

# LDA COUNCIL 2019-2020

## OFFICE BEARERS

### Executive 2018-19

President: Dr Lorraine Hammond (WA)  
Vice President: Dr Molly de Lemos (VIC)  
Vice President: Dr Nicole Todd (QLD)  
Treasurer: Renae Watkins (NSW)  
Secretary: Ann Ryan (VIC)

Sarah Asome\* (VIC)  
Lyn Franklin (VIC)  
Kate Gurjian (NSW)  
Juanita Lee (VIC)\*  
Dr Bartek Rajkowski (SA)  
Dr Sally Robinson-Kooi\* (NSW)  
Dianne Steel\* (QLD)  
Jo Whithear\* (ACT)

*\*New members of council for 2019-20*

### **Dr Lorraine Hammond** **President**

B.Ed (ECU), Post Grad Dip SpLD (RSA) London, M. SpLD (Middlesex), PhD (ECU)  
Lorraine Hammond is a Senior Lecturer at Edith Cowan University where she co-ordinates post graduate Special Education courses and the Graduate Diploma of Education (Primary). Since graduating as a secondary English Teacher in 1990 and realizing how ill equipped she was to support her students with literacy based learning difficulties, Lorraine undertook further study then began working as a Learning Difficulties Consultant supporting teachers and schools throughout Australia as well as presenting professional learning overseas. After completing her PhD on the relationship between beginning reading and spelling, Lorraine was awarded a Churchill Fellowship and travelled to Canada, USA and the UK investigating services for individuals with Dyslexia. A long standing Board Member of the Dyslexia-SPELD Foundation (DSF) of WA, Lorraine is at her happiest working with her university students and the many teachers she meets at conferences and in schools where she conducts research. Lorraine's current research interests include the prevention of literacy difficulties, teaching vocabulary and evidence-based instruction.

### **Dr Molly de Lemos** **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.

**Dr Nicole Todd**  
**Vice President**

*PhD (QUT), MA Special Education (Macquarie Uni), B.Ed. Special Education (UWA), BA Education/Psychology (UQ)*

Nicole Todd is currently an education lecturer at the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) at the Springfield Campus in Brisbane, and has been in this position for five years. Previously she was a special education lecturer for seven years at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). Her focus is on inclusive education and, specifically, quality education for students with learning difficulties. She has taught in regular schools and special education settings involving students from 3 to 18 years of age across Australia and also in England. Her varied career in education includes being a consultant in learning assistance for the New South Wales Department of Education and Training as well as director of an education support centre assisting the local school community with students requiring additional assistance with learning. She recently completed her doctorate at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) on the influence of school culture on the role of the Learning Difficulties Support Teacher. She also has an MA in Special Education from Macquarie University, a BEd in Special Education from the University of Western Australia, and a BA in Education/Psychology from the University of Queensland. Nicole served for many years in the 1990s and early 2000s on the Committee of the Australian Association of Special Education (AASE).

**Renae Watkins,**  
**Treasurer**

*B.Ed (University of Wollongong), Diploma of Special Needs Teaching (Christchurch College of Education), Master of Special Education (Macquarie University)*

With over 20 years of experience in education, Renae Watkins has particular expertise in supporting students with learning difficulties and behaviour problems. She has taught in both mainstream and special education settings K-12 in New South Wales and Queensland, and also in England and New Zealand. Her varied career in education includes roles as a community care teacher, itinerant teacher behaviour support, assistant principal, leader of community intensive literacy centres, director of MultiLit literacy centres, and most recently as a consultant. She has taught in the public school system, the juvenile justice system, in not-for-profit community based literacy centres, and has led and managed large teams in instructional settings. She has a long standing interest and well developed skills in Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) and has innovated with these to good effect in the various educational settings in which she has worked. Renae is currently working as an Education Consultant with the Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AISNSW) supporting schools in New South Wales to improve literacy levels as part of the NSW Literacy and Numeracy Phase 2 Action Plan. Part of this role has involved the development of an early literacy screening tool app (ESTA-L) to provide teachers with a quick and easy tool to identify students at risk to ensure intervention occurs early. In addition to this she provides professional learning on literacy and behaviour management. She is a representative for the non-government school sector on the NSW Centre for Effective Reading Placement Panel, a member of SPELDNSW and the Dyslexia-SPELD Foundation and a member of Learning Difficulties Australia (LDA). Renae is currently undertaking further postgraduate study in the area of TESOL.

**Ann Ryan**  
**Secretary**

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

Ann currently 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. With over twenty-five years working in the field of learning difficulties, Ann has taught 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. She has also worked in adult education. 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. Ann is currently the Editor of the LDA eNews.

**Sarah Asome**  
**Council Member**

*BA(Ed) Hons*

Sarah is currently the Assistant Principal at Bentleigh West Primary School in Victoria. She has been instrumental in leading the change at BWPS and continues to support many colleagues state and nationwide in the implementation of evidence-based literacy instruction in schools. This has led to a significant increase in literacy levels and the 2018 NAPLAN results now place BWPS as a high performing school. In 2015, she was awarded 'Outstanding Primary Teacher' in the Victorian Education Excellence Awards. She previously appeared in 'Outside the Square', a DVD resource for teachers and in 2017 appeared on Insight – 'A teacher Who Changed My Life'. Sarah has completed numerous courses including; Louisa Moat's LETRS training, Dyslexia Action (UK), Associate training with Australian Dyslexia Association, Yoshimoto Orton Gillingham Associate and Advanced and has a certificate as a Certified Structured Literacy Teacher - Certificate Centre for Effective Reading Instruction (CERI) USA. Sarah regularly presents at state and national conferences on literacy and dyslexia and has written several articles.

