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Focus on holistic art education earns national award

An art teacher who encourages her students to be resilient, adaptable and creative thinkers will receive an ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards (ASG NEiTA) on February 23 at an official ceremony hosted by Hon Chris Hipkins MP, Minister of Education in Wellington.

“One of my Year 7 students said to me recently, the art room is her habitat. Like an ecosystem, it is not one factor that enables success for my students, but many interrelated factors.”

Glenys Parry from Craighead Diocesan School in Timaru will join five other outstanding educators from across New Zealand in receiving the top awards.

Selected from around 200 nominations in 2017, the six national award recipients will be honoured for their inspiring and innovative contribution to teaching. Now in its 21st year, the ASG NEiTA awards have contributed more than \$1 million in professional development grants to outstanding teachers in Australia and New Zealand.

As head of department, Glenys teaches across art history, painting, sculpture, photography and design. She was nominated by a community member for her passion and outstanding leadership skills.

“I am absolutely certain I wouldn't even be teaching today, doing what I love, if it wasn't for Glenys. She was my first associate teacher back in 2003 when I was completing my teacher training and still unsure if teaching was for me. Watching Glenys teach and interact with young people was incredibly inspiring and a real eye opener for me in terms what I wanted to do with my life. It made me realise what great leadership entails.”

Glenys has been teaching for 35 years and says she still gets a sense of pride and excitement when she sees young people develop through art.

“Art makes a difference to so many students' lives and has made a difference to my life too. My art teacher at high school opened my life up to the love of art—the creativity, the exploration of ideas, the history, the people, and the social involvement through the art community.

“I encourage individual direction within the syllabus, and so my senior programmes are written with the idea of getting a student engaged by drawing on their own topic—be cultural, environment, figurative or idea based. Where students have done this, results have been unique and successful.

“Self-motivation, organisation and time management skills are built through this process. Not everything will work for them.

“Resilience is formed through trial and error. Students make meaning of their world within the parameters of the syllabus, meeting deadlines, setting boundaries and taking responsibility.”

Glenys adds that her students’ art work has featured in high profile art exhibitions across New Zealand.

“My students work toured as part of [Top Art](#) and have featured as NZQA exemplars in sculpture, photography and painting. Modelling good practice at senior level has been an essential part of my teaching, sharing new ideas and showing younger students how artwork is made and its diverse nature. All senior folios have been documented over 30 years and kept as a resource for other students to access.

“Many of my students have received art scholarships, one is a famous sculptor and another is exhibiting her paintings in London, Seattle and Toronto, winning the Best Young Artist Award for Open Art in the United Kingdom.”

The national recipients are selected by a panel of four judges comprising President NZ Schools Trustees Association, Lorraine Kerr (MNZM); John Paul College Principal, Patrick Walsh; Head of Department English, Social Sciences and Languages for Toi-Ohomai Institute of Technology, Joanne Hayes; former Vice-President Secondary Principals’ Association of NZ (SPANZ), John Day and 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 New Zealand nominated the six deserving and inspirational recipients.

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

“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, farming 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 six 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 all the ASG NEiTA recipients for their significant and personal contribution in achieving better education outcomes for New Zealand 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 onto 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 six national recipients will each receive \$5000 professional development grants. For more information and to view their ASG NEiTA profiles go to: www.asg.co.nz/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 \$2.5 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, with more than 1000 teachers receiving \$1,000,000 in professional development grants, prizes and endowments.

For more information visit: www.asg.co.nz