



2020 Toowoomba Catholic Schools Excellence Awards Finalists and recipients citations

2020 Spirit of Catholic Education Award recipient

**Jacinta Jensen
School Counsellor
Good Samaritan College**

Jacinta's focus is on meeting the needs of the young people of Good Samaritan College who have experienced high levels of complex trauma and have been involved in youth justice. She focusses on the whole person – ensuring that their academic, social, emotional and physical health needs are being met.

Her work in supporting the students to determine a future career path, often requires her to negotiate adjustments to learning with teachers and the principal in order for the young people to be able to access the curriculum. She tracks each young person's development and growth from the moment they enter Good Samaritan College to the moment that they transition and beyond; her focus on personalising learning and providing personalised support is what makes her exceptional.

She is highly skilled in the design and delivery of social and emotional development programs that enable these young people to grow a positive mindset so that they can focus on the other aspects of their schooling. These programs include 'Spits, Spats and Splats'; a program that enables young people to recognise and construct positive friendships and romantic relationships that value add to their lives.

Jacinta's identification of and relationships with additional support services such as Protea Place, HeadSpace, The Haven, TAFE, Toowoomba Dental Services, Heron Optometrist, Carbal, Youth Justice, Centrelink, and psychologists just to name a few is focussed and relentless as she leaves no stone unturned to ensure that the health and wellbeing needs of the young people are met.

And regardless of the situation or what she is called upon to do, Jacinta is always cool, calm and collected in all of her interactions (this might sound like a cliché; however, at Good Samaritan College it is an essential skill). Nearly all of Jacinta's interactions with families and young people are when they are in crisis or are in a heightened emotional state; Jacinta's ability to remain a positive and stable voice of reason is an asset to the College.

In short, her nominator, Liisa Hammond, Principal said, 'Good Samaritan College would not be the success it is without Jacinta's support, insight and willingness to always do more for those in our community'.

Congratulations Jacinta.

Excellence in Education Support – Teaching and Learning

sponsored by Salary Packaging Australia

Recipient

Anne Woodcroft-Brown
School Counsellor
Mater Dei Primary School

Anne is a School Counsellor at Mater Dei Primary School in Toowoomba. Anne's passionate advocacy and proactive approach to seeking out strategies to develop student wellbeing, and engage them effectively in learning, are a mark of her professionalism and commitment to learning, collaboration and ongoing renewal.

She has been instrumental in the development and 'bringing to life' of Mater Dei's learning dispositions – initiating and creating a school based program that provides teachers from Prep to Year 6 with engaging resources, sequences of learning and teaching notes – it is through this that the dispositions have more quickly become embedded and a part of staff and students 'way of being' – reflecting the Good Samaritan and Benedictine spirituality of the school's founders.

Anne's continued work in refreshing and renewing the student behaviour support practices has ensured that the school's 'Green room' - a space where students can go to 'get ready for learning' and self-regulate their actions – is used effectively by all. This is coupled with great parent engagement in the Triple-P parenting program.

During recent months, Anne's determination to stay in touch remotely with students and families during 'learning from home' had her creating a website with easy to use resources for parents focussed on supporting learning and wellbeing. She also pre-recorded wellbeing messages to be used in Mater Dei's virtual school assemblies.

It is because of her considered and well developed sense of 'what is needed' and the personable way in which she is able to engage others, that Anne is a stand out in supporting teaching and learning at Mater Dei and in our Diocese.

Well done Anne!

Finalists

Rachel Crooke
Occupational Therapist
Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office

Rachel is an Occupational Therapist who has been providing quality support to schools across our Diocese for over 10 years.

Since 2017 Rachel has led the OT service and ensured that the focus has been on building teachers' and teacher aides' capabilities to provide specific support and personalised learning for students with OT needs. Of particular note is the work that she has done in creating a series of online professional learning modules, supported with practical teaching resources, focussed on supporting students who 'move and fidget'.

Through a coaching and support model, Rachel has worked with Learning Support Teachers, to identify through classroom walkthroughs, those students who are 'movers and fidgeters' and would benefit from specific educational strategies. These strategies are then implemented with great effect for the student, their classmates and teachers.

School staff are effusive in their praise for Rachel's knowledge, skill and supportive way of working with all; especially when it comes to interpreting clinical OT reports from external providers, so that student's needs can be met.

Rachel, it is because of your ability to pinpoint the needs of students and provide practical short and long-term strategies in such a timely and professional way that you are a valued and very well-respected member of the TCS team.

