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Jump starting literacy

A volunteer run program in Geraldton WA is helping men to improve their literacy.

When he's not working at Geraldton's Greenough Regional Prison, literacy teacher Wayne Hosking spends his Wednesday afternoons working as a volunteer tutor in a local community centre.

Started in July 2022 at Centacare Men's Hub, Hub Cap is a free adult literacy program for men, many of whom have spent their lives hiding their struggles with reading and writing.

There's no shortage of guys in Geraldton and the surrounding area wanting help, Wayne says.

'I'm often working with guys who don't know the alphabet and have zero literacy. Some are rough-

'Many of the guys I work with aren't going to get a job or go to uni but they have a greater sense of self-worth and autonomy and they're able to do things they haven't been able to do before, and function better in everyday life. And that's huge.' Wayne Hosking, Hub Cap literacy tutor

sleeping around town, some come to us through the justice system, others find us through word of mouth.'

They've reached adulthood with such low levels of literacy for a range of reasons, including childhood illnesses that have disrupted their schooling, undiagnosed learning disabilities, or bullying that made school a place not conducive to learning.

All of them have been really harmed by their low literacy, Wayne says. Taking the first step to get help is a milestone so Wayne makes sure they feel welcomed and safe in an environment that's as unlike school as possible.

'Their negative memories of school are still strong so we keep things informal and low key.'

There's no whiteboards, no complicated enrolment forms, and the classroom looks more like a comfortable loungeroom. 'We sit around drinking coffee and talking BS and I do whatever I can to make it easy for them. If we need to pick them up, drop them home, have a yarn, bring them in a feed, we do whatever's required. That sort of thing doesn't and can't happen in formal settings and most of them would find somewhere like TAFE just too daunting.

(Story continues on p. 3)

Message from the CEO



This year's Adult Learners Week theme 'It's never too late' encourages people of all ages to embrace continuous learning, seize opportunities for growth, and embark on a lifelong learning journey. This theme emphasises that opportunities to learn something new are always within reach, regardless of age or circumstances.

Although we're all familiar with the statistics on adult literacy in Australia, I still find it shocking that approximately 40–50 per cent of adults in Australia have literacy levels below the international standard required for participation in work, education and society.

It is heartening that the Federal government has recognised the impact of low literacy, numeracy and digital literacy (LLND) and employability skills on workforce participation and productivity and has announced its commitment to increasing access to foundation skills training. ALA welcomes the expansion of eligibility for the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program to improve access for Australians with low LLND skills, particularly for those people who have been hard-to-reach.

I was pleased to hear the Minister for Skills and Training, Brendan O'Connor, in his recent address to the Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association (AVETRA) conference describing his hopes for a renewed approach to foundation skills so that '...every Australian who needs it, can access literacy, language, numeracy, and digital skills...We want a "no wrong door" approach to building skills, and to include the excluded and often under-represented so they can reach their best potential'.

ALA has been actively advocating for a fresh commitment to Foundation Skills through its membership of the Foundations Skills Advisory Group (FSAG) and through submissions on the National Study on Adult Literacy, Numeracy, and Digital Literacy Skills discussion paper. We also responded to the Jobs and Skills Australia Amendment Bill 2023, highlighting the need for community sector advice and representation, and recognition of learning and employment pathways.

We have been working hard to keep adult literacy on the national agenda, particularly in the lead up to the budget where we responded to a number of media requests from The Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, The Financial Review and ABC Radio for interviews and commentary about adult literacy needs in Australia and broader adult learning issues.

I was recently invited to South Australia's ACE Information Day where ACE providers from across the state gathered, and it was gratifying to hear SA Minister for Education Training and Skills Blair Boyer acknowledge the important role of adult and community education in that state.

We are delighted to have Sharimllah Devi Ramachandran (Sharmy) Ph.D. join our team as our new Manager, Projects and Business Development. Sharmy brings 30 years of experience in tertiary settings (private, public and community) across Malaysia and Australia. Her passion for lifelong learning and empowering learners will be invaluable to our team.

