Jennifer Rennie began her ALEA journey in the early 1990’s when she took out her first subscription to the association. Since then she has been a strong advocate for ALEA by encouraging others to become members, presenting at local, national and international conferences, writing for various ALEA journals, and taking up active leadership roles within the association.

In 1998 Jennifer joined the Northern Territory Local Council, taking on the role of Vice President in 2000. Despite being a relatively small local council it was very proactive within the Darwin community. Along with others in the group Jennifer planned and implemented professional development activities for schools and parents, participated in literacy and numeracy week activities and served on state and national committees and reference groups. Professional development activities included the popular weekly informal café chat PD sessions held after school in various coffee shops in the Darwin region, books for babies on International Literacy Day and professional development such as the Early Literacy mini course.

From 2002 to 2006 Jennifer was the NT State Director on National Council. In this role she contributed to state and national initiatives and served on many committees including the National Literacy and Numeracy awards committee; teacher Bursary Selection panel and focus groups for the National Literacy Inquiry. She also co-convened the AATE/ALEA National Conference in Darwin in 2006 on the beautiful grounds of Darwin High School which attracted over 500 delegates. As a member of a small steering committee she assisted with the overall planning of the event in particular the organisation of the program and speakers. Jennifer was instrumental in introducing a refereeing process for conference papers as a first for ALEA and led the preparation, editing and publication of the conference proceedings.

In 2006 Jennifer took up a new academic position at Monash University and so was required to stand down from her position as NT State Director. In her new role she continued to advocate for the organisation by recruiting new student and teacher members through her work with pre-service teachers and schools.

Jennifer frequently uses ALEA conferences and journals as a means to disseminate her research to others. Since 1998 she has presented at over nine conferences and more recently encourages her own PhD students to do the same. They now view ALEA as a ‘must go to’ conference each year. She also frequently uses and promotes the various ALEA journals with her own students. Her interest and belief in the journals as an important space for both teachers and researchers to disseminate their work led her to apply for the editorship of the Australian Journal of Language and Literacy in 2009. Since then she has worked with her editorial team to continue to enhance the national and international standing of the journal. During her editorship she has recruited a renowned national and international Editorial Advisory Board and Review board with members from Australia, United States, Canada, United Kingdom, New Zealand and South Africa. This has led to an increase in the number of international contributions received. Acceptance rates for the journal have dropped to around 20% and issues have increased from four or five papers per issue to six. In recent months she has moved the journal to an on line submission platform. Whilst she prides herself in the work she has done to improve the overall quality of the journal she still takes the time to encourage and mentor new authors writing for the journal. Her leadership and commitment to AJLL have been instrumental in its growth and increased national and international standing.

It is therefore with great pleasure that ALEA honours Jennifer Rennie with the ALEA Medal in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the association over many years.