

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health



Friday, 20 November 2020

LITERACY CHAMPION WINS TOP EDUCATION EXCELLENCE AWARD

A secondary school teacher improving literacy rates in VCE students has taken out Victoria's top public education prize, honoured by the Andrews Labor Government as one of 14 Victorian Education Excellence Awards winners.

Minister for Education James Merlino today announced the winners of the 2020 education excellence awards as part of a special online ceremony, recognising inspirational teachers, principals and education support staff who improve schools and support children and young people.

Five individual awards, six team awards and three specialist awards were given, with winners chosen from a shortlist of 41 finalists.

The award's top prize, the Lindsay Thompson Award for Excellence in Education, went to Mordialloc College teacher Andrew McConchie for driving improvements in reading and writing through the introduction of a whole-school literacy program, which saw improved VCE English and NAPLAN results.

Andrew also won the Outstanding Secondary Teacher Award.

Princes Hill Primary School principal Esme Capp won the Outstanding Primary Principal Award for her work in using research to improve teaching outcomes, while Camberwell High School principal Jill Laughlin won the Outstanding Secondary Principal Award for her work in becoming a STEM school leader one of three P-TECH (Pathways in Technology) schools in Victoria, specialising in cybersecurity.

Kangaroo Flat Primary School, Swan Hill Primary School, Cobram Primary School, River Gum Primary School and Preston High School were also honoured for education excellence.

Winners in all categories are awarded professional development grants of up to \$25,000 to support their work in schools.

Andrew McConchie also received a further \$20,000 grant as the winner of the Lindsay Thompson Award. The live-streamed awards ceremony was co-hosted by *The Project's* Gorgi Coghlan and included live crosses to the 41 finalists.

From 2021, the Outstanding Secondary Principal Award will be renamed the Colin Simpson Outstanding Secondary Principal Award to honour the one of the Victoria's most outstanding and influential secondary principals.

Colin was the founding principal of Richmond High School and a long-serving principal of the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School. He was regarded as one of Australia's leading arts educators. More information about the awards and winners is available at www.education.vic.gov.au/vaea

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"This year's winners have shown excellence and dedication in improving the educational outcomes for Victorian students and are well deserving of this recognition."

"We are building the Education State, where every student can access a great local school and get a great education. This includes having great teachers at the forefront of our classrooms to help young people thrive."

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2020 Victorian Education Excellence Award winners

- Lindsay Thompson Award for Excellence in Education:** Andrew McConchie (Mordialloc College)
- Excellence in Physical Education and Activity Award – Primary Teacher:** Ben Clark (Antonio Park Primary School)
- Excellence in Physical Education and Activity Award – Secondary Teacher:** Mitch Crowley (Hazel Glen College)
- Outstanding Business Manager Award:** Matthew Smitten (Bacchus Marsh Primary School)
- Outstanding Primary Teacher Award:** Averil Mitchell (Hampton Park Primary School)
- Outstanding Secondary Teacher Award:** Andrew McConchie (Mordialloc College)
- Outstanding Primary Principal Award:** Esme Capp (Princes Hill Primary School)
- Outstanding Secondary Principal Award:** Jill Laughlin (Camberwell High School)
- Dr Lawrie Shears Excellence in Global Teaching and Learning Award:** Richmond West Primary School
- Outstanding Education Support Team Award:** Latrobe Valley Flexible Learning Option
- Outstanding Inclusive Education Award:** Kangaroo Flat Primary School
- Outstanding Koorie Education Award:** Swan Hill Primary School
- Outstanding School Improvement Award:** Cobram Primary School
- Outstanding Provision for High-Ability Students – Primary:** River Gum Primary School
- Outstanding Provision for High-Ability Students – Secondary:** Preston High School