

2025 NSWPPA AWARDS

Wednesday 29 October 2025



Presented by
The Honourable Courtney Houssos, MLC,
Acting Minister for Education
and Murat Dizdar, PSM, Secretary NSW DoE

NSWPPA Awards 2025

Every year we have the honour of recognising the work of our colleagues through the nomination and selection of recipients of the following awards.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP or FELLOWSHIP

FELLOWSHIP of the Association may be bestowed upon a member whose service to Education and to the Association is both long-standing and exemplary.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP of the Association may be bestowed upon a retired member and/or a member in their final year of employment in the teaching service, whose service to Education and to the Association is both long-standing and exemplary. It is usually awarded to a member in their final year of employment in the teaching service, or at an appropriate time on the recommendation of the NSWPPA State Executive and endorsed by the NSWPPA State Council.

In assessing nominations for Life Membership or Fellowship, the following criteria should be addressed:

- a) a minimum period of five years' service to the Association
- b) consideration of the level of service to the Association through outstanding contributions at a state or area level in matters such as, for example:
 - administration and management of the Association,
 - representation on state committees or working parties,
 - preparation of papers on behalf of the Association,

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

The Distinguished Service Award is bestowed upon a member whose service to Area Councils, Reference Groups, Standing Committees or Working Parties has been exemplary for a minimum period of five years. This service may include the administration and management of the relevant bodies or support of colleagues associated with those bodies.

PROFESSIONAL AWARD

The award will be made to a Primary Principal who has made a significant contribution to Primary education and the Principalship at the School, Area or State level in matters such as, for example: initiating significant educational change; undertaking the support and welfare of colleagues; and/or enhancing the professional standing of Primary Principals; fostering the professional development of Primary Principals.

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION & COMMUNITIES AWARD

Area Councils may nominate one Principal and/or School from their Area, addressing for example how:

- the Program/ Principal has made a difference to Aboriginal students/ communities
- the Program/ Principal has changed the outcomes for Aboriginal students or communities; and/or
- the Program/ Principal has changed community attitudes.

NSWPPA Awards 2025

Life Membership of the NSWPPA



Robyn Evans



Jane Kibble



Steve McAlister



Mark Thomson



Michael Trist



Rob Walker

Fellowship of the NSWPPA



Helen Craigie



Grant Schaefer

NSWPPA Awards 2025

Aboriginal Education and Communities Award

Kerry Bryan | Blaxland East Public School

Jody Hall | Dubbo West Public School

Dylan Harry | Eungai Public School

Fiona Kelly | Menindee Central School

Distinguished Service Award

Sharon Allman | Dubbo South Public School

Glenn Daniels | Albion Park Public School

Deborah Fisher | Scone Public School

Peter Flannery | Alstonville Public School

Tony Friedrich | Dapto Public School

Leah Martin | Pambula Public School

Michael Ostler | Parkes East Public School

Scott Sanford | Morgan Street Public School

Glen Walker | Gol Gol Public School

Trish Webb | Alma Public School

Kathryn Weston | Hay Public School

Adam Wynn | Cambridge Gardens Public School

Professional Award

Sharyn Cox | Moree Public School

Les Daley | Murwillumbah Public School

Joanna Henderson | Banora Point Public School

Scott McCardell | Bexley Public School

Andrew Patterson | Copmanhurst Public School

Melissa Scully | Ashtonfield Public School

Life Membership of the NSWPPA Robyn Evans

Nominated by Leah Martin | Liverpool Area Council

Robyn Evans is an exceptional candidate for Life Membership of the NSWPPA. A highly successful primary school principal with over 12 years of dedicated service on the NSWPPA Executive, including four years as President (2020–2024), Robyn's commitment to supporting, empowering, advocating for and leading Principals is second only to her career-long focus on improving the learning and lives of every student who is part of our Public School communities.

Robyn's leadership as principal at Marton, Yowie Bay, Jannali East, Bangor and Casula Public Schools had a profound positive impact on students, families, and communities. As part of the NSWPPA Executive she has made significant contributions across every area of our work, where she has played a pivotal role utilising her expertise and leadership skillset, strengthening our voice, enhancing the culture of our Association and creating change for the better.

As President, Robyn advocated tirelessly for colleagues and fostered partnerships with a solutions-focused approach. She has actively contributed to boards, committees and working parties, at both the State and National level, including as Vice President of AGPPA, influencing policy and support mechanisms for principals across NSW.

Robyn's compassionate, warm, strong, innovative and courageous leadership style has grown an infinite legacy, inspiring and empowering colleagues to reach their potential. One of her greatest strengths is her ability to mentor, coach and bring out the best in all those who are fortunate enough to work with her.

Robyn's contributions have enhanced the Association's capacity to support principals and promote collaborative professional growth for the benefit of all public school students in NSW. In recognition of her exemplary service to both education and the NSWPPA, Robyn Evans is most deserving of Life Membership.



Life Membership of the NSWPPA Jane Kibble

Nominated by Andrew Rodgers | Tamworth Area Council

In recognition of Jane Kibble's outstanding contributions to NSW Public Schools , we celebrate her exemplary leadership during her final year of service. As a principal who has initiated significant educational change, Jane has consistently demonstrated innovative practices that have transformed the learning experiences of students and the teaching environment for staff. Her commitment to fostering an outstanding school culture through her creativity, collaboration and amazing interpersonal skills has set a benchmark for excellence within her school community.

Jane has been a steadfast advocate for the support and welfare of her colleagues, ensuring that every staff member feels valued and empowered. Jane is a compassionate and inspiring principal who is adored by her students, teachers, parents and colleagues. Her endearing personality and great knowledge have not only empowered the teachers in her school to become quality educators, but she has also inspired, supported and mentored many principal colleagues across the region.

Through her tireless efforts, Jane has played a pivotal role in enhancing the professional standing of primary principals over the past 29 years, advocating through her involvement in the Tamworth PPC and as the New England representative on the Principal Support Reference Group ensuring she plays a vital role in shaping the future of public education. Her dedication to promoting public education has resonated across the community, reinforcing the importance of accessible and quality education for all children.

As Jane embarks on the next chapter of her life journey, we extend our deepest gratitude for her unwavering commitment and exemplary service. Her legacy of educational excellence, support for colleagues, and advocacy for public education will continue to inspire future generations of educators and leaders. Thank you, Jane, for your remarkable contributions to your school, the broader education community and the NSW Primary Principals' Association.



Life Membership of the NSWPPA Steve McAlister

Nominated by Greg McLaren | Queanbeyan Area Council

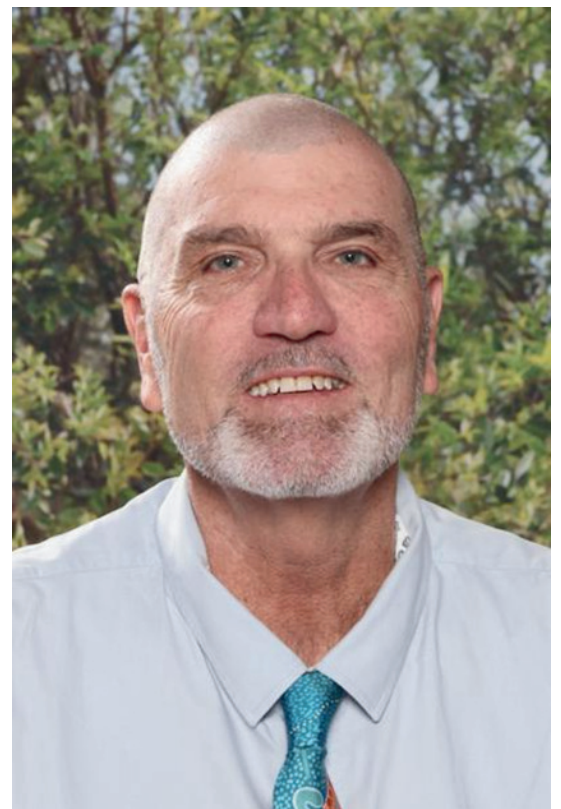
Steve McAlister's service to Public Education and to the New South Wales Primary Principals' Association is both extensive and exemplary.

Throughout his career, Steve has held numerous leadership roles and made significant contributions to the Association's work. He served as the Acting State President from May to July 2013, was State Deputy President from 2013 to 2014, and State Vice President from 2009 to 2012. Additionally, Steve has represented the Association as a State Council Delegate and as President of the Orange-Lachlan PPC. He also contributed as a member of the NSWPPA Legal Issues Standing Committee.

Steve represented the Association at meetings with the State Education Minister and Director-General of Education. He managed membership across all state reference groups, standing committees, and working parties. Steve dedicated significant effort to issues affecting rural and remote school communities. Additionally, he played a key role in the Association's technology integration, serving as web manager and overseeing various communication channels.

Steve's contribution to public education and primary students of NSW includes teaching and/or school leadership throughout NSW at Cootamundra PS, Tumbarumba PS, Tumut PS, Gundagai South PS, Balranald CS and Crescent Head PS. He was a long-term relieving Principal at Kempsey East PS, substantive Principal at Cumnock and Forbes North Public Schools, and is the current and founding Principal of Jindabyne PS. In 2010 Steve was the NSW Federation of P&Cs Primary Principal of the Year.

For his outstanding service and leadership, Steve McAlister is a truly deserving recipient of Life Membership of the NSW Primary Principals' Association.



Life Membership of the NSWPPA Mark Thomson

Nominated by **Melissa O'Meara** | Batemans Bay Area Council

Mark Thomson has been a dedicated member of the NSWPPA for over 29 years. Throughout this time, Mark has exemplified the values of the NSWPPA by consistently supporting, empowering, advocating for, and leading his principal colleagues. His passion for developing strong leaders is the power of his legacy that will continue to benefit staff and students across NSW Public schools.

Mark is a respected mentor and role model who inspires aspiring principals by bringing out the best in those around him and has mentored many colleagues to successful Principalships. His leadership within the association has been extensive, serving in numerous executive roles within local area councils. Beginning as Delegate and Deputy President of the Wagga Wagga Primary Principals' Council and finishing his career as a long-standing President of the Batemans Bay PPC. He was also an active member of the Rural and Remote Standing Committee for a long period and influential at the State level during his tenure.

Mark's influence extends beyond his school, building strong partnerships within the Department of Education and the NSWPPA. He dedicated so much of his career to addressing challenges with a solution focused approach, especially in rural and remote communities.

Colleagues describe Mark as a lighthouse - steadfast and unwavering - guiding his fellow principals through leadership challenges with wisdom, support, and hope. His commitment to wellbeing and mentorship has illuminated the path for many, helping them navigate their roles and reach their full potential.

For his outstanding service and dedication to the NSWPPA and the students of NSW public schools, Mark Thomson is a highly deserving recipient of NSWPPA Life Membership.



Life Membership of the NSWPPA

Michael Trist

Nominated by Jane Martyn | Mid North Coast Area Council

Michael Trist has been an active and impactful member of the NSWPPA since joining in 2003. As the dedicated principal of Narranga Public School, Michael has shown remarkable leadership and commitment to the education community, significantly influencing educational policies and practices that benefit both students and educators.

Michael has been an active member of the NSWPPA on the Mid North Coast PPC, serving in various leadership roles, including President, Vice President, State Delegate, and Equity Reference Group contact. His advocacy for primary schools has led to meaningful improvements and support for principals across the state.

Within the Primary Principals' Association State Executive team, Michael has held key positions such as Vice President, Secretary, and Chairperson for both the Communications and Engagement Standing Committee and the Rural Education Standing Committee. His service has had a positive impact on numerous students, principals, and communities across New South Wales.

He has co-written inquiries and position papers to promote the views of principals and improve various aspects of school leadership, including Principal Classification and Performance Pay.

Additionally, Michael has been instrumental in mentoring many principals, providing guidance that has helped them navigate leadership challenges.

