

Dear Colleagues,

School Administrative and Support Staff Recognition Week (2-6 November)

At Wilson Park school for special purposes in Lismore there's a young fellow in year 12 doing a plumbing pre-apprenticeship.

A big part of this young man's success at school, and in life, is the guidance, friendship and support he receives from Richard Hopkins, the school's general assistant.

This isn't part of Mr Hopkins' job description. He does it because he cares about the children in the school and wants to play a constructive part in their lives.

Recently I was at a public meeting in the south west of Sydney, where members of the community were telling politicians and senior public servants what they liked about government services and what needed improving.

Everyone in my group had positive things to say about public schools.

One woman, a mother of five, said she loved her local school. Why, I asked her? "Because the staff in the front office know my name. They know my children, even the youngest two who haven't started school yet," she said.

Another woman at the table had a little boy with autism. Again, she said she loved her school, this time because of the relationship she had with her son's learning support officer.

These are just a few examples of leadership in public schools by school administrative and support staff - acts of kindness and good judgement that help families and provide life-long examples for children of how to behave to one another with respect and decency.

This week is a special chance to recognise the vital contribution that school administrative and support staff make to schools, not just to their smooth running and presentation, but to the mighty job of preparing children to make their way in world and influence it for good.

With my best regards on behalf of all my executive colleagues,

Michael Coutts-Trotter
DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING MANAGING DIRECTOR OF TAFE NSW
3 November 2009