

AITSL recognises outstanding educators in inaugural awards

Thirty-nine state and territory finalists and five national winners were recognised for their expert knowledge, exemplary skills and unswerving commitment to meet the needs of young Australians at the inaugural awards ceremony in Melbourne on 13th October 2011.

- Australian Primary Teacher of the Year
- Australian Secondary Teacher of the Year
- Australian Primary Principal of the Year
- Australian Secondary Principal of the Year
- The Australian Government Minister's Award for Excellence in Teaching or Leadership Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education.

Winners of each category received a professional learning sabbatical working with recognised national and international



David Hamlett – Taroona High School, Tas

education experts and practitioners.

Winners will share their learning experience with their school community and their profession on completion.

Winners

Primary Teacher of the Year Jo Sherrin – Bradshaw Primary School, NT.

Secondary Teacher of the Year David Henderson – Rossmoyn Senior High School.

Primary Principal of the Year Lee Musumeci – Challis Early Childhood Education Centre, WA.

Secondary Principal of the Year David Hamlett – Taroona High School, Tas.

Graham Blackley – Bairnsdale Secondary College, Vic *Minister's Award for Excellence in Teaching or Leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education*

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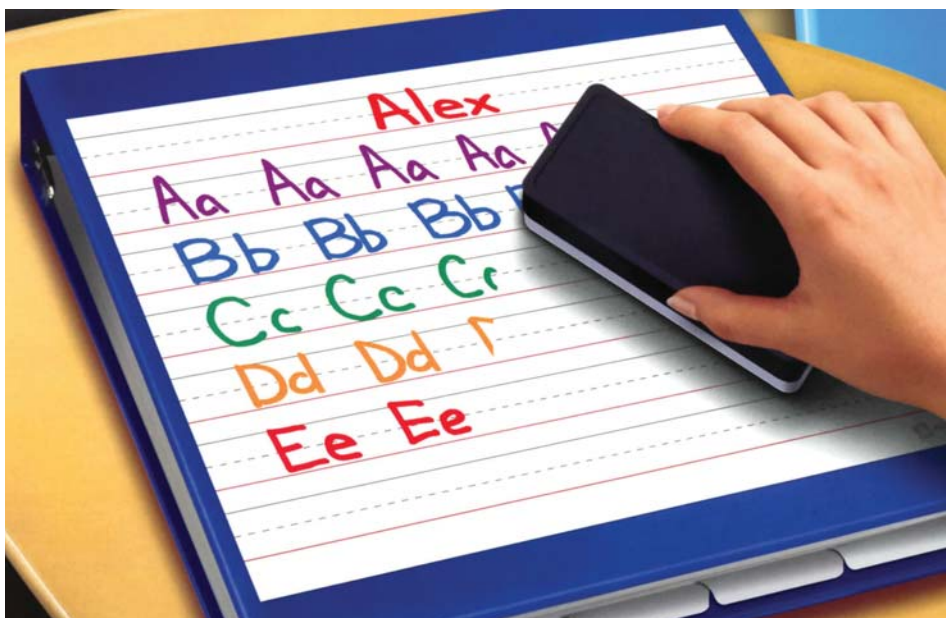
The 280 x 216 mm sheets can be written on using dry erase whiteboard markers and wipe clean without ghosting.

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New program to boost Indonesian knowledge



Ingrid Colman, a teacher from Tasmania, attend the ACICIS Indonesian Language Teacher Immersion (ILTI) Short Course pilot in January 2011



Prof David Hill

Teachers will be offered the opportunity to become 'Asia advocates' to boost language learning, thanks to a project based at Murdoch University.

ACICIS – the Australian Consortium for 'In-Country' Indonesian Studies – has been awarded nearly \$400,000 by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to develop the *Indonesia from the ground up!* program.

ACICIS Founder and Director Prof David T Hill, Chair of South East Asian Studies at Murdoch University, said the program would give teachers the chance to immerse themselves in Indonesian culture on a 12-day study tour to the country.

"We know that if students are to have the best chance of learning a language, language instruction needs to be supported across all curriculum

areas, with the involvement of non-language teaching staff," he said.

"*Indonesia from the ground up!* is designed for teachers of history, geography, arts, business, environment, media and citizenship, who will have little or no Indonesian language skills.

"These teachers will become 'Asia advocates' who can incorporate their new knowledge of Indonesia into their teaching and inspire their students. They will have a dramatic impact on the teaching of Asian studies and make a substantial contribution to supporting language learning."