His passion for education and unwavering dedication to student success have inspired many within the association and beyond. Michael's commitment to public education and his work with the NSWPPA are truly commendable. He is a most worthy recipient of Life membership of the NSWPPA.



Life Membership of the NSWPPA

Rob Walker

Nominated by Trish Peters | Tweed Heads Ballina Area Council

Rob Walker has given many years of distinguished service to Public Education and the NSW Primary Principals Association. He had been a continuously serving member of State Executive for twelve years until 2024, and has held a number of State Executive and Reference Group positions over his tenure. He contributed over many years to the highly successful State Annual Conference Committee and, most recently, was the Deputy President of the NSWPPA.

Rob's diligent service to his principal colleagues is without peer and, as the principal of a K-12 school, has also given service to the Secondary Principals Council. He is widely known and respected for his professionalism and dedication to promoting the values of public education and the NSWPPA. Rob is the epitome of servant leadership, never wavering in his duty, and the moral compass that guides his interactions is exemplary.

His role in transforming the results of the November 2019 APPA report of the high levels of childhood anxiety in primary schools into action was crucial.

He collaborated with one of Australia's leading child behaviour experts to develop a whole-of-school community change project to address this problem. His passion and diligence in bringing this work to life has resulted in the development of principal-led professional learning and the implementation of school-wide learning to tackle an emerging problem for staff, students and schools in Australia.

Rob's dedication, service and commitment to the values and ideals of the NSWPPA make him a worthy recipient of Life Membership.



Fellowship of the NSWPPA Helen Craigie

Nominated by Jackie Nilan | Lismore Area Council

Helen Craigie is currently Principal at Bexhill Public School. She has been a tireless supporter of all matters related to student wellbeing. Helen has chaired the NSWPPA Student Wellbeing Reference Group for 15 years with outstanding commitment and passion.

She has capably led this team through the NSW Behaviour Strategy. Helen was at the table when Professor Donna Cross first began her comprehensive review of behaviour in 2019, attending countless consultations over the years until the strategy was fully implemented.

She embodies the tenets of 'Support, Empower, Advocate and Lead', always speaking up for our principal colleagues with senior members of the Department to achieve what's best for all.

Helen has had significant influence in the sphere of student wellbeing and has made enduring connections with key staff to build an impressive network of productive relationships. Helen can pick up the phone and be confident that her opinion is valued and trusted and that her voice is the voice of the NSWPPA.

Although her representation of primary principals across NSW is formidable, she is also a very active and supportive member of her PPC and is just as happy to pitch in at local schools' athletics carnivals and performing arts festivals with equal enthusiasm.

Helen is highly regarded for her knowledge, her strength and her kindness to all but most of all, her practical wisdom, and she is a very deserving recipient of Fellowship of the NSWPPA.



Fellowship of the NSWPPA Grant Schaefer

Nominated by David O'Connor | Shellharbour Area Council

Grant Shaefer has had a long-standing commitment to the work of the NSWPPA and has held a number of significant roles at a local PPC and state PPA level over many years.

Grant was the Secretary of the Tamworth PPC for two years and a member of the Learning Innovations Reference Group for four years during the period 2000-2005.

Since 2006, Grant has been Secretary of the Shellharbour PPC (two years) and Vice President of the Shellharbour PPC (two years). He coordinated two combined PPC conferences, was a member of the Learning Innovations Reference Group for an additional two years and was the Chair of the Learning Innovations Reference Group for five years.

From 2012-2013, Grant was a member of the NSWPPA Advisory Group, led by Geoff Scott to develop protocols for schools where recess, closure or merge was being considered.

Since 2014, Grant has been the Chair of the Educational Provision / School Viability Working Party, making an incredible contribution to supporting schools and their communities through their most challenging of times. Grant works tirelessly to champion principals and ensure they are well supported to lead their communities.

Grant is truly a worthy recipient of the NSWPPA Fellowship Award.



Aboriginal Education & Communities Award

Kerry Bryan

Nominated by Grace Palamara | Penrith Blue Mountains Area Council

Kerry Bryan is honoured for her six years of dedicated service on the NSWPPA Aboriginal Education Reference Group. Representing Western Sydney schools, Kerry has profoundly impacted colleagues and students by championing Aboriginal education and fostering culturally responsive learning environments. Her leadership has inspired educators to deepen their understanding of Aboriginal cultures and histories, enriching teaching practices.

Kerry has respectfully used Aboriginal language to deliver the Acknowledgement of Country at NSWPPA and school network meetings, celebrating Aboriginal culture. Her advocacy has empowered students to embrace their identities and strengthened connections between schools and Aboriginal communities.

She played a key role in developing the mandatory Aboriginal Education training now completed by all Department of Education staff. Kerry created authentic opportunities for local schools to engage in Aboriginal Education initiatives and supported principals at every stage of their Aboriginal Education journey to better serve Aboriginal students and communities.

Kerry was instrumental in creating the 2024 Guiding Principles in Leading Aboriginal Education resource, which assists school leaders in planning and practice. She actively contributed to discussions and encouraged survey participation to ensure the resource met Principal's needs. She has been a wonderful role-model and mentor for new and aspiring Aboriginal school leaders within the DoE.

As an Aboriginal Principal and leader of her local AECG, Kerry has been a trusted mentor and adviser, offering wisdom on building strong relationships between schools, principals, and Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups statewide.

This award recognises her outstanding contribution to advancing reconciliation and educational equity through unwavering dedication and positive impact. She is a very worthy recipient of the NSWPPA Aboriginal Education Award.



Aboriginal Education & Communities Award

Jody Hall

Nominated by Tammy Anderson | Dubbo Area Council

Jody Hall, Principal of Dubbo West Public School and proud Aboriginal leader, is a passionate advocate dedicated to improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal students and her community. She is committed to upholding cultural integrity across all aspects of school life at Dubbo West and in the schools she supports professionally.

Leading a rural school requires resilience, innovation, cultural competence, and community-driven leadership. Jody and her family are highly respected in western NSW, creating significant opportunities for students, staff, and community members. She meets challenges with unwavering commitment, navigating rural leadership with skill, purpose, and cultural strength. Jody ensures every student understands their identity and belonging within the school and community.