**Lyn Franklin**  
**Council Member**

Master Educational Studies LD (Uni Melb), Post Graduate Diploma Education LD (Uni Melb)  
B.Ed. Spec Ed major (Victoria College Burwood)

Lyn coordinates a Learning Difficulties department in a private school in the Western Suburbs of Melbourne. She promotes best practice and evidence-based intervention to provide support to students within the classroom and in a small group withdrawal setting. Lyn has managed the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCDSSD) across the Junior School. The PD of staff and school management has led to an increased awareness of whole school responsibilities regarding students with disability. Lyn is passionate about helping students maintain their self-efficacy in the face of learning difficulties, which she does by working closely with staff, students and their families. Lyn has worked in Special Developmental schools, secondary schools, rural schools and now resides in Melbourne Victoria.

**Juanita Lee**  
**Council Member**

Master of Education (Melbourne University), B.Ed, Post Grad Dip SpeEd (UNISA)

Juanita Lee is a Specialist Consultant Tutor with over 20 years' experience teaching students with learning difficulties. Juanita is a Consultant Member of Learning Difficulties Australia and a member of SPELD Victoria. She practices privately at independent and state schools and at the Dyslexia Hub, Greensborough. Juanita has taught in special schools, mainstream schools and privately over the course of her teaching career. Her teaching experience and particular interest lies in tutoring students with dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia. Many of the students she teaches also present with co-morbid conditions such as ADHD. Juanita has had a great deal of training and experience in implementing evidence-based approaches to the teaching of reading spelling, writing and arithmetic skills.

**Dr Bartek Rajkowski**  
**Council Member**

*Ph.D., B.App.Sc. (Sp. Path.), CPSP.*

Bartek Rajkowski is a speech & language pathologist with extensive experience in assessing, identifying and helping students with literacy difficulties. He has been the principal clinician and director of Adelaide Speech Pathology Services since 2001, where he leads a team of passionate clinicians. Bartek's doctoral research was an investigation of the potential causes of phonological processing and decoding difficulties that are common in children with poor reading skills. He is a passionate advocate for students with learning difficulties. Bartek is also the creator and managing director of ReadingDoctor® Software, a suite of scientifically based, interactive apps designed to improve literacy skills in children. He regularly presents to audiences around Australia on the topics of reading development, reading difficulties and evidence-based literacy instruction.

**Dr Sally Robinson-Kooi**  
**Council Member**

*PhD (ECU), B.Ed. (TESOL major) (La Trobe University), Dip. Teaching Primary (Phillip Institute of Technology), Certificate EFL (International House, Hastings, UK).*

Sally currently works as an independent literacy and TESOL consultant, providing NESA accredited professional development to teachers. She has worked with diverse socio-economic groups and non-English background cultures in Australia and overseas. Sally completed a Diploma of Teaching, Primary at Phillip Institute of Technology, Melbourne, and was awarded the Dux Linton Medal. She taught in both the Department of Education and TAFE sectors before returning to Sydney, where she promoted a new position of Community Liaison Officer (NESB) in the Multicultural Education Unit (MEC) in the Department of Education, Metropolitan North. She provided consultation services, conducting Professional Development seminars and supporting school communities K-12. In addition, Sally delivered cross cultural awareness programs for school staff, students, parents and community workers, as well as information sessions designed to facilitate cooperation between home and school. Subsequently, Sally co-ordinated the EALD program in a Sydney primary school where she also supervised undergraduate student teachers. She then went on to teach in the undergraduate Primary Teacher Program at Macquarie University. Sally's current interests are providing teachers with professional development on evidence-based instructional methods to optimise literacy outcomes, an area which was a focus of her PhD research.

**Dianne Steel**  
**Council Member**

BOccThy(Hons)

Dianne is an Occupational Therapist, working with school students with learning and developmental motor coordination difficulties. Dianne has 12 years' experience in providing occupational therapy services to people across the lifespan. She commenced her practice in Queensland Health Mental Health Services and has a good understanding of mental health issues, and strategies to assist, when such issues are featuring alongside a student's struggle with learning. Dianne assists students with their learning 'occupations' of reading, writing, and mathematics, often working alongside multiple disciplines. Dianne has a particular interest in working with students with Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), applying research-based approaches to assist students to participate in the activities they want or need to do. Living in Townsville, North Queensland, Dianne fervently advocates for health professionals and educators in regional areas to have access to quality, evidence-based professional learning opportunities. She was very much involved in the 2019 LDA DK Tour, Cairns. Dianne also initiated contact with the Australian occupational therapy professional body, to deliver training in evidence-based intervention for DCD, to the Townsville and surrounds occupational therapists.

**Jo Whithear**  
**Council Member**

MA Special Education (Newcastle)

Jo lives in Canberra and has been a consultant member of LDA for a number of years. She

began teaching 25 years ago initially with primary and then secondary students. She completed her Masters of Special Education from Newcastle University in 2008 and has completed a postgraduate certificate in Research Methods (Special Ed) from Macquarie University. Her intention is to pursue doctoral research in the areas of spelling difficulties, adolescent literacy and/or reading fluency. Jo is currently Director of the Canberra Reading Clinic. She administers reading assessments and her teachers/tutors deliver evidence-based reading programs, primarily for students with dyslexia. In 2012/3 she was a member of the ACT Minister's Taskforce on Children with Learning Difficulties. She has been establishing a charitable organisation DSA (Dyslexia SPELD ACT) with a colleague for the past 18 months and is the Clinical Director. She is excited to work with both LDA and DSA to ensure that those who struggle with learning for whatever reason have equal access to support and services in the ACT.