



INSPIRATION: Marlene Steiner (middle) is surrounded by her Bright Kindergarten students (from left) Ella Parmesan, Lily O'Brien, Charlotte Channon, Taylor Atherstone, Nikolia Nannipieri, Patrick Feritto, Rihan Karkaria and Claire Abbott (front) after the popular teacher received a National Excellence in Teaching Award. PHOTO: Alex Baird

Popular teacher is recognised

It was a day to remember at the Bright Kindergarten as the community said farewell to the facility and a popular teacher was presented with a national award for her contribution to early learning.

As the Elm Court building closed its doors on December 20 last year to shift into the newly created Alpine View Children's Centre, teacher Marlene Steiner received a prestigious industry award in front of her peers and the local kindergarten community.

Mrs Steiner was one of only 60 recipients Australia-wide who was given a NEiTA (National Excellence In Teaching Award), which is the only national community-centred teaching awards program that gives secondary students, parents, early childhood education, and school communities the

opportunity to formally thank their hard-working, inspirational teachers, principals and directors.

An emotional Mrs Steiner, who has worked at the Bright Kindergarten for 27 of her 33 years as an early educator, said the acknowledgment meant even more to her because of the nomination from the Family and Friends group.

"I think being recognised by the community is really important ... because the community are the ones that have supported me whenever I've wanted to do something, I've never had anyone say you can't do that," she said.

Since the announcement of her achievement, Mrs Steiner has been shortlisted alongside 33 other recipients for further recognition, which could lead to one of 12 professional or project grants.

"By the end of February I have to put a more in-depth submission about why I do what I do and how I teach," she said.

At the event held at the Bright Kindergarten leading up to Christmas, Alpine Shire Council councillor, Jan Vonarx, said Mrs Steiner was a deserving recipient of the award after years of service.

"I think she's well respected within the community, not only the kindergarten community, but the community at large," she said.

The pair has worked alongside each other for almost a decade on various different projects, and Cr Vonarx said Mrs Steiner's persistence, in particular with the creation of the new early learning facility on Deacon Avenue, highlighted her contribution to young learning in Bright.