She builds strong relationships with families and community, making her school a centre of cultural safety and responsiveness. Leading with empathy and strength, Jody often goes beyond the call of duty to connect students and families with the support needed to succeed inside and beyond the classroom.

Jody is an active member of her local and regional AECG, working closely with community to embed Aboriginal voices in educational decision-making. She has long contributed to the NSW PPA Aboriginal Education Reference Group, providing valuable input and ensuring the perspectives of Aboriginal principals and communities are heard. Her voice is powerful, grounded in lived experience, educational expertise, and deep cultural knowledge.

Jody Hall exemplifies adaptive, relational, culturally strong, and community-focused leadership. Her impact extends beyond her school to inspire systemic change and future Aboriginal educational leaders. She is a deserving recipient of the NSW Primary Principals' Association Aboriginal Education & Communities Award.



Aboriginal Education & Communities Award

Dylan Harry

Nominated by Leanne Parker | Port Macquarie Area Council

Since commencing at Eungai Public School in 2023, Dylan has demonstrated exceptional leadership in embedding Aboriginal perspectives, culture, and community partnerships at the heart of the school's identity. From the outset, Dylan prioritised authentic connection, meeting and yarning with every Aboriginal family to establish trust, gather feedback, and co-develop a shared vision for the future.

This vision has been translated into action through the establishment of a strong Aboriginal Education team, the co-construction of Personalised Learning Pathways (PLPs) with families, and the embedding of cultural goals that guide student learning. Exemplifying this, students such as Balan have proudly led language initiatives, ensuring Dunghutti words and stories are now woven into the school's daily routines.

Community-led cultural practices—including dance, weaving, art, bush tucker gardening, cooking, and clapstick-making—have become central to the school experience. Signature initiatives such as the Young Deadly Leadership program, the Songs of Garuugga library installation, and student-designed uniforms have elevated Aboriginal student voice, strengthened identity, and increased enrolments.

Elders and community members are active partners, leading on-Country learning, smoking ceremonies, and storytelling that connect students to land, history, and culture. Through visible symbols such as Aboriginal maps, artworks, and Acknowledgement of Country in language, pride and respect are consistently fostered.

This body of work reflects Dylan's outstanding achievement in Aboriginal Education, honouring culture while building a united, aspirational school community recognised for its innovation, inclusivity, and deep respect for Country and people.

He is a worthy recipient of the NSWPPA Aboriginal Education & Communities Award.



Aboriginal Education & Communities Award

Fiona Kelly

Nominated by Tammy Anderson | Broken Hill Area Council

Fiona Kelly, Principal of Menindee Central School, is a proud leader, cultural advocate, and tireless educational leader whose work continues to transform the lives of her students and empower her community.

As a respected leader in her community, Fiona's impact on Aboriginal education in NSW is profound. She is committed to embedding Aboriginal lived experiences across all areas of her school and advocates relentlessly for cultural strength and educational excellence. Under her leadership, Menindee Central School has become a place where culture is celebrated, and students and community members feel valued and empowered.

Fiona is also a national voice in Aboriginal education. She actively contributes to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principals' Association (NATSIPA), bringing cultural insight and educational expertise to policy discussions and system initiatives. As a board member of the NSW Aboriginal Languages Trust, she supports language revitalisation, crucial for identity and knowledge sharing.

Her leadership is deeply connected to community. Born and raised on Country, Fiona builds strong partnerships between school, families, Elders, and stakeholders in this remote location. She ensures school strategies are co-designed with the community.

Fiona Kelly exemplifies culturally responsive leadership.

For her outstanding contributions to Aboriginal education, community leadership, and advocacy, she is a deserving recipient of the NSW Primary Principal Award for Aboriginal Education & Communities.



Distinguished Service Award

Sharon Allman

Nominated by Jody Hall | Dubbo Area Council

It is with great pleasure that I nominate Sharon Allman, Principal of Dubbo South Public School, for the Distinguished Service Award. With over 25 years of dedicated service to the Primary Principals Association in NSW, Sharon exemplifies the values of leadership, integrity, and innovation that define excellence in school leadership.

Throughout her career, Sharon has shown unwavering commitment to student wellbeing, staff development, and the pursuit of equity in education. A passionate advocate for disability and Aboriginal Education, Sharon has championed inclusive practices that ensure all students—regardless of ability or background—receive the support and opportunities they need to thrive. Her advocacy has driven significant improvements in outcomes for students with disability across Western NSW, embedding a culture of acceptance, understanding, and high expectations.

Under her leadership, schools have delivered innovative practices that have led to continuous academic and wellbeing growth for all. Sharon's open-door, collaborative leadership style empowers staff and fosters strong professional communities.

Beyond the school gates, Sharon has contributed significantly to the profession through her active involvement in the NSW Primary Principals' Association, mentoring early-career principals, and her tireless advocacy for public education. Her strategic thinking and compassion, solutions-focused approach have earned the respect of colleagues across the state.

Sharon's lifelong dedication to inclusive, high-quality education and her outstanding service to the profession make her a truly deserving recipient of this honour. Her legacy will continue to shape and inspire the education community for years to come. She is a deserving recipient of the NSW Primary Principal Award for Distinguished Service.



Distinguished Service Award

Glenn Daniels

Nominated by David O'Connor | Shellharbour Area Council

Glenn Daniels has demonstrated long-standing and distinguished service within the NSW Primary Principals' Association (PPA) at both State and Area Council levels. His commitment to supporting principals and schools across the state is exemplary.

Glenn served as Vice President of the Hornsby Primary Principals Council (PPC) from 2009 to 2010 and was an active member of the PPA Teaching Principals Reference Group between 2008 and 2010. Later, from 2012 to 2013, he held the position of Vice President of the Armidale PPC and contributed his expertise to the PPA Technology Reference Group during the same period.

