

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR BOARD

Welcome to your first newsletter and member pack for 2017. It is with some confidence that PETAA moves into 2017 which is, in fact, our 45th year as a professional association supporting primary English teachers in their endeavour to be the very best teachers that they can be. When I first became involved in the PETAA Board we were celebrating 40 years and we are now about to begin to consider our 50th celebrations. It will be a proud moment when the 50th anniversary arrives.

I considered beginning this newsletter with a reaction and response to the changing context for the measuring of quality, outcomes and curriculum in schools in Australia but decided that doing this might mean my readers become both bored and fatigued. So, like any writer I paused and looked around me considering for a moment the power and enjoyment of composition and thought what is it I want to say to the members of this dynamic and strong association of primary English teachers.

As my gaze panned around my desk I was drawn to the books that are in stacks to the side of where I write. It occurred to me as I looked at my current reading that this might allow me to consider my own professional response to the current context of literacy teaching in primary schools.

Immediately to the left of my keyboard sits the latest PETAA publication, which is included in this member pack, *Inspiring Writing in Primary Schools*. This book talks about 'creating spaces for writing' which as a teacher educator and someone who considers primary pedagogy I am sure will provide inspiration for our members and the learners in their classrooms. Lying on top of this book but at an angle is another new book with the intriguing title of *Early Childhood and Neuroscience*. I was attracted to this book because of the chapter about children's language learning and neuroscience. On a pile behind these two books are Louisa Moats' *Speech to Print*, and McLeod and McCormack's *Introduction to Speech, Language and Literacy*. I have spent a lot of time in the last six months reading and re-reading sections of both these books and considering the centrality of this knowledge in both the teaching of reading and writing in primary schools in the late 2010s.

At the next level of this pile is the second edition of the classic Kalantzis and Cope's

book *Literacies* which has Australian editorial additions; the section of this book that I am drawn to is the discussion of diversity and the effect of difference in literacies learning. The book urges us to consider the transformational role of difference in Australian classrooms and empowers us to be leaders in our own unique classroom contexts. Under this sits a somewhat older book called *Talk, Thinking and Philosophy in the Primary Classroom* which has reminded me of the need for time and space for thinking and talking whilst students are forming opinions and building their own metacognitive strategies.

So, I'm back now staring at the screen. What might this word picture mean? What does this survey of my professional reading (sometimes my professional reading becomes my leisure reading) suggest about primary English teaching? Does this set of books serve as a compass for where we are heading, or might it be a litmus test for the changing directions of professional learning as we head towards to 2020s?

I would like to propose that in these times of constant change, political directions which become seemingly more complex and yet, at the same time absurdly simple, and the demands on our profession are coming at us fast from all areas, that we take time to read, listen, learn and discuss our work in ways that focus us. This focus by our profession will ensure the learners in our classrooms are provided with the most informed practice in primary English teaching today.

Robyn Cox
PETAA President

Works discussed

Chamberlain, L 2017, *Inspiring Writing in the Primary School*, PETAA, Sydney.

Conkbayir, M 2017, *Early Childhood and Neuroscience*, Bloomsbury, London.

Kalantzis, M, Cope, B, Chan, E, & Dalley-Trim, L 2016, *Literacies*, 2nd edn, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne.

McLeod, S & McCormack, J 2015, *Introduction to Speech, Language and Literacy*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Moats, L 2010, *Speech to Print: Language Essentials for Teachers*, 2nd edn, Paul H Brookes Publishing, Sydney.

Smith, J 2010, *Talk, Thinking and Philosophy in the Primary Classroom*, Learning Matters, London.



LORRAINE MCDONALD AWARDED PETAA LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Life membership is awarded to a PETAA member in recognition of their outstanding service, leadership and contribution to the Association, to English literacy teaching in Australia, and to the education profession. The enhancement of the standing of PETAA within the English and literacy community, the publication of articles, participation in research and presentations on or with PETAA are also seen as attributes for gaining PETAA Life Membership.

Dr Lorraine McDonald is a highly esteemed PETAA Member to be awarded a PETAA Life Membership. Lorraine was a Director on the PETAA (PETA then) Board from 1990 – 1993, being President from 1992 – 1993. During her time as President, Lorraine was an energetic and diligent President, overseeing the consolidation of PETAA's committee structure while making notable contributions to the individual committees.

She is the author of the highly successful PETAA publication *A Literature Companion for Teachers* and has contributed to the multi-modal and literary teaching learning experiences within the *Global Words* online resource as a content editor and a contributor to *Reading Australia*.

Dr Lorraine McDonald is currently Honorary Fellow, School of Education, Australian Catholic University, Sydney. Lorraine, a former classroom teacher, has taught pre- and post-graduate teachers in Literacy Education, Linguistics, ESL and Literature for Children and Young Adults. She is a regular presenter at international conferences and currently is teaching at ACU and the University of New England, NSW.

When not teaching or presenting engaging and innovative workshops and addresses for PETAA, Lorraine indulges in her other love – travelling.

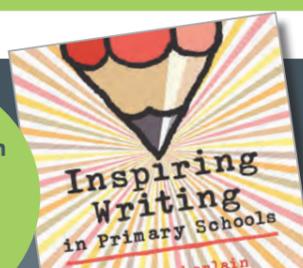
Lorraine will be honoured and awarded her Life membership as part of the PETAA Sydney Conference on 22 May 2017. PETAA congratulates Dr Lorraine McDonald on her well-deserved PETAA Life Membership.