Jacinta Jensen
School Counsellor
Good Samaritan College

Jacinta, as we heard earlier, is a key member of the College community; her work with students who might otherwise not attend school, enables so many to achieve what they may have not thought possible.

Jacinta, the fact you have been acknowledged as the SOCE Award recipient and a finalist in the Excellence Awards is testament to the quality of your work and your personal qualities too.

We once again thank you for all that you do for the staff, students and families of GSC.

Excellence in Education Support - Administration, finance and facilities support

sponsored by Catholic Church Insurance

Recipient

Belinda Hayward
Business Manager
St John's School, Roma

Belinda is an integral and highly respected member of the School Leadership Team at St John's providing exceptional leadership in human, financial and resource governance; ensuring that St John's is financially secure and able to respond to changing educational requirements.

As a result of her leadership the school is able to self-fund one major project in the primary area of the school to the value of \$2.3M and a soon to commence project in the secondary school to the value of \$3.1M. Additionally, Belinda's previous experience sees her playing a significant role in the master planning and project management of these new facilities. Her nominator, principal Jim Brennan explained that Belinda's ability to communicate with TCS facilities staff, architects, town planners and council staff is invaluable.

Belinda's task and solutions orientation enables her to respond to immediate and emerging scenarios, and find innovative ways to meet the resource challenges of St John's – this has been particularly valued in finding ways to school fund teaching positions.

As an emotionally intelligent leader, Belinda can read people exceptionally well which enables her to respond in a caring manner to staff yet demand the highest of standards. She is a leader who has a growth mindset and professionally develops both teaching and non-teaching staff. Her active listening to concerns and problems and adoption of a shared responsibility approach is appreciated by all.

For your exceptional servant leadership and management, and focus on building the capabilities of others, Belinda, you are a worthy finalist. Thank you!

Finalists

Zoe Marks **Business Manager** **St Saviour's College, Toowoomba**

Zoe joined the St Saviour's College staff in 2019 after the College had experienced quite significant gaps in business management across some years. This meant Zoe had to 'hit the ground running' and undertake substantial work to bring systems and processes up to speed.

Zoe was quick to ascertain the needs of the College by gaining insights from key stakeholders, including the Leadership Team, staff, TCS personnel, the Parent Engagement Network, contractors and students. It was through the building of firm relationships with these groups that she was able to engage quickly the practical, cost effective and timely improvements that were crucial foundations to success.

Zoe's pragmatic disposition and no-nonsense approach and work ethic are to be commended. All that she leads is done with the greatest of ease, minimal fuss, maximum attention to detail, always bearing in mind cost effectiveness.

Zoe's engagement of teaching staff and Middle Leaders to dialogue about their department budget needs and wants, provision of termly updates and forecasts of these budgets throughout the year, and ability to make links to the College Strategic Plan has developed a new culture of shared responsibility.

In addition, her work with TCSO in developing a Maintenance Plan and College Master Plan has been focussed on ensuring St Saviour's College sustainably into the future.

Zoe, you are a great asset to the St Saviour's College community and we look forward to your future and what it holds!

Tommy Hunter **School cleaner** **Holy Name Primary School, Toowoomba**

Tommy joined the Holy Name Primary School team in 2018. 'Tornado Tommy', as some have affectionately branded him, whips through the classrooms and grounds like a cleaning whirlwind. Tommy's attention to detail in his cleaning role is second to none and does not go unnoticed with many visitors and prospective families to the school commenting that the school is simply sparkling.

Tommy seamlessly rose to the challenge of the intensification of his responsibilities due to COVID-19 employing innovative practices such as using a hand-sprayer to quickly sanitise desks, chairs, play forts and sporting equipment. It is his efficiency and thoroughness that provide the staff, student and parent community with peace of mind.

As a 'jack of all trades', Tommy is quick to hang a whiteboard for a teacher, make a dash to Bunnings to purchase an essential item or even jumpstart a parent's car - all duties outside the realm of his role. Tommy always happily helps without reservation or hesitation.

In addition, he tends to the gardens and grounds, which have improved the street appeal of the school. Tommy's vision to design and landscape the school oval outside the sporting hall has provided an additional learning and relaxing space for students and teachers; all a part of his desire to create an exemplary place of learning.

Tommy's effervescent personality and generous nature are a wonderful asset to the Holy Name community, and they thank him for the gift he is to them.

Excellence in Education Support - Volunteer support

sponsored by Brandon and Associates

Recipient

Belinda Saal St Stephen's School, Pittsworth

Belinda has been a parent of St Stephen's School for 13 years with her three children, Emily, Nick and Anna, having all attended St Stephen's.

