



LDA COUNCIL 2021-22

OFFICE BEARERS

Executive 2021-22

President:	Dr Robyn Wheldall* (NSW)
Vice President:	Dr Molly de Lemos AM (VIC)
Vice President:	Elaine McLeish* (VIC)
Treasurer:	Ann Ryan* (VIC)
Secretary:	Dr Roslyn Neilson (NSW)

Ordinary Members:

Kevin Wheldall* emeritus professor AM (NSW)
Eleanor McMillan* (ACT)
Dr Alison Madelaine* (NSW)
Kristin Anthian* (VIC)
Dr Kate de Bruin*
Dr Michael Maier*
Jacinta Conway*
Michelle van Puyvelde*
Melanie Henry*
Felicity Brown

**Indicates new members of council for 2021-22*

Dr Robyn Wheldall

President

BA (History, English, Education), PhD in Special Ed

Robyn's career in the field of learning difficulties and special education spans more than 30 years. Throughout this period, she has been particularly focused on ensuring that vulnerable and disadvantaged learners are offered the best instruction possible to help them fulfil their potential. She is committed to evidence-based practice and the scientific method in generating new knowledge and assessing the efficacy of instructional approaches. She publishes in academic journals as well as contributing to the dissemination of evidence-based practices in more accessible forms, by co-editing a digital magazine for teachers and parents. Over the course of her career, in addition to engaging in research and development activities, Robyn has gained extensive organizational management expertise. This has involved building effective organisational structures and managing multiple teams. This experience has been gained in the context of management roles at Macquarie University Special Education Centre including in the MUSEC School, in large scale research consultancy projects, and in the MultiLit company. Robyn was born and raised in Sydney where she continues to live. She is married, has a large, blended family, and enjoys her 8 grandchildren.

Dr Molly de Lemos AM**Vice President**

BSc (Hons), MSc (Natal), PhD (ANU), MAPsS

Molly de Lemos was a Senior Research Fellow at ACER prior to her retirement in 2001. Her initial training is in psychology, but since joining ACER in 1967 worked on a number of projects relating to assessment of educational achievement, with a focus on children from different language and cultural backgrounds and the early years of schooling. She has also worked on projects relating to educational provisions for students with disabilities and the educational needs of children in care. She has had an ongoing interest in issues relating to pre-school education, early intervention, and the assessment and identification of children with learning difficulties, and has also worked in the area of psychological assessment, including the adaptation and norming of measures of intelligence, aptitudes and adaptive behaviour. Her publications include the 1994 report *Schooling for Students with Disabilities*, and the 2002 ACER review paper *Closing the Gap between Research and Practice: Foundations for the Acquisition of Literacy*. She has served on a number of committees and advisory groups relating to assessment and early childhood education, and is currently a member of the Developmental Disorders of Language and Literacy Network Group. She has been a member of LDA since 2004, and was also Secretary of LDA from 2004 to 2012. Molly was the recipient of the 2012 Mona Tobias Award.

Elaine McLeish**Vice President / Consultant Convenor**

Grad.Dip.Special Ed (University of Melbourne) Diploma Primary Teaching (Toorak Teachers' College)

Elaine has been a passionate supporter of LDA and its mission for over 20 years. She has previously served on LDA Council and is a proud Honorary Life Member.

After matriculating in 1960, Elaine studied Commerce at Melbourne University before moving to the public service and working for the Department of Army in the pay accounts centre, eventually as leader of the Victorian section.

Another change of direction for Elaine occurred from 1971 to 1973, when, as one of the early mature-age students (thanks Gough) she completed a Diploma of Primary Teaching at the then Toorak Teachers' College. Elaine then taught in state primary schools in Melbourne across all grade levels for 15 years. In 1988 Elaine completed a Graduate Diploma in Special Education at Melbourne. For many years Elaine was the leading teacher and part of the multi-disciplinary leadership team in an adolescent mental health inpatient hospital providing educational assessments, individual learning programs, liaison with families and teachers, and supporting reintegration to mainstream education. During her teaching career, Elaine was an active union representative in the AEU and served at branch level and on state council during the tumultuous Kennett era.

