

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Talk Money announces the winners of the 2025 financial literacy awards for teachers**

18 March 2025

Talk Money with Ecstra Foundation has announced the 2025 Financial Literacy in Action Awards winners. Across the four categories, the winners are:

- Rachele Smith of Glen Katherine Primary School in Victoria (Kindergarten to Year 6);
- Corinne Salmon of Loreto College, Coorparoo in Queensland (years 7/8);
- Bianca Drum of Marryatville High School in South Australia (years 9/10); and
- Sam Kershler of Giant Steps Melbourne, Victoria (years 11/12).

This is the second year of the Talk Money Financial Literacy in Action Awards, which recognise the efforts of school teachers across Australia to improve financial literacy through innovative education programs.

The winners demonstrated new classroom approaches designed to help students strengthen their financial literacy skills, with each winning \$2,500 for their school.

Dr Tracey West, financial education manager at Ecstra Foundation, said the winners had clearly shown their commitment to improving financial literacy among their students.

"Understanding finances – including budgeting, saving, investing, superannuation and tax – is an essential life skill. Young Australians must be given the knowledge and confidence to take charge of their financial situation.

"It is wonderful to see the initiatives introduced by many schools to help their students better understand money management concepts. We have seen a range of innovative and exciting learning activities developed, and I congratulate all the winners for being selected."

At Glen Katherine Primary, learning specialist **Rachele Smith** introduced a hands-on learning experience for years 5 and 6 students, which saw them develop a business idea in small groups, selecting a product or service to sell. They had to calculate profits, estimate expenses, and manage the production process. The school then held a market day where students set up stalls and worked out their profit at the end of the day. The program allowed them to understand concepts such as income, expenses and profit, supply and demand, and develop entrepreneurial skills.

**Corinne Salmon**, curriculum leader – enterprise and technology at Loreto College Coorparoo, used project-based learning to get year 8 students to develop a digital or physical resource to educate their peers about consumer rights. The learning activities included a guest speaker from the Office of Fair Trading who talked to students about responsible purchasing and consumer rights and responsibilities in the marketplace, and their creations were entered into the Buy Smart Competition.

At Marryatville High School, mathematics and science teacher **Bianca Drum** teaches a financial literacy module, Making Bank, to year 10 students, which looks at areas such as budgeting, investing and wealth building, debt management, risk awareness and data interpretation.

It seeks to build confidence in discussing and applying financial concepts through authentic tasks, like, for example, mapping out income, taxes, living expenses and discretionary spending over different life stages.

Giant Steps Melbourne is a specialist school for children with autism. Its Navigate and Shop financial literacy program was introduced by assistant principal **Sam Kershler**, and helps students develop their counting and financial literacy skills, understand the shopping process, and begin to understand budgeting. The lessons start with toy money to build familiarity, and students also complete a visual budgeting exercise. They watch a video of an excursion to Woolworths to develop their understanding of what the experience would be like. Then, during the excursion, they select an item from a shopping list, pay for their purchase and return to school to make a pizza from the ingredients bought.

Dr West said the winning teachers displayed a variety of different ways that financial literacy can be incorporated into classrooms, tailored to the needs of their students.

"These teachers understand the importance of creating engaging and interesting lessons for students, and the creativity and innovation that has gone into the programs is truly inspiring. These students are developing the skills and knowledge that will stand them in good stead throughout their lives, as they enter the workforce, buy homes, raise their own families, and eventually plan for retirement," she said.

The awards announcement is part of Global Money Week, which runs from 17 to 23 March 2025. Global Money Week is an annual global campaign raising awareness of the importance of financial literacy to ensure young people are financially aware and are allowed to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours necessary to make sound financial decisions and ultimately achieve financial well-being and resilience.

Caroline Stewart, CEO of Ecstra Foundation, says increasing financial education content across the school curriculum is essential to combat the falling rates of financial literacy in Australia.

"Ecstra introduced the Talk Money program to help fill the current gap in schools and provide foundational, interactive lessons in the classroom. However, we continue to call on the government to commit to a nationally coordinated financial education action plan.

"Ongoing cost-of-living pressures makes it even more critical that we equip young people with the practical money skills they need to navigate their way through their school years and beyond. There is a role for all sectors in supporting these efforts, including government, educators, households, researchers and the financial services sector," she says.

References for Global Money week:

<https://globalmoneyweek.org/>

More information, including bookings, is available at: <https://talkmoney.org.au/>



Ecstra Foundation

About Ecstra Foundation:

Ecstra Foundation is an independent charitable foundation committed to building the financial wellbeing of Australians within a fair financial system. Ecstra works to ensure that more Australians are confident making money decisions today and planning for the future.

Talk Money with Ecstra Foundation is a free national financial education program teaching young Australians money lessons for life. The program is provided at no cost to schools and is funded by Ecstra as part of their commitment to help ensure greater access to financial education for all at key life stages. The in-classroom workshops teach foundational money lessons and are interactive to encourage students to ask questions. The program is offered free to all schools for students in years 5 to 10 and helps students learn about money lessons for life and make informed financial decisions. Since launching in 2022, Talk Money has visited all States and Territories in Australia - delivering over 10,000 workshops to more than 390,000 students at over 1,370 schools and continues to expand to schools nationally.\*

\*As at 31 January 2025

Schools can learn more or register for Talk Money workshops across Australia at [www.talkmoney.org.au](http://www.talkmoney.org.au)

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