

## A MESSAGE FROM A PETAA MEMBER

### SUE BREMNER SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

To celebrate the life, times and many contributions of Sue Bremner, former PETAA Director and educator whose particular concern was for the access of ESL children to the literacies of power, PETAA provided a single, once-only 2016 scholarship to a practicing teacher of EAL/D primary students, to attend the Sydney ASFLA Conference in September 2016.

PETAA was pleased to award the Scholarship (return airfares, accommodation and conference registration) to Carmel Leahy, a classroom teacher at Yiyili Aboriginal Independent Community School in north-west Western Australia. Carmel has spent over 30 years working in the Kimberley region of WA.

Following Carmel's attendance at the ASFLA Conference, she submitted a substantial report and here is just a section of the report. To read the full report, go to the Sue Bremner Scholarship page under the 'About' menu tab on the PETAA website.

*I have spent about 30 years in education in the Kimberley region of WA. Early in my teaching career the work of Kaldor, Malcolm and Eagleson (1982) revealed to me the potential for classroom questioning to marginalise particular groups of students. It disturbed me deeply. I enrolled in external study in Linguistics at what was then Northern Territory University in an effort to improve my practice. I had the good fortune to have Francis Christie and other SFL focused lecturers walk me through the notion of 'scaffolding' and introduce me to the organising principles of SFL. Since then I have tried to keep with latest SFL practice but by August this year I was at a bit of a low ebb professionally and the 2016 ASFLA Conference nearly passed me by. I'm so glad PETAA provided the impetus and wherewithal to get me motivated. The experience has been enlightening and inspiring. Like many teachers across Australia in the 80s the notion of genre became embedded in my otherwise still whole language practice. My move toward more explicit English teaching based on SFL principles began when I started using (1980, 1982) Brian Gray's Concentrated Language Encounters (CLE) at Yakanarra Aboriginal Independent Community School in 1990. Students at our school were very engaged in the learning and some were making good progress. But it was clear that a group of students despite very regular attendance were still not reading and writing well.*

*In 1999, Brian Gray and Wendy Cowey visited our school in Yakanarra. Brian looked at a set of body systems 'readers' I had made as part of a CLE unit centered on a hospital visit. "They are really nice Carmel but you've taken out all the*

*literate language," was his first comment. It was a light bulb moment for me. Gray and Cowey had developed the Scaffolding Literacy Program at the University of Canberra. Our school was one of several in the Kimberley invited to be part of a pilot of the program. This was the first time I made rigorous, systematic use of SFL grammar at paragraph, sentence and word level together with the broader genre level. We were trained to use careful, systematic assessment to measure our results and inform literacy lesson planning. Videoing and reviewing lessons amongst colleagues and with consultants became routine practice. Now I had the tools to analyse and help those students I had been missing and extend higher achievers. Our results shot up.*

*The approach later became Accelerated Literacy and was used in Aboriginal Independent Community Schools (AICS) in WA for about ten years. I spent five years as an Accelerated Literacy consultant in AICS schools in the Kimberley. During this time I realized the importance of developing networks and being a part of groups like the Australian Systemic Functional Linguistics Association (ASFLA) and the Primary English Teachers' Association of Australia (PETAA).*

*Recent changes to funding models and various political machinations has seen support for Accelerated Literacy drop out of most AICS and many other schools across Australia. I am currently a classroom teacher at Yiyili Aboriginal Independent Community School. When I applied for the job I sought approval from the school board to again use Accelerated Literacy. This was readily agreed to.*

*As a literacy consultant I grew to appreciate the importance of networks and associations. I saw first hand the impact good research can have on classroom practice. Once the support networks for AL fell away it became difficult to maintain these networks and contribute to current research. We have formed the Australian Association of Accelerated Literacy Practitioners of Australia (ALPAA) to help address this gap.*

*When I read the ASFLA 2016 Conference home page I was struck with how pertinent it was to my experience of education in the Kimberley (2016: <https://asfla.net/asfla-conference/>).*

*Thank you PETAA for awarding me the Sue Bremner Scholarship that allowed me to travel to the ASFLA 2016 Conference. Sue clearly made a big impact in the PETAA community and beyond and I only wish I had the opportunity to meet her.*

#### Carmel Leahy

Carmel Leahy (centre) with Robyn Cox (PETAA President) on left and Sally Humphrey (ASFLA) on right.



## MEMBER SURVEY

PETAA would like to thank all members who took the time and interest to complete the recent Member Survey. Working with the professional and independent Survey Matters company, we received over 1000 responses to the Survey providing an indepth national reflection upon how PETAA is viewed in the education community. While there is much analysis to take place, the results of the Survey will help PETAA to better understand member usage and satisfaction of key services; understand members' preferences in how PETAA delivers publications and professional learning support; gauge members' interest in a range of new services that PETAA is considering. Further, it will help us appreciate the many challenges facing teachers, and explore ways in which PETAA can assist professionally, through leadership and advocacy.

Overall, we found that the majority of our members were generally satisfied with their PETAA membership and the subsequent benefits, while at the same time flagging a number of actions and issues that PETAA needs to consider if it intends to maintain and grow its professional support for teachers and the education community. As PETAA unpacks the Survey outcomes, we will start addressing issues in our short-, medium- and long-term plans.