Elaine has had a long and varied involvement with LDA. After retiring from the Education Department in 1998, she became a Consultant Member and established a private practice providing literacy and maths assistance for primary and early secondary students. From 2002 to 2011 she managed the LDA phone referral service, succeeding her much admired mentor Rosemary Carter. In this role she provided support and advice to parents and worked very closely with Consultants. She was recruited to provide administrative support for the Consultants Committee in 2011/12 and again from 2014 to her retirement in November 2020. She worked closely with seven Consultant Convenors and countless committee members, assisting in the organisation of PD for Consultants, processing renewals and applications, and working on revisions to Consultant Guidelines and many other policy initiatives over the years. She is extremely well versed in all Consultant matters.

Elaine is eager to contribute to the good governance and ongoing success of LDA.

Ann Ryan**Treasurer**

M.Ed (Integration) (Deakin), Post Grad Dip Ed (Inclusion)(Deakin), Dip.Teaching (Burwood).

Ann has spent many years teaching early primary years, middle school and secondary school students across various roles - Classroom Teacher, Special Educator Teacher and Co-ordinator (Primary and Secondary settings), Principal Class in a Specialist School. Ann has also worked in adult education.

She now works in private practise as a Specialist Teacher Consultant (LDA), as an InSpEd Certified Special Educator and as the Director of Ely Education, a regional Victorian specialist education service for students who experience learning difficulties. As an LDA Council Member, Ann has held the roles of Consultant Convenor, Secretary, Vice President, Administration Committee Convenor and Editor of the LDA eNews. Ann has participated in consultative workshops for the Victorian Department of Education and Training's pilot of a Learning Difficulties Toolkit, and for the Department's Review of the Program for Students with Disabilities.

Dr Roslyn Neilson**Secretary**

Ph.D. (Psychology - University of Wollongong), M.Sc. Applied (Human Communication Disorders - McGill University, Montreal), B.A. Honours (Psychology and English, Melbourne University), Life Member of Speech Pathology Australia

Ros Neilson has worked as a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) in the NSW health system, in schools and in private practice. Her clinical experience as a SLP with children with reading difficulties inspired her to complete a Ph.D. in psychology, on the topic of phonological awareness, word identification skills, and reading difficulties. She has researched and published several widely used assessment tools relating to phonological awareness and early literacy. Ros has lectured on a casual basis at the University of Sydney (Speech Pathology), University of Wollongong (Faculty of Education) and Macquarie University (Speech Pathology), and has provided many in-services and conference papers for audiences including speech language pathologists and education professionals, including a National Speaking Tour for Speech Pathology Australia in 2012. Ros served on LDA Council during 2014 - 2015 and has served as a volunteer on the LDA Publications Committee since then. She took over the role of editor of the LDA Bulletin in 2020. Ros was the recipient of the Mona Tobias Award in 2016.

Felicity Brown**Council Member**

Qualifications here

Felicity has had a lifelong interest in teaching students with learning difficulties, commencing with choosing it as a teaching method in 1976, and working as a secondary school teacher for 37 years, 20 of these as literacy support coordinator. She is particularly interested in teaching adolescents who have difficulty with reading, and devising ways to enhance memory and improve phonemic awareness utilising her own illustrations. Felicity has a Masters Degree in Education (Special Education) from Monash. She has served on the SPELD Management Committee from 2001 to 2008 as Minutes Secretary. Felicity has been a member of LDA for over 25 years and a Consultant Member since 2014. Since becoming a Consultant, Felicity has expanded her range of teaching levels to include primary level students through to adults. She represents the Glen Waverley network group in the Consultant Support Group, and is a member of the Consultant Committee. Felicity is interested in the LDA Constitution, ensuring it meets the needs of all our members, and providing a secure foundation for LDA into the future.

Melanie Henry**Council Member**

Dip Modern Languages (German), BA (Honours), M.Ed (LI), Master of Teaching (S), PhD Candidate (SOLAR)

Melanie is a secondary trained teacher and now the instructional leader/coach at the Pavilion School. She has worked in both mainstream and alternative settings, teaching Humanities, German, English/EAL and VCAL. She is passionate about rigorous and engaging curriculum, professional learning, classroom instruction and a structured approach to teaching literacy. She holds a Master of Learning Intervention focused on inclusive practice and alternative education from the University of Melbourne and is in the early stages of a PhD in the La Trobe SOLAR lab, interested in evidence-based strategies to support adolescents in the classroom.