More recently, Glenn served as Vice President of the Shellharbour PPC from 2018 to 2019. Since 2019, he has been a dedicated member of the PPA Assessment Planning and Accountability Reference Group, demonstrating strong leadership and commitment. In 2024, Glenn was appointed chair of this Reference Group, where he has provided invaluable guidance and direction.

Throughout his extensive involvement, Glenn has consistently advocated for principals, sharing his knowledge and supporting school improvement initiatives both locally and across NSW.

His dedication to enhancing educational leadership and helping schools navigate complex challenges has made a substantial impact on the PPA and the wider educational community.

Glenn Daniels' unwavering commitment, leadership, and service to the PPA make him a truly deserving recipient of the NSWPPA Distinguished Service Award.



Distinguished Service Award

Deborah Fisher

Nominated by Kristen Kime | Upper Hunter Area Council

The Distinguished Service Award is presented to Deborah Fisher in recognition of her exceptional dedication and steadfast commitment to the Primary Principals Council (PPC). Over many years, Deborah has played a pivotal role in the growth and advancement of the educational community, consistently demonstrating professionalism and integrity.

Deborah exemplifies outstanding leadership, embodying the principles of empowerment, support, advocacy, and guidance. Her tireless work in managing the PPC has strengthened the collective voice of principals across the region, ensuring that their needs and perspectives are clearly represented and considered in decision-making processes. Deborah's thoughtful approach and strategic vision have contributed significantly to the development of effective policies and practices within the PPC.

As a mentor and source of encouragement, Deborah has positively influenced countless colleagues, fostering a culture of shared learning, collaboration, and mutual respect. She has been instrumental in creating opportunities for professional growth, supporting both new and experienced principals in navigating the complexities of educational leadership. Her remarkable ability to inspire and unite people has led to innovative initiatives that have enhanced educational practices and outcomes throughout the region.

Deborah's invaluable contributions have left a lasting impression not only on the PPC but also on the broader educational landscape. Her commitment to excellence and her unwavering support for principals and schools have had a profound impact on educators, students, and communities.

Her dedication and passion for education continue to inspire and uplift the profession, making her a truly worthy recipient of the NSWPPA Distinguished Service Award.



Distinguished Service Award Peter Flannery

Nominated by Jeff Robinson | Tweed Heads Ballina Area Council

Peter Flannery is a distinguished leader within the NSW public education system, whose unwavering dedication to staff, students, and local communities has been evident over many years of committed service.

As a vital member of the Tweed Ballina Primary Principals' Council (PPC), Peter has held several pivotal executive positions, including President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Through these roles, he has demonstrated exceptional leadership and a steadfast commitment to fostering strong educational leadership and collaboration among principals across the region.

Beyond his contributions to the PPC, Peter has played a significant role in supporting schools as a Principal School Leadership (PSL) member and as a relieving Director Educational Leadership (DEL), where his expert guidance and mentorship have been instrumental in driving school improvement and leadership development.

Additionally, Peter's active participation in PSSA sports highlights his dedication to promoting student wellbeing and community involvement through extracurricular activities. His career is marked by a genuine passion for representing and advocating for the needs of schools and their communities, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs addressed.

Peter Flannery's exemplary leadership and ongoing service have made a profoundly positive and enduring impact on education in the Tweed Ballina region and make him a worthy recipient of a NSWPPA Distinguished Service Award.



Distinguished Service Award Tony Friedrich

Nominated by David O'Connor | Shellharbour PPC

Tony Friedrich has been a dedicated and active member of the NSW Primary Principals' Association (PPA), serving in multiple leadership roles at both local and state levels over many years. From 2014 to 2016, Tony served as Vice President of the Shellharbour Principals Council (PPC), followed by his presidency of the Shellharbour PPC from 2017 to 2018. In 2020 and 2021, he represented the Shellharbour PPC as State Delegate. Since 2021, Tony has been an active member of the Legal Issues Standing Committee, where he continues to advocate tirelessly on behalf of principals and schools.

Tony is a highly experienced principal and a respected mentor to many colleagues. Known for his approachability and generosity, he readily offers advice and support to fellow principals, demonstrating a strong commitment to professional collaboration and leadership development. As the principal of the largest school in the Illawarra region, Tony balances his demanding role with significant contributions to the broader educational community.

His leadership is marked by a dedication to fostering collegiality, sharing expertise, and strengthening the collective voice of principals within the PPA. Tony's influence extends beyond his own school through his ongoing advocacy and involvement in initiatives that support educational leadership and address important legal and policy matters.

Tony Friedrich's sustained commitment, leadership, and service to the NSW PPA make him a truly worthy recipient of the NSW Primary Principals' Association Distinguished Service Award.



Distinguished Service Award

Leah Martin

Nominated by Bob Willetts | Batemans Bay Area Council

Leah Martin is receiving the Distinguished Service Award in recognition of her outstanding leadership, commitment and positive impact in our Association and across NSW Public Education.

Leah has demonstrated exemplary leadership as a member and Executive Liaison of the Technology Reference Group. Her advocacy and collaboration have been instrumental in creating high-impact initiatives that have resulted in significant system-wide improvements and support to lift the technical capability, of principals and teachers, to utilise technology for learning. Her visionary approach and collaboration have ensured that technology integration supports both teaching and learning effectively.

As Executive Liaison on the Human Resources Reference Group and Small Schools Reference Group, Leah has been highly effective in her advocacy, leading the development of NSWPPA positions that have influenced significant system changes. Her dedication to addressing the unique challenges faced by small schools has led to tangible enhancements that benefit principals, staff, and students.

In addition to these achievements, Leah's outstanding leadership on the NSWPPA State Executive has been pivotal in improving our organisational effectiveness, influence and capability to support, empower, advocate and lead. Her strategic guidance and organisational skills have directly resulted in significant improvements to our systems, and the effectiveness of operations.

Leah Martin's contributions have had a profound and lasting positive impact on our Association and NSW Public Education.

Leah is a worthy recipient of the NSWPPA Distinguished Service Award.



