Wendy Bean has been an active member and energetic ambassador for ALEA since July 1992. She has always encouraged teachers to become members, present at conferences, write for journals and take active leadership roles in the association.

In 2007 Wendy was instrumental in forming the North Sydney Local Council. She has served as vice president, treasurer and is currently the president of this successful Local Council. A particular skill Wendy demonstrates is her ability to mentor others to take leadership roles. Wendy supported and encouraged a ‘break away’ group from North Sydney in order to establish the Sydney West Local Council in an area with many early career teachers and few professional learning opportunities.

In her many professional roles Wendy has sought to understand teachers’ everyday literacy teaching and learning needs, and has been instrumental in organising highly practical professional development opportunities to meet them. These are always firmly embedded in contemporary theory and derive from best practice. To enhance North Sydney’s professional development, Wendy has invited key literacy practitioners and authors to present.

As a casual lecturer at University of Wollongong, Wendy extended knowledge about ALEA among her graduate students. In her three years as Literacy Coach at Windang Public School Wendy ‘instilled a passion for literacy in all the teachers involved at Windang which continues today’.

Wendy has played a critical role in managing and/or writing for the National Literacy and Numeracy Week (NLNW) literacy project for ALEA. Since 2008 she has been project manager, negotiating with the Department of Education, writers, publishers and many others to finesse the smooth running of this very important project. In spite of many hurdles, Wendy has always managed to meet impossible deadlines, budget and marketing requirements while ensuring that the content of NLNW fits within the professional standards of ALEA and ‘best literacy practice’. The success of ALEA’s ongoing partnership in this annual event can be attributed to Wendy’s skills, knowledge and perseverance.

Wendy was a major contributor in the planning and running of the ALEA National Conference in Sydney in 2012. As a member of the small steering committee and the treasurer, her financial knowledge and skills, networking ability and organisational management contributed greatly to the overall success of the conference. Wendy monitored the budget and proposed spending ‘like a hawk’, advised the committee of potential financial risks throughout the planning, worked with the events planners and took a major role in preparing the final report for ALEA National Council.

Wendy takes every opportunity to promote the aims and purposes of ALEA, particularly in her work with schools. She has presented at many ALEA national and local council conferences.

Since the 1990s Wendy has regularly presented at the International Reading Association and in 2014 co-presented with Jan Turbill on Book Clubs. Wendy began Book Club with students at Windang school for two critical purposes: to engage students in wanting to read, and as a demonstration to teachers about the importance of students enjoying ‘good children’s literature’. It was and still is a highly successful program.

An important belief that Wendy holds and practices is building capacity within the professional ALEA family. To this end she quietly encourages and mentors young educators to share their professional expertise and knowledge beyond their classrooms. Windang Public School staff will attest to how Wendy gently but firmly set expectations that they should and could share at local and national professional conferences. These young teachers now willingly open their classroom doors and work as a team to develop and present their expertise and practices.

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