

2025 HTAV Award Winners

The Award for Excellent and Sustained Contribution to the Teaching and Learning of History and to the History Teachers' Association of Victoria



Ann Guns

Ann Guns was a longstanding, diligent and effective Board member of HTAV. As a Board member she served on and helped shape the work of the inaugural Finance Committee, and she coordinated pre-service volunteers at HTAV conferences. She presented at HTAV Annual and Middle Years Conferences, sharing her expertise with the broader History teaching community. She has supported teachers and students at all levels, working as a consultant for HTAV, reviewing educational resources, and creating professional learning units for 'out-of-field' History teachers.

Ann coordinated and judged the National History Challenge in Victoria, requiring extensive liaison with students, schools, teachers, competition judges and national colleagues, as well as substantial administration and attention to detail. She designed and hosted wonderful National History Challenge Awards ceremonies, making them special for award recipients and their families. She also coordinated the Australian History Competition, demonstrating her dedication to promoting history education.

Ann made significant contributions to History education at Monash University, teaching History and Humanities education courses from 2011 to 2021. She brought strong global and social justice perspectives, ICT skills, and enthusiasm to her teaching.

Ann's work and voluntary roles have made a lasting impact on primary, secondary, and tertiary History education students, teachers, and the wider HTAV community. Her contributions to the teaching and learning of History and to the History Teachers' Association of Victoria are truly deserving of recognition.

HTAV Award for Excellence in History Teaching by a Graduate (Pre-Service) Teacher



Rosemary Balcomb, University of Melbourne

Rosemary Balcomb's teaching practice is distinguished by her innovative and immersive methods. She achieved exemplary results in history education coursework in the Master of Teaching program at the University of Melbourne, receiving First Class Honours in three history subjects. During her placements, she earned the Norman Curry Prize for Outstanding Teaching Practice. She creatively used the historical modes in Assassin's Creed games to provide students with an engaging audiovisual experience, while critically analysing the content. Her memorable lessons included a recreation of a Roman election, a board game on Hatshepsut's rise to power, and a roleplaying card game simulating the Black Death's consequences. She also ran writing feedback workshops and small group debates to help students develop their arguments. Rosemary's approach emphasizes experiential learning and the importance of historical thinking concepts.

HTAV Award for Excellence in History Teaching by a Secondary Teacher



Daniel Armitage, Galen Catholic College Wangaratta

Daniel employs a methodical, evidence-based pedagogy in teaching history, emphasising explicit skill instruction. His classrooms feature visual source analysis, graphic organisers, timelines, and games. As an IT whizz, Daniel integrates technology into his teaching, including student-developed websites, virtual museums and analysis of AI-generated responses. His passion for history is evident, and his students enjoy his classes which has led to strong enrolment numbers. To quote from his nomination, 'History is fun in Daniel's classrooms, students laugh and engage with the topics, making links to their world on a regular basis.' Daniel has created and implemented four VCE history courses at Galen Catholic College, leading to strong student interest and excellent VCE results. He supports colleagues through professional learning and mentoring.



Alice Backhouse, MacKillop College Werribee

Alice's passion for history shines through her vivid storytelling and real-world connections. Her students experience Medieval History through role-playing activities. Her enthusiasm fosters a classroom environment where students critically analyze sources and form their own interpretations. Alice mentors early-career educators, shares effective teaching strategies, and leads professional development in assessment writing and role-play. As a department leader, she promotes professional development and research. Alice is dedicated to her own professional learning, attending workshops and conferences to stay updated with the latest historical perspectives. She shares this knowledge with colleagues, fostering a collaborative and informed teaching environment.



Jordan Clark, Mount Ridley P-12 College

Jordan Clark is dedicated to continuous improvement in his teaching, inspiring students through his own learning journey. He engages in peer-learning with his department, enhancing his and his colleagues' teaching practices. Jordan created the PARASITE tool (People-Appearances-Relationships-Actions-Symbols-Items-Time-Environment) to help students analyse visual historical sources effectively. Jordan's nominators say that using this tool has created 'an invisible tether that connects students of different year levels and staff teaching different ages'. This innovative tool has significantly improved student engagement and understanding from Years 7 to 12. Jordan's supportive nature and commitment to promoting history have united the college's history teachers and students. His impactful contributions, particularly with PARASITE, have transformed the history program at Mount Ridley.



Meaghan Ryan, St Bede's College

Meaghan has been an engaging and passionate history teacher for 10 years, teaching various year levels and VCE Modern History. She creates innovative classroom activities to promote student engagement and a love of history. Meaghan introduced assessment tasks in which Year 7 and 8 students created models which were displayed in shared spaces and promoted in the school newsletter. She organized European History tours, and designed curriculum for Years 7–12 including two new electives. She supports colleagues by sharing resources and presenting professional learning sessions. Meaghan promotes history beyond the classroom through History competitions and excursions to the NGV Pharaohs exhibit, Medieval Day, Melbourne Holocaust Museum, Hamilton the Musical, The Shrine of Remembrance, the local RSL and the MCG Museum. Meaghan is a textbook author with Oxford University Press, and she regularly attends and presents at conferences, contributing to the broader educational community. Meaghan's dedication and innovative teaching practices make her a deserving candidate for this award.



Tom Stammers, Tintern Grammar

Since joining Tintern Grammar in 2019, Tom has revitalized the teaching of History with his passion and innovative methods. He revamped research skills instruction and created engaging activities, such as respectfully recreating Aboriginal songlines and using sensory experiences like food and music to enhance student learning. Tom redesigned the Year 7 History curriculum, emphasizing Aboriginal history and created new content for the Chinese and Russian revolutions including simulated voting for parties in the Russian Constituent Assembly, only to slowly change the conditions of the process as the revolution continued. His feedback-focused pedagogy and creative assessments have increased student engagement, and he has led a whole-school approach to teaching research skills which has helped students become more ethical and thoughtful researchers. Tom's enthusiasm has led to higher enrolment in VCE History classes. He has also presented at HTAV conferences and run workshops for his school colleagues, fostering the History teaching community.



Kirk Thomson, St Bede's College

Kirk is an enthusiastic and supportive history teacher, engaging students from Year 8 to 12. He organized a European History Tour in 2024 that will run again this year. As Humanities Learning Area Leader for a new campus, Kirk aligned course outlines and assessments across two campuses within twelve months. He organises History excursions including a Year 7 Indigenous Immersion excursion, and three Year 8 Medieval Days to accommodate the school's 330 Year 8 students. He mentors teachers, conducts classroom observations, and inspires a love for history with creative methods. Staff are aware that Kirk is the History: Revolutions teacher, and he has been spotted walking into class wearing Marie Antoinette hair or a Russian hat. Kirk engages in professional learning, presents at conferences, and contributes to the Oxford Textbook series. He shares innovative teaching techniques with his school colleagues through 'Speedy Professional Learning' sessions. His nominators say that his dedication to teaching and his love of History are infectious.



Jai Trebilcock, Box Hill Senior Secondary College

Jai's passion for history inspires students at Box Hill Senior Secondary College, where he is the only History teacher. He tirelessly shares his knowledge, arriving early and staying late to assist students and create engaging resources. Jai's innovative teaching methods, including fun activities and special stickers, make history accessible and enjoyable. His beautiful booklets for History units and use of Google Classrooms enhance learning. Jai has promoted History successfully and increased the number of history classes, and builds strong relationships with students. Dedicated to continuous improvement, he engages in professional development and supports colleagues. Jai's nominators say he 'is able to take a student who has a negative view of history, and soon change it to seeing the fun side of studying and learning from the past'.