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The *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* (formerly the *Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education*) is an official publication of Adult Learning Australia (ALA). It is concerned with the theory, research and practice of adult and community education, and to promote critical thinking and research in this field. Its prime focus is on Australia, though papers relating to other contexts are also sometimes published. Papers in the refereed section of the Journal have been blind peer reviewed by at least two members from a pool of specialist referees from Australia and overseas.

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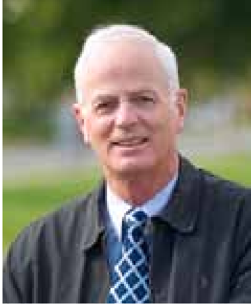
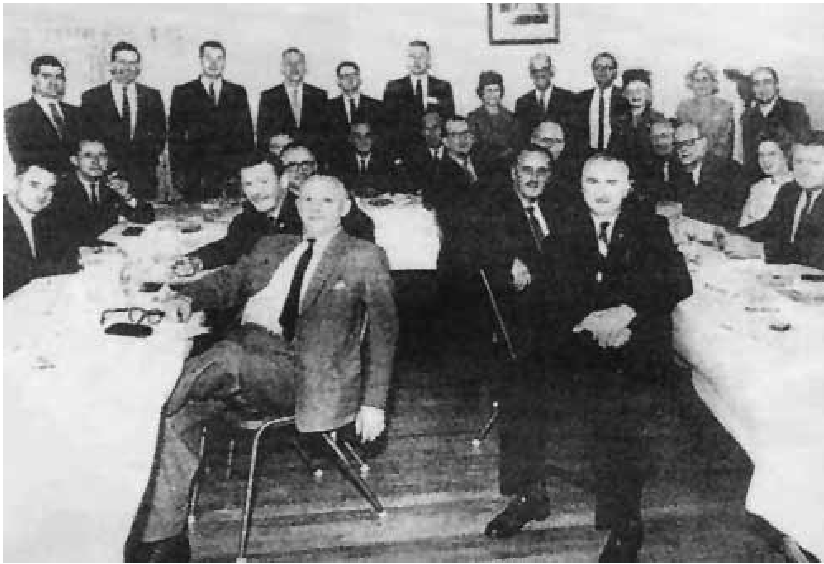


FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

50 years!

In this issue, we celebrate half a century of the Journal! The Australian journal is one of the longest running adult education journals in the world, and that is something about which we all can be justifiably proud. The *Indian Journal of Adult Learning* was founded in 1939 and the *Adult Education Quarterly* (USA) started in 1950, so they are both older, and it would be interesting to know of any others with a longer history than our own journal. We have just celebrated the 50th National Conference, held in Adelaide where the very first one had been run on 3–5 October 1961 as a residential conference in the Hotel Richmond in Rundle Street.

It was billed as 'the most important conference on adult education yet held in Australia' (*Journal*, 1(1), July 1961: 30), with the theme of 'Adult Education—The Nation's Responsibility', a theme that could easily have applied to the 2010 conference (the 2010 theme was 'Looking Back—Moving Forward'). Despite the euphoria generated over the years with such important Senate reports as the two featuring Cinderella in the 1990s, adult education continues to remain the nation's responsibility.



Participants at the first Adult Education Conference in Adelaide in October 1961

Given that academic literature reflects the knowledge base of a discipline, publication activity can tell us much about a field of study. Thus, the content of the Journal illuminates the history, trends, patterns and authorship across the last half a century of adult education in Australia (and beyond). Changes (three) in the journal's title trace the metamorphosis of our discipline over the last 50 years. Mirroring the name of the Association, the journal was launched as *Australian Journal of Adult Education*, becoming the *Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education* in April 1990, and finally adopting the present title in April 2000 when the Association became Adult Learning Australia. These name changes signal two significant realignments over time—a shift from education to learning, and a shift in emphasis from the association to the field. I suggest that these re-alignments reflect quite accurately the discipline's changing focus on **learning** as our core business.

So what has been the role of the journal, over its 143 issues since 1961? In summary form, I believe that the Journal has fulfilled four main functions. First, it is the most visible, accessible and lasting voice of the adult education profession in Australia. This is not to say that there are not other important voices, such as conference proceedings, meeting minutes or newsletters, but I contend that none of these compare with the Journal on these criteria. Second, it is a reflection of significant national events/trends: its contents remind us of key happenings, not only in the content of individual papers, but in the trends over time. Third, it forms a mirror of the knowledge base of the discipline and its issues—and how they change over time. And fourth, it illuminates the history, trends, patterns and authorship across half a century!

Formally, there have been four main versions of what the journal has been intending to do over these 50 years. These have always been printed in the journal issues, usually on the inside front cover, and are presented below:

1961: "Policy"
To provide a forum for discussion on adult education matters

1973: "Journal Objectives"
1. To describe and discuss activities and developments in the field of continuing education for adults

2. To publish accounts of investigations and research in this field

3. To provide a forum for the discussion of significant ideas about the education of adults

4. To review relevant books, reports and periodicals

> **1984: "Policy Statement"**
> It should be of a quality that will command respect in Australia and overseas. It should provide substantial original information and views on the practice of and research into adult education in Australia and overseas and the reporting of original research of significance to Adult Education.
>
> **1990: "Journal Statement"**
> It aims to provide information and analysis on the theory, research and practice of adult and community education… To promote critical thinking and research in this developing and increasingly significant field… prime focus is on Australia, though papers relating to other contexts are also published.

Another way of responding to the question of role is to analyse articles over the years that reflect on the nature of the journal itself. These articles are significant because they are **primary** sources of the day, unfettered by the perspectives, viewpoints and standards of later periods. So often we are prone to judging the past according to our present-day lenses/frameworks/paradigms. So as early as 1968, Berry Durston noted that:

> The *Australian Journal of Adult Education* is probably the most tangible proof of the Association's stated concern for encouraging inquiry, research experiment and publication in the field of adult education… Whichever way you look at it, the *Australian Journal of Adult Education* is serving adult education in Australia well, and deserves the continued and active support of all who are concerned with adult education in Australia… It offers a medium for vigorous, independent thought about adult education and its problems. (*Journal*, 1968, 8(1): 79)

Fifteen years later, Peter Long could write that 'it speaks for a wide cross section of educators in formal education systems, industry, government, unions, communities, the military and the media to name but a few' (*Journal*, 1983, 23(3): 5). Acknowledging it as 'an excellent publication' (p.6), he nevertheless quite insightfully recognised that it had a difficult course to chart:

> It has as much a mission to reflect the current state of scholarship which arises unsolicited like the crest of waves, as it has to control the turbulence by a directive editorial policy. In this sense, the journal has done an excellent service by the Association. But now may be an appropriate time for the Association to reflect upon the role this journal plays: in sponsoring the learning society, and in ensuring that the participative, empowering nature fundamental to adult education theory, is reflected in the journal (p.15).

Continuing this theme, Brennan concluded shortly after that:

> One of the other important services to members, and adult educators generally in Australia and overseas, was the [Journal] … Working from Adelaide, Hely ensured that the new journal from a new Association would make an impact … (*Journal*, 1988, 28(2): 34–35);

and:

> Publications continued to be significant in the service of members. The journal under the editorships of John Shaw, Joan Allsop and Nicolas Haines, continued to serve Australian and overseas readers in the tradition set by Hely and Crowley … (*Journal*, 1988, 28(3): 28).

And a decade further on, I was stimulated by a previous editor's (Nicolas Haines, *Journal*, 1979, 19(1):1) lament that participants at adult education conferences 'assembled, gyrated and dispersed with no published, or, perhaps, publishable proof that the fundamentals we profess have been mentioned, let alone explored in reasonable debate', and I wrote on the role of the *Journal*:

> … at the very least the journal succeeded in establishing and maintaining an outlet for writers to publish their material … If dynamic debate on adult education values was not exactly forthcoming, then perhaps our early counterparts can be excused given the beginnings of the Association, the few adult educators who were in a position to contribute and the infancy of the discipline itself in this country … The editors' toil was not

> in vain. They gave birth to and nurtured this journal through its formative decade, and provided for their successors a regular, informative and spirited publication… Their efforts, and those of the writers who contributed what they saw as significant in that fruitful decade, have therefore left a legacy about which adult and community educators in Australia today can feel justifiably proud (*Journal*, 1997, 37(1):55).

Speaking of editors, it would be remiss of me (as one of those successors) if I did not pay tribute to their hard work on this journal. There have been seven main editors, as follows:

Years	Editor/s	Position
1961–1963 (July)	Arnold S.M. Hely	Adult Education, University of Adelaide, Adelaide
1963 (December)–1965 (July)	Des W. Crowley	Adult Education, University of Adelaide, Adelaide
1965 (December)–1968 (July)	John H. Shaw	Division of Postgraduate and Extension Studies, University of New South Wales, Sydney
1968 (July)	John H. Shaw (Joan W. Allsop: Assistant Editor)	
1968 (Nov)–1969 (July)	Acting Editor: Joan Allsop	Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney, Sydney
1969 (Nov)–1970	John H. Shaw (Joan W. Allsop: Assistant Editor)	
1971–1973	John Shaw & Joan Allsop	

Years	Editor/s	Position
1974–1976 (April)	Joan Allsop	
1976 (July)–1978 (Nov)	Series of guest editors	
1979–1983	Nicolas Haines	Centre for Continuing Education, Australian National University, Canberra
1984–1989	Barrie Brennan	Department of Continuing Education, University of New England, Armidale
1990–present	Roger Harris	Adult and Vocational Education, University of South Australia, Adelaide

Des Crowley published a tribute to the first editor, Arnold Hely (*Journal,* 1968, 8(1): 42–44), in which he accords him first place among those who could justly claim to have played an important part in the founding of the Association; he was the first editor of the Journal and the second Chair of the Association. When 'difficult problems of defining membership, of deciding how conferences were to be organised, of creating the journal, had to be discussed, Arnold's suggestions were nearly always those that were adopted'. This was claimed to be because he had thought things out more clearly than anyone else in practical terms, so that what he proposed was always constructive, going in fact as far as was possible at the time, and because it would work. With specific reference to the journal, Crowley wrote:

> The Journal is one of the best examples of the kind of contribution he made. While the rest of us were looking at the size of our membership on the one hand, and the cost of printing on the other, and timidly thinking in terms of a roneoed or

> mimeographed production, Arnold worked out a scheme based on bulk purchases by organisations and a novel approach to the obtaining of advertising that gave us a journal which (as far at least as format was concerned) we could proudly send overseas. (*Journal* 1968, 8(1): 42)

Roger Morris, in successfully having Hely posthumously inducted into the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame in 2009, stated that Hely 'served the field of adult and continuing education loyally and diligently' from 1937 until his untimely death in December 1967 at 60 years of age. It was Hely who 'brought Australian and New Zealand adult education for the first time into the international arena' (pers. comm., 17/9/09). He is regarded as the founder of ASPBAE and was its Secretary-General until his death.

