



# Editorial

The final edition of *Quest* for 2003 brings both good and sad news. We publish obituaries recording the achievements of two members. George Shipp was made a life member of the Association last year in recognition of his indefatigable commitment to liberal adult education. To commemorate Peter Poulson's dedicated contribution to adult learning, Adult Learning Australia (ALA) has introduced the Poulson Award for outstanding partnerships in adult learning.

We report on a very successful Adult Learners' Week (ALW) which has set the bar high for next year, both in terms of the number and calibre of events, and in taking forward two initiatives, the Great Literacy Debate and Learn @ Work Day. We also publish the winning entry in the ALA/ASA Short Story competition.

*In Quest of Learning* profiles Dr Ching Jung Ho, one of the ALW international guests. Dr Ho mentions the creativity she finds in her teaching. Tom Bentley, who addressed the Australian Flexible Learning Framework's conference, Networking 2003, also spoke about creativity and the need to promote teaching as a creative profession. It seems to me that Adult Learners' Week is a very useful vehicle for doing that and encouraging respect for an undervalued profession.

The article on Networking 2003 picks up some broad themes in adult learning and reports in detail on the presentation on disability, an issue we have not aired in the ALA magazine for some time. There are opportunities for adult and community educators in the Framework and these are growing thanks to the energetic efforts of our representative on the Flexible Learning Advisory Group, Rita Bennink.

Congratulations to the new Board of Adult Learning Australia! The nine members were elected in a system of proportional representation, with a one-off arrangement to allow a transition to the new constitution. This means that the three members with the most votes are elected for a three-year term, the next three for a two-year term, and the last three for a one-year term.

The Association has introduced a new fee structure. The national executive devoted a lot of time to working out a structure that would not discourage individual members, who do so much for the Association, while also making some modest increases in fees to help cover the costs of providing membership services. New categories cater to those people who might prefer just to receive information from the Association and to support its mission rather than being active members, as well as to practitioners for whom professional recognition is important.

I am also pleased to announce that ALA has entered into an arrangement with NIACE, our sister organisation in the UK, which will enable us to give members regular information about its excellent publications, many of which will also be housed in our library. If you are in Canberra, you really should visit us and take advantage of this specialist resource on adult learning.

Adult Learning Australia was represented both at the mid-term review of CONFINTEA V in Bangkok and at a workshop on citizenship in Kathmandu. Mary Hannan reports on her trip to the troubled kingdom of Nepal, where the thirst for learning is not matched by adequate resources. For that reason, ALA would like to propose to members that we launch a book drive and fund raising campaign for the money to send the books to the World Education, Nepal in Kathmandu. It would be great to finish this year and start 2004 by doing something concrete towards fostering learning as a mechanism for peace and security. Contact Mary if you would like to take part.

**With best wishes for 2004.**

**Francesca Beddie**

ALA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR