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## take note

**T**HE Teach for Australia program recruits high-performing university graduates and gets them into teaching positions in disadvantaged schools. Philippa Williams (below) praises the program and tells **Jeanette Hill** that, along with two other recruits, she is thoroughly enjoying her first term at Stawell Secondary College

### What did you do before joining the Teach for Australia program?

I studied science/law at Melbourne University. Five days after finishing I started the six weeks of training.

### Had you considered teaching before you heard of Teach for Australia?

Yes, in the later years of school teaching started to interest me. But I had thought it would be something good to get into later in life. I did a gap year when I coached rowing and netball. I have always enjoyed being able to convey my ideas to someone and feel good when they understand because of the way I explained it.

### How did you find out about the program and what attracted you?

It was at a Melbourne Uni careers expo at the start of last year. I was looking at government graduate positions and I stumbled on the Teach for Australia booth. They said to me, "You can't do this if you have a teaching degree". It appealed because you go in at the coalface of teaching and it also fitted my broader goal: that it shouldn't matter where you come from, you are entitled to an education.



### Do you think the program has prepared you well for a teaching post?

We had six weeks of intensive training and it is continuing over the next two years. There are further intensive sessions in the school holidays and we have assessment tasks based on what we do in the classroom. I have a mentor who has been fantastic and a very supportive staff. I couldn't ask for a better place to have come to.

### What is your response to criticism that it's a hothouse program?

I understand the criticism because it's new and very different for Australia to be doing this, though there is a parallel from when the tech schools did similar training with trade teachers. Every time you're going to change the status quo there will be criticism but in terms of the support we are getting we've never had any reason to doubt that we could do it. We have a lot of back up from a lot of people.

### How have you found your first weeks in the classroom?

It's what I hoped it would be and more! After the build-up over six weeks of what we could expect it was great to get into the classroom and put it into practice. It has been fantastic.

### What lies ahead?

We are contracted to stay in our school for two years, then we can go back to study for six months to complete a masters degree if we choose.

[www.teachforaustralia.org/](http://www.teachforaustralia.org/)