Des Crowley became the second editor of the Journal, and the first secretary and later Chair of the Association. Like Hely he was a New Zealander. Charles Bentley published an obituary (*Journal,* 1984, 24(1): 4–5), and, although it does not reveal much about his editorship, it does claim that, as a new arrival in Australia, he was able to play an important role in negotiations on the forming of the Association because he was not identified with any of the various factions of the time. During the first decade, he played 'an active and significant role in building [the Association] up and was extremely generous in the time and effort he put into it' (p.4). He took a keen interest in educational television, and in radio where he became a regular commentator on the ABC program *Notes on the News*. He was also editor of *Current Affairs Bulletin*. He was made a Member of the Order of Australia just before he died, on 7 January 1984.

John Shaw and Joan Allsop worked both separately and together on volumes of the Journal over 11 years. Crowley wrote (*Journal*, 1976, 16(2): 60) that:

> Under John and Joan, the Journal became an adult education publication of high repute internationally. They conducted a

> promotion drive which gained some two hundred overseas subscriptions, many of these of course being to university libraries. The frequency of publication was increased from two to three issues annually. The high standing of the Journal has in large measure been due to the excellent quality of the articles it has been able to attract, from overseas as much as from Australia. The range, interest and quality of its overseas contributions have owed a great deal to Joan's outstanding awareness of overseas trends and developments and her very extensive international contacts among adult educators. The Association is greatly indebted to her for her contribution to the development of the Journal, the publication of which has always been recognised as one of the main contributions for its excellence.

Allsop is credited as the first Australian to gain a doctorate of education in adult education, studied at Columbia University in New York. An obituary by Richard Waterhouse in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (27 October 2000) claims that 'her impact was broad and enduring. An influential and pioneering promoter of adult education, … a member of the boards of adult education journals and of bodies that provided adult education classes, … and she herself taught adult classes'. Her generous gifts to the University of Sydney provided funds that have helped dozens of postgraduate students in history to travel throughout Australia and overseas in pursuit of their research. Besides editing the *Journal*, she was on the Executive of the Association between 1967 and 1976. She was awarded an AM in 1981, and died on 12 October, 2000.

I have not been able, in the short time available to complete this editorial, to locate information written by others on the editorship of Nicolas Haines. We know that he was a staff member of the Centre for Continuing Education at the Australian National University. I am informed that he was an erudite man. Perusing his editorials leaves me with the impression that he was indeed that, as well as being hard-hitting in his comment, perhaps to provoke and galvanise

readers into action. In his first issue as editor, he laments that few conferences 'have advanced an inch either toward agreement on what it means to educate in Australian society or toward disagreement on lines of disagreement suited to professions of intellectual and moral effort and integrity' (*Journal*, 1979, 19(1): 1). He continued that 'the decade has seen activity, … hard routine work…, bold declarations of intent…, but seldom, if ever, any determined attempt by our own informed, professional intellects to understand the principles of our own business let alone by precept and example to confront the nation and the national leadership with a reasoned account of what we mean for society' (p.1). In another issue, he refers to TAFE as 'in for a boom time with any threat to "old beliefs" and values coming from too much concentration on functional training, too little understanding of what it means for education, strictly, to be liberal' (*Journal*, 1979, 19(2): 1). And later, referring to a paperback from Monash University (*Back to school: A guide to adults returning to study*, Methuen, 1982) offering what he calls 'the most sensible, useful and, at times, entertaining guidance on adult education that I have seen published in Australia', he claims he was left wondering 'why other university departments… have attempted nothing of the kind' (*Journal*, 1983, 23(1): 1).

Barrie Brennan, currently an Honorary Fellow at the University of New England, was editor between 1984 and 1989—my immediate predecessor. His contribution to the *Journal* has been enormous, and his advice to me through my editorship has always been wise. He introduced an Overseas Consultants group as a result of the 'large overseas reading audience' in the mid-1980s (*Journal*, 1985, 25(2): 2), and was always keen to maintain links between the local Association and the international community. However, for me what stands out was that he was particularly proactive in encouraging thematic numbers on substantive issues of the day. Examples included: the aged; technology; multicultural education; education and learning—in which he quoted Tough describing education as the tip of the learning iceberg and Thomas describing education as

floating on a sea of learning (*Journal*, 1986, 26(1): 2); adult education in Asia and the Pacific; innovations—from which he observed that 'adult education practice is not "sick", [though] it is on the fringes, or cutting edge, of traditional adult education that innovations seem to be happening' (*Journal*, 1986, 26(3): 3); history—offered as a contribution to the re-examination of the future of adult education in this country; prisoner education; and adult education in rural areas.

In the issue on the celebration of learning, he stated that this journal number 'stands for learning that appears to be of quite a different kind to that being thrust upon educational institutions by those who see learning through the eyes of economic rationalism', and that:

> It stands for approaches to education and learning that are currently not very popular. It stands for a humanistic approach, conceiving of the person as a whole person with feelings and hope, emotions and aspirations, a rounder person than the economic cog of the approach that focuses on quantitative outputs and vocational skills' (1987, 27(3): 2–3).

That sums up Barrie's contribution, and is a valuable reminder of the spirit of adult learning and a view that is very topical still today.

His own reflections on editing for six years states that there were problems (e.g. the journal had not been well promoted, it had been difficult persuading postgraduate students to publish, and making contacts with publishers and distributors), but that 'the problems [had] been outweighed by the positive benefits' (*Journal*, 1989, 29(3): 4). It was his impression that the Journal 'is being used more widely and is referred to increasingly in articles and theses'. That is the valuable legacy that Barrie Brennan has left us.

Peter Long wrote in 1983 that: "There is no review process so the journal is a non-refereed journal and as such the influence of the editor is significant in one sense …' (Journal, 1983 23(3): 5). Certainly these earlier editors played a vital role in providing the mouthpiece for the Association though the medium of the Journal. We owe them

our sincerest gratitude. Since then, the Journal has become both refereed and non-refereed (from April 1999), striving to balance on the tightrope between catering for those who desire or need to have their work academically recognised as refereed publications, and providing opportunity for those who desire to spread the good news of their work for the benefit of practitioners.

In this issue are included many of the prominent who's who in Australian adult education over the years—and very fitting that is too, for the celebratory 50th year! There are two refereed articles with a historical flavour, one by Darryl Dymock and Stephen Billett on lessons we can learn from the World War II workforce development programs, the other by Tony Brown (a past Association President) on the teaching of adult education history. A third article, by Francesca Beddie (also a past Association president), provides a reflection on the historical positioning of adult education vis-à-vis other sectors of tertiary education—a very topical issue currently in the post-Bradley Report era of a new tertiary education environment in Australia. The remainder of the issue provides some very interesting reading: on the five decades of the Association compiled by people who were/are leading adult education figures in those respective decades; on revisiting the articles in the first issue with contemporary equivalents; on artefacts/events that significantly influenced the thinking and practice of some of our current adult educators; and on some facts for the sake of posterity about the journal and conferences over 50 years.

Returning to the theme of the first conference in 1961 of adult education being the nation's responsibility, our field has in one sense come a long way in 50 years in its disciplinary base and its excellent practices, though in another (recognition) sense perhaps remains 'a marginal activity stuck on to our education system somewhere between our leaving primary school and our going senile, … run … with meagre budgets, leftover facilities and other people's spare time', as Ian Hanna expressed it in earlier days (Journal, 1965, 5(2): 3).

Perhaps our experience of minimal political follow-up after the promise of the Cinderella reports in the 1990s merely confirms what Anne Whyte (another past Association president) rather prophetically claimed in 1987, 'Generally speaking, governments do not regard non-formal, informal and non-credit education as priorities' (Journal, 1987, 27(1): 6). However, the Journal continues along its merry way, having been recently recognised in the second tier of educational journals in terms of quality.

Happy reading, and let's start the next 50 years! A batter in cricket is entitled to receive some measure of recognition upon reaching 50 runs, but the wholehearted applause is reserved for when the century is attained!

Roger Harris
Editor

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Skilling Australians: Lessons from World War II national workforce development programs

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Griffith University

Governments are currently mobilising their national workforces to compete effectively in a globalised economy where being export-effective and import-competitive are necessary to secure national economic and social goals. Australia is no exception here. Yet, in this country, as in others, similar mobilisations occurred in earlier times, most noticeably during wartime. This article describes and discusses two particular measures during and after the Second World War: the Commonwealth Technical Training Scheme and the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme. Beyond providing an historical account of these two national schemes for skilling Australians, the paper identifies the importance of securing a national consensus and the engagement of all parties, and showing sensitivity towards those who participate in such programs. Particularly salient is that although national-focused, the success of these programs was premised on effective localised arrangements, where diligent administrators and educators seemingly worked closely with local employers and unions to realise their effective implementation.

Skilling Australians

Across the last two decades, various programs have been introduced for developing the skills of the national workforce in Australia. These have included the development of national standards and uniformity of vocational education provisions, introducing a training levy to encourage enterprise expenditure on training, and cycles of reforms of the vocational education system, its institutions, governance and operation. Many of these initiatives (e.g. 'Skills for the future' 2006; 'Workforce futures' 2009) were driven by a concern to mobilise the Australian workforce and the national vocational education system to meet more effectively the challenges emerging from a globalised economy where the quality of goods and services is essential to both maintain levels of exports and resist increased levels of imports. A key feature of these processes has been the role of national bodies, such as Skills Australia, established in 2008, which have been charged with reforming workforces and the vocational education system. Yet, far from all of these initiatives have been successful (Billett 2004), so it is useful to understand more about how such initiatives might be organised.

Indeed, the need for Australia to mobilise and develop the skills of its workforce in the face of challenges to national well-being has occurred previously. During and after the Second World War, national programs were implemented for developing the required skills for military purposes and then later to assist the demobilisation of a large proportion of the nation's fighting force at the end of six years of conflict. To address the urgent need for such skills, the Australian Government introduced the Commonwealth Technical Training Scheme (CTTS) and the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS) which it saw as a way of producing qualified tradespeople in a relatively short time. More than 300,000 people went through the two schemes, with the CRTS later described as 'one of the most significant strategies for social change in Australia' (NAA 2009).

It follows, therefore, that this paper documents the development of the CTTS and CRTS to identify their main features and discusses whether any of the experiences of these initiatives can be usefully applied to help address current skills development initiatives in Australia. Most of the information about the history of these Schemes is drawn from government files held in the National Archives, Canberra. While clearly historical, the accounts demonstrate the importance of gaining national consensus, having appropriate infrastructure, and the importance and difficulty of attempting to align needs with demand. Yet, successful implementation of these programs seems to have been very much premised on constructive and collaborative arrangements at the local level.

