



# **PUBLIC SERVICE MEDAL – AUSTRALIA DAY 2020**

## NOMINATION GUIDELINES

The Public Service Medal is a prestigious medal within the Australian Honours System designed to recognise Public Sector Officers who have made a contribution to the community through the outstanding performance of their duties.

These guidelines will answer your questions about the nomination process, eligibility and selection criteria for the award.

### **Who can be nominated?**

Current public sector employees of the Commonwealth Government, State and Territory governments and local governments are eligible to be nominated for the Medal.

Department employees who deserve recognition for outstanding performance of their duties can be nominated. The Medal is awarded for meritorious service. Long service alone is not a sufficient basis for nomination.

The medal is not confined to senior officers. It is available to any public sector employee. In the past has been awarded to administrative or clerical staff and employees involved in operational roles. In all of these instances, "outstanding service" has been the definitive criteria for the Medal.

### **What are the selection criteria?**

Outstanding service could be shown through:

- service excellence to the public, or to external or internal clients;
- innovation in program, project or policy development;
- leadership, including as a member of a team; or
- the achievement of more efficient processes, improved productivity or better service delivery.

### **When do nominations close?**

Nominations for the Public Service Medal are sought twice a year for Australia Day and Queen's Birthday.

Nominations for the Public Service Medal for announcement on **Australia Day 2020** close at **5pm on Friday 28 June 2019**. Nominations should be forwarded to the department's Human Resources directorate at [hrcorro@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:hrcorro@det.nsw.edu.au)

The nomination form can be downloaded from the [Jobs and Opportunities page](#).

**Contact officer for NSW Department of Education** - Leah Warrior, Lead, Correspondence on 02 7814 1779 or email at [hrcorro@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:hrcorro@det.nsw.edu.au)

## How to complete the nomination form?

The nominator must:

- complete the nomination form which includes:
  - the nomination statement (2-3 page limit)
  - signed referee statement of support from at least 3 people (2 page limit each)
- ensure the nomination form and referee statements are signed and dated
- ensure nomination is endorsed by the relevant Director, Executive Director, General Manager or Deputy Secretary.

### The nomination form and statement

The nomination statement must contain comprehensive information on the service or achievement for which the nomination is being made. A list of positions held over a number of years is not sufficient. Because the nomination will be considered alongside other nominations in what is essentially a competitive process, the committee needs to be given a clear idea of what the nominee has done to fulfil the criterion of outstanding service. It should not be assumed that the committee has a detailed knowledge of the area in which the nominee has worked, or a full understanding of the significance of certain achievements. The nominee's service should be put into context in the nomination statement. The nomination statement is limited to 2-3 pages.

### Referee support

To be considered by the committee, all nominations must be accompanied by at least 3 referee statements which comment on the service of the nominee. It is also often appropriate to obtain referee statements from outside the agency, especially if the nominee is being nominated for outstanding service to a particular community or industry. If the nominee's service relates to the work of another agency, a referee statement from that agency may also help the committee in their consideration of the nomination. The referee statements must be signed.

### Endorsement

Nominations should be endorsed by the relevant Director, Executive Director, General Manager or Deputy Secretary who should then forward the nomination to the Human Resources Directorate at [hrcorro@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:hrcorro@det.nsw.edu.au)

Please **do not** send nominations directly to the NSW Department of Premiers and Cabinet as all nominations are required to be approved and endorsed by the department's Secretary.

## **Who selects the awardees?**

### **At the departmental level**

A selection panel comprised of senior departmental officers reviews all nominations and recommends the most meritorious nominations in rank order to the Secretary for endorsement.

### **At the Premier and Cabinet level**

NSW nominations for the Medal are made to the Premier, through the NSW Public Service Medal Committee which is administered by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Each State Public Service Medal Committee meet twice a year to consider nominations. After considering the nominations, the committee recommends a list of proposed recipients to the responsible Minister or Premier, who then makes a recommendation to the Governor-General who has the authority to approve the awards.

## **How many awards are made each year?**

Only 100 awards of the Public Service Medal can be made in any calendar year across Australia. Of these up to 30 can be awarded to employees of Government agencies and the remainder are awarded by states and territories.

