

## Schools Plus Teaching Awards supported by Commonwealth Bank

### 2025 AWARD GUIDELINES

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#### 1. Introduction

The Schools Plus Teaching Awards are a prestigious national teaching award open to registered teachers and school leaders presented by national non-profit Australian Schools Plus Ltd (ABN 65 164 622 459) (Schools Plus) and supported by Commonwealth Bank of Australia (ABN 48 123 123 124) (Commonwealth Bank).

Twelve (12) teachers or school leaders are awarded a Teaching Fellowship valued at \$20,000. The majority of award recipients will be educators working in schools in communities facing disadvantage.

The Awards are supported by a key initiative of Schools Plus - the 'Pioneers in Philanthropy'. The Pioneers in Philanthropy include David Gonski AC and Orli Wargon OAM, Angus James and Sarah James, John B Fairfax AO and Nick Fairfax, John Grill AO and Rosie Williams, Roger Massy-Greene AM, Kerry Stokes AC and Christine Simpson Stokes AO, and the Commonwealth Bank.

#### 2. Am I Eligible?

- The Awards are open to registered teachers and school leaders in Australian primary and secondary schools (hereinafter referred to as 'teachers') in any Government, Catholic or Independent school with students from Year K or Prep to Year 12.
- A registered teacher is a person who is registered or accredited to perform the duties of a teacher as defined by the relevant legislation in their Australian State or Territory.
- Teachers should be currently practising in a school and to the best of their knowledge should intend to continue teaching in the same school for the next 12 months.
- Teachers working in schools in disadvantaged communities are particularly encouraged to apply.
- The application form is to be completed by the teacher or school leader who is applying for the Awards. Forms completed on behalf of the applicant will be considered ineligible.
- A maximum of one (1) form per applicant will be accepted.
- The form must be submitted between 9:00am (AEDT) on Monday 3 March 2025 and 9:00am (AEST) on Tuesday 8 April 2025.

#### 3. The Award

**Teaching Fellowship** - Twelve (12) teachers or school leaders will be selected to receive a Teaching Fellowship, with the majority being teachers and school leaders who are working in schools in disadvantaged communities. The Teaching Fellowship Professional Learning Award is valued at \$20,000 and includes:

- Attendance at the 2025 Teaching Award Ceremony at Parliament House in Canberra on 3 September 2025

- \$10,000 for the awardee's school to plan and undertake a high impact school visit program. This will provide in-situ experiential learning at one or more schools/sites and contribute to advancing school improvement and student learning outcomes.
- Participation in a 12-month Teaching Fellowship program including a 1.5-day face-to-face collaboration workshop, master classes and networking opportunities. Participants will expand their professional knowledge and leadership capabilities, enhance professional networks and develop a School Visit plan for implementation in 2026.
- Invitation to join the Schools Plus Teaching Award Alumni, a network of over 120 teachers and school leaders from across Australia.

## 4. Application Preview

Please refer to the below prompts targeting assessment criteria for the **Teaching Fellowship**.

Applications will be assessed on the demonstration of excellence and achievement across the four areas outlined below.

### 1. Transforming Learning Outcomes – Student Impact

Explain how your teaching practice and whole school leadership drives measurable and continuous improvements in student learning. How do you identify specific student needs and apply high-impact, evidence-based strategies? Share how you have enriched students' learning experiences and outcomes, supported by data, evidence and measurable results that demonstrate your impact. **(Max 2500 characters)**

#### ***Details to consider including in your response:***

- *The specific needs of your students and/or school community*
- *What YOU have done to improve students learning outcomes*
- *The scale and reach of your work*
- *Changes in practice that have occurred because of your work*
- *Evidence and measures that demonstrate improvement in student outcomes*

### 2. Collaborating and Sharing Knowledge – Capacity Building

Describe how your teaching practice and school leadership has actively fostered a culture of collective efficacy, professional growth, and connectedness both within and beyond your school community. Provide specific examples of how you have shared knowledge, expertise and best practices to create a professional learning culture that enhances the skills, effectiveness and confidence of your colleagues. Highlight the measurable outcomes and collective impact of these collaborative efforts, including improvements in teaching practice, student learning or broader educational initiatives. **(Max 2500 characters)**

#### ***Details to consider including in your response:***

- *What YOU have done to champion a culture of collaboration within or possibly beyond your school gates*
- *How you have shared learnings and evidence with colleagues in your school or others in education*
- *The outcomes of your collaboration or knowledge sharing*
- *Evidence or measures demonstrating these outcomes*
- *How improvements will be sustained long term*

