

24st November 2021

Dear LDA colleagues

It's now just over two months since the Annual General Meeting (see minutes [here](#)) in September and I thought I would update you on some of the things that have been occurring in your association.

Full 2021-22 Council in place

Last time I wrote to members I called for Expressions of Interest to serve on Council as we still had a number of positions to be filled (5 in total). As you will know, Council is made up of 14 members, five of whom are honorary office bearers of the association (known as 'the Executive') and nine 'ordinary' members of Council. We received a really pleasing number of responses to our call for others to join us and I am pleased to introduce them to you here.

New members of Council (in addition to the nine in place from September) are:

- Felicity Brown (Vic), an LDA Consultant and extremely experienced Specialist Teacher and former secondary teacher. Felicity has joined the Governance Subcommittee of the Executive and is on the Consultants' Committee
- Jacinta Conway (Vic), a Learning Intervention Specialist from Melbourne, a Consultant member and assisting with educational research at Monash University. Jacinta is the new Website and Social Media Committee Convenor and is a member of the Professional Development Committee
- Dr Kate de Bruin (Vic), a Senior Lecturer in Inclusion and Disability and Graduate Research Coordinator in the School of Education at Monash University. Kate has joined the Professional Development Committee
- Melanie Henry (Vic), a Specialist Teacher, Instructional Leader and doctoral student in the SOLAR Lab at La Trobe University. Melanie has joined the Governance Subcommittee of the Executive
- Michelle Van Puyvelde (NSW/ACT) who is an experienced Special Education Leader and classroom teacher, currently the NCCD and Inclusion Officer in the ACT Education Directorate. Michelle has joined the Professional Development Committee

We are delighted that these great people have joined the Council. A full listing of Council Committees and their membership is available [here](#).

Transition and Professional Development activity

Things have been very busy as the largely new Council has settled into place. A big shout-out to Treasurer Ann Ryan who is also the Convenor of the Administration Committee who has overseen the transition arrangements, assisted by Bec Rangas our fantastic Administration Officer, who has now been engaged in a full-time role in LDA. Ann and Bec have seen to the various administrative procedures that were required to ensure that new Council members are registered with the

appropriate regulatory bodies and that the necessary changes to our banking arrangements have been made to accommodate our new office-bearers. Another particular focus for the association has been to meet our commitment to running the Science of Writing professional learning series in October and November. Huge thanks are due to Kristin Anthian who stepped in as the interim Convenor of the Professional Development Committee right after the AGM to make this series happen. Thanks also to Bec, Geoff Ongley of Training 24/7 who has also offered his services as volunteer LDA IT Consultant, and Eleanor McMillan, member of the PD Committee for helping to make it all happen. I would also like to thank Robyn Bartram, Lyn Stone and Jenny Baker, the speakers in this popular series. We are very appreciative of the way in which they engaged with the 950 strong audience for this event. The PD Committee is now engaged in developing the series of offerings for 2022. If there are particular topics of interest and ways in which we can offer information and events to you, please don't hesitate to drop us a line to enquiries@ldaustralia.org. We want to be responsive to your needs and interests.

Publications update

The LDA Publications Committee is convened by Molly de Lemos. Another issue of the *Bulletin* is in the works (and should be on your desks in December) and it will be a cracker, I'm sure. In addition to her busy role as Secretary of LDA, Editor Ros Neilson and her team put in an enormous amount of time, effort and rigour into producing a really high-quality publication for members, and for the educational community more generally once the contents are uploaded to the website. This is, of course, another really important form of professional learning and I encourage our members to read every issue from cover to cover. The upcoming issue of the *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties (AJLD)* should be available to members by Christmas or soon after. All six articles that will be published in this issue of the Journal are already available online. Thanks to the new Editors Kevin Wheldall, Alison Madelaine and Assistant Editor Nicola Bell who have ensured that the second issue of 2021 has made its way through the publication process.

Website, Consultants and Governance

Also look out for improvements and increased functionality of the new LDA website as Jacinta Conway has taken on the role of Convenor in this area. The Consultants are ably led by Vice-President Elaine McLeish, and there is a great deal of work going into ensuring that the new website is meeting the needs of our Consultant body, as well as general members of Council and the wider community. Pleasingly, we have seen new Consultant members join LDA. The Governance Committee has met, and we have engaged the services of Melbourne based firm Conscious Governance to guide us through a review of our LDA Constitution and to help us engage meaningfully with our members as we take the next steps as an association. You will be hearing more about this, as was promised at the September AGM.

I hope you can see that there has been lots going on in LDA in the last couple of months – of course, there is so much more that has occurred with Committees meeting regularly and which I have not detailed here. Suffice to say, your association remains strong and our growing membership is testament to the important role we have to play in the field of learning difficulties in Australia.

With best wishes for the remaining weeks of 2021,



Dr Robyn Wheldall