## Past recipients nominated by the Department of Education

Australia Day 2019

### **Magda Pollak, Leader, High Performing Students**

*For outstanding public service to education in NSW.*

Ms Pollak has displayed dedication and passion for improving outcomes of all students during a career of over 48 years of service with the NSW Department of Education.

Since 2005, she has managed the High Performing Students Unit where she oversees the placement processes of academically gifted and talented Year 5 students into opportunity classes, and Year 7 students into selective high schools. The Unit processes approximately 27,000 applications each year, and she has led the Unit to streamline the processes to increase the efficiency of the team, and to ensure high integrity and security.

She has identified strategies to increase the representation of Aboriginal students in opportunity classes, and selective high schools, and worked closely with the University of Western Sydney on a four-year longitudinal study to identify better options for these gifted students. Consequently the number of Aboriginal students who have lodged applications for a placement has doubled since 2010, and there is now a greater representation of Aboriginal students attending opportunity classes and selective high schools.

As a result of her leadership and administrative skills, there is now a high level of confidence in the integrity of the placement processes within the school communities and across the Department. Since 2010, the program has expanded from 33 to 46 selective high schools and during this time she has also been a part of the team which led the implementation of a virtual high school for gifted and talented students, the first of its kind in Australia. She is currently working to roll out this initiative to rural and remote primary schools.

Ms Pollak is an exceptional change champion, leader and educator who has made a significant impact to the NSW Department of Education initiatives, with students always at the core of her ethos.

Queen's Birthday 2018

### **Michael Waterhouse, General Counsel, Legal Services, Department of Education**

*For outstanding public service to education through legal counsel roles in NSW.*

Mr Waterhouse has served the Legal Services directorate at the Department of Education where he has undertaken the roles of Director, Legal Services and General Counsel.

During his 14 years of service, he has led sensitive, contentious, high profile and complex legal matters and has delivered positive outcomes for the department.

Of particular note, Mr Waterhouse has contributed to the promotion of quality outcomes for Indigenous people through his leadership in developing processes to guide the settlement scheme, and the delivery of personal apologies on behalf of the State to members of the Stolen Generation in the settlement of legal claims.

As part of this process, Mr Waterhouse has provided each claimant with the opportunity to tell their story and the impact on their life. He then provides an apology that encapsulates the key features of each individual's experience in a way that acknowledges their personal resilience in the face of adversity. To date, Mr Waterhouse has delivered in excess of 120 apologies.

Mr Waterhouse has made a significant contribution to the NSW Government and to those of the Stolen Generation

### **Jason Ardler, Executive Director, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education**

*For outstanding public service to Indigenous people in NSW.*

Mr Ardler has dedicated over 30 years of service to the NSW Public Service. Since 2012, as Executive Director of Aboriginal Affairs, he has excelled in delivering strong public administration, and sound and rational policy making, and has been committed to addressing key issues affecting Indigenous people in NSW.

He oversaw the implementation and initial community consultation that led to the ground breaking Aboriginal Affairs plan, 'Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility and Empowerment' (OCHRE) which was of vital importance to the NSW Government. As the lead of the OCHRE plan, he presented a compelling case that represented the voices of Indigenous people and included healing within the final plan - the first Aboriginal Affairs Policy in Australia to do so. He also conceived and led the introduction of the NSW Aboriginal Languages ACT 2017, the first legislation in Australia to recognise the significance of Aboriginal languages to Aboriginal culture and identity, as well as the broader cultural heritage of the State.

He also played an instrumental role in the NSW Government's response to those of the Stolen Generation, including leading a team that conducted over 180 interviews with members of the Stolen Generation, allowing those affected to tell their own personal story. As part of this process he ensured they each received a personal apology on behalf of the State and a suitable settlement payment. He advocated for the establishment of a fully funded stolen generations reparations scheme and funeral assistance fund which was accepted by the state government.

Mr Ardler's untiring commitment to the advancement of Indigenous people across NSW, and his leadership with the Stolen Generations, are most noteworthy.

