



Media release content

Maurice Saxby Award 2019

The 2019 recipient of the Maurice Saxby Award is Professor Alyson Simpson. With a background as a primary school teacher librarian, Alyson now works with graduate-entry preservice teachers at the University of Sydney as a Professor in English literacy education.

The Maurice Saxby Award for service to children's and/or young adult literature is given to an individual, team or organisation that has displayed excellence and passion in promoting reading and/or writing for young people in NSW.

Alyson's passion, excellence, and commitment to the promotion of reading and children's literature are evidenced in her voluntary service over two decades to KOALA, which stands for *Kids Own Australian Literature Awards*, and through her work as a teacher educator in undergraduate and postgraduate programs for preservice teachers.

Upon moving from teaching into teacher education, Alyson continued her association with KOALA and has effectively brought research, theory, and practice together to embed educational rigour into its programs. She has worked with schools and relevant organisations to raise the profile of the KOALA program



and has introduced KOALA to multiple cohorts of pre-service teachers by highlighting how literature awards chosen by children align with syllabus outcomes and help build critical literacy in students.

Alyson was recognised by the Australian Government, Department of Education, Skills and Employment, in 2015 for her passionate commitment to dialogic pedagogy that inspires her students to teach critically and creatively with children's literature. She has conducted large-scale international research into the politics and practice of teaching with children's literature and, in research conducted locally in primary schools, has explored the use of dialogic teaching in literature circles. Alyson has authored and edited a number of books focused on reading and the use of children's literature in teaching.

Through her longstanding service to KOALA, Alyson Simpson has influenced the lives of thousands of young readers across NSW. Similarly, Alyson's dedication and commitment to literacy education has influenced the professional lives of the teachers and teacher librarians of today and tomorrow through provision of a rationale, resources, and strategies to support the development of reading programs. The members of the School Library Association of NSW congratulate Alyson on the receipt of this award.



The [School Library Association of New South Wales](http://www.slansw.net.au) (SLANSW) is a professional association centered on professional learning, advocacy and research. Our membership is interested in learning about, and supporting and advocating for, the importance of school libraries as a part of the K-12 educational experience.

For media inquiries contact:

Kaylene Taylor - Executive Officer

Email: info@slansw.net.au

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