We also welcome Dr. Robyn Ober from the Batchelor Institute as a new board member, bringing expertise in First Nations perspectives, language, and learning. We congratulate returning Board members Ros Bauer, Ron Wilson and Kathleen Priestly on their re-appointment and extend gratitude to outgoing board member Prof. Stephen Billet for his valuable contribution.

This year's Adult Learners Week theme 'It's never too late' encourages people of all ages to embrace continuous learning, seize opportunities for growth, and embark on a lifelong learning journey. This theme emphasises that opportunities to learn something new are always within reach, regardless of age or circumstances. I look forward to celebrating it with you.

Jenny Macaffer, CEO



Making the learning experience relaxed and fun alleviates anxiety for people who have had bad experiences with education in the past.

(story continued from p. 1)

'It's not like school where attendance is mandatory. As adults they only come if they want to. If they come in and feel uncomfortable they don't come back. So I make sure they are happy and it's enjoyable and they can see progress. Sometimes there might be more coffee and talking than studying, it just depends.'

But Wayne says once they start the men are keen to make progress. 'When they are ready to come in and get help they do wonderfully well.'

'The centre is open during business hours so even if I'm not here, the guys can come in and work at their own pace, on their own. It gives them a sense of autonomy and a feeling that they are in control of their own learning. One of the guys, Malcolm, practically lives here, he's a study machine. I might drop in and give him a rev up and say "Well done", but he's very self-directed and very motivated. Having said that, one-on-one reading together is still the gold standard, and I try and do at least one or two sessions a week with each student.'

In the room next door fellow volunteer Kerrie Elliott runs art classes and the two groups mingle at break times. 'Everyone gets to know one another and it's a little community. It's a really welcoming group,' Wayne says.

Doing art with Kerrie encourages self-expression and creativity and can be a stepping stone to getting help with reading and writing, Wayne says.

'I've learned way more than I've taught since I've become involved in teaching adult literacy, and met some amazing people.' Wayne Hosking, Hub Cap literacy tutor

'It can be a great hook to get them into the literacy class. They might sit in the art sessions for a while with Kerrie, but they get to know me as well. It's another way we can break down barriers of shame or hesitancy. Maybe when we're yarning about something I'll just ask "How's your reading, mate" and they'll tell me: "Good enough" or "Nah, no good" and we can take it from there.'

'It's a matter of being here whenever someone reaches a stage where they're ready to have another go, and then to meet their specific needs as much as possible.'

'We have no formal program, I just work one-on-one and I have great funders who give me the flexibility so that each individual student is the centre of our attention, it's all about them.'

Countering the shame of low literacy

'All of the guys have got a story. Working in prison you get familiar with the barrier of shame. Some of them have never been encouraged or received positive feedback regarding education in their lives. So when they come in here it might be the first time they've had positive messages about their ability to read or write.'

'One guy I'm working with nearly fell off his chair when I said his writing was fantastic. He was terribly self-conscious about his handwriting but my standard isn't about how the writing looks, it's just whether it's legible. If I can read back to them what they wrote, then their writing is fine: that's the purpose of writing isn't it? To communicate? Me reading back to him something he'd written was the first time anyone had said anything good about his academic abilities and he is 60 years old. That has a huge impact.'



For people with low literacy, everyday tasks like using an ATM can be a challenge.

'The same happens when someone who can't read a word sits and reads a small book for the first time. It makes them reassess where they think they're at and it changes their view of themselves. For someone who believes they can't read to be half an hour later reading a simple book makes them reassess their whole sense of self and what they are capable of.'

'I've had men record themselves reading to a child that they are separated from. The whole family ended up listening to the recording because they didn't believe he could read. I've seen men start reading for pleasure for the first time, and others have told me they answered a couple of questions when watching TV quiz shows because they learned facts during our reading practice. They will open their own mail now. One bloke had never touched a computer before. We showed him how to use the mouse so he could work with some of our literacy software. So now he's purchased his first smart-phone, aged 58.'

'One guy who had untreated hearing loss as a kid and really missed out in school is reading really well. After about six months of learning, he picked up a book of junior fiction and three hours later had read 100 pages. Half way through he looked up and said, "I can see pictures in my head!" Seeing him discover the joy of reading for the first time was fantastic. What's that worth?'

From CEO to adult literacy tutor

Wayne didn't start his teaching career until later in life. A science graduate who started work as a research officer for a fisherman's co-operative, he later took over as CEO and over 16 years oversaw its development into the world's largest lobster export company with a half a billion dollar turnover. In 2018, he quit his job and retrained as an adult literacy teacher and began work at the local prison. But

helping people improve their reading and writing had always been at the back of his mind.

'When I first came to Geraldton 30 years ago, I went to the ATM to withdraw some cash. I was waiting in line behind a bloke. He was taking a long time. He was pushing buttons, starting to get agitated. Eventually I looked over his shoulder and there was a big red sign saying "Out of order". I said, "That's not working mate" and he dropped his head and walked off. That's when I decided I would one day work on adult literacy. I started studying for my Grad Dip as soon as I resigned in 2018.'

'I've always been someone who loves a challenge and when I see a problem I like to fix it. I first became aware of low literacy among the seasonal fish factory workers here in Geraldton when I was CEO and I got interested in what to do about it.'

'Centacare have been really supportive. It's something a bit different for them, but they have really embraced and supported us and it's very compatible with other things they are doing in the Men's Hub.'

'The model we've built here it's really low cost. We run on the smell of an oily rag because otherwise it's not sustainable. I'm about to go back to the well for more funding for another year. Our main supporters are Bendigo Bank and the local Rotary club. They're really happy with what we're doing.'

'I love working with these guys and the challenge of thinking about and solving problems and I like to learn and listen to people. That's a trait that's universally useful.' Wayne Hosking, Hub Cap literacy tutor

No more waiting at Bus Stop

A film-making course is shifting attitudes about disability on and off screen.



Bus Stop Films, a not-for-profit organisation that teaches film-making to people with an intellectual disability to improve their participation and representation in the film industry, is running its Accessible Film Studies Program for the first time in Tasmania.

The Launceston program, run in partnership with TasTAFE, is Bus Stop Films' tenth program, joining a network of programs in locations including Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, Melbourne, Parramatta, Canberra, and Wollongong.

Bus Stop Films Chief Executive Officer Tracey Corbin-Matchett says the 40-week course is a game-changer for the participants and the Australian film industry.

'People with disabilities get a chance to see themselves on screen, have a chance to tell their own stories and the industry benefits by being more inclusive and representative of the diversity of Australian voices.'

The program consists of three-hour weekly classes, delivered on Saturdays over 40 weeks at TasTAFE in Launceston. Program fees can be paid through a student's NDIS package.

During the course all participants are involved in creating a short film and learn lighting, camera, sound, hair, makeup, production, sound design, and casting. They learn from professional film makers who

work as mentors alongside them during film making as well as in post-production.

Mainstream educational institutions who partner with Bus Stop Films are showing their commitment to inclusivity and collaboration and their students benefit from being involved in an award-winning training program, Tracey says.

Bus Stop Films benefits through access to facilities and equipment. All films are shot in one day which costs around \$15,000. 'Panasonic provide the cameras so we are very grateful for that support but we aren't eligible for film finance because it's a film school production so we raise money through fundraising.'

The course does not offer a formal qualification. 'We're a social enterprise not an RTO,' Tracey says. 'It's about developing our community and capacity building. There's a whole bunch of things our students learn - taking direction, improving literacy, building relationships, and developing communication skills. They get all of this through the film school experience. It also helps them get work in the screen industry. They get attachments on feature films, they work on TV commercials and shows, and in production. The industry gains confidence in working with people with disability and people with disability gain confidence working in the industry.'

Changing film culture

Tracey says that learning skills in film-making not only gives students better access to paid work opportunities in an industry that is experiencing a labour shortage but enables them to tell unique stories about life with a disability.