Distinguished Service Award

Michael Ostler

Nominated by Scott Sanford | Orange Lachlan Area Council

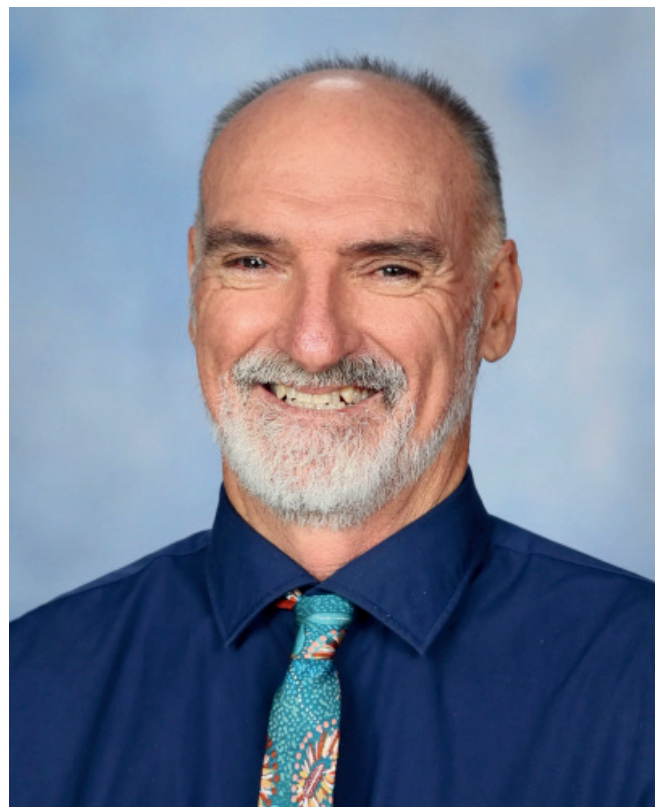
Michael is a most deserving recipient of the NSWPPA Distinguished Service Award, having dedicated many years of exemplary service to Area Councils, Standing Committees and the NSWPPA. His commitment has been marked by integrity, professionalism and an unwavering focus on advancing the work of colleagues across the Association.

Michael has served the Orange Lachlan Primary Principals' Council with distinction, undertaking the roles of secretary, delegate, and president. He held the president role for five years. His steady leadership, capacity to mentor and ability to build community have strengthened the voice of his colleagues and ensured the PPC's work remains purposeful and effective.

A passionate advocate for rural education, Michael has been an active member of the Rural Education Standing Committee for many years, since 2021 he has served as Chair. In this role he has provided strong and staunch leadership, consistently bringing the voice of principals in regional, rural and remote communities to the forefront and influencing decisions that directly impact the profession. Michael actively holds the Department to account for the betterment of our schools.

Through his advocacy, vision, and dedication, Michael has demonstrated outstanding leadership, leaving a legacy for principals and their schools. His service reflects the highest ideals of support, empowerment, advocacy and leadership.

This award recognises Michael's distinguished contribution to his colleagues, his school, his PPC and to rural education across New South Wales, making him a most worthy recipient of this award.



Distinguished Service Award Scott Sanford

Nominated by Bob Willetts | Broken Hill Area Council

Scott Sanford Is receiving a NSWPPA Distinguished Service Award in recognition of his outstanding leadership within the NSWPPA.

As President of the Broken Hill PPC, Scott demonstrated exceptional commitment to enhancing the wellbeing and performance of principals in rural, regional, and remote areas. His dedication to professional connection and personalised support, combined with his advocacy for rural, regional and remote school issues, has been instrumental in empowering principals and ensuring that their unique challenges are acknowledged and addressed.

In his role as Chairperson and Executive Liaison of the Assessment Planning and Accountability Reference Group, Scott has directly influenced significant improvements in systems and processes for school planning, annual reporting, and external validation. He has tirelessly advocated for more effective, transparent and streamlined school excellence processes that reduce workload and increase the benefits to schools across NSW.

Scott's work on the NSWPPA Executive has been exceptional. He has strengthened our association's financial systems and processes, bolstering our financial position which enhances our capacity to deliver our mission to support, empower, advocate, and lead.

Scott Sanford's dedication, expertise and leadership have had a proven positive impact on principals and schools across NSW.

Scott is a worthy recipient of the NSWPPA Distinguished Service Award.



Distinguished Service Award Glen Walker

Nominated by Jonathon Thomas | Broken Hill Area Council

Glen Walker is recognised for his exceptional and sustained contributions to public education. Over more than 30 years at Gol Gol Public School, Glen has led with vision, integrity, and a deep commitment to student and staff wellbeing.

As a long-serving delegate and Deputy President of the PPC, Glen has been a strong voice for principals, ensuring their needs are represented and their professional growth is supported. His mentoring of colleagues has been instrumental in building the confidence and capability of principals across the network, while his focus on distributed leadership has empowered school leaders to step forward and thrive.

Glen's involvement in the City–Country Alliance has strengthened vital connections between metropolitan and rural schools, creating opportunities for students, staff, and leaders that transcend geography. His ability to build networks, foster collaboration, and champion equity has left a legacy across the system.

With wellbeing at the heart of his leadership, Glen has not only supported individuals but also shaped environments where people feel connected, valued, and able to succeed. This award recognises his distinguished service, his advocacy for colleagues, and his dedication to building stronger, more connected school communities.

He is a most worthy recipient of a NSWPPA Distinguished Service Award.



Distinguished Service Award

Trish Webb

Nominated by Jonathon Thomas | Broken Hill Area Council

Trish Webb is receiving this award in recognition of her exceptional and sustained contributions to public education. For many years, Trish has provided exemplary service to Area Councils, Reference Groups, and the Rural Education Standing Committee, where her leadership, advocacy, and commitment to equity have left a lasting impact.

Trish has mentored and supported principals across the PPC, building their confidence and capacity through professional learning, collaboration, and guidance. Her ability to connect colleagues with the right information, share her extensive knowledge, and provide practical solutions has been invaluable to those navigating the complexities of leadership in rural and remote settings.