## Queen's Birthday 2017

### **Lynne Irvine, Director, Learning Management and Business Reform (LMBR) Systems Deployment**

*For outstanding public service to education in NSW.*

Ms Irvine has dedicated her working life to making a difference in the NSW education system and is recognised for her commitment to improving the performance of students, teachers, school leaders and schools

In her current role as Director, Learning Management and Business Reform (LMBR) Systems Deployment, she has led the successful delivery of the 2016 model of deployment to over 800 public schools in NSW which remained within budget and

to the set timeline. With a collaborative approach, she was quickly identified for her expertise in working with principals and school staff with a focus on the needs of schools, ensuring the deployment was tailored to each location, individual and category of staff member.

A strong leader who provides strategic advice and has the outstanding capacity to identify many complex and competing priorities, she has championed optimal business outcomes in a number of Director roles and achieved department and Government initiatives including overseeing the NSW secondary syllabuses, incorporating the Australian curriculum and implementing the Every Student Every School initiative.

She has developed sound working relationships with local government agencies, councils, community groups, unions and professional associations to establish communication lines to discuss key initiatives and resolve potential issues.

Ms Irvine is an exceptional change manager, leader, role model and educator who has made a significant impact to those she has worked with her as a classroom teacher, school principal and senior officer of the NSW Department of Education.

## Australia Day 2017

### **Peter Riordan, Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services**

***For outstanding public service to industrial relations and education in NSW.***

Mr Riordan has held the role of Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services, Department of Education since 2012 and has worked tirelessly in various roles within the Department of Education since 2003.

His expertise while working in the Department of Industrial Relations, prior to his move to education, has enabled him to significantly change the face of industrial relations within the NSW public education system. Building a strong rapport with key stakeholders, including relevant unions and principal representative associations, has enabled him to transform the industrial relations environment within education, and dispel the occasions of wide scale and repetitive industrial action. This change to the industrial relations environment enabled the incoming Government in 2011 to pursue significant educational reforms.

One of his most significant accomplishments was the development and implementation of a government commitment to introduce standards based pay for all NSW Government school teachers. Utilising his outstanding stakeholder management skills he was able to facilitate the delivery of the first comprehensive standards based pay system in Australia for public school teachers.

As a well-respected and highly regarded public servant, Mr Riordan continues to provide outstanding service to the Department of Education and to the government and people of NSW.

### **Stephanie Brown, Deputy Principal, Denison College Kelso Campus School**

***For outstanding public service to education in NSW as a teacher and administrator.***

Ms Brown has had a 37 year career as a public educator in the roles of teacher, head teacher and deputy principal in NSW. Her outstanding commitment to improving the educational outcomes and life opportunities for students is demonstrated in her day to day work. She has initiated and implemented many

programs, particularly for those students who don't have ideal home lives, teaching them the importance of self-esteem and self-reliance.

She has been recognised on numerous occasions for her service in public education and, amongst other awards, in 2002 she received a Director-General's Award for The Machismo Program, which equips boys with healthy tools to encourage achievement, recognition, motivation and positive self-image.

Since 2004, she has led the highly acclaimed school-based circus program, 'Cirkus Surreal' for students at Denison College Kelso Campus School. Devoting extra hours to her week, her vision for this program is to encourage students to build resilience and develop life-long learning skills for a healthy and productive life. The remarkable success of the 'Cirkus Surreal' program has enabled members to perform for a range of organisations and community groups, as well as tour the United States and Canada, empowering students to broaden their horizons to a world outside their own neighbourhood.

Ms Brown is acknowledged for her many years of service and the lives she has enriched. She is widely recognised for the ongoing support of students in life and educational skills as well as for her leadership and mentoring skills and her outstanding commitment to the community of NSW.

## Queen's Birthday 2016

### **Marnie O'Brien, Group Director, Work Health and Safety Unit**

*For outstanding public service to work health and safety in NSW.*

Ms O'Brien has made an outstanding contribution to the Department of Education's Work Health and Safety Directorate over the past 11 years. As Group Director she led the delivery of several innovative and highly effective work health and safety programs across the department.

Under her direction, the department instituted lasting strategies and systems to effectively manage students and others diagnosed with anaphylaxis. In June 2013, she implemented a behavioural insights program to manage workers compensation claims and injury management practices which has improved the rate of return-to-work by 27%. In 2014, she established an e-Safety system which facilitated the delivery of online learning for all staff across the state and enabled the department to support leadership capacity in NSW public schools.

