Honour for a class act

WELL-LOVED Darwin High School teacher Judy Boland won’t change a thing after receiving a Queen’s Birthday Honour award.

“It will just spur me to keep on going,” she said.

The long-term history teacher was awarded the Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to secondary education in the Northern Territory, as a supporter of historical and heritage organisations, and to the community.

Learning of her award brought mixed feelings for Ms Boland.

“I feel honoured, but I also feel very humbled,” she said.

“Working with students has helped me probably more than I’ve helped them, I suppose.”

She has taught all over the Territory for the past 40 years, including Batchelor, Katherine and Milingimbi.

She started her career at Ballarat Grammar School in Victoria, teaching European languages, before coming up to Darwin and falling in love with the place.

“I came up here for a bit of a look around, and I’m still looking,” she said. “I love the enthusiasm, the positive atmosphere, the vibrancy and the friendliness of people.

“There’s just so much opportunity up here that you wouldn’t find in Victoria.”

Her passion for her students is evident, and so is the affection her former and present students have for her.

She’s a big advocate for hands-on learning, and ensuring her students succeed.

“It’s teaching them a slightly different format than books,” she said.

“They get to meet people; they learn the protocols of meeting important people; they get the self-confidence of acting on their own behalf.

“If our kids learn to operate in the right channels, they will be successful.

“Basically, it’s helping launch young people into the adult world and if they go in well prepared, hopefully they will leave the world a better place than what it was when they came into it.”

Ms Boland is renowned for her Mini Moke, which she bought when she first moved her Mini Moke, which she bought when she first moved to Darwin in 1984.

“It’s become a bit of an institution,” she said. “Students will pull up beside me and wave, ‘Hi Miss’. "I know that I’m respected, they’re not afraid to speak to me in the supermarket, and that’s really positive when you get those sort of greetings.”

Ms Boland was one of 14 Territorians honoured. Chief Minister Adam Giles congratulated all the 2015 recipients.

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