

Editorial



**Welcome to the Autumn Edition of Quest.
Another year is rapidly disappearing and I'm
not sure if the speed with which time goes is
a function of age, business or both.**

Just as we have done in our previous editions, this one includes some stories about our immediate past history, to inform about ALA's 45th Annual Conference and the 10th Adult Learners' Week (ALW) Anniversary celebrations.

Importantly, this edition continues the tradition of including contemporary feature articles. We carry a summary of research recently completed by Associate Professor Barry Golding on 'Men's Sheds' and another by Tracey Murphy, Assistant Director, of the Adult Literacy Policy and Programmes Section of DEST, on the very successful 'STEPS Programme' run through TAFE NSW Riverina Institute.

I hope you find these two articles informative and thought provoking. The challenge in finding funding for Men's Sheds, is to do it in a way that maintains the integrity of their role and purpose as learning environments.

Likewise the article about 'The STEPS Programme' raises some interesting policy issues around the skills, knowledge and attitudes required for social capacity building. Not the least of these being who and how, measures the financial and non-financial outcomes from important projects like this one, along with the challenges of identifying the benefits that can flow from a relationship model as opposed to a service model approach.

The use of radio to reach out to those who don't have all the options available to them for engaging in learning in their community has prompted ALA to explore learning opportunities through radio.

Most of you will be aware that Tony Ryan (ALA Visiting Media Fellow) has through his program 'Take Time' (www.pbafm.org.au) many engaging adult learning stories. There is an audio file of an interview Tony did with Alan Tuckett. Access to 'Take Time' is through a link via the ALA website. Another interview Tony did was with Barry Golding and covers research on his work with Men's Sheds. Also in this edition, there is a story about Radio Print Handicapped (RPH) Australian Radio networks, which adds another dimension to the initiative Tony is taking with adult learning using the medium of radio.

We also draw your attention to the NCVER Literacy Breakfast coming up around the country in May.

This edition also reports on the 'E-learning Creative Community Partnership Project' for 2005, another project successfully managed by ALA. The ALA team is now working feverishly to identify the recipients for the 2006 funding.

ALA as part of its ALW initiative recently acquired the national number 1300 I Learn (453276), which will be supported by a call centre. This year is the first year of operation and we look forward to it growing like the Reading Writing Hotline which has received over 100,000 calls since its inception in 1994. If you would like to know more about the hotline see the article by Tracey Murphy.

ALA will keep you informed about 1300 I Learn developments through our websites and this publication.

By the time you read this, you will also have received the first edition of our e-newsletter for 2006 called 'The Current.' This newsletter will be prepared regularly to keep you updated on the latest news from ALA and will also be available on the website.

In the meantime...

Read and enjoy!