Early developments

The need for national schemes for skill development emerged in Australia before the outbreak of the Second World War. Like many European counterparts, in 1938 successive provocations by Nazi Germany led the Australian Government to conclude that an outbreak of war was inevitable. The Controller of the Munitions Supply Board, J K Jensen, who had visited Britain 20 years earlier to learn how it had mobilized for munitions production in World War I (Steven 1996), suggested the need to plan for the intensive training of war workers in technical schools and colleges (Department of Labour and National Service (DLNS) c. 1946: 24). At that time, as now, those schools and colleges were the responsibility of the six States, along with the provision of primary and secondary education, with the Commonwealth Government then having responsibilities for the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. There had been some nascent attempts for national coordination of technical education, including the Australian Education Council, established in 1936 to enable continuous consultation among the relevant State and Federal Ministers. However, this Council met only every two years (Eltham 1953a: 24). So, there were no mechanisms for harnessing the States' technical education systems for the service of the nation.

The first move to institute such a mechanism came in September 1939, some three weeks after the Second World War began. Representatives of interested Commonwealth government departments met to discuss the shortage of skilled tradesworkers for defence purposes and the availability of training facilities (Eltham 1953a: 24). Subsequently, a survey in December that year identified existing and potential technical training facilities. Shortly afterwards, the first conference of State and Federal technical education and industry representatives was convened, leading to the establishment of an Expert Advisory Committee comprising representatives of industry, government and technical education (Eltham 1953a: 24). In many ways, the formation of this committee constitutes a forerunner for subsequent efforts across reform processes to mobilise national institutions to develop further the skills of the national workforce and to organise technical or vocational education for these purposes.

Commonwealth Technical Training Scheme

These developments across 1939 and 1940 culminated in the establishment of the Commonwealth Technical Training Scheme (CTTS) whose focus was to fully utilise existing networks of State technical education facilities. The most urgent need was for skilled engineering tradesmen, and by December 1939, the first course of training, for 100 Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) fitters, was under way. Arrangements were made to purchase precision tool- and gauge-making machinery from the United States, although when it arrived in Australia much of the equipment was diverted to munitions factories (DLNS c. 1946). Nevertheless, the CTTS quickly expanded, with E.P. Eltham as Director, seconded to the Industrial Training Division of the Commonwealth Department of Labour and National Service from his role as Chief Inspector of Technical Schools in Victoria. The new division's role was to coordinate training for war purposes through the States' administrative and training facilities; with the Commonwealth meeting all costs, including premises,

equipment and teachers. Initially, the CTTS was for those already enlisted in one of the three services, and included a wide range of trades, from armourers to X-ray technicians, electrical mechanics to projectionists. Basic courses ran full-time for periods of four weeks to 20 weeks, and by 1944 almost 100,000 Army, Navy and RAAF trainees had completed CTTS courses (DLNS c. 1946: 24).

Another form of training program within the CTTS was established under the National Security Dilution Regulations, which were introduced in May 1940. This program aimed to provide for the employment of 'suitable adult persons' in work normally undertaken by qualified tradesworkers, following a period of intensive training in engineering work. The relevant trade unions agreed to the relaxation of existing training requirements for tradesworkers to meet the exigencies of the time, with the caveat that qualified tradesworkers' rights would be protected when the wartime need had passed. Applicants for this program were initially selected by committees comprising representatives of employer and employee bodies and technical colleges. However, soon the Australian Council for Educational Research developed aptitude tests to expedite the selection process (DLNS c. 1946: 24). Each trainee was paid the basic wage for the period of their training, which averaged 15 weeks, and signed an agreement that from the date of completion of the course to 'serve if and as required by the Local Dilution Committee in the performance of the duties for which he [sic] is trained during the remaining period of the War' ('Tradesmen's rights' 1946).

Those dropping out of courses or not meeting their service obligations had to pay back the cost of training, up to a maximum amount. In 1943, the scheme was expanded to include women, and by 1946 around 50,000 'diluted' tradespeople had completed courses and almost half of them remained employed as 'added tradesmen' ('Tradesmen's rights' 1946: 3). There were also more specialised and other courses that reflected the breadth of the mobilisation effort.

For example, some 700 selected fitters and turners and first-class machinists undertook courses of 52 hours a week for around three months to become tool and gauge-makers for government munitions and aircraft factories (DLNS c. 1946: 24). Also, the expansion of munitions manufacturing and the increasing employment of workers trained under the 'dilution' scheme led to a demand for more supervisors, so part-time and correspondence courses were introduced to meet that need. The growth of such factories also resulted in training for canteen managers, cooks and bookkeepers. Other courses trained optical munitions craftsmen, engineering draughtsman, industrial chemists and workshop inspectors.

The last trainees were accepted into the CTTS in 1944, by which time more than 23,000 adults had undertaken training in munitions and aircraft production in 60 technical schools and colleges across Australia, in addition to the 100,000 trained within the Services. These institutions were already teaching around 100,000 students annually, and some of them introduced day and night shifts to cater for the increased numbers. It is claimed the percentage of trainees found to be unsuitable when they took up positions in munitions and aircraft factories was 'negligible', and that in two large factories, the percentages of CTTS trained workers was 75% and 94% respectively (DLNS c. 1946: 24). However, while these figures may well reflect a high demand-driven labour market, the take-up rate and presumably high level of satisfaction by employers and supervisors stands in contrast to current circumstances. Yet, it is important to identify factors that led to the seemingly successful implementation of this scheme. One of these was the training of trainers and the development of training institutions.

Training the trainers and training institutions

Initially, teachers in the CTTS came from the State technical education systems, but they were supplemented by hundreds of tradesworkers recruited directly from industry. Each State organised

its own short teacher-training courses for these new recruits, and teaching aids produced specifically for these courses included film strips, wall charts and printed manual and lesson notes in order to minimise the need for note-taking in class. Manuals were also produced for particular subject areas, for example, turning and machining, reading technical drawings and electrical theory. In addition, the sudden increase in student numbers meant existing technical colleges were quickly overstretched, and the Commonwealth Government spent around £250,000 [$500,000] on the construction of 40 new buildings to cope with the demand for the CTTS. Two main conditions for this expenditure were: (i) the buildings had to be designed for flexible use, so they could be adapted for different training purposes, and (ii) they had to be part of the planned development of each State's technical education program.

In sum, the Commonwealth Technical Training Scheme saw the Australian Federal Government become involved in a field of education that previously had been solely a State responsibility. Moreover, this scheme was wholly funded by the Federal government with State governments apparently readily co-operating in its implementation; and the relevant unions agreeing to the fast-track system for trade skill development as long as tradesworkers' rights were protected. In addition, selection was based on aptitude tests; tradesworkers were recruited as teachers; and special training and resources were provided for the new teachers. These urgent war-time measures established a model for the successor to the CTTS, the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS), and indeed many of the initiatives for developing the national skill force in much later times.

Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme

The high proportion of Australia's population in the war effort and the early return of Australian casualties prompted government interest

in civilian post-war reconstruction. Prime Minister John Curtin, elected in 1941, was keen to prepare troops for a return to civilian life once the war was over (Serle 1993). So, in late 1942, even as Japanese troops edged closer to Australia, Curtin presciently established the Department of Post-War Reconstruction, headed by H.C. (Nugget) Coombs (NAA, Australia's Prime Ministers: Timeline: John Curtin). Curtin's policies on post-war reconstruction, including planning for full employment, assisted immigration and improvements in social security, helped his party secure re-election in 1943 (Serle 1993).

The Government saw training as a key to returning almost one million Australian servicemen and women to civilian life after the war, but held that any training scheme should fit within a national reconstruction framework. It therefore decided that training for returning troops would not be provided as a matter of course (that is, as a 'reward' for war service) but according to whether such training was necessary for a satisfactory return to civilian life, taking into account each individual's qualifications, aptitude and health (CRTC c. Feb. 1944). This assessment process was an underlying principle of the new scheme. From a national perspective, 'a unique opportunity was … available to foster training for employment in under-staffed trades and occupations with good prospects, to avoid encouraging the entry of additional workers into over-crowded fields with less attractive prospects (Report on Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme 1946: 16).

In March 1944, as the Commonwealth Technical Training Scheme was winding down, the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS) was introduced on a small scale. Although its main role would be at the end of the war, it was made available earlier for those members of the armed forces who had been discharged, but needed training to obtain employment in civilian life (Report on CRTS 1946: 16). By October 1945, almost 4,000 former armed services members had begun full-time training and over 9,000 had enrolled in part-time courses.

To prepare for post-war reconstruction, in 1944 the Commonwealth Government had attempted to change the constitution in order to take over some of the States' powers for a period which would end five years after the cessation of hostilities. There were 14 specified elements in the proposal, including employment and unemployment, national works and national health, as well as 'the reinstatement and advancement of those who have been members of the fighting services of the Commonwealth during any war and the advancement of dependants of those members of the armed services who have died or been disabled as a consequence of war (quoted in Gallagher 2003: 13). However, although the relevant act (known as the Evatt Act after the Attorney-General of the time) was passed by the Australian Parliament, the proposed handover of powers was not accepted by Australian voters at the subsequent referendum. Gallagher (2003: 15) suggested this rejection may have been 'a blessing in disguise for the CRTS as, had Evatt's Act become law, at least six of the fourteen matters to be referred to the Federal Parliament would have caused major political and social upheaval in peacetime, and most certainly would have diverted the attention of leaders such as Chifley [who became Prime Minister after Curtin's death in July 1945], Coombs and Dedman [Minister for Post-War Reconstruction].'

Consequently, when Parliament passed another Act, in June 1945, 'to provide for the Re-establishment in Civil Life of Members of the Forces, for facilitating their employment, and for other purposes', it had to rely on the *co-operation* of the States. Under that Act, the general purposes of the CRTS were to provide:

> Full-time training: for those who required training because of incapacity caused by war service, or because their re-enlistment occupation was oversupplied; for those whose training (or commencement of training) had been interrupted by war service; for those in need of a short refresher course; and for those who during their war service 'have shown conspicuous ability and can satisfy the Regional Committee of their suitability for a calling apt to improve their economic status substantially'.

> Part-time training: for those who wished to improve their occupational status or their general education (Gallagher 2003: 13).

There were three categories of full-time training: i) professional training—at a university, technical college, teachers' college, agricultural college leading to a degree, diploma or equivalent; ii) vocational training—for an established skilled adult vocation, trade or calling; and iii) rural training—on approved farms or by short intensive courses in agricultural colleges (CRTS c. mid 1957). It is noteworthy that this scheme embraced both elements of tertiary education: vocational education and higher education. It is only in very recent times that government efforts to increase the skill base of the Australian population have extended beyond a focus on vocational education, and into higher education.

