**Transcript – World Teachers’ Day 2025 podcast with Stacey Sanders**

**Announcer:** This is a Queensland Department of Education podcast.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** World Teachers’ Day, is a special day on the Education calendar. It’s a day we celebrate and acknowledge the hard work of our teachers.

As part of our World Teachers’ Day celebrations for 2025, we asked teachers throughout the state to share their teaching story.

I’m Virginia Bowdidge and today I’m talking to Stacey Sanders. Stacey is an upper primary teacher at St Patrick’s College, Winton.

Hi Stacey, lovely to talk to you today.

**Stacey Sanders:**  You too. It’s a pleasure.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Can you tell me what it is about teaching that appealed to you?

**Stacey Sanders:** It’s funny because teaching it’s not like a story that’s inspirational, I guess mine. I actually started university as a nurse. After school I applied for the Defence Force, the Police Force and university at the same time. I just told myself I’ll just go with whoever chooses me first, and that’s how I got into university to start studying nursing. And from there, I wasn’t really enjoying that and that’s when I reached out to one of my friends from high school who was teaching at the time. I was asking her about the job and getting a little bit of insight that way and that’s how I bridged across to a Bachelor of Education. So it’s probably not the start that everyone might be used to hearing but that’s my unique way of applying for the job.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Okay, and how long have you been teaching?

**Stacey Sanders: I**’ve been teaching now for four years. I just completed my fourth year and I’m now entering my fifth.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** What was your first teaching job?

**Stacey Sanders:** Myfirst teaching job was a primary school teacher, and I was teaching Years 3 to 6. I’d started my first job in 2021, in midway through the year, and I was still at university at the time, so I was taken on to teach 4 grades and that’s while I was on, Permission to Teach. Big load.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Yeah. I was about to ask how that was?

**Stacey Sanders:** Yeah, it was difficult but I got through it.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Where was that at?

**Stacey Sanders:** That was, I’m currently still teaching at the first place that I got my first job and that’s at St Patrick’s School, in Winton, Queensland. The school that I’m at currently is a school that I once went to when I was a student. My family and I lived out here during the period from 2006 onwards and I went to both schools, both Winton State School and Winton St Patrick’s school and that’s where I’m currently working, which is pretty special.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Have you seen very many changes?

**Stacey Sanders:** Definitely seen changes, there’s been obviously changing families that have come through, however there’s still some families that were around when I was a kid. For example, I once taught a boy whose mum taught me when I was out here, so that’s pretty special. I’ve had a couple of full circle moments where I’ve got to teach some of the people’s children who I actually grew up with teaching me or being around my childhood, so that’s been a pretty special part of the job.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Yeah that would be very special, very rewarding.

So, what is it about teaching that makes it rewarding?

**Stacey Sanders:** I think teaching is so rewarding because you can provide people with such engaging learning experience, especially living in the west. I’ve always lived in a small town and obviously, I’m now teaching in the west, and there’s sometimes barriers to what kids can experience in these small towns. So, I definitely try my very best working alongside my awesome staff here to bring those experiences to them, making it go beyond the classroom so they get to experience life outside of a small town. I guess it’s very rewarding as well because you get to build really strong relationships with the community out here, the staff and the parents and the families become a big part of your life, so it’s a very genuine, rewarding experience.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Can you see yourself moving to a city for teaching?

**Stacey Sanders:** Moving to a city to teach doesn’t really interest me, to be honest. I remember talking to my uncle who is also a teacher, and he said, *‘I’m as rare as a chook’s tooth’*, because I would like to stay and provide my services in western schools. So no, I can’t see myself moving to a city school and teaching in a large area, I would love to always to be in a small-town teaching western kids.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** What impact has rural teaching had on your career?

**Stacey Sanders:** Teaching rural has definitely helped fast track my career, in the best way. So I don’t feel like I’ve been rushed throughout my development as a teacher. I feel like I’ve had a chance to take on a lot more roles that might not be offered to people who are in, or are starting a career in a larger urban area. I know I’d be able to take on leadership roles a little bit earlier in my career; that’s helped me build relationships with staff, with student, families, being involved in the broader community. So it’s allowed me to make a real difference in the community and I’ve been able to grow both professionally and personally. So, the opportunities in the west, they’re enormous. You’ve just got to be open minded and willing to give it a really good crack.

