

St Margaret's teacher receives Rising Star award

Jane Martens, Visual Arts teacher at St Margaret's, has been announced as the winner of *The Educator's* prestigious Risk Star award.

The award recognises emerging leaders in education who are making waves in the early stages of their career and show their achievements, innovations and industry contributions on a national platform.

Jane is putting the A in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) by emphasising the Arts – the “A” in STEAM education, providing St Margaret's Visual Art students with opportunities to engage with cutting edge technologies to create virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) artworks.

Jane says the integration of the Arts within the STEM disciplines encourages creative approaches to the solution of complex problems.

“In our ever-changing world, the ability to think both creatively and critically is the foundation for innovation and so, to encourage our students to thrive in a world full of advancements yet to be conceived, we need to equip our students to be innovators.”

Jane is also preparing her students for jobs of the future and possible vocations students might not yet have imagined.

“There are many cross-curricular applications using these technologies and there is a real future in the workplace for students who have these skills.

“A career path using these technologies will be a lot more common in the future with applications in a range of areas from design, science, ICT and more,” Jane said.

This is the second award for Jane whose adoption of new technologies in the curriculum also formed part of St Margaret's winning entry into *The Educator's* Innovation Awards last year.

So, how are AR and VR technologies used in the classroom?

They each adopt the same concept, which is bringing another dimension of reality into the art making process for students. These technologies can fuse together elements from film and television, the visual arts and sound and music.

In AR, students activate a base image (their own two-dimensional artwork) using AR software that allows them to add an animated element or a moving image element to a 2D image, often accompanied by sound. Viewers can scan the camera laptop or iPad over this two-dimensional artwork to activate and view moving graphics and animations, through their screen.

VR is a completely immersive world. When girls put on their headsets, they experience a different dimension of reality. They combine drawing, painting and sculptural skills to create immersive, three-dimensional artworks within virtual spaces. They design and construct environments and alternate worlds that viewers can then walk through and physically experience using VR headsets.

This incredible tool enhances the girls' spatial awareness, 3D modelling and mapping skills, and ability to formulate and solve creative problems.

Ms Martens attests that the imagination that flows from the students using this technology is next-level in terms of creativity, there are really no limitations as to what can be created.

Jane Martens also runs a Digital Art Club with students from Years 7 to 12 who have already begun working on special effects for the school's upcoming musical.

St Margaret's Principal Ros Curtis congratulated Jane on her innovation in the classroom.

“Jane is a committed and passionate educator who has embraced opportunities to provide innovative learning experiences through the integration of digital technologies and visual art, not only inspiring and engaging students but preparing them for their future workforce,” Ms Curtis said.