During that time Belinda has helped and supported the school as Chairperson and parent representative on the School Board, held three committee positions with the Parents and Friends association, was Grant's Officer for three years, secretary for two years, and Pulse and Pain coordinator for three years. She has also helped with many High Teas, volunteered at tuckshop on a regular basis, volunteered at Graduation Dinners, was a timekeeper at the Sport's Carnivals and trained the school Netball teams.

Her volunteering extends to the parish as well, as parent helper during the preparation of children for the receiving of Sacraments, assisting with the catering, and during 2016, when the school celebrated its Centenary Belinda volunteered throughout the weekend.

Belinda's great love for St Stephen's School has inspired and been invitational to other parents to volunteer. Belinda, the school community have indicated that this is a sad year for the school, as your youngest child, Anna moves onto high school – they know that they will feel the loss, and that the high school will feel the gain. They wish you all the best and thank you!

Finalists

Kristie-Lee Hall St Saviour's Primary School, Toowoomba

Kristie-Lee's care and attention to creating a sense of welcome as families, staff and visitors enter the school, whether it be the work she does in the garden or ensuring there are fresh flowers in the school reception and indoor plants within the school are often commented on by prospective and current families and visitors.

Her openness and friendliness, her positive nature and dedication to the school community is infectious. Her nominator's the St Saviour's Primary School, P&F said, 'the energy you bring Kristie-Lee, uplifts staff and students each day'.

It is because of the joy you voluntarily bring to the school, your energy and ideas that make the surroundings reflect the welcoming culture of the school that you have been chosen as a finalist for 2020. Well done and thank you Kristie-Lee.

Tommy Hunter Toowoomba Catholic Kindergartens and Care

In addition to Tommy's great work at Holy Name, he has volunteered his time as Toowoomba Catholic Schools has established its first Catholic Kindergartens and Outside Hours School Care services.

Tommy's volunteer work has been significant, with his willingness to give his time and considerable expertise ensuring that the very best play and learning spaces are available to students.

Many of the requests for maintenance, repairs and landscaping were at short notice, often during weekends, and Tommy responded with generosity and an attitude of 'leave it to me'.

Tommy's work was always welcome by students and staff and on many occasions provided a real boost to the morale and pride of the local community.

Tommy's sense of the common good is evident in the way he made and continues to make himself available. His contribution is getting a big thumbs up from the children and their families and will continue to do so for a very long time!

Excellence in Teaching and Learning - Early career teachers

sponsored by Salary Packaging Australia

Recipient

Rebecca Smith
St Patrick's Primary School, Mitchell

Rebecca is in her second year of teaching but to see her in the classroom you would think she had been teaching for a decade. She is a born teacher.

Rebecca teaches in a complex, multi-age classroom; planning for learners aged 8 -13 across four-year levels of Australian Curriculum - no easy task.

Rebecca enthusiastically plans engaging, integrated units of work, using high impact strategies matched to the needs of her students - social and academic; acknowledging their strengths and weaknesses, their interests and passions.

Her classroom is dynamic and stimulating, extremely well organised and on every wall there is evidence of learning. She invites guests, including community members, authors and experts into the classroom to enrich student learning and through the design of hands-on, real-world tasks, everything from watching chickens hatch, to practising and performing self-written rap songs she keeps students engaged.

It is because of this dedication to personalising learning, that 92% of students in her class were making high growth in reading at the end of 2019, her first year of teaching!

Coupled with this is Rebecca's commitment to the growth of the St Patrick's community whether this is through being a regular on the school's Facebook page or working at community events like the local Fire and Water Festival. She has also taken on APRE responsibilities when the principal is away engaging the community in this year's Ash Wednesday celebration.

Rebecca, you are a devoted and inspiring young teacher – and we believe you have an impressive career in front of you. Congratulations on being a finalist!

Finalists

Jacinta Willocks
Middle years teacher
Our Lady of the Southern Cross College, Dalby

Jacinta is keen to learn and try new strategies and her ability to change her teaching mid-learning to meet student needs is exceptional. She is an active member of the middle years' team and has a positive growth mindset for sharing and exploring ways to improve learning and teaching, for this the middle year's team say they have much to thank her.

During the recent Remote Learning period due to COVID-19, Jacinta's wealth of digital knowledge and enthusiasm to problem solve was shared with colleagues. She actively helped many teachers to come up to speed and ensure that their digital platform was professional with no problem too difficult and certainly never too trivial for Jacinta to solve.

Jacinta's visually stimulating and inviting classroom is a great example of the importance of visible learning as she creates an atmosphere which encourages success. Her embracing of the Write that Essay initiative in the Middle Years has also seen great improvements in students' writing.

Jacinta's focus on developing a true understanding of each individual she teaches, is particularly evident with those students who have learning difficulties. She connects with their needs at school and works in harmony with their family and the learning support unit at the College to ensure true personalised learning.

Well done Jacinta, your commitment to collective efficacy and focus on every child make you a worthy finalist.

Monica Conway
Year 4 teacher
St Saviour's Primary School, Toowoomba

Monica is in her second year of teaching and already exemplifies what it means to be an expert Catholic teacher. Monica has shown that she knows her students, can identify their learning dispositions and is able to set individual learning goals that provide opportunities for students to achieve success.

She is also active in supporting and leading new initiatives. When the school introduced 1-1 Surface Go devices in Year 4 in Monica's first year of teaching, she led, investigated and sought help to provide support to her teaching partners and students. Her persistence and openness to learn more about digital technologies has ensured a successful transition from the Apple to Microsoft platform in the school's upper primary years.

Monica is a teacher who appreciates the value of engaging in constructive dialogue and often takes the lead within her year level professional team when planning together, observing and discussing teaching practices and evaluating units of work. She seeks feedback and continues to implement ideas from professional development opportunities that enhance her teaching. She empowers students to discuss their learning; ensuring students always understand what and why they are learning; and it is through the use of a variety of feedback strategies including exit tickets, think/pair/share and questioning that she is informed of the next steps in her teaching.

These examples of a quality practitioner who has students at the centre of her practice and a focus on continual improvement and learning are what make Monica a great example of excellence in an early career teacher in our Diocese.

Excellence in Teaching and Learning - Primary Expert Teacher

sponsored by Data #3

Recipient

Amanda Thompson
St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe

In 2020 Amanda has taken on the role of classroom teacher of the Year 6 Learning Hub. The Hub incorporates an open floor plan (the size of two regular classrooms), 37 learners, flexible seating, contemporary technology and multiple teachers – one class teacher and several specialist secondary teachers – readying students for secondary schooling and using the best of visible learning.

As a teacher within a Visible Learning Lighthouse School, Amanda, had embraced the innovations that came in teaching and learning – this made her the natural choice for leading the Hub – designing curriculum and leading and mentoring staff.

Adopting the open, flexible learning approach of the Hub, Amanda encourages all students to take ownership of their learning; and it is Amanda's clarity of purpose that has engaged students in such a way that they understand that good learners have effective time management, are organised, hear and take feedback, communicate and let others in, think positively and don't give up. They have a growth mindset, persist, listen, make mistakes, ask good questions, and push themselves.

Amanda also shares her expertise within the primary professional learning community and the whole school Digital Pedagogy Committee and Visible Learning Team.

Amanda - your passion as an educator is ensuring that these students, entering secondary schooling in 2021, will be well equipped for their secondary education and that Stanthorpe and its' teaching staff are on the cutting edge of educational design. Well done!

Finalists

Nicola Crank **Mater Dei Primary School, Toowoomba**

Nicola is a passionate teacher whose infectious delivery engages both students and colleagues to challenge their understanding, aim for success and develop a love for learning.

Nicola's active participation and leadership in the visible learning professional learning team has modelled what makes an expert teacher and has enhanced culture and pedagogy across the school to include new and research-based strategies and professional dialogue and sharing; these being hallmarks of Nicola's approach. Colleagues regularly consult with Nicola to improve their own practice especially in the use of visible learning strategies – with Nicola willingly modelling these approaches, sharing her own classroom examples and aiding others to integrate these strategies into their planning.

The differentiated learning she plans and implements for her students ensures that she is catering for each child's assessed needs including hearing and vision impairments, those with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder and those with English as an Additional Language or Dialect. As a result, in 2020, 90% of her students are at or above mid-year expected reading levels.

Parents were particularly thankful for the support provided by Nicola during the 'learning from home' period – one commenting... Massive thanks to Year 2 teachers especially Mrs Crank for being such shining role models during this time; daily plans have been fantastic; they're well set out; pre-recorded lessons are fabulous... my child enjoys seeing her teacher and is more confident completing activities.

Well done on your nomination and being a finalist in the Primary Expert Teacher category Nicola.

Kellie Pritchard **Mater Dei Primary School, Toowoomba**

Kellie is both a Year 1 teacher and one of Mater Dei's Impact Coaches for Visible Learning. Kellie's knows how to create engaging, student-centred and productive learning environments in which students know what they are learning and why; she achieves this through the use tried and tested strategies that reflect student voice and choice.

