

KATHLEEN MACDONALD

Tully State High School

Citation for Peter Botsman Memorial Award 2017

Kathleen Macdonald has committed to more than 30 years in state schools in north Queensland and has played a significant role in supporting curriculum and pedagogy in her region, having been HOD English at Tully State High School for the past 21 years.

Kathleen has played a leading role in her region, beginning with her Master of Education in rural education. She contributes to the development of English in Queensland through writing of new syllabus documents, doing the QCAA syllabus PD rollout, writing sample units, assessment tasks and resources for the use of English teachers as well as being a senior marker for the last two external exam trials. Her sharing nature and generous spirit are evident in the way she thinks nothing of spending a day, or driving a four-hour round trip, to guide new HODs through the Queensland system as well as generously sharing her resources around the state.

Kathleen's curriculum leadership skills are impressive. She clearly demonstrates the belief that the weakest students need the strongest teachers by regularly taking the most challenging classes in her own school. She shares her infectious passion for classic literature, inspiring her teachers and students to 'catch' the love of English. Her achievements, as HOD, include the championing of innovative pedagogical approaches such as LTLTR, Anita Archer's explicit teaching and a wide range of structured approaches to spelling and reading. Under her direction, Tully High hits well above its weight in terms of English, NAPLAN results and reading improvement.

Kathleen's influence is wide. Her regional organisation and leadership of professional development of English teachers is highly regarded. Kathleen has co-organised an extensive range of PD in Cairns for English teachers at Student Free Days and ETAQ events. She also takes opportunities to connect with researchers. Kathleen literally goes the extra 300 km or more to absorb, and later apply, a wide range of research in person. A pedagogical coach, she leads staff capacity building sessions in literacy to upskill teachers from all subject areas. In her district cluster, Kathleen has also built strong networks of support for primary teachers, as well as mentoring countless teachers who have gone on to take up leadership roles.

Kathleen has also developed strong relationships with local Jirrbal elders by, in the 1990s, enabling the teaching of local language in Year 8 English units, engendering a deep understanding of and empathy with the local indigenous community.

With an incisive, analytical mind, balanced by compassion, humour and humility, Kathleen is a talented educator who is a most worthy recipient of the Peter Botsman Award.