'We want more people with disability on screen as well as behind the camera as crew, in the production office

'A great film can really change attitudes. It can change lives and minds.'

Tracey Corbin-Matchett, CEO, Bus Stop Films



Bus Stop Films on set.

and as part of the writers' room so that people who are underrepresented are part of the whole process.'

Bus Stop Films' students have gone on to work on projects such as Marvel's *Thor: Love and Thunder*, *Masterchef* and *Survivor* and the program has provided pathways to employment in the screen industry for over 1000 students.

The tutor works as a film director with a group of up to 15 young adults living with an intellectual disability or who live with an Autism Spectrum Disorder to produce a short film.

'I always say a good tutor is a unicorn, creative and kind. It's a job that takes a lot of patience. You either love it or it's not for you. We look for people who have a passion for film-making who lean towards social justice and who are very good at what they do.'

After they've finished the program some participants stay on working for Bus Stop Films, with most staying one to three years before going out into the industry.

A booming industry

Film production is thriving in Australia, Tracey says. 'It's going gangbusters. Major productions like *The Fall Guy* are choosing to shoot in Australia because we have these beautiful landscapes that lend themselves to looking like the US or anywhere else in the world. We have great crews, and amazing studios and overseas and domestic producers are chewing through content and we can hardly keep up with the demand.'

Still change is slow. 'One of the things that struck me when I met founder Genevieve Clay-Smith was how the film industry was too good for too few. There's so much work in production so why aren't people with

disability employed in the sector? I want to grow Bus Stop Films and capitalise on its assets and partner with film schools to deliver courses because we don't have enough courses for training baby film makers. Bus Stop Films offers them a great opportunity to get that experience.'

'I love Bus Stop Films because it's a perfect synthesis of creativity and social justice.'
Tracey Corbin-Matchett, CEO, Bus Stop Films

Are you an ALA member?

Becoming a member of Adult Learning Australia is a fantastic way to support lifelong and lifewide learning across Australia.

To find out more about all the benefits of an ALA membership, go to our website:

www.ala.asn.au/join-now



It's never too late to learn.

This year's Adult Learners Week theme – It's never too late – encourages adults of any age to give learning another chance and aims to counter the belief that learning ends with school.

Adult Learners Week highlights the range of learning opportunities on offer to help people make a new start.

Re-engaging with learning as an adult offers plenty of life-changing moments. There's the thrill of discovering hidden talents, the satisfaction of learning new skills, and the excitement of imagining a new and different future. And there's new friendships and the exchange of ideas with people in a whole variety of community venues and settings where formal and non-formal learning takes place.

Adult education and learning can help people adapt to some of the challenges they face in a rapidly changing world. It can improve physical and mental health and wellbeing and armed with new knowledge, skills and confidence people can pursue their dreams, explore new careers, change jobs or re-enter the workforce.

Adult Learners Week is particularly aimed at encouraging people who are disengaged from education to re-engage with learning. People with a history of negative experiences of education, who suffered from incomplete or disrupted schooling or those with little belief in their ability to learn can be reluctant to take on adult learning even though they have most to gain from the benefits and rewards that it can bring.

By highlighting the range of creative, inspiring, fun and practical learning opportunities available in communities across the country Adult Learners Week

aims to entice people back to learning no matter their age, their background or previous educational history.

Adult Learners Week celebrates all forms of adult education from formal to informal, and everything in between.

Get involved

Organisations that offer any form of adult learning through courses, classes, exhibitions, tours, training, tutoring, and discussion groups can participate in Adult Learners Week.

Register your event

Open days, come and try sessions, online classes, awards ceremonies — whatever your planned activities for Adult Learners Week, register your events on our website to have them promoted nationally. Best events are awarded during ALW with cash prizes.

Be an early bird

Organisations who list their events before August 4 will go into the draw for cash prizes to help with event costs.

Nominate a learner

Sharing stories of adult learners whose lives have been turned around by adult education is inspiration to others. Enter an adult learner with an inspiring story for an Adult Learners Week scholarship before August 25. Nominees' stories will be shared across social media and winners will be announced during the launch on September 4.

