

ASHWOOD

Program that keeps on giving

Julia Rabar

LISTENING to students reflect on what they have achieved through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award program is a reward in itself, says Ashwood School teacher Debra Tucker.

The program leader and secondary school teacher has been short-listed for the Longevity Award, part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Victoria Excellence and Innovation Awards.

Mrs Tucker, who has been helping facilitate the program for 20 years at the school, said all 97 students in Years 7 to 10 were enrolled in one of the six awards streams this year.



Ashwood School teacher Debra Tucker with students Luke Gasic, left, and Cameron Owen. Picture: STUART MILLIGAN

She said the students, who have mild intellectual disabilities, flourished.

"It is a wonderful program because our students do a lot of learning around indepen-

dence and relationships," Mrs Tucker said.

"This is a wonderful platform for them to take the skills they learn at the school and practise them."

From volunteering to camping and even learning new skills, Mrs Tucker said the awards program provided students with an engaging outlet.

"Teenagers with mild intellectual disabilities and their families often find it very difficult to find age-appropriate activities that they are able to join in with," Mrs Tucker said.

"This gives them the skills and programs relevant to their needs at the time."

Ashwood School has also been nominated as a finalist for the Innovation Award.

Both winners will be announced at the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award Gala on December 6.

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