

## Students making their mark

It's a wet and windy spring morning in Melbourne's CBD. A group of young people are battling the wild weather and pasting sheets of paper to a brick wall opposite a busy exit from Flinders Street Station. Several sheets later, a pair of eyes stare out from the wall, then a nose is added – a face takes shape.

Paste ups, or graffiti created by drawing, cutting out and then pasting paper to walls is a vibrant part of Melbourne's street art culture. These young artists are contributing to the flourishing artwork of Melbourne's lanes and alleyways in a new project called 'Break Out', which is aimed at keeping young adult students engaged with learning during college break time.

In this two-week program, students explore Melbourne's streets for inspiration, learn design and media skills, and work as a team and to produce and exhibit their artwork – a series of portraits of the people who populate Melbourne's Degraes Street. Some of the students are enrolled in the Victorian Certificate of Applied



Artist Rachel Taylor with students Channelle and Ely.

Learning (VCAL) a 'hands-on' option for students in year 11 and 12. The Centre for Adult Education's VCAL course co-

ordinator Clare Kellett says VCAL students are a diverse group of young adults, from a range of backgrounds, and

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## Message from the CEO

We know from research that early school leaving casts a long shadow; impacting on employment, income and health across the life span, which is why so many adult education providers put such a priority on youth re-engagement programs. It's also why ALA lists youth engagement as one of eight policy priorities in its platform.

Australia has a good school system relative to the rest of the world and most young people complete secondary school. However, 17 per cent of young women and 27 per cent of young men don't finish school. Many of them are Indigenous young people, from rural and remote communities, from low socio-economic backgrounds or combinations of all three.

For young people to re-engage with learning they need a different approach to the ones that failed them, including opportunities for applied learning at work or in a community setting. One such approach is featured in this edition of *Quest*. I'm sure many of our readers would know of similar innovative approaches. For many such programs, the primary goal is a first in a lifetime positive experience of learning.

As a colleague recently suggested

to me: adult education isn't about the age of the participant, it's about the approach taken to the learner.

I recently had the opportunity to attend a conference of the European Society for Research into the Education of Adults. A number of papers focused on the crisis of youth unemployment and hopelessness, which, in parts of Europe is a threat to social cohesion.

In Australia, our strong economy has shielded us from these extremes, however, we continue to have pockets of high youth unemployment within a stone's throw of areas where employers complain of skill shortages.

In the coming months, ALA's new Board will be looking at ways that we can engage with the incoming Australian Government to look, amongst other things, at ways that young people can be engaged in work through innovative approaches to adult education.

Meanwhile, if you are involved in running a successful youth re-engagement program, please let us know about it.

**Sally Thompson**  
CEO

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with a variety of educational experiences. Whether they went to a government high school or a private school, whether they live in the leafy suburbs of Melbourne's affluent east or the far-flung suburbs of the poorer west, all have become disengaged from education. 'What they share is that they've had trouble fitting in at a mainstream high school – whether that's because they've had some learning difficulty or because they are non-conformists. Many describe feeling judged at high school and most have been bullied.'

The VCAL course 'gives students a sense of community, it's a place of certainty and security' but it can be fragile and staff worry about some students when term break time comes around Clare says. Without the routine and the network, boredom and even depression can set in. And in Clare's experience, that can mean trouble.

'Break Out' is a project aimed at helping all CAE students aged under 24 to use their break time constructively. For VCAL students, it not only offers a chance to stay connected to their course and classmates but it counts towards their qualification.

Clare Kellett says that when she started at the CAE four years ago, most of the CAE's VCAL students were troubled young people from difficult backgrounds who'd dropped out of school and most often referred by youth welfare groups and networks. Now the demographic is shifting, Clare says, with an increasing number of students referred by school careers counsellors who see that a different kind of educational experience may well be the way for a student to blossom.



(continued from page 2)

VCAL can be a pathway to work, to further training, to trade and industry and further and higher education. The CAE VCAL program currently has around 80 students enrolled.

The challenge for Clare and her staff team is to create classes that focus on their students' strengths and help them overcome barriers that might have hindered learning in the past. The flexibility of the VCAL year 12 curriculum allows staff to develop a range of creative projects to keep their students engaged and actively learning.

An atmosphere of mutual respect, Clare says, helps resistant students relax and enjoy the opportunity that

classes and their interactions with other students and teachers can give. 'We treat them as adults,' Clare says. 'And we allow each student to define their own version of success. For some that might be arriving on time for classes each day, or making it here three days out of five. For others it's the sheer fact of joining in and completing a qualification.'

Staff model the kinds of behaviour they expect from their students and provide feedback that will help them learn important skills for getting on with future colleagues and bosses in the workplace. For example, Clare says, in contrast to high school students, CAE VCAL students are allowed to bring mobile phones into class. 'You don't want to miss a call from Centrelink when you've been waiting on them to phone you back.'

But students are encouraged to be responsible and mindful of others. 'We discuss what sort of calls it's OK to answer, and



how to do it in a way that's not a disruption to people around you.'

Clare says an accepting and respectful atmosphere is a crucial environment for engaging with disengaged young adult learners. The diverse student group is also terrific for the students Clare says. 'We often survey our students to see how they're feeling and what we could do better. The one thing that emerges time and again from our research is that students say the thing they've most enjoyed is meeting and mixing with a range of different kinds of people they would never have met otherwise.'

The 'Break Out' project was initiated and managed by Project Leader [Marie Baird](#).



## Break Out

Artist and 'Break Out' co-ordinator [Rachel Taylor](#) says you'd never know the young people she's working with hadn't had good experiences of high school. A couple might have been motivated to come along at first because of the incentive of completing the course towards their VCAL. 'They are all very interested in street art and when they were told there was a wall for them to put their art on legally, they got very excited, the whole idea stimulated lots of creative ideas.'

Getting caught up in the excitement of the creative process means they don't notice that they are learning Rachel says. 'They are constantly learning by doing. The process involves literacy, communication skills, teamwork, reading, writing and maths, computer literacy and visual literacy. And all the while they're having a great time.' Rachel can identify with young people who might have felt marginalised at school. 'I hated school,' she laughs. 'It wasn't until I'd left school and started a photography course that I really started learning. Photography taught me history, maths, science, and chemistry. I know what it's like to find yourself empowered and engaged and inspired through learning. And it's even more powerful when you are working to create something with a team of other people.'

Projects like 'Break Out', Rachel says, stay with learners long after the classes are over. 'Creating art is about providing people with an experience. People come to Melbourne and they experience the street art as they walk through the streets. It's not like they are walking through a pristine city without marks on any walls. Street artists inspire and engage people through their art. For the students involved, art is a way of connecting people and that stimulates something in them that they will take along with them forever.'



# Hall of fame for adult educators

Los Angeles has Grauman's Chinese theatre where Hollywood stars are celebrated on the footpath. Philadelphia celebrates baseball on its Wall of Fame. In Oklahoma, it's leading adult educators who are inducted each year into their own exclusive club.

The International and Continuing Education Hall of Fame at the University of Oklahoma (OU) inducted its first group in 1996. Since then over 280 adult educators from around the world – including five Australians and two New Zealanders – have been honoured as leaders in the field.

'All are outstanding lifelong learners and have left lasting impressions on the students, institutions, and organizations they have served,' Dr James Pappas, Vice President for University Outreach and Dean, College of Liberal Studies says.

People who make it to the Hall of Fame are innovative leaders



Dr James Pappas at the International and Continuing Education Hall of Fame.

*'Adult education is exciting, and there's much more opportunity for personal learning than in teaching traditional, large classes.'*

who believe passionately in the transformative power of education.

The Hall of Fame is located in the Centre for Continuing Education's (CCE) Thurman White Forum building, a purpose-built and busy facility that hosts meetings, conferences, workshops and seminars year round. The day that Quest magazine visited in August, the Summer Youth Program was in full swing and the Oilwell Blowout School was in session. Dr Pappas who oversees the Centre says, 'It's an exciting place to work.'

Dr Pappas says the Hall of Fame plays a crucial role both in the valuing and celebration of adult educators. He says it not only honours leaders in the field of continuing education and adult learning but also serves as an inspiration for the next generation

of continuing education leaders.

'The Hall of Fame is important because people get the recognition they deserve. It's also a way for students to identify with and understand the contributions others have made. Adult education is a broad field and we don't do a good job of recognising contributors.

Just look at the range of different fields that use the concepts and learning principles of adult education. You find them in community courses and colleges, in career focused courses and HR development, in management theories related to learning organisations.'

Dr Pappas is an honorary and lifetime member of the Hall of Fame and is actively involved in teaching. He finds teaching adults terrifically engaging.

'Adult education is exciting, and there's much more opportunity for personal learning than in teaching traditional, large classes. I also have trouble with my attention span and the diversity and richness of the interactions you have as an adult educator and the fact that you are always trying new things makes it perfect for me.'

Australian members of the Hall of Fame

[Dr Lloyd Robert Maxwell](#)  
[Dr Jose Roberto \(Robbie\) Guevara](#)  
[Joan Allsop](#)  
[Dr Roger Morris](#)  
[Michael Newman](#)





# Seniors saddling up for a ride

**A new program in Queensland aims to get older adults on bikes and pedalling to a healthier lifestyle. 'Seniors on Saddles' was recently announced as one of 96 programs around Australia funded to promote active ageing, improve skills and foster social connections for senior Australians.**

Deb Crompton, 55, Workforce Development and Planning Officer with [Queensland Fitness, Sport and Recreation Skills Alliance](#) (QFSRSA) envied colleagues who rode their bikes to work and talked so enthusiastically about the pleasures of cycling. 'I felt left out because I'd never learned to ride.'

Deb is physically fit and active and part of a fitness group but bike riding seemed to her to be an ideal way of incorporating physical activity into everyday life. And as a group activity it looked like a great way to meet new friends and have fun. But she'd never learned to ride a bike. 'I started to wonder how many other people were out there my age and older who'd love to learn to ride?'

When the Federal government called for applications for the Productive Ageing through Community Education (PAAtCE) Program, with its focus on courses for senior Australians, Deb decided to investigate the feasibility of a seniors cycling class for beginner riders.

She conducted extensive market



Senior cyclists take to bike paths.

who've either never learned to ride or are very rusty when it comes to cycling. Would-be cyclists will have to have a health screening and be fit enough to ride. Apart from that all they need is a willingness to learn.

research to gauge potential interest. 'I spoke to a whole range of different groups in the area including the QLD Islamic Women's Association, indigenous groups, church groups, and seniors groups.' She asked them how many would like the chance to learn to ride. Although intuitively she felt she'd identified a need, the results were still unexpected. 'I was surprised by the amount of interest,' Deb says. 'It was right across the board.'

Together with Jon Newrick of Brisbane's Bushranger Bikes, Deb developed the idea for 'Seniors on Saddles' a 5 week program for bicycling beginners aged 60 and over. Jon's years of experience in teaching people to ride was invaluable in course planning, Deb says.

Deb says they are aiming to attract people over the age of 60

The course location was important, Deb said. 'We chose bayside locations that were safe, had a beautiful foreshore, and plenty of shade'. Wynnum and Redcliffe are both 30 minutes from Brisbane on the edge of Moreton Bay. Wynnum to the East and Redcliffe to the North.

As well as learning how to ride during the twice weekly two hour sessions over 5 weeks, participants will learn bike safety and road rules, navigation techniques and simple bike repairs such as how to replace a chain and fix a puncture. Deb says the addition of a dietician will add extra value to the package.

'We wanted to provide advice on preparing for a long ride. For example, what fluids and food to take for the trip as well as what to eat beforehand to sustain your energy during a ride.'



Trainer Jon Newrick says first time riders can be on a bikepath in two hours.

Trainer Jon Newrick has had plenty of experience teaching new riders, from kids as young as 9 to adults as old as 94. Jon says it's important to keep it fun and engaging so people develop confidence and enjoy themselves. He's confident that by offering individual coaching he can have a first timer out riding on a bike path in as little as thirty minutes and at most, two hours.

He expects that the class will also attract people who haven't ridden in years. He doesn't think you ever forget to ride a bike but as people age, 'the body loses some of those abilities.' It's a matter of working with each person in a group to identify what barriers they might face.

'A lot of balance and co-ordination relies on peripheral vision and making judgements in response. Some older people can be slower at this. Others might have trouble getting on and off a bike. Some have a mental block about riding. Others take off straight away.'

Once they're out on a bike path as a group, having fun and feeling more confident, friendships develop. 'It's fantastic to see people make

social connections,' Jon says.

The aim of Seniors on Saddles is for participants to feel confident about and enjoy cycling, connect with other people in their local area, and set goals for increasing the amount of riding they do once the course is over. 'Then they can move on and up,' Jon says.

From relatively easy 8 km or 15

km bayside rides, people who want to can continue to improve their fitness. The beginner's course has been designed to fit well with a more advanced cycling group Jon runs as part of Brisbane City Councils' Growing Older and Living Dangerously (GOLD) program. The GOLD approach is what keeps people coming back.