Her focus on driving professional learning and capacity building has strengthened networks across the region, ensuring leaders and schools are empowered to innovate and improve practice. Through her work, Trish has consistently championed an equity lens—ensuring that distance or circumstance does not determine the quality of opportunity or outcomes for students and staff.

A generous colleague, dedicated mentor, and passionate advocate for rural education, Trish embodies the values of service, collaboration, and innovation. This award recognises both her distinguished record of leadership and the enduring legacy of stronger, more connected, and more capable schools when she leaves.

Trish is a highly deserving recipient of a NSWPPA Distinguished Service Award.



Distinguished Service Award Kathryn Weston

Nominated by Michael Sky | Deniliquin Area Council

Kathryn Weston has made outstanding contributions to supporting colleagues working in rural and remote educational settings for over five years. Her unwavering dedication to advocating for and supporting fellow educators is demonstrated through her exemplary leadership and commitment to addressing the unique challenges faced by rural principals.

As a representative on the Rural and Remote Standing Committee, Kathryn has been a vital voice for principals, actively contributing to discussions and initiatives aimed at improving conditions and opportunities for educators in these areas. Her efforts have ensured that the perspectives and needs of rural educators are consistently considered in key decision-making processes within the education system.

Kathryn has also represented the Primary Principals' Association (PPA) on the Department of Education Teacher Housing Roundtables, focusing on improving housing solutions for educators in rural communities. Her involvement has helped highlight the critical issue of adequate teacher housing and its direct impact on recruitment and retention in remote areas.

In addition, Kathryn has served as both a delegate and President of the Moree Principals Council (PPC) for more than five years. In these roles, she has played a significant part in building strong connections between local educational issues and PPA processes, working diligently to address community concerns and mediate solutions through effective representation.

Recognising the isolation common in rural teaching, Kathryn has also worked to establish valuable networking opportunities for educators via the PPC.

Kathryn Weston's strong advocacy, leadership, and sustained commitment to rural and remote education make her a truly worthy recipient of the NSWPPA Distinguished Service Award.



Distinguished Service Award

Adam Wynn

Nominated by May Ptolemy | Penrith Blue Mountains Area Council

Adam Wynn is a highly valued and respected member of the Penrith Blue Mountains PPC. An authentic and transformational leader, Adam demonstrates deep passion and strong dedication to his colleagues across the local PPC and NSWPPA through his outstanding care, service, leadership, and advocacy. His meaningful contributions have paved the way for significant positive impacts on the profession.

Adam has held numerous elected roles over many years, including President and Secretary of the Penrith Blue Mountains PPC, Secretary of the Blacktown PPC, State Delegate for the Penrith Blue Mountains PPC, Events and Meeting Coordinator, and Member of the Annual Conference Committee. He has also strengthened system-level collaboration by establishing representation with Executive Directors at termly meetings, re-establishing Metropolitan North ED Meetings, promoting PPC representation at Regional North ED Meetings, and initiating Metropolitan South and West ED Meetings.

In the NSWPPA, Adam has served as Vice President, a member of the Communication and Engagement Standing Committee, and the Finance and Administration Reference Group.

Adam embodies the values of integrity, accountability, trust, care, and courage. He is knowledgeable, supportive, and dedicated to building strong relationships with his colleagues. Whether organising wellbeing checks or offering a listening ear, he prioritises connection and support. Adam is committed to preserving the best conditions for principals and remains a fair, transparent, and professional advocate for the profession.

He is a worthy recipient of the NSWPPA Distinguished Service Award.



Professional Award Sharyn Cox

embodying the PPA mantra of SEAL

Nominated by Michael Sky | Moree Area Council

Sharyn Cox demonstrates unwavering commitment to the principles of Support, Empowerment, Advocacy, and Leadership through her exceptional contributions to colleagues across rural and remote areas, her deep understanding of the public education system, and her outstanding leadership within the education community, including her active role in the Moree Principals Council (PPC).

Sharyn generously supports colleagues by providing professional advice and practical, time-saving solutions. Her thorough knowledge of policies and procedures makes her a trusted guide on School Excellence Plan implementation, managing challenging conversations, and improving merit selection applications. She empowers principals and staff from neighbouring small schools by mentoring and inviting them to celebrations and Staff Development Days. These events focus on priorities such as high-performance, high potential and gifted education (HPGE), explicit teaching, Aboriginal Education, and mandatory training, fostering networking, resource sharing, and expanded educational opportunities.

As a passionate advocate for public education, Sharyn has worked tirelessly across regional communities including Moree. She represents colleagues as Moree PPC Deputy President and New England representative on the Finance and Administration Reference Group and has previously served as Secretary and State Delegate. Her commitment to equity ensures regional and remote schools have a strong voice in decision-making.

Sharyn's exemplary leadership is demonstrated through roles as relieving Principal, School Leadership, and Director of Educational Leadership. She models resilience and dedication, driving positive outcomes through strategic mentorship and innovation. Currently undertaking a PhD on teacher professional learning, Sharyn's work will continue to support impactful, contextually relevant professional learning for rural educators.

Sharyn Cox's exceptional support, empowerment, advocacy, and leadership make her a truly worthy recipient of the NSWPPA Professional Award.



Professional Award Les Daley

embodying the PPA mantra of SEAL

Nominated by Jodi Ridgway| Tweed Heads Ballina Area Council

Les Daley has been a passionate advocate for junior rugby league throughout his career as a school principal and an active member of the PSSA Sport community. Serving as Vice President and Rugby League Convener, Les has dedicated countless hours, often travelling significant distances from his regional base, to ensure that students in rural and regional areas have equal access to sporting opportunities comparable to those available in metropolitan centres. He consistently shares updates from the sporting unit with fellow principals, promoting the many physical, social, and emotional benefits that PSSA sport provides to both students and staff.

Les has been instrumental in fostering inclusivity within junior rugby league, particularly by expanding participation opportunities for girls, helping to create a more welcoming and diverse sporting environment. His leadership and commitment to using sport as a positive and transformative force in young people's lives have left a lasting and significant impact on the junior rugby league community.

