling students to gain confidence in presenting, engaging with their local community and understanding how businesses use technology in a new way. The benefits of the program have been immense and this is a continuing initiative."

Other initiatives she has established include a mentoring program with Edith Cowan University for students and pre-service teachers, and the design and implementation of a STEAM-focused space, which is a collaborative lab to advance STEM education and the arts.

Shaloni intends to open a high-end science research and development centre at the college with her ASG NEiTA grant.

“The vision is to have a lab facility for students to experiment in and explore their interest outside of the curriculum. If students want to make cosmetics or cream or learn about extract essential oils then they have a lab to do it in.

“I would also like to have lab certificate courses embedded so that students get trained to work in that field. I am keen to explore the idea of partnering with universities where PhD students can use our lab to conduct their research.”

The national recipients are selected by a panel of seven judges comprising Director of Early Learning, Ruyton Grammar School, Sarah Denholm; Director of Collegiate Institute, Julie Rimes; Zig Zag Public School and previous ASG NEiTA national recipient, Tiffany Sirisavath; Principal, Saddleworth Primary School and previous ASG NEiTA national recipient, Sheree Mader; Director of Leadership, The Southport School and 2016 ASG NEiTA national recipient, Keith Fennell; Emmanuel Christian School, previous ASG NEiTA national recipient and Space Camp leader, Drew Roberts and ASG NEiTA Chairman Allen Blewitt.

The selection process is rigorous, including a comprehensive nomination outline, a written paper and video presentation by the nominated teacher.

Parents, grandparents, secondary student councils, school boards, councils, parent associations, committees of management and community organisations throughout Australia nominated the 12 deserving and inspirational recipients.

ASG NEiTA Chairman Allen Blewitt says the national recipients have made their mark in local communities throughout Australia.

“It’s so wonderful to see teachers being singled out by members of the community for their personal contribution to education. It’s in local townships, villages and indeed larger, city centres where our ASG NEiTA recipients can be the heartbeat of these communities. For every student they teach, they could be impacting multiple lives as they establish relationships with parents, grandparents and connect the home and school life, creating an eco-system of continued and shared learning and support networks.

“The thread that ties our 12 ASG NEiTA recipients and brings communities together are their common values and educational aspirations. Motivating students to push themselves, creating inclusive spaces, identifying specific developmental and communication needs, and letting students take charge of their learning are the key drivers behind teaching strategies and innovative approaches happening every day in schools.

"I thank our ASG NEiTA recipients for their passion and persistence in teaching today's young people and for the communities who nominated them, in recognising their outstanding and inspirational qualities."

ASG CEO Tim Mitchell-Adams says the ASG NEiTA recipients are passing on one of the most valuable gifts a young person can receive.

"I congratulate the ASG NEiTA recipients for their significant and personal contribution in achieving better education outcomes for Australian school children. Teachers have an enormous responsibility and right from early childhood education, our ASG NEiTA recipients are putting the building blocks together so that young people are equipped to become confident and competent lifelong learners.

"As students navigate their educational and life journey, our ASG NEiTA recipients are going on a journey of their own. A journey of excitement and wonder as they see their students achieve, through taking risks, accepting challenges and breaking down barriers. Some of these teachers have seen students blossom on the world stage and have careers they love. Our ASG NEiTA recipients are a huge part of these success stories, encouraging, mentoring and leading students to map out their future and reach their full potential, regardless of what that looks like. This is why ASG NEiTA has thrived for the last 21 years. The community thanks and applauds you for the countless hours and dedication you put into teaching their children."

The 12 national recipients will each receive \$5000 professional development grants. For more information and to view their ASG NEiTA profiles go to: www.asg.com.au/neita

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Editor's notes:

The Australian Scholarships Group (ASG) is a member owned organisation, helping to create educational opportunities for children. ASG has been helping families and their children for more than 40 years. During this time, more than 540,000 children have been enrolled with ASG and more than \$2.8 billion in education benefits and scholarship payments returned to members.

The ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards (NEiTA) started in 1994 in Australia and 1996 in New Zealand. Since inception, more than 35,500 teachers have been nominated by the community in the two countries. More than 1000 teachers have received \$1,000,000 in professional development grants, prizes and endowments.

For more information visit: www.asg.com.au