

Brief description of the achievements and passion of nominee – Jan Strauch:

In summary, Jan Strauch is a most passionate, driven, inspiring, humble, compassionate and caring woman who lives each day caring for and reaching out to others in all spheres of her life. On a personal, professional and community level Jan continuously cares for others and strives to address issues of inequality or injustice. She not only offers an incredible amount of her time and energy to others in practical ways, she also inspires and motivates others around her in relation to the issues and causes that move her.

For many years Jan Strauch has been a long term and instrumental advocate for gender equality through her position as a teacher. As a teacher at Christian College Geelong, Jan has kept International Women's Day (IWD) on the agenda by organising an annual IWD breakfast for the school community. Each year, Jan invites guest speakers who help promote non-traditional female careers for our students. Jan also prepares and shares valuable information with all Senior Campus staff and students relating to the history and continued relevance of International Women's Day. As a VCE Biology teacher, Jan continuously encourages young women to pursue careers in the sciences. Jan is a strong role model for female students and colleagues alike, as demonstrated in her own work, her 'can do' attitude towards all she does, as well as through her compassion for others.

Jan has spent many years drawing attention to the inequalities and discrimination experienced by Indigenous people in Australia. She has spent many years educating staff and students about the historical struggles of Indigenous people and the many injustices they continue to experience. Jan passionately shares her stance on land rights and the respect she has for our Indigenous people. She has led many school trips to Central Australia (approximately 11) and the community of Alcoota where she has developed very strong relationships within that community, the women in particular. Jan has been embraced by this community and used these relationships to help many students in relation to the history and current culture of our Indigenous people. Jan has organised and facilitated a visit by the teachers from Alcoota to Christian College to help develop this relationship and further develop the educational opportunities for students in both Alcoota and Christian College Geelong.

On a personal level, Jan not only supports her own adult daughter through the life challenges of living with a disability, but has continued to be a source of inspiration and support to other parents who have faced the same battle.

Jan is always the first person to organise care packages, meal rosters or practical assistance for those in need, whether it be other staff members, school families or others she knows of in the community needing assistance.

In addition to her present achievements and passions, Jan has had a long-term association with the Anglesea Surf Life Saving Club. Jan has some wonderful stories of being one of only a few female competitors in surf and surf life-saving competitions in her late teens and early twenties (1970s). As a woman who is passionate about giving people with special needs every opportunity to safely enjoy the beach and surf, Jan has been a long-time supporter of the Nippers Starfish program at Anglesea Surf Life Saving Club. Her special needs daughter Jenny is involved in this program.

Jan is a remarkable woman who we are all proud to work alongside at Christian College.