

Referee Report for ASLA Citation nominee: Karen Suzanne Bonanno

I have known Karen Bonanno for a period of some ten years which coincides with her term of active involvement with ASLA.

I first met Karen during a period of transition in her professional life: a time of significant change and risk assessment associated with leaving the comfort of a secure position to develop her own business. At this time Karen was a well-respected teacher librarian and member of the SLAQ Executive.

The approach she took to that transition has been revisited a number of times since as she has grown and matured and taken on significant responsibility.

Karen Bonanno is a rare individual. She has been endowed with a wide range of skills and aptitudes with a strong people orientation. At the same time she is task orientated and able to drive a set of goals both personal and professional.

Karen Bonanno has developed the problem solving and team building skills that underpin her leadership. More than that she is a person of achievable vision and she has demonstrated the capacity to sell her visions.

Over a lengthy period of time Karen Bonanno has provided national leadership in the field of teacher librarianship. Karen has provided leadership in obvious ways through her involvement with the ASLA Council and through the management of national ASLA projects. She has provided leadership in less obvious ways through mentorship and role modelling.

When I was searching for a co-editor of the Information Literate School Community: Best practice Karen Bonanno was a standout choice. Not only was she equipped to contribute to the work, she had the skills to liaise with authors and achieve deadlines.

I have much pleasure in supporting Karen Suzanne Bonanno as a nominee for the 2001 ASLA Citation. As a Citation winner Karen would bring significant credit to ASLA and to the profession.

James Henri

Sub Dean Faculty of Science & Agriculture
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TESTIMONIAL IN SUPPORT OF THE NOMINATION OF KAREN SUZANNE
BONANNO FOR AN ASLA CITATION

Norma Jeffery, Director of Curriculum, Curriculum Council (Western Australia)

My involvement with Karen in relation to her national contribution to the Australian School Library Association spans the period between 1992, when she became an ASLA Councillor, to the end of her 2 years as President in 1998.

From the time she first took on the role of ASLA Councillor it was evident that she had the vision, dedication, drive, enthusiasm and attention to detail to be a future leader of the Association and Teacher Librarianship across Australia.

These attributes were evident, for example, in the period when she was Project Officer for the development of an IMM CD-ROM, *Teaching Information Skills* during my time as President of the Association. Karen contributed to the conceptualization of the product and managed it through from conception to fruition. This process included extensive analysis of practice around Australia and negotiation and collaboration to ensure that there were 'common messages' about the centrality of information skills to the learning process and the role of the teacher librarian in this. The CDROM supported the policy directions provided by *Learning for the Future* and provided a means for exemplifying best practice in a range of educational settings. The quality of this work was acknowledged in 1997 through an International Commendation Award for professional development **programs** by the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) and SIRS.

Her role as an **administrator** through being Vice President, President and Immediate Past President is in itself a major contribution to the Association. In Karen's case not only did she dedicate 6 years of time and effort, she also contributed significantly to improving the management functions of the organization which in turn has led to the Association being more effective from the perspective of the membership. This contribution included clarification of the role statements for members of ASLA Executive and revision of the position descriptions for paid officers and alignment of these with work agreements. Guidelines for the ASLA Board of Publications were also developed and approved to encourage and facilitate quality publishing. Karen contributed to these publications through her own writings such as Access articles, joint publications and conference papers.

Perhaps more importantly, Karen used her time as an administrator to provide leadership through the initiation and development of projects which had Australia wide impact on the membership and the quality of teacher librarianship in Australia and internationally. **ASLA policy** statements flowing from *Learning for the Future* were developed jointly with Lyn Rushby and the CD-ROM mentioned above was developed and promoted. A policy was also endorsed for development of the ASLA website with Karen taking on the role of website manager to ensure that teacher librarians had access to quality information in a timely manner. This typifies her mode of operation which was always to follow through on ideas and decisions to ensure that they had the desired results.

All of her ideas, energy and deep understanding of the **educational** needs of schools and students she passed on through giving time to the presentation of keynote addresses at local, national and international conferences, presenting professional development for member associations (nationwide), conference organization and involvement in the education of teacher librarians

I have worked with Karen in all of the situations named above and can give testament to the significant influence she has made to the achievement of the goals of ASLA. In all instance she has either been the initiator or part of the group conceptualizing the initiative and then put her energies into ensuing that the initiative was achieved and had the desired impact. Almost invariably this has meant many hours of dedication to a task way beyond what could reasonably be expected. In my view she would be a very worthy and deserving recipient of the ASLA citation.

Norma Jeffery

Testimonial for Karen Bonanno

It gives me great pleasure to offer this testimonial in support of the nomination of Karen Bonanno for the ASLA citation award.

Karen has been both a practitioner and a leader in the field of teacher-librarianship since the mid 1980s. During her time as a teacher-librarian working in Queensland schools, Karen quickly developed a reputation as someone who brought to her work energy, dedication, and the ability to inspire and work effectively with others. This early work in the field laid the foundation for her subsequent state and national contributions to professional organisations such as SLAQ and ASLA. It is through her varied roles as executive member of these associations (including President and Vice President), ASLA web manager, and consultant that Karen has made a distinguished contribution to school libraries and teacher-librarianship in Australia. Her continued support for the principles and practices of teacher-librarianship is evident through her achievements in policy planning and implementation, publication, conference organisation, dissemination and networking, and professional development.

As her curriculum vitae clearly outlines, Karen's achievements cover a wide spectrum of activities which range from policy formation to innovative practices. Whilst the scope of her involvement is impressive in terms of its breadth of duties, responsibilities and activities, it is also significant to note the range of abilities that is required to bring these activities to successful fruition. Karen's duties as President, Vice President, Councillor, Conference Convenor, ASLA Web manager, and advisor to various working parties, reference groups, and university reviews, involve not only a willing spirit and energy in terms of 'getting the job done' but an intellectual acuity and vision. It is perhaps these latter qualities which serve as markers of successful leadership in any endeavour. Consequently, Karen has not only the ability to conceive and envision pathways for future directions that school libraries and teacher-librarianship can take, but is able to ensure that these goals will be achieved through her own indefatigable drive and her gentle support of, and collegial relations with, committee members, practitioners, and other stakeholders.

Karen's reputation in the field of teacher-librarianship reaches beyond state and national levels as her publications and international conference presentations have provided her with forums to advance ideas and open up debate and discussion on issues relevant to the field. Professional associations such as ASLA and SLAQ, and teacher-librarians in Australia especially, have benefited from Karen's intelligence and dedication for many years. For her peers and colleagues to be able to acknowledge this depth and range of commitment to the profession through an ASLA citation award would be a fitting tribute to a very deserving candidate. I, therefore, offer my full support for the nomination of Karen Bonanno for this award.



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