Two pilot tours, funded by the grant, are planned for July 2012 and January 2013. If these are successful, the program will be rolled out on a fee-paying basis.

www.acicis.murdoch.edu.au

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Jamie's Home Cooking Skills secondary schools program

Teacher training for Jamie's Home Cooking Skills secondary schools program is underway.

The program fits within a Year 9 and 10 food technology framework in Australia and teaches students to cook healthy, affordable food, using fresh ingredients.

To offer the program, schools need to become an accredited centre; commit to the quality assurance regime; and attend a one-day BTEC training session. As of end September, 40 teachers in Perth, Sydney and Melbourne had booked or attended the one-day training.

The program cost is \$95.00 per student and includes the curriculum, recipes, activity sheets, fact sheets, support videos online, support, and quality assurance. It comprises 60 hours of contact time, research time, preparation and assessment. On completion, students receive a BTEC level 1 qualification.

The home cooking skills program has been launched in Australia by Pearson Australia.

www.pearson.com.au/jamieshomecookingskills

Nuance joins speech recognition research consortium

Nuance Communications, maker of Dragon NaturallySpeaking software, has joined the Liberated Learning Consortium, (LLC), an international group of technology providers, colleges and universities working to advance information accessibility in higher education through the use of speech recognition technology.

The Consortium was formed to support the diverse higher-education learning needs of people with disabilities by improving access to class lectures. Members research and develop platforms for speech recognition-based captioning and transcription of education media in support of the LLC mission. Australian Consortium partners include Australian National University, Macquarie University and University of the Sunshine Coast.

Representing between 10–20 per cent of all post secondary students, higher education learners with various disabilities face significant challenges when it comes to capturing class notes or accessing information from class lectures. Many colleges and universities use volunteer note takers, but this is typically a very inefficient process, and also forces students with disabilities to rely on others. There are also outsourced services that can transcribe class lectures, however this is typically costly and inefficient. The rapid rise of online multimedia based courses further increases the need for technology solutions focused on accessibility.

The Consortium's aim through its research is to apply speech recognition technology to deliver real-time captioning and transcription of class lectures and other education media, to provide equal access to information for students of all abilities.

<http://liberatedlearning.com>

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Prime Minister's prizes for science excellence awarded

Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary Schools

Brooke Topelberg science coordinator at Westminster Primary in Perth has been awarded The Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary Schools.

She terms the way she teaches science 'non-confrontational' where children don't feel under pressure to use the right language or come up with the right answer.

"One example is that I use hand-held puppets to elicit discussion. The children feel quite comfortable in talking to the puppets. They're not scared or threatened about giving their views or opinions. They don't feel there's an adult around." For many of the same reasons, she often uses cartoons. Both approaches empower children for whom English is a second language.

Once a week, she opens up the science laboratory for a lunch time science club. "I have some fun science activities for the children to take part in – tea-bag rockets, hovercraft CDs, something hands-on that they can do during the lunch time break." Not surprisingly, the club is oversubscribed and children have to take turns.

Another cornerstone of her teaching is a



Brooke Topelberg and students

whole-school approach. She integrates science with other learning areas. She has established science-based school projects to do with recycling resources and using water wisely and has just been granted money to develop a school vegetable garden.

Her influence, is much broader than Westminster Primary. With her Year Six pupils, she developed a story for a video on science investigation. They then collaborated with media students from nearby Mirrabooka High School to film it, with special effects contributed by

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undergraduates from Edith Cowan University. That video has now been sold and distributed to more than 200 schools across Australia.

Westminster Primary won the WA Science School of the Year award in 2008 and the Scitech Salvaged Sculpture Competition in 2009.

Excellence in Science Teaching in Secondary Schools

Dr Jane Wright science coordinator and head of the science faculty at Loreto College, Adelaide, has been awarded the Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Secondary Schools for her work in developing curriculum, teachers and a generation of young women.

"Jane is highly regarded for her outstanding contribution to science teaching," says Ms Jan Althorp, a former Executive Director of the Australian Science Teachers Association. "Her involvement within her school, the state and national professional associations has been extraordinary over 20 years. I don't think she sleeps!"

Her enriched teaching has led to a string of awards including the Shell National Science Teacher Award in 1992, the BHP Billiton National Science Teacher Award and a Credit Union SA Award for Outstanding Science Teacher in 2010, and now the Prime Minister's Prize.

Her students have investigated extra-sensory perception; finding the best way to neutralise spills of household cleaners; and testing the antibiotic effects of Manuka honey. They present their results not just by writing reports, but using talks, videos, role-plays and stories.

