

ARIA Music Teacher of the Year Award.

MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED until Thursday 11 October, 2018

NOMINEES ANNOUNCED FOR ARIA MUSIC TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD.

ARIA and **The Song Room**, a leading national arts education organisation, are excited to announce the nominees for the **ARIA Music Teacher of Year Award**, sponsored by **Telstra**. Four finalists from around Australia have been chosen from hundreds of online applicants for their incredible contribution to music education.

The nominees, announced live at the ARIA Award nomination event in Sydney today, are Dean Harawira from Nerang State High School on the Gold Coast, Deb Skelton from Caladenia Primary School in Perth, Scott Maxwell from Grant High School in Mount Gambier and Becky Hall from the Royal Children's Hospital Education Institute in Melbourne.

Four ARIA Ambassadors, **Guy Sebastian**, **Thelma Plum**, **Justine Clarke** and indie pop band **Sheppard** surprised the chosen music educators and their students, to celebrate their nomination and shine a light on the importance of music education in young people's lives.

The ARIA Music Teacher of The Year Award was introduced to recognise music teachers for their passion and hard work in providing Australian children with a better education and the chance to play and enjoy music. There is growing recognition worldwide of the value of creativity and the arts to improve education standards and build a better connection for students to their school life in general.

At the 2017 ARIA Awards, ARIA winner **Josh Pyke** awarded the inaugural ARIA Music Teacher of the Year Award to **Renee McCarthy** from Woodcroft College in South Australia, who stole the hearts of Australians nationwide when she accepted the award live at the ceremony.

"Many of the greatest musicians of our time credit their teachers with being a critical factor in their success, but it's much more than that, for many children their music or art teacher has helped them develop a sense of belonging and purpose! Hats off to ARIA and Telstra for helping us to celebrate the enormous contribution made by music teachers." said Simon Gipson, CEO of The Song Room.

The public can now vote for their favourite music teacher online at **www.ariamusicteacheraward.com.au**. Voting closes at **11:59pm on Wednesday 21 November**. The music teacher with the most public votes will be presented with an ARIA at the 2018 ARIA Award ceremony held in Sydney on 28 November, 2018.

Interviews available upon request, please see contact details below. For more information please see attached:

About The Song Room

The Song Room levels the learning playing field for children experiencing disadvantage through an impactful, sustainable and scalable approach to arts learning. The Song Room works in partnership with schools and communities across Australia to improve student outcomes and school engagement.

About ARIA

The ARIAs is the flagship event on the Australian music calendar – a celebration of all that is great in local music. The very first ARIA Awards were held in 1987 and hosted by Sir Elton John and winners included INXS, Crowded House and John Farnham. Since that time the ARIA Awards have developed into Australia's pinnacle music Awards ceremony, forging careers and playing host to countless memorable moments and performances. For more information visit www.aria.com.au.

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More info on The Song Room: www.songroom.org.au