

Editorial



Welcome to the Spring Edition. Yes, that means Christmas is just around the corner. I'm not sure if it is a function of age, but each year seems to disappear just a little more quickly these days.

ALA has just completed the management and coordination of another extremely successful Adult Learners' Week (ALW). While we await the final audit figures on the level of awareness by the Australian population, as measured by ACNielsen, we know we exceeded 900 listed events, a 35% increase over last year.

Beside the number of events ALW also has a strong qualitative aspect to it as well. Building social capital comes from creating interest, rapport and trust. Through ALW this year, ALA had the opportunity to do this in abundance. To help us we were very fortunate to have two very knowledgeable and experienced adult education practitioners from NIACE in the UK.

Both Alan Tuckett OBE, Director of NIACE, and Dr Peter Lavender, Director of Research with NIACE, provided volumes of stimulating intellectual input about adult learning, along with a lot of charm and generosity toward all those with whom they engaged. A comprehensive report will be available in the Summer Edition of QUEST and I look to reporting back to you then, with many good news stories.

You may have also noticed a new look to Quest. We thought it was time to breathe new life into the newsletter and have gone with a more modern style and layout. This edition also comes with many good stories and articles.

Last year, ALA engaged Kris Newton as a Visiting Research Fellow to undertake a project to identify how the ACE sector might better meet the identified learning/training/professional development needs of small business.

This project set out to identify recommendations, and guidelines, to assist ACE providers to better develop learning services to address small business needs that fit within small business limitations. A summary report has been prepared here by Kris.

In recent years there has been a growing body of government policy work on the implications of Australia's ageing demographic. As an ALA Visiting Research Fellow, Dr John McIntyre recently completed a briefing paper for ALA reviewing this work and what it means for the community sector and lifelong learning policy. A summary of Dr McIntyre's paper is printed here.

Hume City Council has a strong determination to address issues of social and economic disadvantage by implementing strategies to strengthen the Hume community. Lifelong learning is one of the nine key themes to achieve the community's vision for Hume City in 2030. This involves the development of Hume City as a learning community through the development of the Hume Global Learning Village.

The article by Dr Leone Wheeler summarises a more detailed report, funded by an ANTA/ALA Innovation Grant, which

documents the development of the Hume Global Learning Village and outlines the initial work to build an evaluation strategy which will map the progress of Learning Together – 2004/2005 – a strategy plan for the development of Hume City as a learning community with key actions.

The Bundaberg Regional Learning Community recently organised a launch of their project in August. Guest speaker was Mary Hannan Assistant Executive Director (Innovative Projects) who is managing eight national projects on behalf of ALA for the Australian Flexible Learning Framework. A full report is presented here.

Cheryl Lewis-Fitzgerald another ALA-ANTA Innovation Research Grant 2005 winner, reports on the development of a tool she has developed to assist people who work in the area of non-formal learning. A summary of the thinking underpinning the development of this manual is briefly reported on. A launch of the manual is planned at our 45th Annual Conference here in Canberra in November.

The paper by Eric Wright seeks to broaden both Adult Education's self-awareness and governments' perceptions of it.

Eric argues that over the past ten years the language of the educational landscape has, broadly speaking, made increasing use of the language of the market economy. This has been paralleled by development in government thinking away from notions of public service to public sector management. The two have operated hand in hand. Eric explores his thesis in this edition. His paper is supported by a graphical model.

We also report on a Learning City-Learning Region Audit and Study that focuses on Western Australia's Great Southern as a richly diverse region with numerous human, natural, infrastructural, economic and learning assets on which to build and grow the region into the future. This study seeks to answer a number of questions in order to understand what regional assets exist and what the opportunities are to link these assets together to continue to grow a thriving, prosperous and pleasant community – *Growing the Great Southern*.

Finally Nicholas Abbey presents a reflective paper on *Developing 21st Century Teaching and Learning*. Nicholas argues that we stand on the threshold of a pedagogical and technological revolution, with profound and far-reaching consequences for education and training and the economy and society. In the years ahead, this revolution is likely to coalesce around emerging pedagogies such as *structured dialogue*.

In his article, Nicholas explores how structured dialogue can build robust learning environments and improve learning outcomes. He also examines a four-dimensional model and stage-by-stage process for leading and managing such strategic change.

Read, learn and enjoy!