'They keep it fun, they keep it social. They schedule coffee breaks and chances to chat.' Jon says. The Seniors on Saddles program will aim to create this same sense of group identity where the group takes on a life of its own once the formal training is over.

The [Seniors on Saddles](#) project is open to anyone over the age of 60 who has either never learned or forgotten how to ride a bike. It's funded by the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education under the [Productive Ageing through Communication Education \(PAatCE\) Program](#).



Deb Crompton Workforce Development and Planning Officer at QFSRSA envied others who could ride.



# Sustainability for educators: A toolkit of learning activities and resources

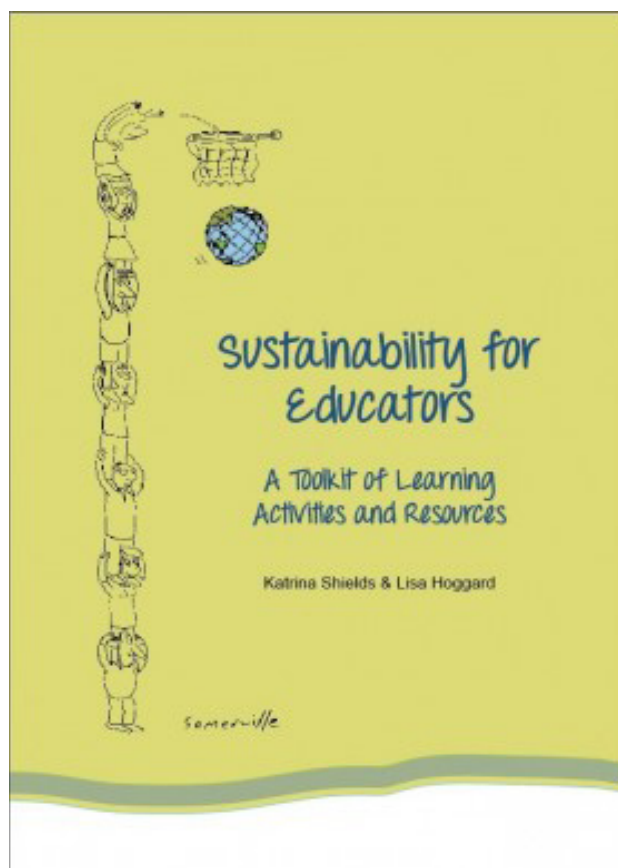
Adult educators Lisa Hoggard and Katrina Shields have written a book based on their passion – how to prepare and motivate people to build a sustainable future. The pair met in a classroom in 2011 as adult learners studying a Swinburne University course in Education and Training for Sustainability.

‘The course had a practical focus and there were fifteen of us, and everyone just kept coming up with brilliant ideas for learning activities. Katrina and I thought wouldn’t it be wonderful to pool all these activities and share them with our group.’ The idea grew from there. If their group of fellow students found it useful, the pair thought, why not produce something for a wider audience?

With support from Byron Community College, they successfully applied for funding from the federal government’s Skills for the Carbon Challenge. The result is: *Sustainability for educators. A toolkit of learning activities and resources*, a manual of practical strategies and activities for sustainability education.

The book includes:

- succinct explanations of sustainability concepts
- an introduction to guiding principles for Education for Sustainability (EfS)



- eighty learning activities with tips, participant hand-outs and facilitator resources
- case studies of sustainability in action
- links to resources.

Each author brought her particular skills and experience to the project. Lisa says her own focus has been on helping organisations to change their culture.

‘People will look at sustainability through the lens of their own values. What makes or breaks sustainability practice is how well you deal with people’s values. I find it useful to think of my learners wearing a t-shirt that says “What’s in it for me?”. If you can make your teaching about sustainability relevant,

meaningful and give it some inherent personal value, you can make real changes.’

Co-author Katrina Shields says the book aims to inspire.

‘We emphasise that solutions already exist, there is actually a lot of good news if you know where to look.’

Lisa says they aimed to produce a book of benefit to teachers, trainers and facilitators across a range of settings including schools, vocational training organisations, universities, communities and businesses.

‘What we’d love to do is make a difference to those time poor adult educators who already have so much on their plate but who really want to do something about education for sustainability. If we can save them time and help them hit the mark with their learner groups, we’d be really happy.’

Shields, K & Hoggard, L 2013, *Sustainability for Educators: A toolkit of learning activities and resources*, Byron Community College.

