

Editorial



Recently ALA sponsored an ACE Forum at which 20 of our ACE colleagues from around the country attended here in Canberra. The group was brought together to address the issue of how ACE, in all its diversity, might be defined from a research and policy perspective.

Not an easy task, and no surprise, that the group made only tentative steps despite the energy and the range of experience represented.

Why bother? One reason is that some 1.4 million Australians use ACE for a variety of reasons as their provider of choice, and yet while ever ACE as a sector remains hidden or unable to be categorised it will never achieve a strong position on any government funding or policy agenda.

However, we will continue with this endeavour. An interim report is available in the members section of the Adult Learning Australia website.

Jim Nicholls (ALA Director) outlines some of the other reasons why it is important for ALA to work with the ACE sector so that we can start to clearly identify the scope of its contribution to the national adult learning agenda given the changes now in train following the abolition of ANTA, as of June 30. The opportunity for new doors to open for ACE presents itself with the coming changes to the national skills development structure. Jim briefly outlines the new structure here in his article.

Aspects of the contribution made by ACE to the national skills shortage issue, and its role in community development, are also explored from a number of interesting perspectives in this issue.

We report on a range of learning community activities around the country, including those organisations that were successful in securing funding for their e-learning projects.

Another interesting article provides an overview of the findings of an ALA initiated project on lifelong learning entitled: 'Towards A Learning Revolution in Australian Society' and another ALA initiated project, we will report on later, looks at how the ACE sector

can develop an interface with small business around their training needs.

You will also notice an insert in this edition from TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL. They are linking up with ALA as partners in the 2005 Adult Learners' Week and Learn @Work Campaigns. With over 700 clubs throughout Australia the opportunity exists for ALA provider members to work with TOASTMASTER INTERNATIONAL Clubs to identify workplace training opportunities. Remember that many TMI's members are also engaged in workplaces, as well as wanting to know more about and engage with ALA provider members' programs.

This edition also has several research-based articles which explore the links that learning has with health and wellbeing as well as findings from Dr Sarojni Choy's research into 'engaging youth learners.' Both articles provide interesting insights into these topics.

We also feature a long serving member of ALA, Tony Ryan in this edition. Tony will be working with ALA to capture an oral history account of ALA's development over the years as part of our 50th Anniversary Celebrations in 2010.

If you would like to nominate from existing or former members of ALA who you believe have made a contribution to adult learning over the years, please contact Tony at tryan@austcolled.com.au.

Tony is also very involved with community radio, an area that still remains to be explored as a program delivery mode for adult learning opportunities in the home and at work. Tony has an article on what he is doing presently through this medium in South Australia.

Finally, with the transition of ALA funding from ANTA to DEST, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the board and members to wish our friends and colleagues in ANTA success in their new fields of endeavour. We are confident that as DEST takes responsibility for the carriage of training nationally, that the legacy left by ANTA will provide a sound framework from which DEST will build and develop its new initiatives.

Read and enjoy what your organisation is achieving through your membership and support.

Ron Anderson

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR