

Annual General Meeting 2021 General Manager Report

Introduction

I would like to thank Learning Difficulties Australia for the opportunity to contribute to the association in 2021. My role has been concentrated on contributing ideas and plans for helping LDA achieve the recommendations set out in the Sustainability Report of 2019. At its core, this has focussed on LDA becoming a guiding light to education professionals and systems across Australia to show that we can vastly improve the educational outcomes for students across the country if we use evidence-informed approaches. This is a most worthy and noble cause that presents the members of LDA with an enormous opportunity and a considerable responsibility. This year like last year has presented many challenges related to Covid-19 to consider new ways of operating. I believe some progress has been made in our quest to be that guiding light. I will not be continuing in this role after the AGM, however I will remain interested in and involved with LDA as a member. Below is a brief summary of the LDA progress in 2021.

Expansion of membership base and profile

- There has been a significant increase in membership this year from approximately 500 members to now over 800. This has been by far the largest increase in membership in modern LDA history and a significant achievement.
- There has been increased media and social media presence for LDA in 2021 from 2020 numbers. There was some success in this area. Twitter grew from 2680 to 3036 followers; Facebook from 5710 to 8182 followers; LinkedIn from 129 to 224 followers; and the YouTube Channel from 948 to 1530 subscribers.

Expansion of professional development services

- The year commenced with our inaugural Science of Learning Hybrid National Conference with a keynote address by Louisa Moats. Live presentations were held in Brisbane, Canberra and Perth with a national virtual conference and, due to a late lockdown, the Sydney conference was also held virtually. Attendance at the conferences totalled 626 people and also raised over \$20,000 for LDA. The success of this conference amidst so much uncertainty was a great achievement for LDA and a credit to so many who were involved.
- The popular Weekly Wednesday Webinar series continued for a 2021 season after launching with a great Jan Hasbrouck presentation. Over 1,000 live attendees and over 7,000 online views have confirmed the success of WWW. Since its launch in April 2020, there have been over 48,000 views of the high quality WWW's.
- In May we held the Supporting Secondary Students with Learning Difficulties conference with over 200 attendees. This was a great success and met a significant need in the secondary school space as well as raising over \$10,000 for LDA.
- In July we held a Science of Reading conference in Perth that was sold out with over 300 attendees and over \$20,000 raised.
- The Science of Writing course will be held virtually commencing in October. Already, over 600 people have registered. This will be a financial windfall for LDA with revenue of well over \$100,000 generated.

New Website

- The new website was finally launched this year after an extensive development period. This has already had a positive impact on membership numbers due to simpler renewal processes. As with all new websites, bugs are still being uncovered and further improvements will be made.

Changed governance and strategic direction

- A Special General Meeting was held to vote on changing the name of LDA to Effective Teaching Australia and to change the legal structure to enable us to better comply with government requirements and operate more efficiently. Both resolutions failed to reach the 75% threshold required to be successful. Further information since the SGM has been shared with the membership.