

PRESIDENTS REPORT TO THE 2024 AGM

The 2023-24 Council year has marked another significant chapter for Learning Difficulties Australia, as we grow and reinforce our pivotal role in improving education across Australia.

I am both honoured and excited to be leading LDA into its 60th year! We remain dedicated to empowering educators through our outstanding publications, professional learning opportunities and relevant resources. Our mission to enhance teacher practice directly transforms the lives of countless students, making a lasting impact on the future of Australian education.

Our publications continue to be exceptional. Our highly regarded *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties* that has been expertly edited by Dr. Alison Madelaine and delivers on its promise to offer highly relevant research, intervention studies and academic insights. The *Bulletin*, skillfully curated by Laura Glisson, remains an indispensable resource for teachers, and bridges the gap between research and practice. Its evidence-based strategies and updates from the frontlines of teaching practical insights from the classroom continue to equip educators with the important knowledge and strategies. I want to personally thank Dr. Alison Madelaine, Laura Glisson, and the entire team of experts who participate in making such incredibly rich publications available to our members.

I would like to thank our staff and volunteers of the organisation for keeping things moving; you are a credit to LDA's ongoing legacy. Thanks go out to Bec, Hema, our Committee Convenors, LDA's Council, and our consultants for all of the phenomenal work put in to continue the good work of LDA.

I also want to give special mention and thanks to my colleagues on the Executive team: Treasurer Iain Rothwell, VP Dr. Robyn Wheldall, VP Elaine McLeish and Secretary Steph Murphy for their ongoing support, collegiality, and availability to discuss organisational matters at short notice and their support in driving the organisation forward.

Key achievements in 2023-2024 Council Year:

- On the membership we have both retained and grown. We are pleased to have members continue on, and to have also welcomed a number of new members over this past year. It is exciting to have more and more teachers seeing the value of LDA and all it has to offer!
- Operationally, we have reduced LDA's operating expenditures at the bottom line, while also increasing revenues at the top line, improving LDA's financial position.
- The new "On-Demand" professional learning platform was launched and is now growing in both available PL and in engagement since its launch.
- Following the release of this platform, we have also introduced professional learning included at no additional charge as part of your LDA membership!
- Our live professional development courses also continue to attract strong numbers and the diversity of offerings is increasing. We have sold over 1,000 tickets to LDA events over the past 12 months, with our top performing events being:

- Best Practice Using an RTI Framework (Conference)
- Working Memory Challenges: Practical Strategies (Webinar)
- Think it, Say it, Write it! (Conference)
- Our social media presence has increased (on average) by ~26% across various platforms
- Our Council, Executive, and committees remain stable with all members of the current Council and Executive continuing on for another term.
- Consultants have enjoyed free consultant-specific professional learning as well as a key winter mixer to network and connect supported by the Barton bequest. Many thanks to Dr. David Barton and the late Anne Barton for their generosity.

2024-25 Council

Following the call for Council nominations, we received one nomination for each of the five Honorary Officer/Executive positions and nine nominations for the nine ordinary members. There was, therefore, no need for a ballot. Those nominated and therefore elected to Council are as follows:

Honorary Officers/Executive

President; Geoff Ongley NSW

Vice President 1: Dr. Robyn Wheldall (bank signatory) NSW

Vice President 2: Elaine McLeish (bank signatory) VIC

Secretary: Steph Murphy (bank signatory) VIC

Treasurer: Iain Rothwell (bank signatory) NSW

Ordinary members

Dr Anne Bellert NSW (Consultant Committee Convenor)

Felicity Brown VIC

Laura Glisson WA (Bulletin Editor)

Dr. Alison Madelaine NSW (AJLD Editor, Publications Committee Convenor)

Eleanor McMillan ACT (Awards Committee Convenor)

Justin McRae NSW (new member)

Jen Robin VIC (new member)

Erin Rollason VIC (PD Committee Convenor)

Dr. Damon Thomas QLD

The stability and continuity of the 2024-25 Council allows for efficient operations of the organisation and provides opportunity to improve current processes and offerings. With the addition of new council members Jen Robin who comes with a wealth of experience in professional development and inclusive education and Justin McRae in the information technology space we believe the 2024-25 Council to be in a strong position to continue to go from strength to strength.

Awards

I would like to congratulate our LDA Award winners for 2024!

AJLD Eminent Researcher Award - Emeritus Professor James Chapman

AJLD Early Career Researcher Award - Dr Emily Jackson

Mona Tobias Award - Jenny Baker

LDA Tertiary Student Award - Caitlin Stephenson

Note: Bruce Wicking and Rosemary Carter awards are not being awarded in 2024.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all our members for their continuing support of LDA. Serving LDA and its members is an honour and I look forward to serving in my second term as President.

Report prepared by:

Geoff Ongley

LDA President

30/09/2024