### 3. Engaging in Community – Team, School and Community Collaboration

Tell us about the larger team you collaborate with regularly. How do you engage with partner schools, external organizations, and key stakeholders to drive meaningful change? Describe the collective effort behind these partnerships, emphasizing how your team's combined expertise and shared goals are making a tangible impact on students, families, and the broader community. Provide specific examples of successful collaborations that have enhanced student engagement, improved outcomes, and strengthened community connections. **(Max 2500 characters)**

**Details to consider including in your response:**

- Why and how you have engaged families and/or the community as a strategy to improve student outcomes
- What has changed for students because of your initiative(s)
- The overall benefits for students, school and community

#### 4. Student Stories

We seek a powerful story of a student (or students) whose journey exemplifies the profound impact of your work in shaping and advancing educational practice. Through this narrative, illustrate how your team's unwavering dedication to inspiring and empowering others, deep commitment to the teaching profession, and steadfast focus on equity in education are creating transformative change and driving meaningful, lasting improvements in students' lives. **(Max 2500 characters)**

**Details to consider including in your response:**

- A story of an individual student or cohort whose learning experience has been positively impacted by your work
- How you have helped to advance equity in education and access to educational opportunities
- Direct quotes from the student(s) you have supported
- Note: You are welcome and encouraged to anonymise students and/or omit any sensitive information. We will seek approval before sharing any student stories beyond the context of your application.

#### 5. Key Dates

**Nominations open:** Monday, 3 March (9:00am AEDT)

**Nominations close:** Tuesday 8 April (9:00am AEST)

**Finalists notified:** Monday 12 May

**Finalist interviews (online) and reference checks:** Monday 12 May to Friday 30 May

**Award recipients notified:** Friday 20 June

**Awards Event:** Wednesday, 3 September 2025 – Parliament House, Canberra

#### 6. Selection Process

*Eligibility check and assessment of applications*

- After applications are checked for eligibility, an independent assessment panel with relevant education, leadership and project coaching expertise will assess and score applications.

*Finalist interviews, referee and due diligence checks*

- Finalists will be invited to attend an online interview.
- Interview questions will focus on your background and motivation, your principles and philosophy on education, and why you feel you will be an excellent candidate for the award
- Finalists' referees (principals for teachers and supervisors for principals) will also be contacted for reference checks.
- Due diligence and background checks will be undertaken for all finalists.

*Award recipients selected by expert Panel*

- A Selection Panel of senior education and business leaders will select 12 Teaching Fellows from a shortlist of finalists.

*Announcement of Award recipients*

- Award recipients will be notified immediately following the Selection Panel meeting and will be announced publicly at the Awards Event on 3 September 2025.

## 7. How do I Apply?

- Applications are to be completed online via the Schools Plus Application Management Portal - accessed through the Schools Plus website [schoolsplus.org.au/awards](https://schoolsplus.org.au/awards)
- Before starting your application, you will need to register and login to the Portal. All eligible schools have been pre-loaded on the site for your assistance.
- Your application can be saved and modified during completion. (*Tip: You might want to create a Word document to have a saved copy offline.*)
- On submission, you will receive an email confirming receipt of your application.
- You can access your application again through 'My Applications' on the Portal, however no further changes can be made after submission.
- The Application Form should be completed by the teacher or school leader applying for, or who has been nominated for the Awards. Forms completed by the nominator will be ineligible.

## 8. Frequently Asked Questions

### Who is Australian Schools Plus?

Schools Plus aims to provide all Australian children with the educational opportunities they need to become confident lifelong learners and to thrive through school and beyond. As a registered non-profit organisation with DGR (Deductible Gift Recipient) 1 status, we take a place-based approach working with teachers and schools on bespoke programs to support children where they specifically need it – because it is the community - the families, teachers, and health practitioners - who know their children best.

Schools Plus was established as a result of a recommendation in the 2011 Review of Funding for Schooling (the 'Gonski Review'). More than 4,600 disadvantaged schools (Government, Catholic and Independent) across Australia are eligible for support through Schools Plus. For more information, visit [www.schoolsplus.org.au](https://www.schoolsplus.org.au).

### Who can nominate or apply?

Anyone can nominate a teacher or school leader for the Awards. Teachers or school leaders who are nominated will receive an email informing them of their nomination and will be invited to apply. A teacher or school leader can also apply themselves. Nominated teachers or school leaders who wish to apply will need to complete the online Form themselves to be eligible for the Awards.

### Who is eligible for the Awards?

The Awards are open to all registered teachers and school leaders currently working in Australian primary and secondary schools - Government, Catholic or Independent schools with students from Year K or Prep to Year 12. Please note early childhood teachers working in early childhood centres or pre-schools are ineligible to apply.