*You have spoken, we have listened and PETAA will act.*

As a thank you for your participation, all completed responses were eligible to go into a prize draw to win one of five (5) book packs from the 2016 CBCA shortlist. PETAA congratulates and is pleased to announce that the five lucky book pack recipients are:

- Kylie Godfrey (Ranford Primary School) (WA)
- Siobhan Denny (VIC)
- Meredith Lockery (Tyndale Christian School) (SA)
- Andrew Jones (QLD)
- Linda De Marcellis (Regents Park Public School) (NSW)

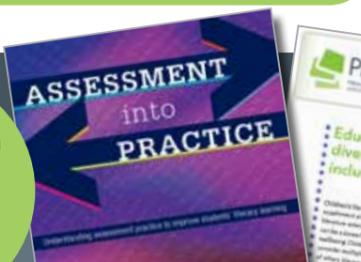
*PETAA is an excellent organisation providing quality resources and opportunities for professional development*

(Survey Quote)

## NEW PUBLICATIONS ENCLOSED

- *Assessment into Practice*. Heather Fehring (ed)
- *PETAA Paper 205: Educating for values and diversity through culturally inclusive children's literature*. Helen Adam & Laurie Harper
- *Parents' guide to helping children at home with reading and writing*: Kaye Lowe

All members can access digital versions online



PETAA news, professional learning and other resources  
**TURN OVER**

## PETAA RESEARCH GRANT

### PETAA RESEARCH GRANT PUBLICATION (MARCH 2017)

Members will receive the first **PETAA Research Grant** publication *Researching dialogic pedagogies for literacy learning across the primary years*, (Dr Christine Edwards-Groves and Dr Christina Davidson). This research project, funded by PETAA, studied how changes in classroom teacher's interaction practices will lead to improved opportunities and experiences for students' oral language and literacy development.

### PETAA RESEARCH GRANT 2016 ANNOUNCED

The 2016 **PETAA Research Grant** of \$75,000 has been awarded to a research team lead by Dr Helen Harper, Centre for Child Development and Education, Menzies School of Health Research, Darwin (NT) and Dr Bronwyn Parkin, School of Humanities (Linguistics), University of Adelaide, (SA). The successful submission is entitled: *Scaffolding language and literacy for STEM in disadvantaged school contexts*. The successful project aims to articulate a robust, reliable and useful set of principles for scaffolding language and literacy, and investigate the impact of using these principles in classroom practice in STEM. The resulting publication(s) will be delivered to members in March 2018.



## STUDENT AND NEW GRADUATE WORKSHOPS

In 2016 and in order to provide additional support for beginning teachers in the teaching and learning of English and literacies in primary classrooms, PETAA introduced the new membership categories of Students and New Graduates offering generous discounts on services.



In addition to gaining access to research-based resources to enhance their expertise, understandings and professional knowledge, students and teachers new to the profession were able to attend workshops specifically designed for their needs. *Where Do I Start? Literacy Teaching for Beginning Teachers* presented by Robyn Wild, *Literature and Latte: an afternoon with quality texts* presented by Jennifer Asha were sold out quickly, proving solid evidence of the need for professional support for aspiring and early career teachers.

## PETAA MEMBERSHIP



There is no better time than now to be a PETAA member and enjoy all the benefits that membership brings to teachers.

In 2017, PETAA will **not** increase its membership, publication or professional learning fees, but will increase the special **discounts** that members enjoy. For example, PETAA members will now enjoy discounts of 35% off publications and professional learning courses. PETAA feels that it is important to ensure we stay connected with you as often as possible and that these extra benefits will help to enhance and entrench your membership with PETAA.

See the attached *2017 Professional Resources Catalogue* in this Summer Mailing Pack or else go online to see all the membership benefits.

PETAA appreciates and values your ongoing support.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT IN 2016.....

- Over 1650 teachers attended PETAA open workshops
- PETAA assisted schools across several states with 67 specifically tailored workshops run by expert presenters
- PETAA processed 2345 orders for publications
- Special student and new graduate memberships attracted great interest for new memberships
- There have been 73 500 page views for CBCA units of work (with 1000 visitors on the first day of release of the 2016 Guide)
- PETAA members can also access digital materials in e:pub format or read (PETAA Papers) online

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

### PETAA 2017 CONFERENCES ANNOUNCED

*The Power of Reading: Quality literature across the curriculum*

Save the (tentative) dates

**Brisbane:** Saturday 29 April

**Melbourne:** Tuesday 2 May

**Sydney:** Friday 19 May

**Adelaide:** Wednesday 24 May

**Perth:** Saturday 27 May

**Parramatta:** Saturday 17 June

Stay tuned for further details

SAVE  
THE  
DATES

## AUTHOR VISITS TO SCHOOLS

The Australian Society of Authors (ASA) runs a literacy program, *Reading Australia Book Pros*, in which professional authors visit schools to conduct writing workshops. Benefits to students include:

- Enthusiasm for writing, inspired by a published author
- Development of thinking, literacy and writing skills
- Access to expertise in all aspects of the writing process, including planning, structuring, pace, creating real characters, engaging your reader, using language appropriate for audience and purpose, and editing

In addition to the workshop, authors will introduce teachers to new, free, online resources: [Reading Australia](#). Learn how these quality and insightful resources can support your teaching of Australian texts in the classroom.

For further information, and to book an author to visit your school, please go to the [ASA website](#).

## PETAA CHRISTMAS OFFICE CLOSURE



The PETAA Office will be closed from 4.30 pm Tuesday 20 December 2016 and will reopen on Monday 16 January 2017.

The PETAA Board and Staff thank you for your support throughout 2016 and wish you, your partners, your family and friends a safe and happy holiday season. PETAA looks forward to supporting your professional learning needs in 2017.