

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **WA School Leaders honoured for dedication and commitment**

Five Western Australian principals and school leaders have received a national award for their achievements in education. The John Laing Professional Development Awards are administered by the Principals Australia Institute.

“It is imperative that we recognise and value the vital role that principals play in providing leadership in our community,” said Jim Davies, CEO of Principals Australia Institute.

“Great schools do not happen by accident. The quality of our school leaders helps shape and drive excellence in education.

“We all want our students to thrive and flourish at school. We need leaders who have the learning and wellbeing of students and staff as their primary focus.”

“The Institute exists to support principals and school leaders as they seek to build effective, inspirational and sustainable leadership in Australian schools. These awards acknowledge leaders who have achieved exceptional standards in school leadership.”

The recipients were honoured at a gathering held in Perth on Monday August 18 2014.

Each of these peer-nominated individuals is considered to have made an exceptional contribution to school leadership and to the professional development of their peers. The five people honoured were:

- David Barras
- Anthony (Tony) Curry
- Marie Donovan
- Lynda Fisher
- Nancy McNally

**More information on the honourees is available in the attached backgrounder.**

**The Principals and school leaders are available for interview and photograph.**

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# John Laing Awards Backgrounder

## The Honorees

### David Barras

- David has been actively involved in leadership roles in Catholic schools since 1984, and Principal of five Catholic schools since 1990.
- He has assisted in the planning and organisation of Leadership Conferences in Catholic schools through the Catholic Primary Principals Association of Western Australia.
- David has mentored and inspired a number of aspiring leaders within our system, several of whom are now Principals. David also currently mentors Principals new to the role.

### Anthony (Tony) Curry

- Tony has worked in primary schools, secondary schools and the Catholic Education Office for over 30 years.
- Tony has worked in small (< 50 students) and large schools (> 1600 students) where his philosophy of encouraging and working hands-on with staff, students and their families underpins all that he does.
- Tony's current role is Director of School Improvement at the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia and he oversees the school improvement agenda for the 161 Catholic schools in our State.

### Marie Donovan

- Marie is a visionary who pioneered the development of education services for students with Specific Language Impairment in Western Australia.
- 45 years of inspirational teaching and leadership has led to WA having services that cater for students with language vulnerabilities that are unique in the world.
- Through her extensive knowledge and understanding of communication disorders, innovative practice and strong leadership she has established an internationally renowned educational system that today caters for over 1,000 students across five Language Development Centres.

### Lynda Fisher

- Lynda is President of the Western Australian Independent Primary Heads of School Association (IPSHA).
- She is an accredited Girlpower Coach and has completed the Quality Teacher Program in Gifted and Talented education.
- She is passionate about, and committed to, providing excellence in education in all that she undertakes and works tirelessly to give her best in all of her professional duties.

### Nancy McNally

- Nancy has worked in education for 24 years and is now Associate Principal at Comet Bay College.
- She has worked as a secondary teacher, administrator, district Curriculum Consultant, district Curriculum Manager, district Principal Consultant, Manager Leadership Development at the Institute for Professional Learning
- Over a 10 year period, she has designed and coordinated professional learning for aspiring and existing school leaders and teachers.

## The Award

John Laing is a former Tasmanian school principal who worked for Principals Australia Institute.

His passionate belief and energy was the driving force behind the first cross-sectoral professional learning projects for all school leaders in Australia.

John's retirement from the profession prompted a special award to be set up in 2004 in his honour.

The John Laing Professional Development Award recognises school leaders who have significantly contributed to the professional learning of their colleagues.

## Principals Australia Institute

Principals Australia Institute (PAI) provides quality professional learning, leadership development and support to principals and school leaders.

Our programs and services help build effective, inspirational and sustainable leadership in Australia's 10,000 government, Catholic and independent primary and secondary schools.

The principals' associations that founded PAI are:

- Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (AHISA)
- Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA)
- Australian Secondary Principals Association (ASPA)
- Catholic Secondary Principals Australia (CaSPA)