FOREWORD

This booklet has been published by ALEA in order to give literacy educators access to a clear statement about how children learn and use phonic knowledge appropriately. This is important knowledge for all teachers. The authors emphasise that for teachers to be able to support children to learn and use phonic knowledge appropriately it is important that they have explicit knowledge of phonics and give accurate information to students.

The content of this booklet was originally presented as a submission to the National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy conducted by a committee appointed in December 2004 by the then Australian Government Minister for Education, Science and Training, Dr Brendan Nelson. The Committee, chaired by Dr Ken Rowe, called for submissions, providing an opportunity for all those interested in the teaching of literacy to contribute to the Inquiry. In response to this invitation, a paper on the place of phonics in reading and writing was prepared by three highly experienced educators, Marie Emmitt, David Hornsby and Lorraine Wilson.

These three educators value teachers' professional knowledge. In the conclusion to their submission, they wrote: As literacy educators who are passionate about the power and joy of literature and literacy in our lives, and who have been instrumental in helping young people experience the same power and joy, we are committed to all children having the same opportunity. We have seen many teachers who have been effective with students, including those students with difficulties, because they have had professional knowledge and they have been in an environment where they could use that professional knowledge to make informed curriculum decisions appropriate to their learners' needs.

Members of ALEA National Council agreed that the paper would be a valuable resource for literacy educators. When we approached them to seek permission to reproduce the paper as an ALEA publication, the authors readily agreed to the request. Although the paper can be accessed on the website www.literacyeducators.com, the authors agreed to our proposal for circulating a print version. ALEA thanks Marie Emmitt, David Hornsby and Lorraine Wilson for their willingness to make their work available to a wider audience, and gratefully acknowledges their contribution to literacy education.

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