She has a significant influence on her colleagues' practice both at Mater Dei and in other schools in the Diocese through demonstrating, team teaching and modelling high impact Visible Learning strategies in her classroom and in others; sharing her expertise within the TCSO Visible Learning Impact Coach network; creating opportunity for professional dialogue with colleagues, the school leadership team and Education Officer for Visible Learning; and mentoring early-career teachers.

Within her own classroom, personalising learning for all students, Kellie has enabled 90% of students to achieve at expected mid-year levels; with over 85% of students on track to achieve a year's growth; nearly 25% have already achieved this.

Beyond the academic, Kellie ensures the whole child is nurtured, encouraging all to act for the common good. She has taken a lead role in the organisation of Parish family masses; led her cohort's response to Project Compassion; and was instrumental in the effective planning and delivery of Remote Learning in the Early Years.

Kellie, as a team player, and leader, you demonstrate excellence in teaching and learning while motivating others to do the same. This makes you a worthy finalist!

Excellence in Teaching and Learning - Secondary expert teacher

sponsored by Data #3

Recipient

Amanda Wighton
St Joseph's College, Toowoomba

Amanda is an English and Science teacher leading her English Year Level Team and the College's Canvas and Visible Learning Professional Learning Communities.

As an early adopter and champion of best practice Amanda ensures her Year level team and PLCs, like her classes, are clearly organised with manageable and achievable goals for the collective and for individuals.

Creating and leading the Visible Learning PLC, Amanda started a difficult but important discussion about what good teaching is. The whole student and staff cohorts were surveyed to determine what passionate and inspired teachers 'looked like' at the College. Staff were then able to apply the outcomes of these 'discussions' directly to their own practice, to aid teachers she also shared research, professional reading and willingly modelled and shared her planning and teaching with her colleagues.

Amanda's leadership of the CANVAS PLC has included modelling through her own lessons and CANVAS courses how to use the platform well; and these are the examples the teaching community looks to. She has voluntarily made herself available for CANVAS tutorials for teacher-learners and this has naturally had a positive impact on the student-learners of the College with teachers being better placed to deliver 21st Century skills via 21st Century platforms.

Amanda you embody the TCS Teaching and Learning and Continual Renewal strategic goals; with each researching, planning and pedagogical decision you make focussed on the learner, whether this be student-learners or teacher-learners or yourself as the learner. It is for these reasons that the College has seen great improvements in a short time frame and that you are a great example of a Secondary expert teacher. Well done!

Finalists

Michelle Reid
St Saviour's College, Toowoomba

Michelle joined St Saviour's College in 2016 and quickly established herself as an expert teacher providing countless opportunities for the young women to engage in learning, and strive for excellence irrespective of what personal learning, physical, social and cultural needs they may have.

As an extremely diverse school community, St Saviour's regularly enrolls students who have English as an additional language or are verified with additional learning needs. Michelle leads the additional needs enrolment procedure alongside the principal, ensuring that she knows all new and existing students, how they learn, and supports teachers to create engaging, student-centred and productive learning environments.

Michelle also plays a special role in the lives of the College's indigenous students. Under her leadership, a College group, known as 'Deadly Sisters' has been established to celebrate the indigenous young women, providing opportunities to meet, engage in cultural activities, song and dance, and develop their leadership skills. In addition, a 'Wellbeing Hub' has been created to provide a space for these

girls to be a part cultural activities two lunchtimes a week and includes yarnning circles, art activities, and the development of a sensory garden, incorporating the growing of bush tucker.

Due to Covid-19 many of the College's Aboriginal and Torres Strait boarders returned to the College after extended absences; Michelle and her team developed an extensive transition support program that ensured that the returning remote boarders were able to seamlessly find their way in the 'new normal', feeling loved, supported and challenged under Michelle's guidance.

Michelle, your expertise, practical sharing and leading by example of high-quality secondary teaching and learning make you a worthy finalist. Thank you!

Emily Whiting **St Joseph's College, Toowoomba**

Emily meticulously gathers a range of data about her students and uses this to determine which of the broad range of highly effective teaching strategies she has in her repertoire will lead to the best learning outcomes.

She also uses this preparation to inform her learning conversations with each student ensuring they feel simultaneously challenged, safe and welcome. Critical to the learning conversations success, Emily has built a common language of learning and thinking strategies that enable she and the students to 'talk together' about assessment tasks both formative and summative. A number of students have identified Emily's use of targeted high-order questioning as a technique they find highly engaging and effective.

