



FROM THE EDITOR

You will be looking at this edition of the newsletter just as Adult Learners' Week gets underway. I'd like to wish all who are involved in an ALW event every success. For those who want to know what is happening go to the calendar at www.adultlearnersweek.org. I'm delighted to say that we have attracted high level support for the week, including from the Prime Minister and the Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training. Dr Nelson wrote to all federal members of parliament encouraging them to get involved in the week and I am sure that with your encouragement many will do so. He will also be launching the week on 1 September 2002.

As you will see from my report on a visit to the United Kingdom in May, one of the lessons I drew from Adult Learners' Week there is the importance of identifying the best of what is happening in adult learning and of telling the world about our achievements. That was the impetus for a new section in the newsletter, *On the Ground*, which gives you the opportunity to tell us about what's happening in the field. I know from my travels in Australia since taking up the position of Executive Director that there is much to be proud of and believe we should be sharing the knowledge of best practice. This will not only put us in a

better position to encourage excellence among fellow practitioners, but will also give us the wherewithal to back up our statements about the importance of learning to the well-being of the nation.

The benefits of lifelong learning cannot be denied but have, for too long, been mouthed as platitudes rather than a call to action. There are welcome signs that this is changing. The Ministerial Declaration on ACE is a step in the right direction, as is the fact that the ALP has incorporated the idea of lifelong learning accounts into its policy review process. And there is plenty of scope to inject broader concepts of learning into the Federal Government's Higher Education Review. ALA's response to the overview paper can be found on our website. With all this activity in the policy environment, I strongly urge all members to become engaged in the debates. One way to do this is to join the discussion groups we have set up on the website.

Museums are a theme in several of our articles. For me the award ceremony at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London was the most lively I attended, for it involved the creators and their families, with an air of exuberance more formal occasions cannot replicate. For Linda Ziegahn, the experience of

visiting two Australian museums led to some serious reflection on questions of reconciliation here and in the United States. For John Cross, our resident evangelist for the museum as a learning space, a conference at the Australia Museum in May uncovered some fellow believers. The ALA National Office will be seeking more converts at its ALW event at the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra.

I will end on the slogan for this year's ALW: Never Stop Learning! ■

Francesca Beddie

ADULT LEARNING AUSTRALIA'S Annual General Meeting

will be held in Canberra on Friday 1 November 2002.

Further information will be provided.

Check the ALA website at www.ala.asn.au.