Administration

A Central Reconstruction Training Committee was established to oversee the scheme, with the Chair from the Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction, and representatives of the Repatriation Commission, the Universities Commission, the Rural Training Authority, the Employment Division and Industrial Training Divisions of the Department of Labour and National Service, employers' and employees' organisations, and Ex-Services associations. There were also co-opted members from the Navy, Army, Air Force and Treasury (CRTS c. mid 1957). E.P. Eltham was appointed Director of Industrial Training in the Department of Labour and National Service following his earlier secondment as Director of the CTTS. When the full scheme became operational in August 1945, Regional Committees were established at a State level and in the Australian Capital Territory. These committees were responsible for such matters as selection of trainees, advice to the Central Committee on occupational training needs and training quotas, approval of training facilities and hearing of appeals from disgruntled applicants. Living allowances

for full-time trainees were paid by the Department of Labour and National Service (DLNS), which also paid subsidies to employers with trainees under the scheme. The Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction issued all requisites, including books and tools of trade, for full-time professional and vocational students. Eligibility for full-time training was based on 14 criteria for professional training and 15 for vocational training; suitability factors included previous qualifications and aptitude, and employment prospects in the particular occupation. The DLNS identified skills shortages in conjunction with employer and employee organisations. Here again is a prescient initiative—that is, an early effort to align the demand for vocational education with the supply of graduates. As indicated below, efforts to identify alignments between supply and demand were taken seriously, to assist the preferences of those engaging in these programs to most likely lead to employable outcomes.

Industry requirements

Out of a population of about seven million, close to one million Australians enlisted or were conscripted into the military forces in World War II, with a maximum strength of the armed forces peaking at 700,000 men and 40,000 women in June 1943. Although in 1939 the male unemployment rate was 11% and the female rate was 6.5%, most of those in the armed services were drawn from civilian jobs, including 48% of the pre-war strength of the building and construction industry, 31% from primary industries and 30% from commerce; 28% of those who had been engaged in mining also saw war service (Report on CRTS 1946: 16). There had also been a large increase in women's participation in industry—the wartime figure of 800,000 was 150,000 higher than in 1939. It was estimated that at the end of the war about 1.5 million adults would need to be re-employed in civilian occupations, and half a million more jobs would be required than in 1939 (Report on CRTS 1946: 16). This meant:

> Training was urgently required over a wide field of trades and professions on an unprecedented scale to meet industrial and professional requirements. In some callings, such as the building trades, grave shortages of qualified tradesmen were evident. In others, enormously expanded during the war, there were considerable surpluses, and little or no openings for secure employment existed for discharged Servicemen (Report on CRTS 1946: 16).

This task was made even more demanding by the unexpectedly quick end to the war following Japan's surrender after nuclear weapons were used against its cities.

Start-up problems

Although the CRTS had been in preparation for two years or so, the unexpectedly quick end of the war in August 1945 caught the government and the military by surprise. Suddenly, Australian servicemen and women were returning home and the Scheme was not yet in full operation. Demobilisation accelerated from 6,000 a week in October 1945 to 16,000 a week by the end of November, and peaked at 19,000 a week in January 1946 (Report on CRTS 1946: 16). Between October 1945 and April 1946, almost 400,000 servicemen and women were discharged, and 30% of them expected, not unreasonably, that the CRTS would help them re-settle into the civilian workforce (Report on CRTS 1946: 16).

Those expectations had been developed by the promotion of the scheme throughout the armed services from early 1944 onwards, mainly through service publications, and then through the newly established Regional Committees. However, it appears early information was sketchy, and only at the end of 1944 were comprehensive booklets on the CRTS published and distributed: 'it is evident that many details of the Training Scheme were not clearly conveyed to the troops by those concerned nor were the implications of the Scheme properly understood' (Report on CRTS 1946: 15).

Furthermore, Regional Committees sometimes ignored national directives of the Central Reconstruction Training Committee with which they disagreed. The result was often confusion, particularly among the applicants, especially about the distinction between being declared 'eligible' for training under the scheme, and the next step, being deemed 'suitable'. Also, in the vocational training category, many applicants, having been advised about being 'suitable' for particular (and popular) trades, were then told there were insufficient training places in those trades, and in some cases future vacancies were unlikely.

Responding to a 1946 inquiry into the delays, those behind the scheme claimed it was always intended to spread training over a period of up to two and a half years, with regular intakes of trainees, annually for professional training and six-monthly for vocational training, 'so as to give industry time to adapt itself fully from a war to a peacetime economy' (Eltham 1953b: 2). Estimates of the likely take-up of the scheme were based on a census undertaken within each Service, showing that some 7.5%, or about 70,000, of the 940,000 men and women enlisted or called up as at September 1944 expressed a desire to undertake post-war training (Eltham 1953b: 1). Simultaneously, the Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction estimated the number required to be trained full-time to meet industry requirements after the war was 60,000 to 70,000, which coincided with the census estimate of availability (Eltham 1953b: 2). On the assumption that initial trade training would take six months on average before the trainees were assigned to employers, planning was based on a peak training load of 20,000 at any one time. However, not only did the demobilised troops have expectations of taking immediate advantage of the scheme, Regional Committees were also apparently unaware of the plan to spread the training and the industry take-up over two years or so (Report on CRTS 1946: 61). In the seven months from October 1945, there were 104,000 applications, of which only around 40,000 were accepted for training

during that period. The main delays included the handling of initial applications and keeping the former members of the forces informed of the progress of their applications. Understandably, applicants forced to wait for training opportunities were aggrieved, and had to seek hard-to-come-by, short-term employment while they waited (Report on CRTS 1946: 64).

By late 1946, when a committee of inquiry reported on initial problems with the scheme, the administrative problems were gradually being overcome, helped in part no doubt by the withdrawal of around 14,000 applicants who decided to pursue other options (Report on CRTS 1946: 120). Of the 193,000 applications received (almost 20% of gross enlistments in the armed forces), between the inception of the scheme in March 1944 and July 1946, 79,000 were for full-time training and 114,000 were for part-time courses. Only some three percent of those applications were rejected on grounds of ineligibility or unsuitability (Report on CRTS 1946: 120). This low percentage indicates that there was a real need to provide skill development opportunities that were within their educational capacity for the vast majority of these applicants. This is perhaps hardly surprising as many had been in military service close to six years, and had enlisted before they had the opportunity to develop occupational skills. Yet, there is also a lesson about the difficulties of aligning the aspirations and needs of applicants, the provision of vocational education and training, and opportunities within the labour market. These three inter-related factors are always going to be difficult to effectively align. Such misalignments occur and continue to this day, hence expectations about them need to be carefully managed.

Vocational training

For all three categories of training—professional, vocational and rural—the minimum eligibility requirement was six months' service in the armed forces, unless incapacity from war service in a shorter

period precluded return to their previous occupations. The other main requirement, with some exceptions, was enlistment before their 21st birthday (which meant a person who had enlisted at the outbreak of war in 1939 would be under 27 years of age at the time of demobilisation). Some 275,000 members of the forces were in that age cohort. Table 1 shows four key categories of those eligible for *vocational* training.

Table 1: Selected categories of eligibility for CRTS vocational training (CRTS c. mid 1957: 7)

As well as having enlisted before their 21st birthday, had 'no definite vocational skills'
Demonstrated the ability and will to undertake intensive courses to enable vocational skills acquired earlier 'to be converted satisfactorily to new vocational skills which have come to be in demand'
Had been self-employed before enlistment but were unable to resume their former employment and who could be re-established in a skilled or semi-skilled calling for which there was a demand
Needed short refresher courses in a particular vocation or specialisation because they had been away from it for too long

In addition, those enlisted before their 25th birthday and not eligible under any other categories, could be considered for training in selected occupations, that is, those where vacancies 'may exist from time to time' (Report on CRTS 1946: 120). Full-time trainees were paid a living allowance and, if necessary, a living-away-from-home allowance for the duration of their training. Initial training mainly through technical colleges and other approved industrial institutions (for example, private colleges), was intended to develop learners to be 40% competent in their chosen trade—or, as the regulations, put it, at 40% earning capacity. Then, they were allocated to an employer and continued their training, often with concurrent part-time training in a technical college, until they were adjudged to have reached 100% proficiency or earning capacity. During this period, the government

subsidised the employer on a sliding scale for each ‘tradesman-in-training’ until they were fully competent. This model was based on a similar arrangement after World War I, when around 44,000 ex-Servicemen received training under the Commonwealth Vocational Training Scheme (Gallagher 2003: 24).

Training facilities

The Industrial Training Division of the Department of Post-War Reconstruction, which had overseen the establishment of the CTTS, took overall responsibility for arranging vocational (technical-type) training under the CRTS. In each State, the Superintendent of Technical Education also acted on behalf of the Commonwealth as Regional Director of Industrial Training; separate Regional Directors were appointed in the Australian Capital Territory, and also in Papua New Guinea, where certain indigenous people who had helped Australian troops block the Japanese advance could apply for the CRTS (Gallagher 2003: 116). As part of the preparation for the introduction of the CRTS, a survey was carried out to ascertain the extent of the training facilities available and what additional facilities the Commonwealth would need to fund. The estimated cost of the provision of additional permanent buildings was £1.1 million [$2.2 million] (Eltham 1953b: 5). Table 2 indicates the extent of the planning undertaken. It included estimates of the number of full-time equivalents of training places, requirements for buildings and the number of buildings to be completed, the prospects of securing temporary or leased accommodation for vocational training related activities. All of this likely constitutes a first instance of a strategic planning process to respond to the skilling needs of the Australian population, albeit building upon processes trialled at the end of the First World War.

Table 2: Summary of building requirements for CRTS (CRTS c. mid 1957: 4)

Estimated number for whom facilities for full-time training required at one time	20,000 (peak load)
Estimated capacity of accommodation available in existing technical schools for those trades and callings in demand for training	6,300
Estimated capacity of accommodation of workshop units erected by the Commonwealth for war-time training	2,300
Estimated capacity of accommodation of temporary & leased buildings	3,000
Estimated capacity of accommodation to be supplied by implementing those parts of the States' permanent building programmes for technical training, which were selected for Commonwealth needs	6,200
Total estimated capacity	17,800

To meet the shortfall between the identified capacity and the estimated demand, as shown in Table 2, surplus Army huts were planned to be used as training facilities. When the CRTS ended in 1952, 130 additional training centres had been established ('CRTS with particular reference' n.d.).

As noted, it had been assumed there would be a time lag in achieving the maximum training rate, so the provision of training facilities was based initially on a proportion of the total target. In the case of the construction industry, the allocations were predicated on a large increase in the number of houses built: from 40,000 a year in 1939 to 60,000 a year for the next ten years (Eltham 1953b: 4). This required a consequent estimated increase in the skilled labour force from 95,000 to 130,000. The total CRTS training target for the construction industry was set at close to 33,000, spread across six trades, with an initial target of a quarter of that number

(approx. 8,000) for each six month period over the two years. The floor areas required for training, along with the equipment and tools required for each trade, were calculated on groups of 15–20 trainees. Sufficient equipment and tools were then ordered through the (Commonwealth) Directorate of Machine Tools and Gauges to cater for the number of trainees in each trade, based on the estimated maximum training rate. The maximum training capacities eventually available at the various facilities was close to the target of just over 8,000, but the actual peak at any one time was around 7,000, mainly due to fluctuations in employment opportunities and sometimes because of materials shortages at the end of the war. The supply of small tools was a constant problem; particularly those not made in Australia, and these were sometimes thinly spread across facilities, with a consequent loss in training efficiency. Indeed, a senior officer in the Industrial Training Division suggested that the lack of sufficient tools and equipment was the main limiting factor in expanding the CRTS (Maher 1965).

Training followed the normal trade training curriculum, but with adaptations for the intensive training required under the scheme and taking account of the learners as adults. When the CRTS finished in 1952, some 22,000 ex-servicemen and women had been trained in construction trades through the scheme. Table 3 presents the breakdown by trade and by State. A further 1,500 who had received training in the armed forces were regarded as 40% competent and were sent straight to employers. So, there were significant numbers of individuals moving into this industry. It is also evident from this table that it was a nationally implemented strategy with significant numbers of trainees completing construction training across every State and Territory in all trades except tiling and slating.

Table 3: No. of trainees who completed CRTS construction training (Eltham 1953b: 5)

Trade	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	ACT	TOTAL
Bricklaying	1509	597	326	353	191	99	48	3123
Painting	1628	865	318	341	179	69	63	3463
Plumbing	461	234	283	101	123	62	38	1302
Carpentry & Joinery	3878	3223	2478	633	673	445	86	11416
Plastering	640	420	125	282	357	89	31	1944
Tiling & Slating	136	77	15	13	8			131
TOTAL	**8252**	**5416**	**3545**	**1723**	**1531**	**764**	**266**	**21,497**

As noted above, the skilled education provisions went beyond much of what has comprised provision in more recent initiatives, and included correspondence courses.

Correspondence courses

Under the CRTS, part-time and correspondence training was provided for eligible ex-service men and women already in employment yet who wanted to improve their level of training or otherwise to improve their 'cultural knowledge' ('CRTS with particular reference' n.d.: 3). Such provisions had been initiated earlier in the war by the Australian Army Education Service (AAES), whose role it was to keep servicemen and women informed and occupied when 'off-duty', initially within Australia and then in Papua New Guinea and the south-west Pacific (Dymock 1995). In addition to an on-site program of lectures and educational activities, the AAES developed a range of correspondence courses in conjunction with technical colleges and universities. Enrolments in correspondence courses rose remarkably from around 4,000 at the end of 1942 to some 46,000 at the end of 1944, although it seems there was understandably a

high dropout rate in these courses (Dymock 1995: 46). However, the CRTS gave a new emphasis to vocational training, and from 1944, the Education Service was directed to restrict vocational training to reconstruction requirements, and new proposals for correspondence courses were first referred to the CRT Committee.

Although there are some slight discrepancies in various CRTS figures produced by different parts of the system, the Director of Industrial Training said that 165,000 former members of the armed forces took advantage of the part-time training provision post-war, of whom around 72,000 (43%) enrolled in correspondence courses in technical training (Eltham 1953b). Pedagogically, the significance of the development of technical education by correspondence in the ten years after the end of the war can be gauged from the following account:

> Experience in the process has led to improved techniques in compiling, presenting, illustrating and reproducing courses; in interesting, motivating and progressively instructing the trainee; in more closely linking theory with practice; in developing effective study habits and closer written expression; and in supplementing the regular instruction by such diverse associated services as circulating libraries, mobile workshops, supervised study groups, periodic practical sessions, school publications, itinerant teacher assistance, and employer co-operation (DLNS 1954: 2).

The author of that paper, probably Eltham, noted the advances in practical training, such as the mobile workshops and intensive practical sessions of several weeks for trainees at the nearest technical college. He was also complimentary about 'perhaps the most significant development': the involvement of employers in on-the-job training of young trainees: 'Where the employer conscientiously endeavours to give him progressive practical instruction and experience which complements his correspondence instruction, and insists on high standards of performance, excellent results can be achieved' (DLNS 1954: 2).

Nevertheless, there are hints of initial difficulties with articulation from correspondence to classroom studies, and also with the transfer of applications from one State to another, and with the interchange of courses between States (DLNS 1954: 2). It was claimed, however, that as the Scheme progressed the coordination improved, and that over the nine years from its inception achievements in technical training by correspondence under the CRTS included an expansion of the number of technical correspondence schools from two (in Melbourne and Sydney) to six, a permanent one in each State; an increase in the number of courses from 200 to 1,600; and a total enrolment of 88,000 before discharge and 73,000 post-discharge (DLNS 1954: 3). These figures are from official reports, and there is no indication of dropout rates, although the AAES had found them to be high in wartime. Nevertheless, by any measure given the size of the Australian population, this was a significant educational undertaking. The realisation of these schemes was very much premised upon the efforts of individuals at the local level who administered, taught in and developed resources for these programs.

As with the CTTS, those teachers initially came from the State technical colleges, and were supplemented by temporary instructors who undertook a 12-week training course for the purpose ('CRTS with particular reference' n.d.: 4). The preparation and distribution of training aids (mainly films, film strips and wall charts) begun by the Industrial Training Division for the CTTS continued with the CRTS after the war. A textbook allowance was provided for full- and part-time trainees, but textbooks were in short supply at the end of the war, and, as might be expected, it took some time to build up sufficient supplies of books for post-war training purposes (Betheras 1946).

Finale

The government set the final application date for the CRTS at 30 June 1950; those enrolled at that date could continue with their

courses, and eligibility was based on enlistment prior to 30 June, 1947 and discharge on or before 30 June 1949 (CRTS n.d.). Under the Menzies government, elected in 1949, responsibility for administering the scheme passed from the Department of Post-War Reconstruction to the Repatriation Department; the CRTC arrangements basically remained unchanged. The Scheme was officially rescinded on 31 December 1952, although a small similar scheme was apparently established around this time for troops who had served with the Australian army in Korea and Malaya (Gallagher 2003: 19).

Although the emphasis in the discussion above has been on the vocational education provisions, it is worth noting that 15,000 ex-service men and women completed diploma and degree studies and 1,500 undertook rural training (Gallagher 2003: 118). The departmental files and reports about enrolments are sometimes discrepant, but the most credible appears to be a one-page printed (but undated) version from the Department of Labour and National Service titled 'Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme: Final statistics' which includes the summary reproduced in Table 4.

Table 4: Final statistics—CRTS trainees (CRTS: Final statistics n.d.)

	Commenced	**Completed**	**Terminated or withdrawn**	**Transferred to another course**
Full-time	63,707	52,801	8,497	2,409
Part-time	176,097	56,046	114,076	5,975
TOTAL	**239,804**	**108,847**	**122,573**	**8,384**

The figures in Table 4 appear valid because the high withdrawal and termination rate (65%) for part-time courses, which includes correspondence courses, reflects other reported experiences. Hence, there is evidence of problems which advocates may well have been reluctant to publicise. The experience of the Army Education Service

with correspondence education during the war, more recent research findings generally about dropout rates in distance education, and the fact that many of the part-time trainees were re-establishing themselves both at work and in family life post-war, all suggest that such a figure is likely to be realistic. Although the completion numbers are below the numbers reported in some other official documents, Table 4 shows only a small (13%) withdrawal and termination rate in the full-time courses, indicating both persistence by the trainees and an effective training approach. Much of the success of the CRTS was claimed to be due to high levels of co-operation between the Commonwealth and the States, from employers and ex-servicemen's organisations, and among the Commonwealth Government Departments concerned. ('Technical training under the CRTS' n.d.: 3). A report by an Inter-Departmental Committee noted that 'The CRTS administration, though seemingly complex on first observation, has successfully provided training for some 270,000 people, without any administrative difficulties or industrial troubles' ('Report of the Inter-departmental Committee', n.d.: 2).

Discussion

From the available reports, there was significant cooperation between the Commonwealth and the States, perhaps not surprisingly, given that this initiative was all about rebuilding the nation after a long war. When the Re-Establishment and Employment Bill was debated in 1945, just before the war ended, the Federal Opposition was strongly supportive, as Opposition member Dame Enid Lyons noted:

> Even when the criticism has been strongest there has been very little questioning from either side of the House of the motive behind the bill, and I believe the Government has made an honest attempt … to solve a problem of very great complexity—the problem of restoring hundreds of thousands of men and women to normal living conditions, which have been disturbed in a way hitherto unknown in our history (Hansard 1945, quoted in Gallagher 203: 10).

This sentiment seems to have carried over to the States, whose co-operation was no doubt bolstered by the Commonwealth funding the Scheme, and the States getting substantial new training facilities, tools and equipment. However, despite the rhetoric of the Inter-departmental committee, there were administrative problems with the CRTS, particularly at the beginning of the Scheme, necessitating an inquiry, and one departmental source suggested it was not until around 1948 that things ran smoothly. Even then, issues with the supply of tools for training purposes persisted, with intrastate administration, and with securing sufficient textbooks, especially just after the war. On the industrial front, there was considerable co-operation from the unions, although perhaps not as universal as the Inter-departmental report suggests. In one instance, it was stated that because a particular union in southern States had agreed to support the initiative there was no reason to suggest that the same union in Queensland would support it. Nevertheless, overall the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme fulfilled its objectives. As shown earlier in this paper, towards the end of the war, the estimate of Australia's industry needs was 60,000 to 70,000, taking what seem conservative figures. Moreover, as summarised in Table 4, the number who *completed* training under the Scheme was around 109,000, comprising some 47,000 who trained full-time in trades to at least 40% proficiency, 5,500 who undertook full-time professional studies, and a further aggregated number of 56,000 who completed part-time studies, the majority of whom would have been in vocational training.

An advantage for the CRTS was that it drew on experiences of the CTTS, and some of the arrangements under the early scheme continued under the new one. Like its predecessor, the success of the CRTS was built on extensive cooperation between the Commonwealth and the States; full funding of the Scheme by the Commonwealth, including capital works; training of additional teachers in short intensive courses; and union support. Selection of participants in both

schemes was based on abilities and aptitude, but also restricted by employment opportunities, and those opportunities fluctuated over the period of the scheme. This, at times, complicated the selection process and sometimes frustrated those seeking training in particular trades. Another post-war innovation was the establishment of Regional Committees that spread the load of the Central Committee and also linked ex-service personnel to their home State, but causing occasional problems between the regions and the centre. The CRTS also had extensive provision for part-time studies, including correspondence education, leading to the development of a dedicated college in each State, and allowance for 'cultural studies'.

Over its nine year operation, educators took the opportunity to develop and enhance their teaching approaches, particularly with correspondence education, and to develop appropriate resources and, in general, to try to align the objectives of the scheme with the needs of adult students. Given the relatively low level of attrition in full-time training, it seems there were high levels of satisfaction with the provision of education and the experience provided by teachers and others.