**Virginia Bowdidge: How do your students inspire or motivate you?**

**Stacey Sanders:** My students, they teach me a lot, just as I hope I teach them so. They’re always pushing me, as an educator to stay curious, especially in a changing world that they’re currently I, with advancements in technology. So there’s definitely that push from them for me as their teacher to stay curious in my job, always seeking new ways to support them. I’m very, very driven to give them access to the same opportunities that kids in larger cities have access to and that motivates a lot behind everything that I do in the classroom. I try and provide them with as many opportunities through my planning to make it very fulfilling for them as well because if the students aren’t having fun, I’m not having fun and visa-versa, so I feel like we both motivate each other.

**Virginia Bowdidge: What do you think drives your enthusiasm for teaching?**

**Stacey Sanders:** I’m very fortunate in the situation that I have here, at St Pat’s. I have a principal that’s very, very supportive in how we as teachers can deliver the curriculum. So I feel like I am very creative, and when I’m allowed to have that creative license behind delivering the curriculum, that’s where my ideas come from. Teaching three year levels means I’m on constant three-year rotation so you can’t be teaching the same things ever year, you’ve got to be creative and come up with exciting new ways to access the curriculum. So, keeping things fresh and engaging for my students is definitely something that drives my enthusiasm. I want them to always be going home and telling stories about what they’ve learnt. So it’s a fantastic opportunity for me to tap into my creative side as a teacher. And that’s my thinking, if I’m having fun, the kids are definitely having fun. That’s often when the best learning happens. So, that’s definitely my drive for the enthusiasm for the job.

**Virginia Bowdidge: What advice would you give students considering teaching or career changers considering teaching?**

**Stacey Sanders:** My advice to the people who are thinking about entering teaching as a profession, is it is a job that definitely demands passion. You need to be determined and have a genuine love for what you do. It’s not something you can just switch off, like you will take the job home with you mentally. Whether that’s wins, whether that’s something funny that happen throughout the day or something that didn’t go as you had planned, it becomes part of you. However, that’s what makes it part of you. However, that’s what makes it so rewarding, because you feel that attachment to the job. I think that’s also something that can drive your enthusiasm. But if you are looking for a path that is very fulfilling, it’s constantly evolving, full of heart, then teaching is the right fit for you.

It’sdefinitely a challenging job, I’m not going to sugar coat that. It’s definitely has its highs and has its lows; however, I think if you ride those highs and really enjoy it, you’ll get a lot from the job.

**Virginia Bowdidge: I’ve got one more question. Could you tell us something about teaching in Winton that you wouldn’t experience anywhere else?**

**Stacey Sanders:** Well I think because we are out in Winton in Western Queensland, we are known for the dinosaurs out here of course, I think that’s a pretty good opportunity to tie into your lessons. For example, I remember one time I had my kids writing an informative report and they were journalists for the day and it actually made the news. And the kids got to excavate dinosaur bones. They got to connect to their local area and what it’s known for, and understand that on a deeper level while also undertaking this extraordinary opportunity that most kids wouldn’t get to experience. I think that’s what makes it special out here, is the support you have to really have those classroom opportunities really developed and for the kids to make so much learning from it.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** That sounds like a fantastic lesson.

**Stacey Sanders:** Yeah, it was lots of fun. Kids were very curious, and we made the news.

**Virginia Bowdidge: Do you have any other advice, for would be teachers?**

**Stacey Sanders:** I think if you are really looking at becoming a teacher, I think your best start would be in a rural or remote area. The opportunities are endless. If you are pursuing leadership, there’s defiantly areas for that. You can fast track your career quicker, you can create bonds with your community. It’s just a really good start out in the west. So if I can give any tips to that, it would be, if you’re wanting to be a teacher I would recommend starting in a rural or remote location.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Thanks for your time Stacey, it was great talking to youand listening to your passion about teaching out west.

**Stacey Sanders:** No, thank you for your time and anything I can share to inspire others around me, I will do.

**Announcer**: You have been listening to a Queensland Department of Education podcast.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** The Department of Education acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands from across Queensland. We pay our respects to the Elders, past and present, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture, and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.