In addition to his contributions to sport, Les has held key leadership roles within the Tweed Ballina Principals Council (PPC), serving as both President and Vice President. In these roles, he has demonstrated steadfast dedication to supporting school communities, promoting collaboration among principals, and enhancing educational outcomes through community engagement and shared initiatives. His active involvement in the PPC has strengthened the connection between school sport and educational leadership, further enriching regional school life.

Les Daley's commitment, leadership, and service make him a highly deserving recipient of recognition for his distinguished contributions to school sport and the PPC.



Professional Award Joanna Henderson

for fostering the professional development of Primary Principals

Nominated by Jodi Ridgway | Tweed Heads Ballina Area Council

Joanna is recognised for her exceptional contributions to the professional development of primary school principals and her transformative leadership within the Far North Coast Women in Educational Leadership (FNC WIEL) network. Under her visionary guidance, the network has evolved into a dynamic and supportive platform where women leaders and aspiring leaders connect, learn, and flourish. Her dedication has fostered a nurturing and collaborative community that empowers women educators to strengthen their leadership capabilities and build enduring professional relationships.

Joanna's leadership has been instrumental in creating opportunities for women in education to access targeted professional learning and mentorship, enabling them to overcome challenges unique to their roles. Through her advocacy and strategic initiatives, she has helped elevate the profile of women educational leaders across the region.

Beyond her impactful work with FNC WIEL, Joanna plays a central role in organising the North Coast Conference, a key annual event that champions educational leadership and innovation throughout the region. Her commitment to excellence and innovative approaches to professional development have significantly contributed to advancing the growth and development of educational leaders.

Joanna's efforts have made a lasting difference in the primary education landscape, inspiring many to pursue leadership roles with confidence and resilience.

Her outstanding dedication, vision, and leadership make her a truly worthy recipient of recognition for her service to educational leadership.



Professional Award Scott McCardell

for embodying the PPA mantra of SEAL

Nominated by Danielle Scott | St George Area Council

Scott has provided invaluable support to principals establishing Support Units in their schools. Throughout the development process, he offers expert advice on staffing, liaises effectively with Assets and Learning and Wellbeing teams, and ensures a cohesive approach. Scott has led the creation of comprehensive guidelines for schools establishing Support Units, carefully considering the timeframe and support principals require during this critical phase. These guidelines clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of all Department directorates and suggest realistic timeframes, providing principals with a structured platform for decision-making while balancing their workload and that of their staff.

A strong advocate for manageable workloads, Scott ensures principals receive adequate support from all sections of the Department, facilitating successful student transitions into supported settings. He generously shares his school's experiences and expertise with principals and staff across networks, enhancing understanding and planning for inclusive education. To further collaborative practice, Scott established the Inclusive Education Executive Network, which supports and mentors Support Unit Executive Teams. This network empowers leaders to succeed in their unique educational environments.

Scott exemplifies the NSW Primary Principals' Association mantra of SEAL—Support, Empower, Advocate, and Lead. He supports school leaders in establishing successful Support Units, empowers staff to lead inclusive education, advocates for sufficient departmental support, and leads best practices across schools and networks.

Scott's dedication and leadership have made a significant impact on inclusive education, making him a worthy recipient of the NSW Primary Principals' Association Professional Award.



Professional Award Andrew Patterson

for undertaking the support and welfare of colleagues

Nominated by Heath Simpson | Mid North Coast Area Council

Andrew Patterson is recognised for his exceptional commitment to supporting and advocating for colleagues, particularly those in small schools. With over 30 years of leadership experience, including 15 years as a teaching principal, Andrew has dedicated his career to fostering collaborative environments that empower educators and enhance student outcomes.

As a leader of small school principal networks, Andrew has played a pivotal role in connecting principals across the region, facilitating the sharing of best practices and resources. His mentorship of beginning principals and aspiring leaders reflects his passion for nurturing the next generation of educational leaders. Through personalised guidance and support, he has built confidence and capability in those he mentors.

In addition to his mentoring, Andrew has coordinated numerous professional learning opportunities and conferences tailored specifically for teaching principals. These initiatives have provided invaluable platforms for professional development and strengthened the community of small school leaders.

Andrew has been a long-standing member of the NSW Primary Principals Association and has served as the Teaching Principals PPC contact for an extended period. In this role, he has ensured that the unique challenges and needs of small schools are represented and addressed at the highest levels of the association.

Andrew Patterson's unwavering dedication, leadership, and advocacy for small schools and their principals make him a truly deserving recipient of the NSWPPA Professional Award. His contributions have left a lasting impact on the educational landscape, inspiring colleagues and enhancing the welfare of the teaching profession.



Professional Award Melissa Scully

for initiating significant educational change

Nominated by Brendan Gray | Maitland Area Council

Melissa has been at the forefront of driving significant educational change over many years. As principal of Ashtonfield Public School, a large, diverse, and complex school in the Maitland area of Newcastle, she has overseen a complete transformation of the school's educational culture. Guided by a clear vision and unwavering belief in the potential of her staff and students, Melissa has successfully established Ashtonfield as a leading school within the network.

Melissa has been the driving force behind the creation and ongoing success of the Maitland Explicit Teaching Community of Schools (METCoS), a collaborative group of seven schools within the Maitland network. Through her commitment to systems leadership, she has identified, nurtured, and supported teacher leaders to build distributive leadership across the group. METCoS now supports over 200 teachers in implementing evidence-based, high-impact teaching practices, with ongoing coaching and feedback. As a result, more than 1,800 students across the seven schools receive optimal teaching daily.

Within just 18 months, teacher surveys have shown significant increases in teacher confidence, classroom walk-throughs demonstrate outstanding teaching practices, and early student data indicates improvements in learning and performance, particularly in mathematics. Melissa's visionary leadership and dedication to collaborative improvement have made a lasting impact on the schools within the network.

Melissa's outstanding leadership, commitment to excellence, and transformative influence make her a truly deserving recipient of the NSW Primary Principals' Association Professional Award.





Support | Empower | Advocate | Lead

