

4<sup>th</sup> April 2017

**Re: Reference for Karen Starkiss**

To Whom It May Concern

I have known Karen Starkiss for three years professional and personally. In 2013-2015 ACT Education implemented recommendations of the final report *Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties*.

The *Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties* was an advisory body established in 2012, to provide the Minister for Education and Training with recommendations for classroom level intervention and support of children and young people in ACT government schools with learning difficulties. The report identified 14 strategies under the three key recommendations: *A Consistent Systemic Approach, Building Staff Capacity and Building Partnerships with Families*.

Karen Starkiss was an important member to the Taskforce team and became ongoing 'critical friend' to the executive leaders during the implementation stage. Karen was integral in supporting the team in implementing one of the three key recommendations *Building Staff Capacity*. Karen presented numerous workshops for all staff and families in our Directorate and survey results showed a high regard for Karen Starkiss training. Her knowledge, expertise and skills and in the area of learning difficulties (in particular Dyslexia) was recognised by the team, staff and parents. She provided ongoing advice and direction to the executive team to improve teaching practice and pedagogy and presented information session for school principals on 'Whole School Approach to Learning Difficulties'.

I would highly recommend Karen Starkiss in any capacity she is designated to in leading change in creating inclusive environments for students with learning difficulties.

For further reading of the report please visit the ACT Education website  
[http://www.education.act.gov.au/teaching\\_and\\_learning/learning-difficulties/taskforce](http://www.education.act.gov.au/teaching_and_learning/learning-difficulties/taskforce)

Please don't hesitate to contact me for further information.

Regards,  
  
Stella Scheele

School Leader  
Inclusion and Engagement Section  
ACT Education

[stella.scheele@ed.act.edu.au](mailto:stella.scheele@ed.act.edu.au)  
0451679750

To Whom It May Concern

I would like to endorse the referee statement provided by Stella Scheele in respect to Karen Starkiss.

In 2013 I was appointed Chair of the ten member ACT Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties. The Taskforce was a multi disciplinary body which included psychologists, an academic working in the area of diversity and inclusion, reading specialists, a senior speech pathologist, a young adult with Dyslexia and the President of ACT Council of Parents and Citizens. As Chair I brought extensive experience as a school principal and adult educator.

As a component of our information gathering process I was fortunate to be able to bring Karen Starkiss to Canberra to address the Taskforce. All members of the Taskforce were extremely impressed with the expertise in learning difficulties and particularly Dyslexia that Karen shared with us. Karen was able to expertly engage the Taskforce members demonstrating her strengths as an educator and communicating both her knowledge and the processes she had been part of in both England and Australia. Karen also generously provided extensive written material and references to inform the work of the Taskforce. It was immediately obvious to me that the ACT Education Directorate would benefit enormously to an ongoing relationship with Karen if the recommendations of the Taskforce were to be embedded with integrity and depth.

As stated in the referee statement from Stella, Karen went on to be contracted by the ACT Education Directorate as an advisor and integral part of the team implementing the recommendations of the Taskforce. She implemented workshops in the key recommendation of *Building Staff Capacity*. Her workshops were extremely well prepared and presented and participants were always keen to have more access to her expertise.

Karen has experience in both the policy and strategic development of educational initiatives and the delivery of training that makes a difference to students and teachers. I feel very confident in recommending Karen for positions that require high level expertise in the area of development and training in regard to educational programs around learning difficulties and Dyslexia.



Irene Lind

5<sup>th</sup> April 2017

[Irene.lind@act.gov](mailto:Irene.lind@act.gov).

0410468393.