Conclusion

These two schemes can be seen as forerunners of more recent efforts to mobilise the Australian workforce and vocational education system for national workforce purposes. They represented the first instances that the Commonwealth took responsibility for educational initiatives, that otherwise had been a State responsibility, in this instance in vocational education, a rehearsal for later interventions. Also, they represented early instances of strategic planning processes, which have become far more common. While not as urgent or extreme as in the war period, many recent initiatives have sought to replicate the kinds of federal and State arrangements, and those with employers and unions, particularly under federal Labor governments.

Emerging through the account above is an abiding need for strong consensus across national institutions: the States and Territories and also key agencies of employers and employees. There was a willingness to make concessions to realise important national goals. State governments were willing to accept federal leadership, in return for financial resources. Unions were willing to be flexible about worker status to address urgent needs and with assurances that their members' interests would be protected in the long run. It also seems, without evidence to the contrary, that employers were also willing to participate. Although likely not as straightforward and benign as these documents suggest, the first lesson from these arrangements is the importance of gaining consensus and in ways that engages the representatives of the parties involved, which likely led to tolerance of problems with these schemes. In recent initiatives, the provision of national administration and leadership has progressed national imperatives, but without the same level of consensus and engagement.

The second lesson is evident in information provided through archive documents, and stands to be imputed from other evidence; that is, although the implementation of this initiative was managed centrally at both Federal and State levels, its success was premised on local factors, such as collaboration between stakeholders. The teachers, administrators, employers and union officials who implemented the scheme locally must have engaged positively and productively, otherwise the levels of completion, the success of the programs and the absence of extensive complaints would not have been as strong. Initiatives that are centrally mandated will likely only ever be successful when those working as teachers or administrators who implement them and representatives of labour and employers are engaged and work to support them. All too often, since this time and particularly in the period of reform since the 1990s, not all of these players are engaged, consulted and assisted in their development to provide effective vocational education provisions.

The third lesson is both the importance of and the difficulty in attempting to align labour market demands with the provision of vocational education. Simple means-ends analysis may fail to account for the kinds of aspirations of deserving Australians. Premising a provision of vocational education wholly on an estimate of labour demands at a future point in time, and failing to account for the range of individual aspirations and unanticipated fluctuations in these demands (such as a quick cessation of hostilities, or a global financial crisis), can lead to over-prescription and under-engagement.

In other words, the *breadth of engagement* of the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme and its predecessor may well have been ahead of similar initiatives that were enacted in subsequent decades. It seems that these early mobilisations were premised on collaboration at the national, State and local levels. That is, bi-lateral and multi-lateral, rather than unilateral, actions were at the heart of their success.

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Teaching adult education history in a time of uncertainty and hope

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Adult education's continuing purpose has been questioned by writers for over twenty years and today the re-organisation and closure of some University departments brings this issue to the fore. This paper takes up the theme of really useful knowledge in a changing world from the standpoint of teaching adult education history to graduate students. Many enter their new field of practice unaware of the specific social contexts of the foundations of adult education in different places, or the genealogy of its current manifestations. Examining these different contexts, traditions, practices and practitioners can enable students to better locate themselves, connect with different traditions, understand the past and position themselves for their future. Secondly, the paper considers the idea of locating oneself in a rapidly changing political economy that has emerged from the global economic crisis and recession, the effects of which are expected to continue into the next decade.

A recurring and common criticism within adult education is that it has lost its way, forgotten its original purposes or mission, or become compromised by its uncritical service to business and its embrace of the market. Michael Welton wrote in 1987 that a paucity of scholarly analysis, a separation from activist involvement and adult education's respectability were at the root of 'our unease and professional restlessness'. Soon after, Jack Mezirow (1991) challenged American adult education's 'faded visions' and Michael Collins (1991) lamented the crisis associated with an obsession with technique and vocationalism. Phyllis Cunningham's 1993 call to 'get real' and her later contention that adult education was becoming more complicitous with private business and industry (1996) was echoed across the Atlantic by Jane Thompson's *Open Letter* naming how managerialism and corporatisation had permeated adult education (1993). Post-modern adult educators joined in, suggesting that there was a sense of crisis over the meaning of adult education, as there were no longer any 'overarching narratives' that make any sense (Edwards & Usher 1996).

As the new century dawned, Matthias Finger and Jose Asun (2001) argued that adult education was at 'a crossroads'. The same year a paper, reporting on conversations with long-time American adult educators, noted that reactions to the evolution of adult education from 1926 to the new century 'varied from excitement about the possibilities to frustration over the "abandonment" of earlier ideals'. The authors noted the belief that 'the true "spirit" of adult education as a means to foster democracy and the development of an enlightened society' was rapidly losing ground to the 'high tech arena of HRD training and compulsory learning' (Hensley, Maher, Passmore & James 2001). Nearly a decade later, Mike Newman's (2007) reminder of the importance of teaching choice and defiance in a time of war reflected an ongoing questioning about the purpose and future of adult education.

These writers lament a condition in stark contrast to the feisty beliefs of adult education's possibilities expressed by educators among the 18th and 19th century Corresponding Societies, Chartists and Plebs League, of Thomas Hodgkin and others who contrasted the idea of 'really useful knowledge' to the prevailing idea of 'useful knowledge'; of the optimism of Americans such as Eduard Lindeman and Myles Horton, and later of Paulo Freire's 'pedagogy of hope' in South America, among others.

Today times have changed again and new conditions confront adult education as financial crisis, war, growing inequality and environmental concerns challenge dominant economic and ideological conventions of the past thirty years. Over a very short period in 2008, the sense of dramatic upheaval was represented by terms ranging from new times, modern times, interesting times (Kalantzis and Cope 2008), disturbing times, challenging times, troubling times (CJSAE 2009) and momentous times (IJLE 2009). By the end of the year, as stock markets threw up unprecedented collapses, the political climate, at least in the USA, shifted to one of hope. It serves to remind us that change can and does occur quickly and dramatically, that history is dynamic and that having an appreciation and theory of history is invaluable.

This paper takes up the theme of 'really useful knowledge' in a changing world from the standpoint of teaching adult education history to graduate students. History in this context takes on two meanings, firstly, the history of ideas and practices within the 'field' of adult education, and secondly, the history of the surrounding world and its impact on the practice and evolution of that field.

At a time when many of the economic certainties of the past thirty years have been exposed as fragile, and when the consequences of economic crisis impact on the work of many adult educators in their contacts with adult learners in both formal and non-formal sites, the question of what knowledge will help them locate themselves in their work as educators becomes very important.

Examining traditions and histories, different contexts, practices and practitioners becomes therefore a critical practice for adult education teachers in developing critically aware educators, so that they in turn can work with learners to be aware that education requires choices and choice requires informed learners. It can enable students to locate themselves better in their practice, connect with different traditions, understand the past and position themselves for their future. The paper considers the rapidly changing political economy that emerged as a result of the global economic crisis, and the impact of these events on the daily life of those whom many adult educators work closely with as a critical point in our history. By calling into question a number of orthodoxies and certainties of the neo-liberal worldview that have come to permeate education and adult education, the paper asks what might really useful knowledge look like today and what implications does that have for teaching and learning.

Adult education—a continuing purpose?

University adult education in English-speaking countries is undergoing considerable change as departments close, are merged into larger faculties or 're-engineered'. In the United States seventy-four institutions had adult, continuing and community education departments but tightening budgets and shifting priorities resulted in the number of institutions offering adult education degrees decreasing by 29 percent between 1992 and 2002 (cited in Glowacki-Dudka and Helvie-Mason 2004: 8). In the United Kingdom, a study of Masters degrees in adult education revealed that twenty-six universities were offering postgraduate qualifications in various adult and continuing education fields (Field, Dockrell & Gray 2005).

Similarly, in Australia the number of universities offering adult education qualifications has contracted. Some closures and amalgamations are forced by higher education administrations at least partially inspired by the hope of reaping the benefits of

economies of scale. However, some occur with the acquiescence or agreement of adult educators who hope that the search for new fields in professional learning, communication, cultural studies, health or workplace learning can offer fresh fields and an escape from adult education's perennial problem of its marginalisation within the academy (Imel, Brockett & James 2000: 634).

Despite these contractions students continue to enrol in graduate programs where adult education and learning is a key focus, with many entering from diverse backgrounds that include health settings; public sector agencies; professional backgrounds; faith-based, non-government and social movement organisations; organisational development departments; IT; school teaching and more. They come from discipline backgrounds that range across the social sciences into business, technology and the sciences. Too often they are introduced to pedagogical concepts that are dislocated in time and place from their origins. As a result few understand the specific social contexts of the foundations of adult education in different places, or the genealogy of its current manifestations. The decline and in some cases absence of historical perspective means that theories, practices and epistemologies are at times considered with insufficient regard to their context.

Concerns about the current state of studies in the history of education (Campbell & Sherington 2002, Goodman & Grosvenor 2009) and sociology of education (Lauder, Brown & Halsey 2009), while not directly focused on adult education, are pertinent to this discussion. Goodman and Grosvenor (2009: 601) point to the importance of an historical dimension bringing 'contextual understanding to enrich contemporary research' in order to link individual and collective interests with current challenges. They characterise the current state of history of education scholarship as a 'moment of insecurity' arising from 'moments of challenge' resulting from both institutional change as well as the disappearance of history of education from

teacher education. Campbell and Sherington (2002: 46) also look at the 'impact of neo-liberalism in economics and public policy' as new orientations left history studies detached from its base in teacher preparation, and compounded by the reduction of staff in university education faculties. In a related discussion Lauder, Brown and Halsey (2009: 569) refer to a declining contribution of sociology of education 'as other cognate disciplines in the social sciences such as economics take over some of the key questions that were previously the preserve' of sociologists. Each look to the potential involved in working with other interested disciplines, arguing that these moments of insecurity can be seen as 'moments of opportunity' if they lead to developing new, interdisciplinary ways of working.

History however is not a dispassionate or objective study. Wilson and Melichar (1995: 422, 423), highlighting the influence of writers such as E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams, proposed 'the "doing" of history as a counter-hegemonic strategy of re-membering the past in order to critique the present' and refer to Williams' argument that, within any cultural activity including adult education, a 'selective tradition' emerges which reinforces a particular understanding of the past (see also Welton for a discussion on adult education's 'dominant tradition', 1987: 51–55).

The doing of history involves being able to locate oneself within a tradition or community. The Scottish philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre wrote that 'to answer the question of what I as an individual should do, one must first know of which stories I am a part, and what my roles in those stories require'. He posed the challenge this way: 'Actors can only answer the question "what am I to do?" once they can answer the prior question of what story or stories do I find myself a part' (MacIntyre 1985: 216).

