ALEA Medal
Robyn Henderson
July 2015

Robyn Henderson is an active member of ALEA and has contributed at local, state and national levels. She has encouraged the sharing of classroom practice and research about literacy learning and teaching in multiple ways for the benefit of ALEA members and other literacy educators.

A member of ALEA since the late 1980s, Robyn began her active involvement in the association in 2004 when she moved to Brisbane and, for the first time, had access to an ALEA local council. On joining the Meanjin Local Council, she became an executive member and treasurer. She was involved in the organisation of professional development workshops for teachers and presented at many of these. During her time with Meanjin Local Council, it grew to be the largest of ALEA’s local councils.

On relocating to Toowoomba, Robyn was a member of the steering committee that re-established the Darling Downs Local Council in 2007. She again took up the roles of executive member and treasurer and, during that time, membership of the Darling Downs Local Council grew from 6 to 36 in 2007, to 50 in March 2008, then to 102 in June 2010, making it the fastest growing local council. Concurrently, Robyn was a member of the State Director’s sub-committee.

At the national level, Robyn has contributed to ALEA through a range of editorial activities. She is currently the editor of Literacy Learning: the Middle Years. She co-edited the journal from 2008 to 2010 and then returned as editor in 2013. One of Robyn’s aims for the journal has been to achieve 100 per cent acceptance of articles. As a result, she provides support for first-time and inexperienced authors to prepare and revise their work to a form suitable for publication. She regards this educative work as building author capacity and enabling the sharing of ideas about literacy learning.

Robyn’s leadership has seen the inclusion in Literacy Learning: the Middle Years of a new section for peer-reviewed articles, the establishment of an editorial review board, the revitalisation of the editorial advisory board, and a large increase in submissions from authors. Despite the changes to the journal and its operations, however, the journal has maintained its ‘feel’ as an illustrative journal that is suitable for a wide audience, including teachers, pre-service teachers and academics. Robyn has also built a working relationship with a range of publishers, resulting in a larger pool of books for review and the subsequent publication of those reviews in the journal. She encourages teachers and pre-service teachers to write reviews for their peers.

Robyn has published in all three of ALEA’s journals. She was a Support Contributions Editor of Practically Primary from 2004 to 2005 and she is currently a member of the Editorial Review Board of the Australian Journal of Language and Literacy. Also at the national level, Robyn has been a long-term attendee and presenter at the annual AATE/ALEA conference. She has presented at ten conferences, has chaired conference sessions and was a member of the steering committee for the AATE/ALEA National Conference in Brisbane in 2013.

Robyn’s contributions to ALEA have aimed at sharing information about literacy learning, teaching and research and at building the capacity of literacy educators. It is therefore with great pleasure that ALEA honours Robyn Henderson with the ALEA Medal in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the association at local, state and national levels.