

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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Semi-finalists selected for inaugural teaching award

UTAS Peer Assisted Study Sessions leader and Law lecturer Meg Good and UTAS Education student Georgie Dawkins are among the semi-finalists in the inaugural University of Tasmania, Faculty of Education Teaching Excellence Award.

Young teachers are being encouraged and rewarded for the positive influence they have on their students with the Education Faculty adding a special category to the Southern Cross Young Achiever Awards.

Judging to decide the eight section winners and the overall Young Achiever winner will take place in Hobart on February 21 and be announced at a gala presentation dinner at Wrest Point, Hobart, on April 21.

The Premier's Young Achiever of the Year will receive a \$1000 grant from the Tasmanian Government, a trophy and a holiday for two anywhere in Australia.

Teachers under the age of 28, teaching in any area of any school, from early learning to Catholic education to Polytechnic, could be nominated for the award, which carries a prize of \$1000 and a trophy and the chance to win the Premier's Young Achiever of the Year Award.

The University of Tasmania Faculty of Education Dean Prof. Ian Hay said that it was time to highlight the role of young teachers in developing the education of the young people in their schools.

"It is our belief that a teacher can make a huge difference in advancing the potential of kids – and not just in an academic sense – but also their social, creative and learning skills in general," he said.

"Often a new young teacher can connect to youth in a way older teachers can't and that can really make a difference in the classroom.

"Many teachers put in extra time to do extra duties, such as sports and speech and drama, and we want to reward those teachers who go the extra distance."

Prof. Hay also acknowledged the role of young teachers, who often spend their early years as an educator in rural and isolated communities, as community leaders.

“Especially in primary, secondary school and TAFE colleges the young teachers are working hard to build up a community, pulling together the energies of a district, re-energising old programmes and starting interesting new things.

“This commitment has a positive knock-on effect for everyone in a community, as well as helping individual students achieve their potential.

“The teachers I’m talking about have high energy, go above and beyond their duty statement - they have the ability to really turn a struggling kid around and in turn have a long-term impact on that group they’re teaching.”

UTAS has an impressive track record with the awards, with Jessica Andrewartha, API Research Fellow in the Centre for Renewable Energy and Power Systems, winning the TEMCO Science and Technology Award in 2010; PhD student Will Bignell taking out both the Premier’s Young Achiever of the Year Award and the Fonterra Agricultural Achiever Award in 2010; UTAS School of Music graduate Michael Lampard winning the Academy of the Arts UTAS School of Visual and Performing Arts and Tasmanian Polytechnic Arts Award last year; and Stanislav Shabala, an ARC Super Science Fellow in the Astrophysics and Environmental Geodesy groups at UTAS winning last year’s TEMCO Science and Technology Award and the Premier’s Young Achiever of the Year Award.

The University of Tasmania, Faculty of Education Teaching Excellence Award semi-finalists for 2012 are:

- Holly Barnewall: Teacher at Flinders High School.
- Emma Christian: Teacher at Rokeby High School.
- Georgie Dawkins: Currently studying Masters of Education at UTAS, graduating 2013.
- Kamil Douglas: Year 7 core teacher, years 7-12 religion & philosophy teacher - St Brendan- Shaw College.
- Josephine Emery: Year 7 core teacher, year 12 dance teacher - St Brendan- Shaw College.
- Meg Good: UTAS PASS leader and Law lecturer.
- Courtney Hunnibell: Teacher at St Brigids Catholic School, New Norfolk.

- Zane Littlejohn: Big Picture advisory teacher and coach at North Launceston Football Club.

- Kate Longey: Teacher at Dominic College, Hobart.
- Nicole Radin: Health and PE teacher St Patricks College, Launceston.

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