



the **ARCHIBULL** PRIZE



# THE ARCHIBULL PRIZE 2017 TEACHER INTERVIEW JILLIAN REIDY - THE HENRY LAWSON SCHOOL

FOR THE 170 STUDENTS AT THE HENRY LAWSON HIGH SCHOOL IN GRENFELL IN CENTRAL NSW, THE ARCHIBULL PRIZE HAS BECOME AN EXPECTATION. PARTICIPATING FOR THE LAST FOUR YEARS THE SMALL SCHOOL ROUTINELY PUNCHES ABOVE ITS WEIGHT, TWICE WINNING RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION. ARTS TEACHER JILLIAN REIDY SHARES SOME OF THE SCHOOL'S ARCHIBULL SECRETS.

## HOW AND WHY DID THE HENRY LAWSON SCHOOL BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE ARCHIBULL PRIZE?

Our principal wanted to build project based learning (PBL), which sets students an authentic task with the object they produce having a real audience in the wider world. PBL projects are usually large projects working across disciplines and require the identification and solution of a problem. The Archibull Prize was a perfect fit as it enriches student learning opportunities in so many ways.

## WHY DO YOU THINK IT IS IMPORTANT FOR RURAL SCHOOLS TO BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE ARCHIBULL PRIZE?

Even in an agricultural community the students don't understand the different aspects of agriculture and the diversity of careers; their point of view is limited to what they have been exposed to on their farm, and they certainly need to know about the environmental and sustainability issues that come up for discussion.

## DO YOU HAVE ANY USEFUL HINTS AND TIPS FOR SCHOOLS DOING THE PROGRAM FOR THE FIRST TIME?

- Find a school that has done the Archibull before that can act as a mentor;
- Plan – don't underestimate the amount of work involved;
- Identify leaders in the student body who will step up and perform tasks and encourage these people;
- Allow yourself to make mistakes in the first year with the understanding that you will come back next year and build on those mistakes to produce a better piece of work.

## HOW DID YOU TAILOR THE PROGRAM TO MEET CURRICULUM OUTCOMES?

When you look at the outcomes there are a number of learning objectives that you need to address; for example, exploring and expressing your world through art, and being aware of the relationship between the audience, the artist and the actual work. There are many aspects of the Archibull that clearly connect to these goals, which makes it easy to write it in to the curriculum.

## WHAT SORT OF FEEDBACK DO YOU GET FROM THE STUDENTS IN THE EVALUATION STAGE?

The kids learnt that it is okay to make mistakes because you can fix them and learn from them and build on them. They also developed friendships working on the Archibull that would not have formed otherwise with students sitting in their peer groups.

The students ask before we finish if we are going to do the Archibull again – they are already investing in the next year's project and it becomes a very student driven project.

## WHAT ARE WERE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF BEING INVOLVED WITH THE ARCHIBULL?

The growth and the confidence you see in the students and the pride they take in it. How can, as a teacher, you not engage in a project that embraces the students so thoroughly? How can you not give them the opportunity to experience something they take great pride in, that they work above and beyond in, and they're prepared to give up their time and stay back till 5pm of an afternoon? How can you say no to that?