



# Australian Association for the Teaching of English

## Citation for AATE Life Membership: Mark Howie 2014

*Presented at the AATE/ALEA National Conference in Darwin, July 2014*

Mark has long been an active contributor to the work of the AATE. His services began with his deep understanding of the nature of English and the theories that underpin its content and pedagogies. It was this expertise that motivated his work as Reviews editor for *English in Australia* from 2004 – 2007 and his contributions to AATE *Interface* titles including *Media Teaching: language, audience and production*. He was also a co-editor of *Only Connect* (2006).

In 2007 Mark worked in the area of teaching standards, managing AATE's response to the *National professional standards for advanced teaching and school leadership* consultation paper, committing further time enhancing these through his involvement in the Summer Schools program.

The value of his contributions was recognised by his election to the presidency of AATE which was attained through the usual sequence of service: NSW Delegate to AATE Council (2006), AATE President-Elect (2007), President in (2008 – 2009) and Past President in 2010.

Mark's tenure of office coincided with periods of significant questioning about the effectiveness of education in Australia and how the curriculum can best serve society. The English teaching profession was very well served by Mark's rich experience of teaching English, his clarity of thought and eloquence in several public arenas. In 2007 he appeared with Scott Bulfin before the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations and Education and mounted a strong defence of Australian academic standards of school education, bringing some perspective to feverish media criticism of our OECD ranking. He regularly, in the minutes available to him before undertaking his full teaching load, wrote well-argued letters defending the teaching of English against misguided or biased media attacks. Mark was also a prolific contributor to the *They Said WHAT?* section of the AATE web site.

The development of the *Australian Curriculum: English* took place while Mark was President and Past-President of AATE. At this time he took the lead on consultations with ACARA including AATE's national curriculum position statement, its response to the Shaping Paper, Framing Paper and the Senior Curriculum Position Paper. Given the very different approaches to English curriculum and its delivery in the various states, this involved considerable negotiation and refinement of language to ensure that one document would reflect the range of positions across the country.

Mark's contribution to the English teaching profession as a whole has been recognised time and again in the awards he has received including:

- Life membership of the English Teachers' Association NSW
- Fellow of the Australian College of Educators
- Australian Government National Awards for Quality Schooling – Highly Commended National Achievement in the category 'Excellence by a Teacher'
- Professional Teachers' Council NSW 'Professional Service Award'
- and the NSW Minister for Education 'Minister's Award for Excellence in Teaching'

It is in recognition of this contribution and of Mark Howie's services to the Association and to the profession that AATE proudly awards this life membership.