



MEDIA RELEASE

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PORT PHILLIP SPECIALIST SCHOOL HEAD WINS EQUITY TRUSTEES' NOT FOR PROFIT CEO OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Principal of the Port Phillip Specialist School is the winner of the 2005 Equity Trustees' CEO Award for most outstanding head of a Not For Profit organisation.

Bella Irlicht is Principal of the Port Phillip Specialist School (PPSS) which caters for children aged 2-18 with multiple and severe disabilities.

The Equity Trustees' Not For Profit CEO Awards recognise outstanding achievements of chief executives working in the Not For Profit and charitable sector.

There were close to 90 nominations for the awards this year from across Australia. The awards recognise excellence in delivering services, enhancing the organisation's image and building strong and successful partnerships.

Bella Irlicht has been principal of Port Phillip Specialist School since 1988 and is a pioneer in her field; recognised by an Order of Australia in 2003 for her contribution to specialist education. She has developed PPSS as the first school in Australia to use a 'fully serviced school' approach that is combined with an arts-based curriculum to service students' complex educational and health needs.

Children with special needs require a curriculum and school environment that is different from that which is offered in mainstream schools. Bella has improved the educational opportunities and environment for PPSS students and has set the benchmark for other specialist schools in Australia.

Major achievements of the Port Phillip Special School under Bella's leadership include:

- Taking a school of 20 students from a three-room rundown house in 1988 into a state-of-the art, world recognised, multi-million dollar facility with programs that are exemplars of best practice.

.../2

- Developing a \$3 million visual and performing arts centre that includes associated facilities for use by the clients of the school and the local community.
- Attracting support and funding from major philanthropic organisations, including the Pratt Foundation.

Through Bella's tireless networking, the school has been transformed from an under-resourced 'needy' school into a thriving school community with innovative resources, teaching/education programs and facilities.

She has challenged the parameters of traditional education. The Port Phillip Specialist School is so well known that it receives national and international enquiries for enrolments. It has an incorporated Foundation to support its activities and has developed a 'partnership bank' of high profile personalities, corporate partners and philanthropic foundations who commit enormous energy and resources to the school and its services.

"CEOs of Not For Profit and charitable organisations receive precious little reward or recognition for their efforts, yet their jobs can be difficult, demanding and challenging," said Equity Trustees Chief Executive Officer, Peter Williams.

"They routinely face funding shortfalls and difficulties maintaining services, but nevertheless they roll up their sleeves and get on with the job as they take their organisation forward and leave it stronger. Equity Trustees is proud to be honouring Not For Profit CEOs and recognising their commitment, passion, drive and sacrifice."

The winners of the Equity Trustees' 2005 Not For Profit CEO Awards, announced at a gala dinner on Tuesday 11 October as part of the 2nd International Philanthropy Conference, are:

Equity Trustees' Not For Profit CEO of the Year: Bella Irlicht, Principal of the Port Phillip Specialist School

Equity Trustees' Significant Innovation Award: Alexandra Gartmann, CEO, Birchip Cropping Group Inc

Equity Trustees' First Year Achiever Award: Dr Andrew Young, CEO, CanTeen Australia

Equity Trustees' Long Term Achiever Award: Rev. Dr Gordon Moyes, Superintendent, Wesley Mission, Sydney

Equity Trustees' Judges' Award Joint Winners: Michael Traill, CEO Social Ventures Australia and Maud Clark, CEO and Artistic Director, Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company Inc

.../3

The sponsors of the Equity Trustees' 2005 NFP CEO Awards are: Deloitte and Citigroup (gold sponsors), AON Australia and Foster's Group (silver sponsors), Bell Potter Securities, Grange Securities, Melbourne & Olympic Parks (bronze sponsors) and Equity Trustees.

The Awards recognise the true worth of those who lead not for profit and charitable organisations.

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Photo Gallery

Digital photos of the winners at the Awards presentation are available for downloading from Equity Trustees' website at: www.eqt.com.au/ceoawards/gallery

***Equity Trustees' CEO Awards – Recognising the true worth
of those who lead not for profit organisations***