Check out the Adult Learners Week website

Find event ideas, tools, tips and downloads for sharing and making your #ALW2023 celebration a success.

adultlearnersweek.org

It's never too late

Here's some tips for seizing the moment and re-engaging with learning.

Tips and trends

1 Make a list of what you'd love to learn

Whether it's playing the violin, learning a new language, changing careers or going back to school, writing down what it is that you'd like to learn is a vital first step in getting out of a rut and taking steps to make it happen.

2 Make a plan

Having a learning roadmap is the first step in pursuing a dream for your own different future. Break each step into achievable goals and set yourself a timeline for taking action and making a start.

3 Do a skills audit

List all the things you've learned. Identifying what you already know can help you pinpoint gaps and build your confidence in future endeavours. Celebrate all you've learned so far.

4 Look for inspiration

You'll find many people who have decided to switch gears, change their lives and pursue their dreams through resuming their education. Talk to someone you know who learnt something new as an adult and ask for tips on how they did it.

5 Discover learning opportunities

Start with what's on offer in your neighbourhood. Browse informal or formal classes, courses, workshops and activities and see if any of them tick your boxes. If you've been away from education for a while, try something that's engaging and fun to get yourself into the swing of learning again.

6 Identify barriers

Pinpointing things that might be holding you back is the first step in overcoming obstacles. Talk to someone you trust about what's stopping you and next steps.

7 Find a learning buddy

Having someone to share your learning experiences with can improve your outlook, keep you motivated and on track to your goals. Regularly checking in on how you are both going is a great way to stay focussed and committed.

8 Set up a learning space

Find a comfortable spot where you feel relaxed and alert. Having a space dedicated to learning can help you develop the habit, whether it's at home, or somewhere like your local library.

9 Make learning fun

Try listening to an audiobook or a podcast on a topic you'd like to know more about or watch videos that can teach you how to do something more efficiently. Being creative and trying a variety of channels is stimulating and fun.

10 Document your progress

Keeping track of how you're going and what you've achieved is a great way to build your confidence to take even bigger steps. And you can inspire others. Take a photo of yourself learning something new and post it on social media with the hashtags #ALW2023 #ItsNeverTooLate

For more ideas visit adultlearnersweek.org

Easy to read news for adult learners

A Canadian newspaper adapts the news for readers who want to improve their reading skills



Gail Hanney spends her average workday trawling mainstream news media for quirky, informative and helpful stories that she can repurpose for her readers.

Whether it's a story about a dog with an office job, a mum who's invented a bike helmet for her Sikh sons, or an article about protecting yourself from scams, Gail looks for content that will snag her readers' attention and make them turn the page. This is no mean feat, given that her audience is people with lower-level reading skills.

Gail is co-editor with Jade Chan of *The Westcoast Reader*, a print and online newspaper produced ten times a year for adults in British Columbia with low literacy who want to improve their English reading and language skills.

'I look for stories with an interesting angle. Human interest stories are more relatable and easier for people to read because they follow a narrative. The other thing our readers like is easy to understand government news. So, the government might announce a new dental benefits program for kids and we will break it down. Who can apply and how to do it, for example. We select stories that reflect the diversity of our readers such as stories celebrating Pride season, recognising Indigenous people or acknowledging people living with disabilities.'

Each article is labelled as a one, two or three book story, reflecting the levels of literacy required. 'There's something for everyone,' Gail says. 'One book articles tend to be cute animal stories. For example, we had one about a bear that got into a woman's car and drank 69 cans of soda but left the three cans of diet soda alone. Another was about a rattlesnake that travelled 400 km in a Ferrari.'

Gail loves her job. 'I love it because I'm using my journalism skills. You also learn a lot in researching a story you're rewriting. You end up going down all sorts of interesting rabbit holes. I didn't know anything for example about 3D printing and finding out that sort of stuff is fascinating.'