Dr Wright says: "It's not just about teaching the students science, it's actually being part of their lives. When my first Year 8 class graduated from Year 12, I felt a real



Dr Jane Wright and students

sense of achievement which has never left. It's about developing their thought processes, and watching them grow up."

She recently coordinated her 26th week-long, annual camp in the Flinders Ranges for 90 Year 11 girls and 13 staff. The students leave their mobile phones at home and engage in a plethora of cross-disciplinary studies. They examine distributions of plants and animals and their relationship to the environment, and compare salt concentrations in the creeks with samples from Adelaide. They explore landforms, weathering and erosion, as well as the impact of feral animals.

Local Aboriginal people work with the students to broaden their understanding of

Indigenous culture. And they become involved in art activities and creative writing.

The program is typical of Dr Wright's hands-on approach to science, where girls who are about to be tested for their driver's licences measure the speed and braking of cars along busy Adelaide roads, and biology lessons are sometimes held in the gardens surrounding Loreto, or at the school pond.

NEiTA Awards nominees announced

Finalists for the NEiTA 2011 ASG Inspirational Teaching Awards have been announced and 568 nominees will progress through to the next phase—the NEiTA 2011 ASG Inspirational State and Territory Teaching Awards, in which 60 teachers will be announced as recipients by November 2011. Of these, NEiTA will select 10 teachers to receive national awards next year.

Teacher award recipients at the national level will receive national awards commemorated with a NEiTA crystal apple award and a professional or project grant of \$5,000.

One national awardee will be selected as Australia's Inspirational Teacher to participate in the International Space Camp held in Alabama, USA, in July 2012 sponsored by ASG.

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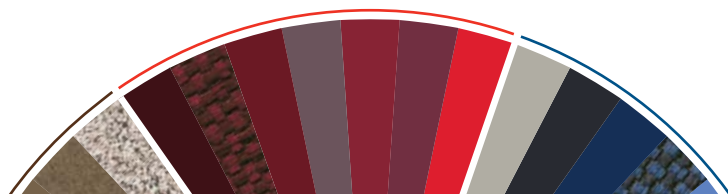
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YHA launches school camps in NSW Blue Mountains



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A range of environmental bushwalks and cultural programs have been developed and are led by specialist Discovery Rangers, The Blue Mountains Botanic Garden's Education Team and Aboriginal Discovery Rangers.

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Read2remember remembers teachers

SunnyKids, a children's charity has launched a new program for teachers called Read2Remember. Developed to support teachers across Queensland, the Read2Remember program supplies teachers from pre-primary to high school with class notes and resources to use on Remembrance Day and automatically enters schools in the National Reading Challenge.

Through Read2Remember teachers can bring Remembrance Day into their normal daily curriculum and extend it in creative ways. "It is important to link our older community members with our younger ones and ensure that children understand the meaning of Remembrance Day in a positive way – through mateship, bravery and strength," said Dr Lorraine O'Neill, SunnyKids Director of Education and Program Development.

"We thought it was time to support the teachers who support the kids by providing them with activities and ideas they can use on Remembrance Day. Registration is simple and the class notes, written by international teaching specialists are curriculum focused."

A multi-faceted program, registration by teachers or heads of curriculum automatically enters schools into the National R2R Reading Challenge, the R2R School Competition and allows students to enter the Aussie Pride Competition. For further information or register a school or class visit the website.

www.read2remember.org.au



Ministers agree on consistent national teacher registration

Anthony Mackay, chair of AITSL, has welcomed education Ministers' endorsement of a nationally consistent approach to teacher registration.

At a meeting in Melbourne on 13th October 2011, the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) approved a proposal from AITSL regarding a nationally consistent approach to teacher registration.

The decision on teacher registration is an important feature of the national focus on further improving teacher quality. It means that across Australia provisionally registered teachers will provide evidence, against a set of seven standards, that they are proficient practitioners in order to become fully registered. "This is an important step in protecting and strengthening the quality of the profession and building the confidence of the community," Mr Mackay said.

A nationally consistent approach to registration will increase mobility for Australian teachers, and ensure that registration is part of a wider framework for teachers' career progression and professional learning guided by the National Professional Standards for Teachers. The agreed national approach builds on the positive features of existing registration regimes operating in many jurisdictions.

Mr Mackay commented, "This is the latest step in putting into place a comprehensive national approach to improving teacher quality, recognised as being the major in-school factor in improving student learning. The Australian community can be more certain than ever that everyone involved in the education system is working to ensure that Australian teaching, school leadership and student outcomes are the best they can be."



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