In a similar vein Ganz (2009) writes of the need to reflect upon our own stories that help us know who we are, why we act and what we aim for. In working with a form of scaffolding to develop a wider

sense of identity, he asks students to identify firstly a story of self that explains why you were called to what you have been called. Secondly, participants are asked to write a story of us, that is what the constituency, community or organisation has been called to and what its shared purposes, goals and visions are. The third stage involves developing a story of now, what is the challenge this community now faces, the choices it must make, and the hope to which 'we' can aspire.

To know what tradition or story one is a part of requires first of all knowing what traditions there are and how they are expressed in practice. This involves enquiry and more importantly means making choices.

Adult education has its own history, and adult educators make a range of claims about it and the special role and purpose it plays. Among these are that the first adult educators were popular educators and that adult education's defining purpose is to support democracy and social change; others aim to assist adults achieve self-actualisation, or concentrate on preparing adult learners for work and see it as developing human and social capital; while others say adult education provides a second chance at education, especially in the fields of literacy and numeracy, and in underdeveloped economies. How might we understand the claims made for adult education in the early 21st century against earlier claims? Is it still a force for social or radical change, or has it been conscripted to deliver at one end of the labour process a flexible and adaptable workforce, and at the other a reflexive professional caste? Can we even say there is a clear role for adult education, or indeed that the term continues to have a particular meaning?

Really useful knowledge today

The dramatic changes ushered in by the global economic crisis of late 2008 raise new questions about adult education's purpose. For teachers of adult educators, they also raise questions of how a theory

or understanding of history might help to understand these changes, what they mean and what impact they might have on politics, economics, work, everyday life and education. Here the concept of 'really useful knowledge' can assist. If 'really useful knowledge' was a term used in the 19th century to develop a critical understanding of self and society and which was of direct relevance to the struggle for social justice, what might it look like today?

The idea of really useful knowledge developed in nineteenth century England among radical working class associations. It stood in direct contrast to the idea of useful knowledge, that is, the instrumental knowledge needed to get on, versus the type of knowledge to act upon, analyse, challenge and change the existing conditions (Simon 1960, 1972; Johnson 1979, 1988; Newman 1993, 2009; Thompson 2007), or as Young (2008) describes it powerful knowledge, as opposed to the knowledge of the powerful. Education was not directed at politics for its own sake, but instead directed at 'producing political understanding that will ultimately enable transformations in the material conditions of the working classes which will free them from exploitation'. Essential to this approach was an understanding that education was the province of independent organisations independent from the state, or the church or the ruling class. It was self-instruction, connecting education to the political process and to self-management of working class institutions. For Thomas Hodgkin 'men had better be without education than be educated by their rulers' (Lloyd & Thomas 1998: 83, 103).

Aronwitz and Giroux (1985: 157) identified three points of analysis that provide a continuity between the idea of really useful knowledge today and earlier times. Firstly, it provided the basis for critique of dominant forms of knowledge; secondly, it strongly valued the development of curricula and pedagogies that begin with the problems and needs of those groups that such education was designed to serve, and thirdly, it argued for knowledge that contributed to

strategies for changing forms of domination while simultaneously pointing to more democratic forms of active community.

Today the idea of really useful knowledge has to be re-introduced, not in some backward-looking sentimental way, but in the light of the 'new forms of power' that take account of the changes in working class life and the labour process; ongoing inequalities between the populations of the north and south and within those societies; inequalities associated with race, gender and sexuality; and the growing challenges of climate change. What might really useful knowledge, as opposed to useful knowledge, look like today?

Global economic crisis, hope and change

Two events dominated the world's attention in the second half of 2008, both of which will have long-term effects. The first was the rapid plunge of the world financial system, which sucked into it the surrounding economy, and the second, was the extraordinary surge of hope that accompanied the election of Barack Obama to the US Presidency. Both events challenge orthodoxies that had come to dominate conventional thinking about politics, the economy and the wider organisation and development of society.

The global economic crisis brought into sharp relief some of the orthodoxies that have underpinned social provision in education, health, housing, transport and welfare; the organisation of work, and on a broader terrain globalisation; and most importantly have been widely accepted in much adult education writing, management and research. These orthodoxies include that:

- the market is the most efficient allocator of goods and services, with an over-riding discourse that there is no alternative;
- the economic role of the state has been superseded by large corporations, which have become more powerful than nations;

- governments should vacate the economic field wherever possible and only act to provide a safety net for the most marginalised, or in certain areas of the economy such as defence and security, and in limited ways in education and health;
- government spending, and particularly government deficits, is a source of economic drain on an economy; and
- globalisation is a natural development driven by technological innovation and removed from and unrelated to human agency.

The global economic crisis turned these conventional wisdoms upside down. In response to the crisis, governments embarked on a course of economic intervention that had not been seen for decades and in a way that confirmed an understanding of the state as acting in the collective interests of capital as a whole. In addition, central banks across the major industrialised countries did everything they previously described as destructive and likely to wreck the economy by generating debt and inflation. By late 2008 much had changed in response to the global crisis and governments produced bank deposit guarantees, large-scale stimulus grants, bought bank stocks and outlined large-scale infrastructure spending. In particular, the massive bail-outs of the world's largest financial institutions by governments in the USA, Britain, Iceland, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, meant that failing banks were effectively nationalised. The vast stimulus packages introduced to stimulate demand, and the acceptance by political parties across the mainstream spectrum of the need for deficit budgets, exemplified the rapid change in the political economy. In the virtual wink of a policy-eye, huge government deficits were announced and accepted economic policy changed. In the UK Martin Wolf (2009) wrote in the *Financial Times*: 'Another ideological god has failed. The assumptions that ruled policy and politics over three decades suddenly look ... outdated'.

Even though the speed of the collapse of financial institutions, followed by manufacturing closures, was spectacular, the causes had not happened overnight, nor was the fall solely the result of bad housing (sub-prime) loans issued by greedy banks. During the last quarter of the twentieth century, a new system of capital accumulation gradually supplanted the old. Neo-liberalism involved building an intellectual agenda, an economic and political hegemony. It didn't just emerge but was won through intellectual effort, posing new solutions to hard to resolve 'problems' (by Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, among others) and delivered by its political midwives Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan.

When the Dow Jones Index first crossed the 10,000-point mark in the 1999 dot-com boom, it confirmed for many the claim that there was a new weightless economy and we were witnessing the 'end of history', with economic cycles considered a thing of the past. A feature of this 'new economy' was the significant redistribution of government spending away from social provision and a rapidly widening polarisation of income. The long, historic trend of the twentieth century, where inequality was reducing and improved standards of living were spreading across the populations in the advanced economies, slowed from the late 1970s and reversed more recently. US census data show that since 1973 the incomes of the top five percent of households grew at nearly four times the rate of the middle twenty percent and seven times those for the poorest twenty percent (Henwood 2005, Madrick 2009).

The effects of neo-liberal, redistributive policies and keeping wages down were already evident before the financial crash, and the starkest indicator of widening income polarisation was found in the salary and benefit packages paid to corporate executives. Remuneration for executives in Standard & Poor's 500 companies in the year before the crash averaged $US10.5 million, or 344 times the average worker's pay, whereas three decades ago, the multiple ranged from 30–40.

Private equity and hedge fund managers from the top fifty companies did even better, averaging annual pay packets of $US588 million each—more than 19,000 times the average worker's wage (Institute for Policy Studies 2008).

In the UK Danny Dorling (2010) studied the social and health inequalities and the consequent wealth and health disparities under both Tory and New Labour governments of the past thirty years. His conclusion is that 'people last lived lives as unequal as today, as measured by wage inequality, in 1854, when Charles Dickens was writing *Hard Times*' (cited in O'Hara 2010). He claims that, in rich countries, inequality is no longer caused by not having enough resources to share, but by unrecognised and unacknowledged beliefs which actually propagate it. He argues that five new tenets support continued injustice, that: elitism is efficient; exclusion is necessary; prejudice is natural; greed is good; and despair is inevitable. These tenets provide an ideological narrative for those who have benefitted from the income and other inequalities that have polarised advanced economies.

The trend is similar across the developed world, with the richer countries falling into three groups as measured by the Gini index[1] and poverty rates:

- the predominantly English-speaking (Australia, Canada, UK, U.S.), are the most unequal, have the highest poverty rates and generally have the most minimal welfare states and least regulated economies (average Gini: 0.322; average poverty rate: 13.8%);
- the continental European countries (France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands), with lower poverty rates and less income inequality (Gini: 0.283; average poverty: 9.1%); and
- the Scandinavian countries (Sweden, along with Finland and Norway), with low poverty rates, the most egalitarian income distribution (Gini: 0.272; average poverty 6.1%), generous welfare states and high-tech economies. (World Bank 2008)

Effectively challenging the dominance of neo-liberalism requires posing another problem-solving paradigm. The Bank for International Settlements (BIS), the umbrella organisation of the world's national central banks, in its 2008 annual, headlined its summary as 'the unsustainable has run its course and policy-makers face the difficult task of damage control'. The real significance of the report from the BIS is not just that it is an established, reputable institution, nor that it is pointing to the potential severity and internationalisation of the recession, but the conclusion that there are no obvious policy settings to rectify the situation (BIS 2008; Bryan 2008).

The impact on daily life

The immediate impact of the crisis and recession are regularly reported in terms of the number of lost jobs; consumption and manufacturing output; house prices; and the number of large firms that close their doors. The impact of these headline measures is less often or easily identified, yet it is manifested in a 'crisis' of daily life—stress, over-work, balancing work and family life, rage and depression, and 'lifestyle' related ill-health. These hidden costs are directly connected to the work of many of the 'new' adult educators who work in the health, social work, family and aged care, charities and indigenous sectors, therefore making it vital that the history, evolution and dimensions of the crisis are understood.

The impact of the economic crisis is now spreading with obvious and less apparent consequences. Since the US recession began in late 2007, the number of people officially unemployed has doubled to 14.9 million people, or one in ten of the labour force. More than three million of those are long-term unemployed, that is, they have been out of work for at least 27 weeks (BLS 2009), while across the Euro zone, unemployment averages 9.5 percent and is accompanied by declining growth. The United Nations (2009) revised its global economic growth forecast down sharply, believing that the world economy will

contract by 2.6 per cent, which could push unemployment past the 50 million mark, while the World Bank's 2010 Global Monitoring Report concluded that the economic crisis would lead to 53 million more people remaining in extreme poverty by 2015 than otherwise would have occurred (Chan 2010).

There are other statistics that show the toll that unemployment, foreclosures and evictions, and dramatic drops in stock prices take on daily lives. Harvey Brenner, a sociologist and public health expert at Johns Hopkins University, studies the social costs of economic fluctuations. He found a direct correlation between economic downturns and an increase in suicide and suicide attempts, heart attacks, domestic violence, child abuse and murder, even estimating how many more deaths, suicides, heart attacks, homicides and admissions to mental hospitals can be expected when unemployment rises. Brenner calculated that, for every one percent increase in the unemployment rate, an additional 47,000 deaths could be expected, including 26,000 deaths from heart attacks, about 1,200 from suicide, 831 murders, and 635 deaths related to alcohol consumption. The impact is swift as shown by the dramatic increase in calls in 2008 to the US National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which received 545,000 calls, a 36 percent rise from the 2007 levels. Similarly, rates of child abuse and domestic violence, robberies and other crimes jump during economic downturns. Brenner concluded that those affected aren't a subset of dysfunctional people but mostly normal people reacting to difficult times (Brenner 1973, 1979; current figures cited in Dreier 2009).

