

Citation for Jon Abbott – Fellowship of the Victorian Branch of IPSHA 2018

Today it is our pleasure to recognise Jon Abbott for his extensive and active years of service to the Victorian Branch of IPSHA.

Let us start with a little history...Jon's journey as an educational leader began way back in 1979. Lalor East Primary School was the largest in the state with over 1100 students and it was there that he learnt his craft among a mix of dedicated young and experienced teaching colleagues. In the nine years he stayed at this first school, Jon worked collaboratively with many others, learning something from every experience. Jon moved to a number of other government schools for the next seven years before taking a year off to take a break. It wasn't long before he was drawn back to his vocation, after realising his true passion was teaching and working with young people. It was at this time that Jon moved to the independent sector and took on a position at Carey Donvale, where he remained for 17 years, starting as a Year 6 teacher and then Deputy Head. The powers that be at Carey saw great potential in Jon and promoted him to Head of Campus after just a couple of years. After ten years in that role, and with his reputation clearly established, an opportunity arose that took him to Scotch College, where he has been for nearly eight years.

Jon acknowledges several of his Principals who have had an enormous influence on his career, including those from the early days to Phil De Young at Carey and now Tom Batty at Scotch. Their influence has shaped how he goes about his role as a school leader, learning different approaches to leadership from each of them.

Prompted by Dr Helen Telford to join IPSHA when appointed Head at Carey Donvale, Jon was quick to establish himself in our association. After four years as a member, Jon was approached to join the Executive and has been on Executive ever since, taking on various roles over those many years. He has been the VCAA representative on two separate occasions and also the Special Projects officer. His amazing contribution was very evident when Jon was the co-organiser of the very successful Melbourne National Conference in 2010. This was a major highlight of Jon's time in IPSHA. He talks about the small organising committee and working closely with Rod Davies and Chris Lawson in particular as a pleasure and privilege that resulted in a very rewarding and satisfying experience overall.

Jon's dedication and commitment to IPSHA is clearly evident in the positive and enthusiastic manner in which he takes on roles to progress the association. He values, as we all do, the collegiality and support he gets from sharing with others. Being a Head of School can be lonely place at times and he values the network of colleagues one can draw on who understand the issues and challenges one can face with your Principal, the teaching staff and the parents. Jon says the children are the easy part!

Jon is always admired for his wisdom and sound advice. He is such a wealth of knowledge both as an educator and as a leader. Above everything else, Jon has an immense sense of empathy and understanding. With encouraging words for those new to the role of Head of Junior School, he cares deeply for his fellow IPSHA colleagues and believes strongly in professional learning for the IPSHA organisation. Pat Kenny notes that one moment that still resonates with him as to the type of person Jon Abbott is, was when he received a personal phone call from Jon after a devastating accident at St Leonard's College. When Pat's College community was struck with grief and he was in the midst of crisis management, Jon's simple words "Can I do anything to help" really showed his true character.

Jon says that it has been a privilege for him to lead two amazing Junior Schools. He is proud of the opportunities that he has initiated that have seen a greater focus on risk taking, creativity and

leadership. He is also very proud of the strong and respectful relationships that have been developed in the school community between students and with staff. Jon says that teaching is either the best job in the world, or the worst job, depending on whether you truly like working with children or not. He considers it an honour and a joy to work with the youngest people in our society and to help shape them to become respectful, confident and capable adults.

Jon is admired for his wisdom and sound advice. He has a wealth of knowledge both as an educator and as a leader. Jon is an exceptional leader with an immense sense of empathy and understanding and a 'great bloke' who is extremely well respected amongst the IPSHA members. Thank you, Jon, for all you have done for all of us.

It is a privilege to nominate Jon Abbott for a Fellowship with the Victorian Branch of IPSHA for his sustained and outstanding leadership, broad and sustained contribution and commitment to the branch.