NEW PUBLICATIONS ENCLOSED

- *Inspiring Writing in Primary Schools*. Liz Chamberlain
- PETAA Paper 206: *Two weeks with Oliver Jeffers: Developing early language and literacy with literature*. Robyn Ewing, Kathy Rushton & Jon Callow

All members can access digital versions online



PETAA news, professional learning and other resources
TURN OVER

PETAA RESEARCH GRANT UPDATE

Following the announcement of the 2016 PETAA Research Grant to Dr Helen Harper and Dr Bronwyn Parkin, the PETAA Board met and agreed that due to the success of the PETAA investment in the 2015 and 2016 PETAA Research Grants, the grant will continue over the years to come. Following constructive feedback around the timeline, which was considered too brief to do full justice to the research topic, the PETAA Board felt that it might be better for each PETAA Research Grant to run over two years. Thus the next PRG will become available in 2018, with the submission process commencing late 2017.

RESOURCES

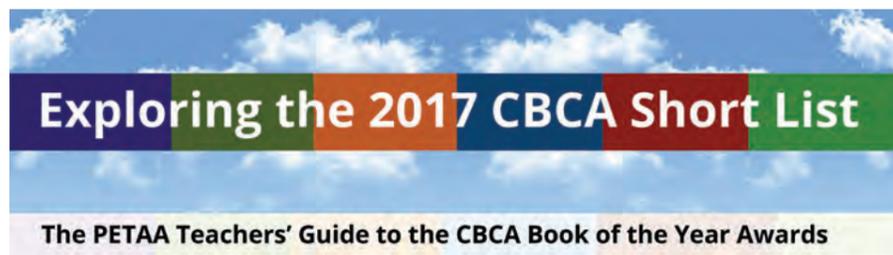
LEST WE FORGET

PETAA's English Curriculum based ANZAC classroom resource, *Lest We Forget*, comprises of six literature-based units of work, now with links to the Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS). Visit the PETAA website under the Teaching Resources tab.



2017 CBCA TEACHERS' GUIDE.

This eagerly anticipated annual resource is currently being developed by the PETAA Team of teachers, writers and creators. Working with the 2017 Shortlist, this online resource will be available early July. **STAY TUNED.**



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

BOOK NOW

PETAA 2017 CONFERENCES: MELBOURNE, SYDNEY, PERTH, PARRAMATTA, ADELAIDE AND BRISBANE.

The Power of Reading: Quality literature across the curriculum

Through plenary addresses and short presentations from a great array of captivating educational presenters, these full-day conferences will engage attendees on the power of reading and using literature to connect the primary curriculum. Ample opportunities to share ideas and connect with other teachers will ensure a day of strong and focused learning.

Visit the PETAA website under the Professional Learning tab.



PL ONLINE

PETAA is working to develop self-paced, accredited online courses to be available for members in late Term 2. Watch out for this exciting new development! *Great news for our regional and remote members!!*



DID YOU KNOW THAT IN THE FIRST 9 WEEKS OF TERM 1:

- Over 350 teachers attended Professional Learning workshops run by PETAA
- PETAA organised 21 tailored professional learning sessions in schools
- PETAA is continuing to support pre-service and new graduate teachers with special PL sessions tailored to them. Most recently, Dr Lorraine McDonald presented *How Does The Teaching Of Literature Link To Language And Literacy Learning?*

PETAA MEMBERSHIP

Members nominate member.

While many in the education community know the value of being a PETAA member, there are some who just might need some encouragement.



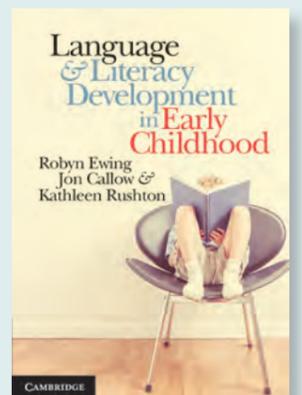
- For every individual member who successfully nominates a new, not previously registered member, PETAA will send to the nominating member, books to the value of \$90.
- For every school member who successfully nominates a new, not previously registered school member, PETAA will add an extra 3-months registration to the nominating school member's account.

All you need to do is send an email to membership@petaa.edu.au with your member number and the details of the new member (name and email address) you are nominating. The new member (individual or school) must accept being nominated. PETAA will then contact the prospective member and once signed up, you will receive your gift.

Special offer deals for members.

To celebrate the publication of PETAA Paper 206 (enclosed herewith), Cambridge University Press has kindly given PETAA seven (7) copies of *Language and Literacy Development in Early Childhood* (see flyer in this pack and special discounts for PETAA members) to give-away to PETAA Members. One for a PETAA member in each State and Territory.

To obtain a copy of this book, be the first member (individual or school) in your state or territory to email PETAA (info@petaa.edu.au) the name of PETAA's newest Life Member and the most recent book she has written?



SHARE A STORY: RETIRED TEACHERS AS MENTORS

Is there a place in our teaching community for a retired teacher mentoring program?

Visit the PETAA Website to vote 'yes' or 'no'.

A good mentor is highly committed to the task of helping less experienced teachers find success and gratification in their work. Mentoring provides a powerful opportunity to improve students' learning outcomes through teachers learning with and from more experienced and perhaps retired teachers, thus making skills and experiences inter-generational.

Do you have a story to share from your school where you have successfully accessed the expertise of a retired teacher(s) to work with less experienced teachers to help with the teaching and learning of English and literacies across the curriculum? In 200 words or less, briefly share your story with PETAA. Email: feedback@petaa.edu.au