



Award Winning Teachers

Medbury teachers Kerri Fitzgerald and Lesley Bath were each awarded a 2019 ISNZ (Independent Schools of New Zealand) Honours Award, two of only thirteen given out across 46 Independent Schools in New Zealand this year. These Awards were established

by ISNZ to honour exceptional staff who demonstrate talent, service and commitment that is truly above and beyond. At Medbury, we are very proud of the calibre of our staff whose common mission is to 'Unlock Every Boy's Potential'.

Kerri Fitzgerald, Service to Drama

Many of you will have witnessed the large scale productions and Shakespeare Festivals that Kerri Fitzgerald, Head of Drama, has directed at Medbury School. The coverage and images of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on pages 22 to 25 are a testament to this.

One colleague wrote, "She is a dedicated professional who unlocks the talent in students, nurtures and encourages them, inspires and develops them and somehow draws out the most incredible performances from both groups and individuals alike."

Medbury boys entering secondary school are awarded Drama Scholarships year after year and the independent MMG Education survey data gathered in 2018 showed class satisfaction rates for Drama in Years 6 to 8 as 'high or very high'.

A leading figure in the sector wrote, "Kerri has been a vital force in the Christchurch Drama/Dance education and performance scene... (she has)

developed a respected reputation as an innovator and as an integrator of learning methodology and styles and as a livewire catalyst for spreading those forces...Her generosity as she poked, provoked and provided teachers with the courage to enrich student learning outcomes through dance and drama has continued unabated as she has grasped every opportunity to assist other teachers, in subject association workshops, resource development, conferences, working parties and mentoring roles that have benefited so many in the last 30 years...The Independent Schools' sector in New Zealand is lucky to have Kerri Fitzgerald amongst its teaching force, as indeed is the whole of the New Zealand schools sector."

Her colleagues call her an 'exceptional' and 'remarkable' teacher, and are constantly in awe of the energy and passion she brings to her teaching.

Our warmest, heartfelt congratulations to 'Ms Fitz'.

"We are richer for her contribution at a national level, and at the individual student level where thousands of individual boys and girls have been empowered to develop character strengths and self-worth by her Midas Touch."



^ Kerri Fitzgerald

"No empirical data would possibly be able to fully encapsulate the broad holistic impact she has had on countless young people."



^ Lesley Bath

Lesley Bath, Service to Learning Support

Lesley Bath is held in very high regard by the wider learning support community, the parents of the boys she has taught and more importantly the students themselves. She works in the areas of Learning Support for the Senior School at Medbury, and she is also Director of International Students.

A former colleague described how Lesley always supported the parents who were often very concerned about their sons and their learning difficulties. "She was always genuinely encouraging. She never failed to believe these boys could do well, and her belief and hard work ensured that they always did."

One current parent wrote, "(Our son) suffered from self-doubt, anxiety and worry about his future schooling... we were told he would not be able to write. The only school that came to mind upon countless recommendations in our community was Medbury and the diminutive Lesley Bath... We are astounded that in such a short time Lesley has unlocked what seemed like a blockage... this is backed up by his school reports, his energy for subjects, above average in an exam (seriously unheard of!) and most important, his happiness...our son is changed forever thanks to the wonderful Lesley Bath and Medbury School..."

A former colleague describes Lesley as at the forefront of educational best practice and achievement outcomes, writing, "Throughout her years of teaching, she has developed a very robust and effective support programme which has made a real difference to numerous students with moderate to severe learning difficulties..."

She has shared her resources and I have visited her for support and sent my support staff to observe her teach. She is very generous with her material. Her goal is always that all students develop to their potential and is never about protecting her own intellectual property."

A former student with multiple Honours degrees wrote to say that the reason he was able to apply himself to studying with vigor and confidence was largely because of Mrs Bath. He described how he always engaged best with problems via discussion and that Mrs Bath asked him to express his thoughts and options to encourage critical analysis of the problem in front of him. She would then work with him on syntax, grammar and spelling to allow him to express his analysis of the problem via writing. He wrote:

"Academically I had never achieved success, nor did I believe that such academic success would find its way to me. Enter Mrs Bath... In hindsight, Mrs Bath's brilliance as a teacher was to identify where I was struggling, work vigorously on those weaknesses while simultaneously, accentuating my strengths.... Mrs Bath is a truly talented teacher because she can take young people who do not believe in their own ability and convince them (that) any academic problem can be overcome through sheer determination..."

Lesley is an outstanding support teacher, colleague and mentor. She has made a phenomenal difference to numbers of students and parents who remember her fondly and we wholeheartedly congratulate her on this well-deserved recognition.