

Editorial



A 2nd Letter from CEO to Members and Stakeholders

We have had a great couple of months here thus far. Adult Learners' Week has proven to be a great growth story this year - not only in the number of events but also in the types of participants! I note particularly that Bunnings joined in with numerous learning events for the public and Oxfam showed considerable enterprise and application in building learning inside their organisation. These and other successes are well recognised in this issue of *Quest*.

But it's the future that I want to talk about. For example Mayor Hannah of Marrickville Council is enthusiastic about working with other Councils to build the Adult Learning message across Sydney and so why couldn't it go well beyond Sydney!

Thinking about building the future is really what we have to do.

It seems to me that the greatest weakness we have in Adult Learning or alternatively informal learning is a lack of unity. The old saying "in unity lies strength" is, I think, a key message for us. Are we seen as important but fragmented? How important are we? We can't say exactly can we? So what is our argument for stronger Government investment, again that's hard to say. 2007/2008 is an ideal time to build that unity.

In Manchester at Adult Learning Week International our President Mr Greg Peart achieved an unexpected outcome through his hard work. Adult Learning Week International 2008 will be held in Australia in October or November next year. This places Australia in an ideal position to have input into the World Intergovernmental Conference in Brazil in 2009.

As we approach the next International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI in 2009), the 2008 International Adult Learners' Week will represent a stepping stone for CONFINTEA VI. The event will serve to create advocacy for CONFINTEA VI. It is no secret that early discussions strongly suggest that many of the participants in CONFINTEA V have not addressed the obligations they made then.

I believe it is important for the sector to consolidate its knowledge and opinions so that we can best inform our government of our contribution to the Australian economy and community wellbeing in terms of employment, health and education. This can only strengthen our bargaining position and the growth of education values in Australia. Previously I held a similar office with an industry that was very strong but two CEOs after I left, the association broke into two smaller groups. Government lost confidence - they weren't sure they were talking with the right bodies nor that their messages were being conveyed to the industry as a whole. The bargaining power of the industry almost disappeared.

We have a single peak body. We need to fully embrace our membership to gain the benefits of our potentially fortunate situation.

Another important development in recent weeks includes the commencement of our relationship with Workventures. This will enable access to cheap computers for all our members. Go to page 13 for more details

Finally I hope to see many of you at our forthcoming conference in Cairns - details are on page..The conference is looking good with excellent speakers and an ideal venue. If you see me there don't hesitate to grab me for a chat, after all it's your views and participation that makes this organisation strong and strengthening.

Peter Peterson

Chief Executive Officer.