Her capacity to work collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders on state wide professional learning ensured school staff were confident to deal with emergency situations. Her ability to manage challenging and complex issues involving school staff calmly and logically is exceptional.

Ms O'Brien's achievements in the area of work health and safety have produced significant benefits for workers and savings for the Department of Education which have enabled funds to be directed to education provision for students.

## Australia Day 2016

### **Murat Dizdar, Executive Director, Public Schools, Ultimo**

*For outstanding public service to education in NSW.*

As Executive Director, Public Schools NSW, Mr Dizdar is responsible for schools in the Sydney and South Western Sydney geographical areas of NSW, comprising more than 219,000 students enrolled in more than 514 primary, secondary and special schools. He also leads 18 Directors who make up the Executive Leadership team.

In this role he leads the implementation of strategies, policies, programs and innovations reflecting the department's strategic directions, to ensure the delivery of high quality education and training across each of the public schools for which he is responsible. His exceptional leadership approach is one of transparency, attentiveness and responsiveness and he adheres to ethical practice in all that he does.

Currently he is working on building leadership capacity across the public education system, as research and demographic studies have indicated an impending shortage in qualified teachers and leaders in many areas of NSW. He has worked with his colleagues and staff in tailoring programs to address this need. He is a strong and passionate advocate for public education, and at the core of every initiative he supports is his commitment to the equity of all students and their families, regardless of background or personal circumstances.

## Queen's Birthday 2015

### **Dr Peter Gould, Leader Numeracy, State Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan**

*For outstanding public service to education, particularly to mathematics, in NSW.*

Throughout Dr Gould's long and distinguished career he has been a passionate advocate for public education. As a nationally acknowledged leader in his field, he has had a profound influence on the teaching of mathematics across NSW, particularly through the development of new and exciting ways to raise the quality and standard of mathematics teaching for students in all government schools. This has reflected his commitment to enabling students to achieve positive outcomes and in encouraging excellence in teaching and learning.

Dr Gould is currently the Leader of Numeracy, for the State Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan and has played an integral role in the implementation of the strategy in 311 government schools to improve outcomes for students in their early years.

He actively looks to identify and unleash talents in others and has positively impacted on the people of NSW through his dedication to the ongoing development of mathematics teaching in the state.

### **Peter Johnson, Executive Director, People and Services (retired 30/4/2015)**

*For outstanding public service to education in NSW.*

Mr Johnson has had a long and significant career across the NSW public education sector and is committed to providing a high level of service to public school students.

The various roles he has held throughout his career, from teacher and principal, to regional demographer, and as a leader in the Department of Education and Communities state office, have given him a global perspective of the education sector.

His ability to communicate effectively with all who he encounters, and to maintain successful networks, is testament to his natural ability as a leader.



He has transformed the way teachers are appointed to schools by implementing reforms under the Local Schools, Local Decisions project, which has enabled schools to choose teachers who best meet the needs.

Mr Johnson has also overseen a range of initiatives which aim to lift the quality of education professionals including in the accreditation of teachers and programs, and he has introduced incentives to ensure teacher supply is sufficient in areas of greatest need.

## Australia Day 2015

### **Michele Hall, Executive Director, Connected Communities**

*For outstanding public service to education in NSW, and through improving outcomes for Indigenous students from disadvantaged rural and remote areas.*

In this role Ms Hall has been tasked with improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students from disadvantaged rural and remote communities. Ms Hall has strengthened relationships between stakeholders for the benefit of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students across NSW. Ms Hall has made significant improvements in the education sector and is a highly respected and outstanding leader.

### **Christopher Presland, Principal, St Clair High School**

*For outstanding public service to education in NSW, particularly through leadership roles, to improved professional standards and certification, and to student performance.*

In this role Mr Presland is responsible for continuing the development of the teaching and leadership capabilities of staff, working towards the continual improvement of student performance and has most recently led the St Clair community through the rebuild of the school, following one of the most significant school fires in NSW. Mr Presland has also made a significant contribution in his role as Chair and Convener of the NSW Branch of Principals and on working groups and educational committees including the NSW Secondary Principals Council.