



For Immediate Release

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Santa Maria College – the science behind \$100k Victorian Schools First State Award Recipient Announced

Melbourne's Santa Maria College has taken a scientific approach to the inaugural Schools First state awards, and received \$100,000 thanks to its partnership with The University of Melbourne ARC Centre for Coherent X-Ray Science

Announced last night at a Schools First State Awards ceremony, the school's success is attributed to its 'Tall Poppies' partnership; an outstanding endeavour designed to make science academia more appealing and approachable for female students.

Speaking from the awards ceremony, Schools First Head Jodi Cryan praised Santa Maria College for its outstanding achievement.

"At the very heart of Schools First is the belief that we can improve student outcomes through school – community partnerships. Santa Maria's collaboration with The University of Melbourne ARC Centre for Coherent X-Ray Science shows an ability to affect positive change for students. This is achieved by not only giving students hands-on experience to science, but access to premium scientific laboratories and exposure to inspirational peers and mentors. What a wonderful opportunity to take learning away from the classroom only, and into such stimulating, enriching surrounds," said Cryan.

"This is an exemplary partnership and demonstrates the impact that can be achieved when schools interact, engage and partner with their communities," said Cryan.

Brought to life by NAB in partnership with The Foundation for Young Australians and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), Schools First is a three-year commitment by these organisations to recognise and promote excellence in school community partnerships.

Schools First is based on evidence that indicates strong school - community partnerships can make a significant difference to outcomes for young people, including increased skills and greater engagement with learning.

Santa Maria College, along with 15 other schools in Victoria, received a \$50,000 Schools First local impact award earlier this month. Santa Maria's success at last night's awards ceremony has seen this figure grow to \$100,000. The College is now in the running to win the Schools First national award, which will be awarded at least an additional \$400,000.

Schools interested in learning more about Schools First and how they can get involved next year are encouraged to visit www.schoolsfirst.edu.au and register as a user. All of this year's winners are showcased on the website.

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**To speak to a representative from Santa Maria College or Schools First, please contact:
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