### How do I nominate or apply?

You can nominate a teacher or school leader or apply yourself via this link on the Schools Plus website [schoolsplus.org.au/awards](https://schoolsplus.org.au/awards). If you are applying, you will be directed to the Schools Plus Application Management Portal to access the online Application Form. If you are nominating a teacher or school leader, you will need to enter their personal or school email address and your nominee will receive an email (anonymously if you prefer) congratulating them on their nomination and directing them to the website to complete an application. If a school email is entered, please ensure you include both the first name and surname of your nominee, so your nomination can be forwarded to the correct teacher.

**Can more than one teacher from the same school be nominated or apply?**

Yes, an unlimited number of teachers can be nominated or can apply from each school.

**Do I need my school principal or supervisor's permission to apply?**

It is recommended you advise your school principal (or your supervisor if you are a principal) that you are applying for the Awards. Your principal or your supervisor should be listed as your referee on your Form, but they will only be contacted if you are shortlisted as a finalist.

**What will I receive if I am selected for a Teaching Award?**

Award recipients will receive a prestigious Teaching Fellowship valued at \$20,000 including the following:

- Attendance at the Teaching Award Ceremony at Parliament House in Canberra on 3 Sept 2025
- \$10,000 for your school to plan and undertake a high impact school visit program.
- Participation in a 12-month Teaching Fellowship including a face-to-face 1.5-day collaboration workshop, master classes and networking opportunities. Participants will expand their professional knowledge and leadership capabilities, enhance professional networks and develop a School Visit plan for implementation in 2026.
- An invitation to join the School Plus Teaching Award Alumni.

**How can I use the Professional Learning Award \$10,000 prize for my school?**

Your school will receive \$10,000 to plan and undertake a high impact school visit program designed to contribute to advancing school improvement and student outcomes at the school. Schools Plus will support teachers to develop the school visit plan, including the identification of relevant schools through the Teaching Award alumni to enable a mutually beneficial learning experience for both the visiting and host school.

**What do the assessment panels look for in an application?**

The written information provided in your application form is the main factor in assessing applications and selecting finalists. Each prompt includes guiding points to assist with providing your responses, which should be supported by clear and specific evidence.

**What counts as data and evidence?**

You should give clear examples of what data, research and/or measures you have used to inform your approach or to determine your activities or strategy, as well as measures (ideally **quantitative**) that demonstrate the changes that have occurred in learning outcomes or experiences for your students and/or school. Note, the form does not allow for data reports or other documents to be uploaded or attached. Please provide a summary and interpretation of your data.

**Who are the Award Selectors?**

A Selection Panel comprised of prominent education and business leaders will select the Award recipients from a shortlist of finalists. Previous panels have included representatives from Federal and State Education Departments, Association of Independent Schools, National Catholic Education, AITSL, Principals Associations, Pioneers in Philanthropy and Commonwealth Bank.

**When will I be notified?**

All applicants will be notified on the status of their application as unsuccessful or a finalist by 12 May 2025. The successful Award recipients will be notified following the Selection Panel meeting by 20 June 2025 and will be officially announced at the Awards Event on 3 September 2025. A full list of all 2025 Award recipients will be published on [schoolsplus.org.au/awards](https://schoolsplus.org.au/awards).

**Can I submit a late application?**

Applications will close at 9.00am (AEST) on Tuesday 8 April 2025. No late applications will be accepted via any means after this time.

**9. Terms and Conditions of the Awards**

9.1. By applying for the Awards and submitting a Form, the Applicant accepts and agrees to be bound by these Award Guidelines, including these Terms and Conditions.

9.2. The Applicant acknowledges and agrees that all material submitted by the Applicant in their Form must not, and the Applicant warrants that such material does not, infringe the copyright or other intellectual property rights of any person or organisation. The Applicant indemnifies Schools Plus and the Commonwealth Bank against any claim made against Schools Plus or the Commonwealth Bank that any use of the material submitted by the Applicant in their Form infringes the intellectual property rights of any person or organisation.

9.3. The Applicant grants Schools Plus and the Commonwealth Bank a perpetual, royalty-free, non-exclusive, irrevocable and transferable licence to reproduce, use, or modify any material contained in the Form at Schools Plus's or Commonwealth Bank's (as relevant) discretion.

9.4. The Applicant must declare on their Form that they have advised their principal or supervisor that they have applied for the Awards.

9.5. By submitting their Form, the Applicant agrees that they have never been charged with a criminal offence, subject to misconduct proceedings by their relevant State or Territory education body or subject to any process that may bring disrepute to Schools Plus or the Commonwealth Bank or the Awards.