Eleanor McMillan**Council Member**

B.Ed, Grad Cert SpED, Cert IV Small Bus Mgmt, Certified Practicing Speech Pathologist

Eleanor McMillan is an experienced and innovative educator, school leader, and speech pathologist who thrives on working collaboratively in dynamic educational environments. She holds dual qualifications and current registration in Education and Speech Pathology, maintaining a high level of professionalism in both fields. Eleanor's skills and knowledge in both professions offer a range of skills and experience that complement and enhance each other to drive improved learning outcomes for students. Eleanor has a strong commitment to improving student engagement and learning outcomes with high expectations for all students, with a passion for inclusion and diversity. Her special interests are in literacy, language for learning, and learning difficulties.

Dr Alison Madelaine**Council Member**

BA, Dip. Ed., Dip. Spec. Ed., PhD

Dr Alison Madelaine is a Senior Research Fellow within the MultiLit Research Unit at MultiLit Pty Ltd. She is also Clinical Director of the MultiLit Literacy Centres and is involved in the development of whole class and remedial programs in reading and spelling.

Alison has had hands on experience teaching students with reading difficulties in Australia and South Carolina, USA, and she has also provided consultation to the delivery of MultiLit's literacy programs to disadvantaged students in several MultiLit projects, including those in Cape York in far north Queensland, inner city, Sydney, and in Sydney's Western suburbs.

Alison was a Lecturer in Special Education at Macquarie University Special Education Centre until 2017, where she taught postgraduate students in the areas of effective literacy instruction and research methods.

Alison's publications and research interests include effective reading instruction (including whole class Tier 1 instruction as well as remedial instruction), curriculum-based measurement of reading, teacher judgment of reading performance, vocabulary instruction, preschool literacy, and teachers' knowledge and skills in teaching reading.

Alison is a past LDA Council Member. She is also a past editor of the LDA Bulletin and jointly edited the Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties (with Emeritus Professor Kevin Wheldall) for several years. Although Alison believes that all children should be provided with evidence-based, exemplary instruction, she is particularly concerned with the instruction provided to those children who need more support to learn basic skills. As such, she is keen to serve on the LDA council once again.

**Kevin Wheldall emeritus professor AM
Council Member**

BA, PhD, C.Psychol, MAPS, FASSA, FBPsS, FCollP, FIARLD, FCEDP

As a long-time member of Learning Difficulties Australia, Kevin has served in several capacities on LDA Council including President (2006-2007) and Executive Editor of LDA Publications. His contributions have been formally recognised by LDA awards, not least for his work on the Journal (AJLD) and Bulletin.

Currently an Emeritus Professor of Macquarie University, Kevin served as Director of Macquarie University Special Education Centre (MUSEC) until my early retirement in 2011. A registered psychologist, he is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, the British Psychological Society, the College of Preceptors (UK), the College of Educational and Developmental Psychologists, and the International Academy for Research in Learning Disabilities.

Kevin was awarded the Mona Tobias Award of Learning Difficulties Australia (LDA) in 2008 “in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the field of learning difficulties in Australia” and in 2009 was inducted into the Macquarie University Innovators Hall of Fame. In 2011, he was appointed a Member (AM) in the Order of Australia “for service to education as an academic and researcher, particularly in the areas of learning and behavioural difficulties, and through the design and implementation of innovative literacy programs”. In 1995, he established the MultiLit (Making Up Lost Time In Literacy) Initiative, to research and develop intensive literacy interventions for low-progress readers. Kevin is currently the Director of the MultiLit Research Unit and Director and Chairman of the Board of MultiLit Pty Ltd, a university spin-off company, which has recently been awarded \$8 million in federal funding to improve the reading and related skills of Indigenous students by rolling out MultiLit programs across 40 schools. He has researched and written extensively in the area of learning and behaviour difficulties with particular emphasis on classroom behaviour management and helping low-progress readers. He is the author of over 300 academic books, chapters, and journal articles and edited the international journal ‘Educational Psychology’ for 30 years. Kevin has acted as an adviser to both state and federal government education bodies and ministers on matters relating to Special Education generally and on behaviour and reading in particular.

**Dr Kate de Bruin
Council Member**

Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Lit & Psych, DipEd (English, English Lit), Postgrad DipEd (Inclusive & Special Education), PhD Ed

Dr Kate de Bruin is a Senior Lecturer in Inclusion and Disability at Monash University. She has taught in secondary school and higher education for over two decades. As a high-school teacher she taught English for years 7-12, ran reading intervention, and provided cross-curriculum support to students with disabilities and learning difficulties. In higher education, she has developed the courses for pre-service and experienced teachers to work with students with disability in the Master of Inclusive Education specialism and the Master of Teaching. Kate’s research examines inclusive models of support in policy, systems, schools, and classrooms. Her current projects focus on evidence-based practices for instruction and intervention that fit within Tiers 1 and 2 of multi-tiered systems of support with a particular focus on reading. She has worked on projects such as the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data for Students with Disabilities Moderation Resource for the Commonwealth Department of Education, Skills and Employment, the evaluation of the Disability Inclusion policy for DET in Victoria and Tier Two Literacy Interventions in Australian Schools for Catholic Education Melbourne. Kate is an affiliate of the Science of Language and Reading (SOLAR) Lab and a national co-convenor for the Inclusive Education Special Interest Group within the

Australian Association for Research in Education. She was also called as an expert witness at the Royal Commission into Violence, Neglect, Abuse and Exploitation. In her spare time, she enjoys playing with her two kids and her puppy.

Kristin Anthian
Council Member

Dip.T(EC), B.Ed(P), PGDip.Ed.St(ECI), M.Ed(SE.I&EI)

Serving more than 30 years in various direct teaching and consultancy roles within inclusive and specialist education settings, Kristin holds two undergraduate and two postgraduate teaching qualifications, including a master's degree in Special Education, Early Intervention, and Inclusion from the University of Melbourne. She is an accredited Consultant Member of LDA, the 2020 Rosemary Carter Award Recipient, and a previous council member. Additionally, Kristin remains certified with the Centre for Effective Reading Instruction (CERI) and the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) as a Structured Literacy Dyslexia Interventionist in the US, as well as a certified Special Educator with the Institute of Special Educators (InSpED) in Australia. Kristin has previously presented on a range of topics for DSF WA and AUSPELD; SPELD Vic; The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER); the Victorian Department of Education and Training; the Australian Education Union Teacher Learning Network and is a regular presenter at conferences and schools.

Furthermore, she was a member of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) review board for accommodations and special exam arrangements for VCE students with Specific Learning Disorders in 2014 and 2017. In 2019 Kristin became the lead author of a whole school Systematic Synthetic Phonics Program with Decodable books titled 'Snappy Sounds', published by Macmillan International in the UK. Kristin currently works in private practice within seven schools west of Melbourne, as well as online, supporting students with diverse and complex learning needs. She is passionate about evidence based and research informed practice; the science of learning, reading, writing and mathematics instruction; and explicit teaching pedagogies.

Jacinta Conway
Council Member

B.Ed, M.Ed (LI)

Jacinta is a learning intervention specialist and consultant, specialising in literacy, literacy assessments and implementing a Response to Intervention framework in schools. With 19 years experience as a teacher and educational leader. She has a Bachelor of Education (Primary) and a Masters in Learning Interventions (Specific Learning Difficulties) She has extensive experience as a primary classroom teacher, and school leader, overseeing and implementing a range of interventions and support for learners, both in primary and secondary settings.

As the founder of Impact Tuition, her practice in the south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne, Jacinta is currently providing small group interventions for literacy and numeracy both face to face and online.

Jacinta is a certified Spalding Instructor, and for the past six years has provided professional development to speech pathologists, teachers, and parents, in the Spalding Method, an approved structured literacy course by the International Dyslexic Association.

With a keen interest in assessment, Jacinta has worked with Kate de Bruin as a research assistant at Monash University, exploring assessments for phonemic awareness and decoding. As a Leading Teacher for the Department of Education, she implemented a Response to Intervention approach initiatives targeting improvement in foundational reading instruction in schools, as well as equitable access to targeted intervention on the basis of need.

Michelle Van Puyvelde

Council Member

Dip. Teaching (Early Childhood), M.Incl & SpEd

To be added shortly.