ISBN 9780992312701

[www.byroncollege.org.au/sustainability-for-educators/](http://www.byroncollege.org.au/sustainability-for-educators/)

# Retaining volunteers

**Volunteers are vital to the work we do. Recognising the work they do can make a big difference to how volunteers feel about their workplace. Here's some effective ways to show you appreciate the work of volunteers.**

## 1. Make a good first impression

The induction process can have a big impact on how much a volunteer feels connected to and part of your organisation. Taking time to plan a welcoming induction is likely to get the relationship off to a good start.

## 2. Ask for feedback

Talk to volunteers about their concerns and suggestions. Tell them what you will do with the information and report back on any changes you make as a result. Incorporating their feedback into decision making demonstrates their views are respected and their ideas are valued.

## 3. Be inclusive

Include volunteers in staff meetings, workplace training, celebrations and events. Treat volunteers as part of the team and encourage them to participate in decisions.

## 4. Keep them in the loop

Make sure volunteers are kept up to date with happenings at your workplace – from staff changes, funding rounds, updates to programs or services.



## 7. Give feedback

Take note of how people are performing in their roles. Point out what they are doing well and offer constructive help to do their best.

## 8. Demonstrate impact

Point out how the work volunteers do contributes to the larger goals or achievements of the organisation.

## 5. Give them meaningful work

Make sure you know what volunteers want out of the experience and that you are continuing to provide it. Ensure their skills are matched to the role to keep them interested and engaged.

## 6. Offer professional development

Enabling people to 'grow' on the job helps people feel satisfied and valued. Provide opportunities for volunteers to take on extra responsibilities and a career path for volunteers who want to move between different roles. Strategies such as providing mentoring or helping with CV writing assist volunteers to develop their skills and feel more confident in taking on different roles.

## 9. Celebrate their achievements

Organise regular chances to recognise the work of individual volunteers as well as the entire team. Use the event to give awards and celebrate milestones.

## 10. Set up a recognition program

Orient your organisation, your board and your staff to regularly and consistently recognise and promote the work of volunteer staff. Tailor your recognition to match the volunteer to make it most effective. For example, if a volunteer is hoping to find paid work as a result of their work with your organisation, they may value opportunities for further training or a written recommendation to potential employers.



# Indigenous artists and strong talk

**Being an artist is one thing, but talking about your work and negotiating with buyers requires public speaking and negotiation skills. Desart's Raewyn Kavanagh devised a program for Indigenous artists wanting to manage and market their own artwork.**

Desart is a membership organisation of Indigenous artists based in Alice Springs. Raewyn co-ordinates the Aboriginal Artworker Program, which supports the training and employment of Aboriginal people working in art centres in the central desert – a vast area covering portions of the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia.

It's a job that often takes her on long dusty drives through the Central Desert region stopping at one remote community after another, to visit the 46 Aboriginal-owned art and craft centres dotted throughout the region.

She organises on-site accredited or non-accredited training, mentorships, personal development, job support programs and networking events for over 60 art workers in the Central Desert.

At one of these events – an annual camping conference in 2008 – Indigenous artists from across the region resolved to take over the representation of their own work and not rely on others to do it on their behalf. But taking charge meant learning the skills.

Being a skilled artist is one thing,



Warakurna artists with their work.

Raewyn says, but talking to customers at markets, galleries and in their own centres and explaining or elaborating on their artwork is another thing altogether.

Raewyn devised a unique experiential learning program for Indigenous artists designed to develop skills in public speaking, and she presented the results at the recent joint ALA/ ACE Aotearoa conference in Wellington, New Zealand.

'Marrka Wangka' – meaning 'strong talk' – brought together

ten Aboriginal arts workers from all over the central desert region to take part in a five day training program in Melbourne.

The arts workers came from Arlpwe Art and Culture, Julalikari Arts, Papunya Tjupi Art Centre, Titjikala Art Centre, Tjarlirli Art, Warakurna Artists, and Warlayirti Artists. And while they all had art in common, they were a diverse group in terms of language, culture and art styles.

In Melbourne, the group took part in week of activities including a drama workshop at the Victorian College of the Art's Wilin Centre, and a visit to the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV). The program

culminated with each art worker presenting a visual story of their training to an audience of one hundred people. Raewyn says this was a turning point.

After the experience of standing alone on a stage in Melbourne to address one hundred people, talking to individuals or small groups of customers became a much less daunting prospect.

Four years on, Raewyn can see the course continues to bear fruit. 'They definitely have more confidence talking to customers and speaking to large groups.'



