

AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY TEACHER OF THE YEAR 2016 FLINDERS UNIVERSITY

DISCIPLINE

Biological Sciences

RESEARCH AREAS

Conservation
Marine Biology
Scientific Literacy
Inquiry-based learning

► [linkedin.com/in/karen-burke-da-silva-a6a11155](https://www.linkedin.com/in/karen-burke-da-silva-a6a11155)

BACKGROUND

Karen Burke da Silva completed her undergraduate degree at Simon Fraser University, Canada and 1995 completed her postgraduate studies at McGill University, Montreal. She began teaching at Flinders University School of Biological Sciences in 2006. She was awarded an OLT Grant in 2007 to engage science academics in teaching science and another in 2011 to investigate teaching practices of first year biology across Australia. She was an educational consultant to McGraw Hill Publishers and Pearson Higher Education Publishers. She was Associate Dean of the School of Biological Sciences (T&L) from 2010-2012 and Chair of the Flinders University College of Distinguished Educators since 2011. She has led a number of science education and the first year transition research programs. In 2014 she was recognized for her work in developing an integrated teaching environment that fosters interaction between teaching and research across multiple STEM areas and won the South Australian Science Excellence award for STEM education. She made international headlines for her clownfish conservation and captive breeding program 'Saving Nemo' at Flinders University www.savingnemo.org/. This breeding program has been expanded into the secondary school arena. Karen Burke da Silva has been instrumental in driving science academics to improve their teaching skills.

IMPACT ON LEARNING & TEACHING

The Award has led to invitations for Karen to present keynote presentations at both national and international events. The enhanced profile has provided her with opportunities to expand her networks and connect with a wider range of people interested in collaborating on various projects. Within her university she has noticed the recognition gained from the Award has increased her credibility and authority amongst her colleagues and university leaders. During the first year of her award, she has had numerous internal requests to share her knowledge with colleagues on various aspects of learning and teaching matters. She has had increased interest from industry to present her approach to learning and teaching in science education. She intends to continue to build on the science literacy work she was already doing prior to the Award, with non-science undergraduates and also with the public. It is very clear to her that this award will lead to new projects and expanding opportunities.

IMPACT ON CAREER

At the time of the Award, Karen was an Associate Professor, and the Associate Dean (Learning & Teaching) for the Faculty of Science & Engineering. Since receiving the Award, she has been promoted to Professor and has a new role as Dean, (Education) College of Science and Engineering. Her new role is a more strategic one within the College and throughout the University, and will provide her with greater opportunities to contribute. The higher profile has already led to an increased level of interest in her from other national universities. It has also provided her with useful professional contacts. Karen can see the national recognition that the Award brings will lead to increased opportunities to build stronger research networks and enhanced research opportunities into the future.

PROFESSOR KAREN BURKE DA SILVA



CURRENT ROLE

Professor Karen Burke da Silva is the Dean (Education) for the College of Science & Engineering. She is an active researcher and teacher within the School of Biological Sciences. She is known for using innovative techniques to stimulate, motivate and improve science education and at the same time reduce student withdrawal rates. She is currently focused on ways to embed greater scientific literacy across all degrees at the university as well as building greater science awareness in the public arena. She is actively involved in social media campaigns to raise awareness around conservation and environmental issues. She involves her undergraduate students in her conservation research and public awareness campaigns, creating an innovative and integrated learning experience. She continues to work with clown fish breeding programs with her biology students and also in the secondary schools.

WHAT THE AWARD HAS MEANT

Excited about the opportunities | Delighted

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

- 2017** Promoted to Dean, (Education) College of Science & Engineering;
- 2016** National Science Week Grants involving a citizen Science Project, and a second involving promoting women and STEM;
- 2015** Grants involving a project to improve student learning outcomes and a second one to provide ongoing support for the "Saving Nemo" project;
- 2014** Promoted to Associate Professor Biodiversity and Conservation, Awarded SA Early Career STEM Educator of the Year – Tertiary Teaching;
- 2007-2014** Awarded numerous OLT Grants, including a 2013 OLT team teaching extension Grant for \$30,000;
- 2012** Assoc. Dean (Teaching and Learning) Faculty of Science and Engineering, Flinders University and also Director of First Year School of Biological Sciences;
- 2011** Chair, Flinders University College of Distinguished Educators, became a member of the Flinders University Executive member of HERGA and also received an OLT Grant – Transitions in Biology.