Emily is deeply committed to her own and others professional learning goals enhancing pedagogical practice and aligning with the strategic goals of the College. This has been shown through her leadership of the 'You Never Walk Alone' program, sharing proactive wellbeing support strategies and modelling and showing others effective and robust academic tracking and mentoring approaches.

Emily's students describe being in her class as an experience where 'we are always thinking about what we are learning and why we are learning it'. It is because of the work she does to develop extremely positive, warm and learning-focussed relationships with her students that their voice as learners and hers as an expert teacher come together with such great effect.

Excellence in Teaching and Learning - Professional Learning Communities

sponsored by Aspect Architects and Project Managers

Recipient

St Joseph's Primary School, Chinchilla

Over the last two and a half years the St Joseph's Chinchilla PLC has worked continuously to improve teaching and learning, and have taken great strides forward in their use of learning technologies and approaches to assessment. This has led to positive change in student self-efficacy, growth in achievement and student learning persistence.

To achieve their goals the school created small working groups that were focussed on various elements of the school's Annual Action Plan. Teachers led and worked together with a key focus on applying research-based practices in their context; always keeping student learning improvement at the centre.

As a result, teachers have refined their curriculum, planning and assessment practices; developed in their students, self-reflective practices; and have provided more opportunities for students to think deeply and consciously about their learning.

As an outcome of the Digital Pedagogy Lighthouse Project students and teachers are now using technology to enhance learning rather than just for skill practice. Teachers views on how their knowledge and proficiency in digital pedagogies could impact on student learning have changed markedly and they now choose when it is appropriate to use technology to enhance learning and develop students' skills as creators rather than just as consumers of electronic content. Students' attitudes towards the use of technology and learning have also transformed. This success is being shared at conferences and with Toowoomba Catholic schools.

The community of Chinchilla are well aware of the success of the teachers and its students too, with the school continuing to grow – not common in smaller, rural communities!

It is for this ongoing success and commitment to learning together that St Joseph's is awarded the Excellence in Teaching and Learning – Professional Learning Community award.

Excellence in Leadership - Emerging leader

sponsored by Australian Catholic Superannuation and Retirement Fund

Recipient

Eleighta Hannam
St Mary's College, Toowoomba

Eleighta has been a valued staff member of St Mary's College since 2013 taking on many roles leading curriculum initiatives and in an acting capacity to develop her skills and demonstrate her commitment to the College, its staff and students. Some of these have included Senior Curriculum Coordinator, Acting Director of Senior Pathways and Acting Assistant Principal Curriculum.

In each of these roles, Eleighta has been instrumental in improving the academic progress of students through tracking their academic progress ensuring they are reaching desired outcomes.

Over the years, Eleighta has also been heavily involved in a range of projects including the development of structures to improve the NCCD capture of teacher evidence, coordination of STEM, tutorials, and vocational education.

In 2019, Eleighta gained a Lead Teacher qualification. She was announced one of the first teachers in the Queensland Catholic Schools network to achieve this certification, and two of only seven in Catholic Schools nationally.

Eleighta, the College are very proud to have you in their team and know that your work is improving and developing their teaching and learning capabilities and expertise. Well done!

Finalists

Charden Ruge
St Monica's School, Oakey

As Learning Support Teacher, Charden has been single handedly responsible for an overhaul of the practices that enable the personalising of learning for all students.

She began with the simplification of processes for teachers and teacher aides to ensure that students with additional needs at St Monica's are identified and receive the necessary funding and support to access the curriculum and experience success.

She then streamlined the way teachers can raise their concerns and engage in professional conversations about students who they feel may require additional support or intervention in the future. The suggested strategies and advice Charden offers during these regular student support meetings is invaluable to the teachers and they are more effectively personalising learning resulting in improved learning outcomes.

Additionally, she proactively analyses schoolwide and individual data to design targeted and early interventions based on educational research.

She works with class teachers to build their confidence and capacity to apply these interventions and regularly seeks new strategies – it is her sustained efforts that have been a critical factor in the growth of students at St Monica's.

In Term 1, Charden also stepped up to the position of APRE and ably demonstrated her leadership in this area along with the Learning Support role.

Charden the staff of St Monica's believe that is because of your knowledge, organisational skills and solutions-based approach that they are inspired to take action and grow; and they thank you for your commitment to them and the students.

Cheryl Anderson St Monica's School, Oakey

Cheryl, as an experienced teacher demonstrates a commitment to teacher leadership in several areas including as the school's Wellbeing Champion, through trialling and leading the implementation of new programs, mentoring beginning teachers and her willingness to take on Acting positions when required.

