

Honours win for unis

Michelle Simmons will have a hugely busy schedule as the 2018 Australian of the Year,

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In today's **Higher Ed Daily Brief**: universities get a degree of recognition, with honours.

Following orders

There is joy and rapture in the higher education and research community about the high level of recognition given to some of Australia's best teachers and researchers in this year's **Australia Day honours list**.

Not only was the increasingly well-known UNSW quantum computing researcher, **Michelle Simmons**, named Australian of the Year, but eminent ANU biophysicist **Graham Farquhar** was awarded Senior Australian of the Year.

In all, 12 Companions of the Order of Australia had a university affiliation. As did 24 Officers of the Order of Australia and 34 Members of the Order of Australia.

It is all helpful to the university lobby in their efforts to raise public concern about higher education funding cuts.

How does she do it?

Does **Michelle Simmons**, who already has a super-crowded calendar as director of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Quantum Computation and Communication Technology based at UNSW. know what she's in for as the 2018 Australian of the Year? The position is almost a full-time job in itself with a heavy schedule of speeches and appearances, with everyone wanting a piece of her time.

We wish her the best in the role and note, in passing, that she's come a long way from her tough, inner London comprehensive school, **Eltham Green**, which was more noted for its schoolyard fights than its academic achievement. The school also boasts another well-known alumnus, Culture Club's **Boy George**.

Matters mathematical

The **Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute** (AMSI) can scarcely contain its glee about the Australia Day awards. Its efforts to spread its message about to need to raise maths standards in schools are given a huge boost by Sydney maths teacher **Eddie Woo** being given the 2018 Australian Local Hero Award. The very articulate Woo is increasingly well-known for the easy-to-understand maths lessons he records at **Cherrybrook Technology High School** and posts on his **Wootube** channel, which has over 160,000 followers.

“An outstanding educator and mathematics advocate, Eddie has made an indelible impact on Australian mathematics and is richly deserving of this recognition and the platform it provides to further their work,” said AMSI director **Geoff Prince**.