*‘Marrka Wangka’ – meaning ‘strong talk’ – brought together ten Aboriginal arts workers from all over the central desert region.*

on experiential rather than classroom learning was key to the program’s success. ‘The trip to Melbourne took them right out of their comfort zones.

Even though it was uncomfortable for all of them, they were able to see it as an opportunity and were able to learn something new. They took on the challenge of learning.’

As well as being able to talk to visitors to their art centre about their work, the course has had a ripple effect. Some are mentoring others and one participant decided, as a result of the experience, that he wanted to be a teacher and is now working at the community school as assistant teacher.

Raewyn says developing partnerships was essential for

the success of such a program. Desert secured some funding from the Northern Territory government and gained support from community organisations to help cover costs. The Victorian College of the Arts and Coonara Community House helped to develop and deliver a program tailor made for the learners who would take part.

Raewyn believes the focus



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# Logie night for the adult education sector

Around 250 people filled Melbourne's St Kilda Town Hall recently to celebrate the inspiring work of learners, educators and providers in Victoria's Learn Local sector.

The Logies of the adult education sector, the Victorian Learn Local Awards are held annually to recognise the achievements of Victoria's 300 Learn Local organisations, 110,000 learners and 16,000 staff and volunteers across the state.

The winners of the 2013 Victorian Learn Local Awards were announced by the Minister for Higher Education and Skills, the Hon. Peter Hall, MLC, at a presentation dinner on Thursday 29 August.

## Outstanding Pre-accredited Learner

Winner: Michelle Jenkins – Traralgon Neighbourhood Learning House



## Outstanding Pathways Program

Winner: Six Steps to Employment (Clean Up Gang) – Continuing Education Bendigo

## Outstanding Practitioner

Winner: Simone Dawson – SkillsPlus

## Excellence in Creating Local Solutions

Winner: Mansfield Adult Continuing Education (MACE) Uni4U

## Excellence in Language, Literacy and Numeracy Provision

Winner: Jill Lewis – CAE



## Learn Local for Business

Winner: Vertech Hume in partnership with Wyndham Community and Education Centre

## Learn Local Legends

Cloverdale Community Centre – Barwon South Western ACFE Regional Council

Haddon and District Community House – Grampians ACFE Regional Council

Wycheproof Community Resource Centre – Loddon Mallee ACFE Regional Council

Wingate Avenue Community Centre – North Western Metropolitan ACFE Regional Council

Coonara Community House – Eastern Metropolitan ACFE Regional Council

YNH Services – Hume ACFE Regional Council

Traralgon Neighbourhood Learning House – Gippsland ACFE Regional Council

Prahran Community Learning Centre – Southern Metropolitan ACFE Regional Council



Minister for Higher Education and Skills, the Hon. Peter Hall, MLC. with representatives of Mansfield Adult Continuing Education (MACE) Uni4U.

## 2013 Adult Learners' Week Awards

In South Australia, Adult Learners' Week kicked off with the 2013 Adult Learners' Week Awards at the Italian Centre, Adelaide. 'The awards recognise the importance of learning and its impact on people's lives and futures,' the Minister for Higher Education and Skills, the Hon. Grace Portolesi said in announcing the winners.

Naomi Stanbury won the Adult Learner of the Year Award for overcoming significant personal barriers to take up training and volunteering in her local community.

Naomi took part in a foundation skills program at the Pooraka Farm Community Centre last year and is currently enrolled in a Diploma of Community Services at TAFE. She plans to pursue further study so she can teach adults.

'Community education has been a life changing experience and has opened my eyes to further study and job opportunities. My experience shows change is possible, I want to encourage other parents to take up training and learning,' Naomi said.



Dorothy Lucardie, ALA, with winner Hellena MacKenzie.

### Other award winners

Adult Educator of the Year (Paid) – Paul Fay, Driving Industry Skills Centre (DISC)

Adult Educator of the Year (Volunteer) – Hellena MacKenzie, Burton and Morella Community Centre and The Parafield Gardens Children's Centre

Adult Learning Program of the Year – Northern Volunteering (SA) – recognised prior learning assessment for the Advanced Diploma of Community Sector Management

Adult Learning Community of the Year – Regional Development Australia Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula



Adult Learners' Week 2013 award winners.



**Adult Learning Australia** INC

Lifelong and Lifewide Learning  
for All Australians

### About Quest

Quest is the national magazine for adult and community education. It is published four times a year by Adult Learning Australia.

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