In each issue, Jade develops Teachers' Notes that offer learning activities for a wide range of learners, bringing her experience as an adult language teacher to the newspaper. 'I used the *The Westcoast Reader* in my classes so it's very exciting to be working on it now, adding discussion activities and practical exercises for teachers to use in the classroom.'

Jade says using the newspaper in literacy classes helps learners develop reading strategies, increase their vocabulary, and improve their grammar, spelling, and pronunciation. Resources are included for extension activities and discussion notes are included to help improve speaking and listening.

The Westcoast Reader is produced by Decoda Literacy Solutions, the province's literacy body in partnership with Camosun College and with funding from the provincial government.

'In this province we are lucky to have a government that sees literacy as a priority,' Gail says.

'There's something so good about putting out things that are helpful for people, that are positive. There's a joy to it and it's fun.'
Gail Hanney, co-editor, *The Westcoast Reader*



Jade Chan and Gail Hanney, co-editors of *The Westcoast Reader*, which has been published for 40 years.

The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills recently announced a funding boost to \$3.4 million CAD annually for Community Adult Literacy Programs to help British Columbians, newcomers, work permit holders and refugee claimants improve their reading, writing, math and digital skills.

The newspaper is distributed free to libraries and community literacy programs. Paid subscribers include seniors' homes, schools and health services that work with people with acquired brain injuries. With a 40 year history in British Columbia, the paper is well known and well loved.

How the newspaper is used depends on the setting, Jade says. 'In libraries there's a stack available for anyone to pick up. A lot of libraries run one-on-one literacy tutoring so tutors might use it as a warmup exercise with an adult learner or give it to them as a take home exercise for them to work on between sessions,' Jade says.

Sometimes adult learners submit stories for publication. 'Newcomers to British Columbia generally like to share stories about their journey to Canada and the culture shock involved, eating new food like ketchup flavoured chips for example, that they don't have in their own country,' Gail says. 'They're the sort of stories we can't write ourselves, because they are authentic and often very touching and always interesting. We give them a light edit and publish them and people are very proud when the paper comes out with their story in it.'

A newspaper might seem like outdated technology to some but not to their target audience. 'People still get excited when a new issue comes out and holding the paper is still a magic "hot off the press" moment. It is easier to teach from a newspaper because many of our learners don't have access to the internet or own

electronic devices,' Gail says.

A feedback loop via surveys and monthly meetings with adult literacy practitioners ensures the paper is focussed on the interests of readers. 'We share ideas and they give us feedback on whether their classes will like a particular story. It's a win-win,' Jade says.

'What I love is how we are constantly working on happy stories and that makes you happy. I also like getting feedback and seeing how we can improve. You must do research and pay attention to detail to make sure all the facts are accurate and correct. So, there's a lot of learning involved for me, that's why I love it.'

'People are drawn to reading the paper because it's relevant, they can keep up with the news, and it builds their confidence in reading but also talking about what they've read with other people,' Jade Chan, co-editor, *The Westcoast Reader*

LEARNING CHANGES LIVES foundation

The Learning Changes Lives foundation is breaking the cycle of disadvantage by supporting adult education programs, initiatives and infrastructure projects that help people to re-engage with education and learning, and reap the benefits.

Support us by donating at: learningchangeslives.org.au

Member round up

News from ALA member organisations around Australia



Williamstown Community and Education Centre (WCEC) in Victoria successfully applied for a grant from the Westgate Neighbourhood Fund to equip a dedicated computer room at its new Altona North Community House, in response to community need.

Mark Brophy, CEO of WCEC, says 'Demand for computer classes keeps increasing, as IT knowledge becomes even more of an essential skill for navigating everyday life.'

'There are many people who are left behind, including the mature aged, and/or those that don't have the English language proficiency to keep up with technological changes. These are the cohorts of people we are helping.'

Over one hundred people are currently enrolled in computer classes across two of WCEC's three centres. Classes are taught by staff who specialise in English as an Additional Language (EAL) and technology studies.