As the school's wellbeing champion Cheryl has organised wellbeing challenges for the staff and coordinated the Year 6 Health and Wellbeing Leadership Team, assisting them with student wellbeing initiatives. As a result, students and staff indicated in a recent survey a great improvement in their own wellbeing and visitors comment on the 'feel' of the school and the positive relationships of staff, students and families – this is culture change that Cheryl has been instrumental in achieving.

In 2019, Cheryl trialled the Phonics to Spelling program, along with the other Early Years Teachers and presented data to the rest of the school. The improvement in spelling was evident and the school determined to implement the program.

Cheryl was then influential in training the Middle and Upper Years teachers and providing support through them observing her teaching.

Cheryl also willingly acted in the Learning Support position in 2018 when the school was a part of the trial of the Planning for Personalised Learning process. She worked tirelessly with classroom teachers sharing her considerable experience and her leadership skills developed and flourished.

Cheryl, your generosity of spirit, your focus on continual growth and your faith are what is admired most by the staff of St Monica's and they thank you for sharing your leadership gifts with them.

Maree Harman St Joseph's College, Toowoomba

Maree leads numerous teams and projects and has a natural talent for mentoring and supporting others. Her exemplary practice has seen her leading others to implement new and innovative strategies associated with online learning, design thinking, visible learning and positive education.

Whether this be through action research, links with Universities, delivering professional development to groups, working with staff to plan, providing feedback on their teaching, modelling and team teaching or writing curriculum documents – her focus is on continual improvement of herself and others.

Maree is described as the epitome of an authentic leader as she aims to empower young people and staff and she models relationships based on Respect, Dignity, Compassion and Endeavour. She is keenly aware of the need to ensure that her cultural, academic, pastoral and spiritual practices and strategies are inclusive and enable all students to develop their strengths. Her genuine care for each student sees her collaborating with others to seek out further knowledge and understanding and extend herself until she feels she has met their needs.

Above all, Maree, your colleagues say that you espouse true servant leadership and live out the College motto of 'Serve Him in Others'. Well done!

Excellence in Leadership - Middle leadership

sponsored by Australian Catholic Superannuation and Retirement Fund

Recipient

Kerri-Ann Manthey
Holy Name Primary School, Toowoomba

Kerri-Ann's effective and decisive leadership is informed by pedagogical expertise and an extensive knowledge of contemporary best practice.

She has been responsible for leading the implementation of several high-yield strategies over the past twelve months focussed on capturing student growth across all year levels. The school's data wall which displays the student's academic levels along with specialised information about their needs is one example.

Her passion for data analysis, monitoring and supporting the progress of students and the development of targeted intervention programs has ensured Holy Name's most recent NAPLAN results were above the state average in all areas in Year 3 and the reading results in both Probe and PM improved by an average of 29%.

To enhance learning further Kerri-Ann has been instrumental in the design of the school enrichment program, one part being the 'Genius Hour'. Students in Years 2 to 6 are identified to participate and complete a project that is showcased to the students and parents; over 30 families attended this presentation solely lead by the students - a great demonstration of their academic success.

With her dual role as APRE and Middle Leader, Kerri-Ann always has staff wellbeing at the forefront. She works closely with all teachers on a weekly basis to ensure that they are supported with curriculum decisions – modelling lessons, sharing reflections and setting goals. She leads professional development for the school and at Diocesan events and is continually seeking feedback to ensure staff are well supported and their voice is part of the plan moving forward.

Kerri-Ann, your drive and focus, coupled with your compassion and sensitivity are what make you an exemplary middle leader. Congratulations.

Finalists

Emily Whiting
St Joseph's College, Toowoomba

Emily's high-quality leadership encourages independence and teamwork in others focussed on living the College's values of dignity, respect, endeavour and compassion.

She is innovative in design thinking and strategies and uses this to include others, enabling them to develop their strengths.

Emily is 'College focussed' and looks for opportunities to innovate in teaching, wellbeing and student welfare, utilising technology to inspire and connect collaborative practices, in conjunction with creating curriculum content that stimulates knowledge, skills and understanding in both teachers and students.

As a positive advocate for a deeper spiritual understanding of the Catholic ethos, she guides others to develop their knowledge and understanding of the spiritual meaning of ritualistic events and symbols; and instinctively integrates Catholic teachings, guidance and support of others as a priority within the community.

Emily's engagement in positive education and visible learning engages students to set positive learning goals and build their resilience. She is the driving force behind the student and staff wellbeing initiative, although it is in its infancy, her work has been a fundamental knowledge base for what is to come.

We congratulate Emily on being chosen as a finalist!

