

# Council news

## Sustainability Review

In February 2019, LDA began to consider a review of its operations in light of the demands on members of Council and the need to ensure a sustainable future for the organisation. Council selected consulting firm Explicate to undertake the review, which involved an analysis of current and historical LDA records, a comprehensive survey of current members of LDA, and face to face or telephone interviews with Council members and past presidents of LDA.

Council formed a sub-committee, the Sustainability Review Committee, to consider the outcomes of the review and chart a path forward. The Committee first formally accepted the report, and began to consider its recommendations. A major recommendation of the review, and one that the Committee and then Council endorsed, was a decision to seek a growth model for LDA that would involve increased turnover through memberships, professional learning and other revenue raising, on the understanding that this undertaking would require additional paid administrative and management support.

In August, Kerrie McMahon, LDA's long-standing administration officer, informed Executive that she would be resigning from her role from 31 October. Mindful of the Sustainability Review's recommendation to increase paid administrative support for LDA's operations, a recruitment panel was convened to identify a suitable person to take on the role in a 0.5 FTE capacity. Julie Hermansen accepted the position, commencing with a handover from Kerrie in late October. Council extends its sincere appreciation to Kerrie for the dedication and efficiency she has demonstrated in supporting LDA, and welcomes Julie Hermansen to the new, expanded role.

The Sustainability Review Committee will continue its work in considering and implementing as appropriate the recommendations of the review. Some areas for consideration include governance processes, Council and committee structures, the possible role of a General Manager, website function

and design, membership expansion and expanded online professional learning. Should constitutional change be required, Council will seek expert advice. The Committee has committed to keeping Council and LDA membership informed of deliberations and decisions throughout 2020 and beyond.

## Professional Development

Meanwhile, throughout the year, Treasurer Pye Twaddell and members of the Professional Development Committee were busy organising and promoting a tour by Dr David Kilpatrick, a US-based psychologist, academic, author and expert in reading difficulties. During this very successful tour, Dr Kilpatrick presented to appreciative audiences in Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Cairns and Sydney. The focus of his seminars was the role of phonological processing and its importance in supporting orthographic mapping to achieve efficient word reading. Promotions of this important tour were assisted by the very active work of Council member Renae Watkins, who has taken responsibility for the recent social media drive to share LDA's message more widely and effectively. Also very successful was the Queensland LDA-SPELD- LSTAQ joint conference, with LDA's contribution and promotion driven by Nicole Todd. The Consultants Committee has also provided professional learning to consultant members and a wider audience throughout the year, ensuring that quality information to support students with learning difficulties is provided to teachers, parents and policy makers.

## Other LDA activities

LDA continues to communicate with its membership and the wider research and educational community through its flagship academic journal, the Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties, and through the Bulletin, the eNews, the website, and the LDA Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts.

The Awards Committee was delighted to invite Mona Tobias Award

recipient Dr Jennifer Buckingham, Bruce Wicking Award recipient Mr Steven Capp, AJLD Eminent Research Award recipient Professor Bill Tunmer, and Rosemary Carter Award recipient Jan Roberts to receive their awards at a ceremony after the 2019 AGM on 26 October. Each of the awardees gave a fascinating presentation which was appreciated by all those in attendance.

Meanwhile, LDA president Dr Lorraine Hammond, Associate Professor at Edith Cowan University in Perth, was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia (General Division) in recognition of significant service to higher education and the community. She has since been invited to serve on an AITSL (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership) taskforce reviewing initial teacher education to ensure that graduate teachers are fully prepared for effective early reading instruction. Throughout the year, LDA has continued to pursue collaboration and co-operation with support organisations including AUSPELD and advocacy groups such as Code Read to improve awareness in the community around learning difficulties.

LDA Council, on behalf of LDA members, remains strongly committed to its core purpose of assisting students with learning difficulties through effective teaching practices based on scientific research. To continue that work, LDA welcomes its new Council for 2019-2020: Dr Lorraine Hammond (President), Dr Nicole Todd and Dr Molly de Lemos (Vice Presidents), Renae Watkins (Treasurer), Ann Ryan (Secretary), and ordinary members Sarah Acome, Lyn Franklin, Kate Gurjian, Juanita Lee, Dr Bartek Rajkowski, Dr Sally Robinson-Kooi, Dianne Steele and Jo Whithear.

*This report on Council News was prepared by Wendy Moore, the outgoing LDA Secretary and Convenor of the Administration Committee for the 2018-2019 Council. We thank Wendy Moore for her contribution to LDA over the past six years, initially as Convenor of the Publications Committee and Editor of the LDA Bulletin from September 2013 to September 2018, and over the last year as Secretary and Convenor of the Administration Committee.*

# Welcome to Michael Roberts

**L**DA welcomes Michael Roberts, LDA's new General Manager..

His appointment follows the review of LDA undertaken last year, which recommended that LDA adopt a growth model that would involve increased turnover through memberships, professional learning and other revenue raising. This model required LDA to seek the services of a General Manager, whose role it would be to guide LDA through this process of change.

Michael comes to LDA with over 23 years of experience as an educational leader. This includes experience as a school principal and as a senior

advisor of a large network of schools across South-East Asia where he led the integration of the Singapore and Australian curriculum across all schools. He was also the Executive Director of the Good to Great Schools program, a program that supported the use of effective teaching through direct instruction, and the Executive Principal of the Arcadia Group of schools which support disengaged youth. In 2017 he was one of only two school principals to serve on the influential *Gonski Review to Achieve Educational Excellence*.

Michael is a strong supporter of evidence-based practice based on the scientific evidence of what works,



particularly in the case of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and we welcome him to LDA.

## In this Bulletin

**T**his issue of the Bulletin focuses particularly on issues relating to phonics, phonemic awareness and the use of the term dyslexia. These are all core issues in the debates about how best to teach reading and to monitor reading progress, and how best to support students with reading difficulties. Jennifer Buckingham and Kevin Wheldall argue the case for a national Phonics Check, Stephen Parker argues the case for synthetic phonics versus analytic, analogy and onset-rime phonics, and Ros Neilson looks at the phonics versus phonemic awareness debate. Moving on to the use of the term dyslexia James Chapman and William Tunmer consider the question as to whether the use of this term leads to effective and equitable practices in supporting students with reading difficulties, Steve Dykstra explains why the term dyslexia is not used to identify a specific disorder in the area of reading in the DSM-5, and Peter Westwood reflects on the changes in the terms used to identify students

with various types of learning needs over the years. This issue of the Bulletin also includes the presentations of recipients of the LDA Mona Tobias Award, the Bruce Wicking Award and the Rosemary Carter Award, with Jennifer Buckingham reflecting on the difficulties of bringing about the changes required to implement effective reading instruction for all children, based on the scientific evidence of what works, Stephen Capp outlining the road he followed in adopting evidence based practices in his school, with a particular emphasis on his recognition that catering for learning difficulty is synonymous with what is simply best practice for all children, and Jan Roberts reflecting on life as an LDA Consultant.

We apologise to our members and readers of the LDA Bulletin for the delay in the publication of this issue, which is in fact a combined issue including both Issue 2 and Issue 3 of Volume 51, and will endeavour to maintain our normal schedule of Bulletins for 2020.

We welcome the submission of articles from LDA members and others with an interest in learning difficulties for possible inclusion in upcoming editions of this Bulletin.

Please submit articles, correspondence about the Bulletin, or letters for publication to the editor. For questions about content, deadlines, length or style, please contact the editor. (Email: [molly.delemos@gmail.com](mailto:molly.delemos@gmail.com))

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Requests to reprint articles from the Bulletin should be addressed to the editor.