Tauondi Aboriginal College celebrated its 50th birthday on June 14 with a cake-cutting ceremony, live music and guest speakers. A half century ago students embarked on their educational journey at what was then called the Aboriginal Community College, which was later renamed Tauondi from the language of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide plains, meaning 'to break through'. The college plans a number of events throughout the rest of the year to commemorate this milestone. Hard on the heels of the birthday celebration the College has received financial commitment from the South Australian Government to the value of \$5.6 million dollars over the next four years.

PRACE, Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education centre in Melbourne's north was delighted to host Victoria's 2023 Learn Local Awards launch and

the opening of nominations. Launched by Nina Taylor, MP, the awards acknowledge the diversity and success of programs aimed at helping Victorian adults, particularly those without Year 12 or an equivalent qualification, to develop the core skills they need for study, work and life.

Social enterprise, employment and training services provider **MTC Australia's** Acting CEO Rob Marshall has been officially appointed its Chief Executive Officer. Announcing the decision, MTC Australia and MTC Recruitment Chairman Rob Campbell said: 'Rob navigated the immediate crisis of the unexpected passing of our CEO Colin Lloyd in August 2022, supporting the organisation through the grieving period while maintaining business continuity in a role he had never done previously. His leadership during this time has been inspirational.'

Are you an ALA member with news to share? Email us at info@ala.asn.au



ALA CEO Jenny Macaffer presented a commemorative plaque to Tauondi Aboriginal College to mark their 50th birthday.

ACE update

In **SA**, CCSA has appointed Kerrie Akkermans as its new CEO. An experienced executive leader who has worked in the not-for-profit sector, in commercial enterprise, in the media, and on community boards, Kerrie has a strong financial background, and is experienced working with a diverse range of stakeholders.

In **VIC**, ACEVic farewellled Tamsin Rossitter, who has taken up a new role, and appointed as a new EO Nina Bekker, who has over 20 years in educational leadership, a strong passion for adult learning and has been a member of the ACEVic board since 2019. Nina comes to the role from her previous position as Senior Manager for Training at CIRE Services.

In **NSW**, Russ Hawkins has been appointed CEO of Community Colleges Australia (CCA), replacing Don Perlmutt who has resigned effective from July 14. Russ has three decades of public and private sector educational leadership and has worked as a teacher, CEO, school principal, project manager, executive principal and policy advisor to government and non-government sectors. Russ is a Fellow of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders and was awarded NSW Parents and Citizen Principal of the Year for his community leadership model connecting young parents to adult and community education.

Internationally, Bernie Lovegrove has resigned as Executive Director of Australia and South Pacific Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) after almost 28 years in the role.



Bilgola Splashes by Sacha Fernandez CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

ALA held its AGM and Board elections with guest speaker Cath Macgonigal, from Odyssey College NSW, who spoke about the role of adult education in the rehabilitation and support of residents recovering from addiction and rebuilding their lives.

The Board congratulated Ros Bauer (NSW), Kathleen Priestly (TAS) and Ron Wilson (VIC) on their re-election, thanked outgoing Board members Stephen Billett and Judith McKay for their contributions and welcomed Dr Robyn Ober (NT) as a new member. Dr Ober is a Mamu/Djirribal woman from North Queensland and a respected researcher in Indigenous educational leadership and both-ways teaching and learning. Her doctoral work investigated identity and culture expressed in and through Aboriginal English. Dr Ober's expertise has been called upon in numerous consultancies on education delivery, both-ways education, Indigenous research methodologies in the Northern Territory, national and international indigenous educational contexts.

ALA was saddened to hear of the death of Professor Chris Duke, a well-known, highly influential scholar-activist-organiser who made a significant contribution to adult education, lifelong learning, higher education, international networking and organising in the areas of adult and lifelong learning. A special issue of the PIMA bulletin celebrates Chris' life and work. https://pascalobservatory.org/sites/default/files/pima_special_issue_bulletin_-_honouring_chris_duke.pdf

Visit our website to find previous issues of Quest and individual stories for sharing. ala.asn.au

QUEST

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