**Teacher Award 2019: Honourable Mentions and Notes on Winner**

Before outlining the achievements of this year’s winner of the Kate Mullin Teacher Award, I want to let you know that the selection committee was very impressed with the quality of the nominations this year. In fact, they decided that three other nominees, all of whom also work in Kimberley schools, should be publicly acknowledged at this afternoon’s ceremony.

They are:

Sophia Mung, AET from Purnululu Aboriginal Independent Community School near Kununurra,

Trichelle Lauren, AET from Kulkarriya Community School near Fitzroy Crossing, and

Caroline Dixon, Deputy Principal, and Michelle Martin EALD Co-ordinator, who were nominated as a team, from Halls Creek DHS.

All of these nominees were very warmly recommended by their colleagues who obviously greatly appreciated the quality of the work they were doing with their students, and they are all clearly held in very high esteem in their schools. The selection panel was extremely grateful for the opportunity to learn about the work that these dedicated educators do, and to see how much their students, colleagues and the community value them.

Turning to our winner, I only have time to skate lightly over her achievements.

Denise Shillinglaw has a passion for improving language and literacy education for Aboriginal students, and the students at Broome SHS and its cluster schools have been the beneficiaries of this over the past ten years.

From her first year at Broome SHS as Head of the Learning Area of English, Denise was aware of the critical part that proficiency in Standard Australian English plays in the success of Aboriginal students. She implemented a strategic, whole school approach to change attitudes in the school staff, provide knowledge to staff to adopt Two Way pedagogy and at the same time, support Aboriginal staff in the school to foster self-belief and confidence for success in the students.

In 2007, there were no Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander graduates from the school, but following Denise's intense work with teachers in the English department to develop programs designed to meet the literacy needs of Aboriginal students, the first Aboriginal ATAR students graduated at the end of 2011. By 2017, with strategic literacy development in explicit literacy instruction in Reading and Writing embedded across the whole school while still nurturing and developing Aboriginal English, Kriol and traditional Aboriginal languages, Denise had overseen Aboriginal graduation statistics increasing every year. In 2018 there were 24 Aboriginal students who graduated with a WACE Certificate. This was the highest number of any school in the state, and Broome SHS’s graduation rate is predicted to continue increasing over the coming years.

Denise is a long-term resident of Broome who has developed positive, respectful relationships with many local Aboriginal families through sport, work and recreation. These enduring relationships are critical to the success of the programs that Denise has implemented successfully over the past five years, which have been a time of rapid growth in the school. Denise has recognized the diversity of the Broome community and works very closely with the Aboriginal Education team consisting of the Level 3 Manager Stephanie Armstrong and a team of AIEO’s. Denise and Stephanie co-chair the Aboriginal Education Committee where matters like family and student engagement are discussed and new initiatives are undertaken. These include such items as home visits, special events to bring parents into the school, sports carnivals and alternative methods of reporting to parents.

Denise knows that strong positive relationships are the key to positive engagement of students. She is able to actively establish rapport with students through humour, sporting interests, art, family and country, all areas in which students have experience and usually excel.

A key aspect of pedagogy which Denise has prioritised in her classroom over the last twelve years, is the partnership with an AIEO. To enact cross cultural relationships and empower the Aboriginal people around her, Denise has invested in the relationships with the AIEOs to enable the classroom to be a place where power and privilege are discussed and evaluated. In addition, in her classroom, AIEOs are encouraged to lead the teaching and learning, bringing their own cultural perspectives into the lessons. In witnessing these partnerships, students can see the positive, respectful conversations - the modeling of dialogue about cultural differences and valuing these differences - as enriching the school community rather than detracting from it.

Denise’s strategy of adopting a model of explicit literacy instruction while acknowledging and developing Aboriginal English, Kriol and local Aboriginal languages has been paramount to the success of a philosophy of two-way learning.

Denise has had a lasting positive impact on Broome SHS, in the classroom, as a leader, and throughout the community, and the Principal of the school anticipates that the school will continue to show improvement deriving from her efforts for years to come.

She is truly a most worthy winner of the Kate Mullin Teacher Award.

Sophia Mung, AET from Purnululu Aboriginal Independent Community School near Kununurra, was nominated for the close connection and strong relationships she builds with all the students in the school. Being able to speak Kriol and Gija as well as English means that her input into liaison and interpreting for families is extremely valuable, and by working collaboratively with the teachers she helps to maximise the students’ learning experiences and build a network of support for them.

Trichelle Lauren, AET from Kulkarriya Community School near Fitzroy Crossing, is valued for her ability to engage reluctant, shy or disengaged students, and to be a positive role model and mentor for them has encouraged them to take an active part in lessons. Trichelle also supports the school’s vision by speaking at assemblies and community meetings, volunteers to help with after-school sports, and plays a leading role in organising and presenting at Bush Days and Inter School Exchanges.

Caroline Dixon, Deputy Principal, and Michelle Martin EALD Co-ordinator from Halls Creek DHS were nominated as a team who enjoy working together, using the two-way model to deliver culturally appropriate curriculum to the students. They have been both generous and diligent in sharing their knowledge across the school and the region. They run an open classroom so other staff can observe them at work, then work with, coach and mentor those staff to develop their own two-way planning. They are using Progress Maps for both reporting and planning purposes, and have strong positive relationships with the students.