Juanita Doherty **St Saviour's College, Toowoomba**

Juanita has been teaching at St Saviour's College for over a decade and has been a middle leader for student wellbeing for the last two and a half years, During this time she has ensured that the wellbeing focus of the College's pastoral programs espouse the values that underpin the commitment to a 'Mercy' education, namely, hospitality, justice, compassion and excellence.

Juanita is described as passionate and professional, with great attention to detail. On a weekly basis, she coordinates House Meetings and Year Level Meetings – each planned meticulously to support the teachers who are responsible for the delivery of these meetings. The content is varied, valuable and timely, and innovatively responds to the wellbeing needs of students.

Juanita also mentors the very proactive Student Representative Council (SRC), leads the 'Mercy Girl of the Week' award and together with the Assistant Principal: Mission and Student Wellbeing methodically organises Year Level Camps and Retreats. Further to this she provides opportunities for the girls to further their leadership through their involvement in programs such as GRIP.

Juanita is extremely proactive in her pastoral care of staff and because of the positive relationships she has, others willingly support her in the pastoral activities she leads.

Juanita's approachable, warm, firm, yet calm personal traits enable her to diffuse situations that arise in ways that are fair, supportive and sensitive to all.

Above all, Juanita is an excellent teacher; consistently emphasising the centrality of teaching and learning in the life and work of the school, and creatively differentiating work and plans in order to unleash the potential of each student.

Thank you Juanita!

Excellence in Leadership - School Leadership

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Recipient

Chris Bartlett

Mater Dei Primary School, Toowoomba

Chris has led Mater Dei from being a good school to a great school.

Recognising the need to build teacher capacity, clarity and collective efficacy, he has nurtured conditions that create a culture of collaboration and commitment. His empowering of staff to recognise their strengths and the need to provide opportunity for the sharing of these strengths saw the establishment of an extended leadership team and Professional Learning Teams – this is further developing existing leaders and growing future leaders. AITSL has recognised this approach and the school will feature in the 2020 HALT summit.

The space known as 'The Hub' is also central to Chris' leadership. It is open and accessible to all. In it, both formal and informal meetings regularly occur. It has become a collegial and collaborative space where the 'thinking behind decisions' is visible, all staff have a voice, are included and well informed. The belief in collective efficacy this has generated is significant.

Chris' commitment to embedding and connecting the Benedictine spirituality and Good Samaritan charism has resulted in the Mater Dei Learning Dispositions. They provide a simple way for all to recontextualise Jesus' teachings to provide relevance in everyday life. Coupled with the introduction of the 'Learning Process' both teachers and students are now able to articulate where they are in their learning, know what is required to achieve success and the next steps.

All of this has resulted in improvement in student learning - Mater Dei is now one of the highest performing schools in Toowoomba in NAPLAN Reading, and one of the highest performing schools in the country, with over 95% of students achieving at least a year's growth in reading in 2019.

Chris, staff describe the culture as one of continuous improvement where 'coasting is not permitted' and that this is as a result of your unrelenting focus on continuous improvement and deliberate actions to enable them to be the best they can be. Well done Chris!

Finalist

Katrina Walton

Our Lady of the Southern Cross College, Dalby

Katrina, as the Assistant Principal, Early Years has fully embraced Visible Learning and worked tirelessly to develop students', teachers' and parents' knowledge. The development of College-wide resources to provide a common language were instrumental in the success of her work, and include a Learning Pit poster where characters are wearing an OLSCC uniform and a Learning Dispositions poster highlighting the seven character traits of a good learner; these have underpinned the professional development she has led and are evident in practice across the College.

Katrina ensures that she stays abreast of new thinking and research, undertaking her own professional development to make effective decisions to support students' learning. Her recent focus was into the teaching of reading where she led the development, sourcing and purchasing of resources; actively reviewed the TCS Phonics to Spelling document; led Professional Development for all teachers of Prep to Year 6; and worked with staff to collectively investigate student data using a data wall of reading development in the College staffroom.

Building ownership and responsibility for data, teaching practices and effective use of resources has been key to changing practices. Katrina's encouragement and support to grow teacher's knowledge and skills has resulted in substantial increases in student's reading abilities over the last 18 months.

Katrina's ability to make Jesus real in her life and that of the College community is seen in her interactions with all students and especially with those students who feel marginalised or isolated. The community knows that she is responsive to their needs; as a strong advocate for open communication she greatly values the input of students, families and teachers. Her visibility within the local community also reinforces the positive relationships between the town of Dalby and Our Lady of the Southern Cross College.

Katrina, the personalisation of your support and appreciation for staff and students is what stands you apart as a quality school leader - well done on being selected as a finalist!