



e

FROM THE EDITOR

The front cover of this edition features one of the photographs, *Discovering the delights of Balinese cuisines*, shortlisted for this year's ALW Camera House photo competition. I have chosen it in honour of those who died in the Bali bombings and as encouragement to all those adult learners who are striving to understand the rich and varied culture of Indonesia.

This is not the time to retreat from the world but rather to increase our efforts to find peaceful ways to address the problems of division which have become so grave that they incite gruesome acts of terror. As Professor Robin Jeffrey, one of the authors of a recent report, *Maximising Australia's Asia Knowledge*, has stated:

We've got a quiet crisis...Australia's expertise on Asia...is withering away at the very time that more and more Australians engage with Asia regularly for work and pleasure. We are in danger of engaging more and understanding less...For Australia's long-term harmony, prosperity and security, we need a far larger proportion of Australians equipped with languages and knowledge of Asia.

Inside the cover, things are happier. I would like to warmly welcome Garry Traynor as ALA's new president, and Vaughan Croucher as a new member of the executive, as well as to thank outgoing president, Ned Dennis, for his support during my first months as executive director. Ellyn Martin has also retired from the executive, having shepherded the association through the tumult of the introduction of the GST.

This edition has stories about some impressive achievements, from George Shipp's lifetime commitment to adult learning to innovations in environmental education. It also tells you about some of the winners of ALW awards and publishes one of the four winning entries in the Collins Writing Competition, *Abu Combination*. Here's what the judges thought of James Watkinson's poem:

This poem effectively moves the reader's focus from learning a skill with a mentor to making visible an often hidden aspect of men's learning. It beautifully conveys the rich and unforeseen benefits that can emerge from a simple shared learning experience.

I am also delighted to announce details about a new scholarship. ALA sees the Innovation

Research Grant as part of its contribution to the goal, articulated in the Ministerial Declaration on Adult Community Education, to expand and sustain innovative community-based learning models. It also hopes that the research it fosters will bolster the argument that, in addition to this declaration, Governments must work towards the development of an overarching lifelong learning policy for Australia.

A survey accompanies this newsletter. I urge you to take the few minutes it will require to fill it out, for its purpose is to find out how the association can best serve you, its members.

With very best wishes for the holiday season and the New Year. ■

Francesca Beddie