9.6. By submitting their Form, the Applicant agrees to Schools Plus and/or the Commonwealth Bank (as relevant) conducting appropriate due diligence and background checks on the Applicant which may include, but not limited to:

9.6.1. Working with Children Checks;

9.6.2 Reference check with Applicant's principal or supervisor;

9.6.3 National Police and Financial Crimes Checks (identifying specific or general involvement with money laundering, terrorism financing, politically exposed persons, terrorists and wanted criminals) by an independent third party;

9.6.4 social media and internet search checks; and

9.6.5 such other due diligence and background checks as considered necessary by Schools Plus and/or the Commonwealth Bank from time to time.

9.7. The Applicant acknowledges and agrees that all considerations, deliberations and decisions made by the Selection Panel in relation to the Awards, including but not limited to the award of the Teaching Fellowship, are final and the Selection Panel is under no obligation to disclose or communicate to or otherwise discuss with the Applicant the nature of such considerations, deliberations and decisions.

9.8. Before distribution of the Teaching Fellowship, the Fellow and the Fellow's school will sign an acceptance letter from Schools Plus that sets out the further terms and conditions for the award of the Teaching Fellowship.

9.9. All Award recipients and their schools acknowledge and agree Schools Plus and the Commonwealth Bank may use, disclose and promote information about the Award recipient and their school, and share the stories and any other information provided by the Award recipient. They may do so on various Schools Plus and Commonwealth Bank related promotional material, general media, online, social media, communication and marketing mediums (Materials).



9.10. The Award recipients acknowledge and agree that all copyright in the Materials rests with Schools Plus and the Commonwealth Bank and the Award recipients and their schools are not entitled to remuneration, royalties, or any other payments in respect to the use of the Materials by Schools Plus or the Commonwealth Bank for any purpose.

9.11. The Award recipients may be required to attend a presentation of the Award to which persons including, but not limited to, media, public personalities, and members of Schools Plus and the Commonwealth Bank will be invited to attend. At the discretion of Schools Plus and the Commonwealth Bank, the Award recipients may be required to do press interviews and photography to help promote the Awards.

9.12. All personal information (as defined in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)) (Personal Information) included in the Form and collected by Schools Plus and the Commonwealth Bank in connection with the Awards is collected for the purposes of administration and promotion of the Awards. Schools Plus and the Commonwealth Bank may disclose any Personal Information they collect in connection with the Awards to each of its related bodies corporate and to external service providers, entities and organisations undertaking any of Schools Plus's and/or the Commonwealth Bank's functions and obligations in respect of the Awards. All Personal Information collected by Schools Plus and the Commonwealth Bank in connection with the Awards will be collected, used, and disclosed in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the privacy policies of Schools Plus and the Commonwealth Bank which can be found, respectively, at; [Schools Plus Privacy Policy](#) and [CommBank Privacy Policy](#)). The Privacy Policies contain further details about Schools Plus's and Commonwealth Bank's information collection and handling processes including information about how to seek access to and correction of the Personal Information and how to make a complaint and complaint handling procedures. For privacy related queries, Applicants can contact Schools Plus and the Commonwealth Bank using the methods set out in the respective Privacy Policies.

9.13. Any waiving of the requirements contained in these Award Guidelines and these Terms and Conditions (including the Selection Criteria) is at the discretion of Schools Plus and the Commonwealth Bank.

9.14. By applying for the Awards, Applicants discharge and release Schools Plus and the Commonwealth Bank from all liabilities or claims of any kind arising from or in connection with the Awards, the Fellowship and the Scholarship. Applicants also indemnify the Commonwealth Bank from any claims arising from third parties in relation to the Applicant's participation in any stage or aspect of the Awards and the Fellowship.

9.15. To the extent permitted by law, Schools Plus, the Commonwealth Bank and their related bodies corporate and their respective directors, officers, employees and agents, exclude any and all liability for any loss or damage, whatsoever which is suffered or sustained, in connection with:

9.15.1. the Applicant's participation in the Awards; or

9.15.2. the receipt or use of the Teaching Fellowship by the recipient or anyone participating in the use of the Teaching Fellowship with the recipient.

9.16. These Award Guidelines and these Terms and Conditions are subject to modification by Schools Plus and the Commonwealth Bank at their sole discretion.

9.17. These Award Guidelines, these Terms and Conditions shall be governed by the laws of New South Wales, Australia and Schools Plus, the Commonwealth Bank, and each Applicant submits to the non-exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of New South Wales, Australia.