A question then is why do people go along with the *status quo* if this is the case? Is it because they don't believe, or have confidence, that there is any other force in society that can change the *status quo* for the better? Is it that opportunities at work to 'have a say', to be heard, to exercise democracy are almost non-existent? Is it that opportunities to discuss or pose alternative production

and investment decisions around social goods, the environment, transport, satisfying work, reducing hours to achieve improved family, community and work balance, and more importantly a different way of governance and democracy, are seen as fanciful?

Conclusion

The shock of the financial crisis was quickly followed by the upsurge of optimism that accompanied the historic election of the first African-American President. Obama's election brought to an end the eight years of George Bush's neo-conservative inspired presidency and heralded a new period of hope. However, Obama's election came about not just as a reaction against the Bush era and what it represented; it could only be successful as a result of organising a movement of people, and that organising drew upon a tradition of community-based organising and education that had common roots with adult education practice. Obama had been inspired by the radical theologian Reinhold Niebuhr (Niebuhr 2008) who had also influenced the young Myles Horton (Horton 1998: 34–36) before Highlander had started, and had been trained in the community organising approach of Saul Alinsky, which continues today in the Industrial Areas Foundation where thousands of new community organisers are trained. A significant feature of Obama's campaign was the field-organiser and volunteer training systems that turned campaign volunteers into organisational leaders and which was coordinated by Marshall Ganz (Garfield and Gladstone 2008) who had previously worked with Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers (UFW) whose grassroots organising campaigns had pioneered the motto 'Si se Puede' ('Yes, it can be done') but is commonly translated into English as Obama's campaign slogan of 'Yes, We Can'. This very contemporary example is one illustration of what this paper has argued, and that is adult educators need to examine history in order to help understand connections with the past, the challenges of the present and how these enable us to create our educational practice.

The economic crisis has shed new light on the widening inequalities that deepened during the past thirty years and invite new analyses of the economy, education and the environment. What is really useful knowledge in today's context, and what do adult education students need to know? Being able to make connections with change and upheaval, to understand the scope and causes of inequality, policy prescriptions that continue to reflect neo-liberal hegemony is enhanced by making connections with the history and traditions of adult education practice and theory, as well as theory and insights from cognate disciplines in the social sciences, and involve what Bonnie Thornton Dill (2009) calls 'intersectional studies' that present 'moments of opportunity' and new interdisciplinary ways of working.

The orthodoxies that underpinned neo-liberalism's rise exercised a hegemony, which squeezed the space for critique. Now that those orthodoxies are weakened or damaged, spaces and audiences open to learn anew as alternative explanations, imaginings and different visions of the future can be considered. The crises are global, even though the impact may vary in intensity from country to country. The globalised market has broken down borders but also created new boundaries that sharply divide the world's haves and have-nots. In this context calls to think about the purpose of adult education continue afresh. Even before the global financial crisis, Mojab (2006: 347) posed the 'most urgent question' as being 'if we witness a serious turn in the history of the world, how do we envisage adult education?'

In considering what really useful knowledge is in the context of crisis; in learning about the traditions of adult education practice that connect the past with the present; in remembering the past in order to critique the present; and in linking the stories of self, community and action, it is worth recalling the words of Eduard Lindeman who in 1926 (105) wrote:

> Adult education will become an agency of progress if its short-term goal of self-improvement can be made compatible with a long-term, experimental but resolute policy of changing the social order.

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Endnotes

The Gini index is used to summarise the course of income distribution over time, or to compare it across countries. The Gini is a number between 0 and 1; if a society were perfectly equal, its Gini index would be 0, and if it were perfectly unequal (one person had all the income), it would be 1. The Gini usually falls between .25 (the Swedish neighbourhood) and .50 (the Brazilian neighbourhood).

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Diversity and excellence: prompts from the history of the tertiary education sector

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In 2010, fifty years after the establishment of the association now called Adult Learning Australia (ALA), the association still faces the dilemma about how to sell its message that adult learning matters. The dilemma is one of philosophy: in the nineteenth century, it was liberalism versus utilitarianism; in the mid-twentieth, the instrumental versus cultural; today, the dichotomy is couched in terms such as 'social inclusion' versus 'productivity'.

The tension goes back to the very early days of white Australia's approach to adult education. Here, I offer an historical perspective on the development of tertiary education—itself a disputed term, but one which can embrace all types of formal education that occurs after secondary school—in Australia. My hope is that a better understanding of this evolution will help identify issues we need to

discuss as we move towards a more integrated tertiary education sector. These issues are essentially about the purpose and value of adult education, matters at the heart of Adult Learning Australia's remit.

This paper is also the further airing of my argument that history needs to be better represented in the mix of policy development (Beddie 2007). Otis Graham (1991), in an analysis of what the history of immigration to America might tell current policy-makers, lists three ways in which the historian can advise. The first is the admonition to stop thinking in any particular way. The second is to remind that situations are never exactly the same—examples are easy to lift from the historical record, but are only useful if properly examined. Instead, the past helps us to find the right questions to ask —it does not offer the answers.

Take the first point about changing perspective: the history of the development of adult education and the tertiary sector suggest to me that we must think differently about the benefits of education and not assume that more and higher qualifications for our people is the progressive way.

While there are similarities between current approaches to education and the mix of the liberal and the vocational in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there are no easy solutions offered by the past. There are, however, lessons to be learned as we try to find the best way to nurture the innovative and creative workers our economy and society is calling for.

It is worth remembering, as the historian of adult education Derek Whitelock did that, despite the rich history of mechanics' institutes and strong tradition of adult education in the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) and elsewhere, for many Australians, education was not regarded the golden key to success it was in nineteenth century Britain. The rather erratic campaigner for education, Henry

Parkes, summed up the pragmatism that prevailed: ‘we are practical people… and have little affection for the ideal and the imaginative; and we are also rather proud of this defect in our national character’ (Whitelock 1974: 129–130). Perhaps many still are.

Before emigrating to Australia, Henry Parkes, a bone and ivory turner by trade, attended a mechanics’ institute in Birmingham. On offer that year, 1835, were lectures on the manners of the ancient Romans, improved cultivation, physiology and music in the age of Elizabeth (Martin 1962: 9–10). That mix of the liberal and vocational would not be misplaced in an ACE provider’s offerings today. The difference is that now we would not speak about education as a civilising agent used to curb the excesses of the working class or, as G.K. Holden, a president of the Sydney Mechanics Institute of Arts in the 1860s, put it:

> … the people may thus be rendered not only a harmless, but a highly beneficial channel of political power (Hyde 1982: 109).

Today, non-vocational adult learning is more likely to be portrayed as beneficial for the individual’s health or community well-being, as a contribution to social capital rather than societal order.

For the state it was and remains the utilitarian or vocational goals of education that are most important. Today, this preoccupation with high-level skills leading to greater productivity threatens the homogenisation of our educational system, especially at the tertiary level. I fear this push is more likely to result in credentialism than a well-skilled workforce and thoughtful citizenry. The official target is 40 percent of all 25–34 year olds with a qualification at bachelor level or above by 2025. To put this in perspective, at the time of Federation in 1901, fewer than 0.07 percent of the population attended university; and by the outbreak of the Second World War the figure was 0.2 percent (Gallagher 1993: 1).

Here I think that what is sometimes portrayed as the 'glorious failure' of the mechanics institutes / schools of art is instructive. Roger Morris, a stalwart of Adult Learning Australia, has disputed this interpretation, arguing that while they did not educate the artisan in the scientific principles underpinning his trade, as had been their founding purpose, the second wave of schools did achieve more modest goals to provide 'a local home for reading, learning, culture, civil society and recreation' (in particular billiards!). In so doing, he is championing the cause of lifelong learning, the liberal rather than utilitarian ideal of education, which has defined the adult education movement in Australia (Morris 2003: 161).

But should these views be at odds? Did those who attended the schools of art to study art rather than anatomy have no inkling that such learning might be beneficial to their working as well as their social lives? Is not the lack of knowledge of our history, grammar and philosophy part of the problem lurking in the call for greater attention to nurturing soft skills, literacy and creative ability? Is it not possible that Parkes' brush with the Romans stood him in good stead when he embarked on a political life? As Otis Graham says, history throws up plenty of questions.

These suggest one answer might be to champion the cause of the humanities, as a means to skill the nation and meet the Council of Australian Governments' targets. Although a glut in Latin speakers may not address the skills shortages the mining industry is facing, it might meet some of the demand for people capable of critical thinking, good writing and speaking, skills which are most certainly vocational. The question then becomes how these skills are delivered, and where: at university, in TAFEs or community colleges?

Such questions are hardly new. Universities have offered vocational courses like law and medicine since the Middle Ages. In the nineteenth century, professionalisation saw the emergence of separate disciplines. Many humanities subjects were relegated

to an academic setting, with other more applied arts degrees (social work, for example), the ones seen as relevant to the real world (Schuhmacher nd: 2).

The divide was also blurred in Australia where, as Jim Hyde (1982) argued (in the neo-Marxist language of his time), the development of higher education reflected conflicts between the squattocracy and the emergent urban industrial middle class—with the latter prevailing. That meant the universities, albeit conservative, were preoccupied with turning out professional men not scholars (p. 108). But even then, with mining and agriculture the main sources of the nation's earnings, less value was placed on higher education than was the case in places like Germany which relied on technology. Indeed, as I have set out elsewhere, until late in the nineteenth century when the economy saw a downturn, Australian industry looked to importing skilled labour rather than training their own (Beddie, forthcoming). There remains something of this tendency.

The mid-twentieth century Australian attitude to tertiary education is pertinent to the current situation, in which we see a remarkable wave of cooperation between public VET providers and the universities, spurred by the last government's response to the Bradley review of higher education and resulting Council of Australian Governments' targets. After decades of much effort to create pathways for students wishing to move between the two—for little return—these policies have sprouted all sorts of new possibilities, including plans for a considerable expansion of higher education in TAFE and, at some universities, more offerings of school and VET qualifications as well as auspicing arrangements. Will this new-found collaboration impart the right education to Australian adults? This is a question Adult Learning Australia might inject into the debate.

The first major expansion of higher education in Australia occurred after World War Two. It was a response to the demands of a war economy and then the push for post-war reconstruction. One long-

time observer and player in Australian education, P.H. Partridge, explained—it seems with some regret—the character of Australian higher education:

> If Australian universities have appeared to be exceptionally utilitarian or vocational in spirit, this is mainly due to the character of the society they served. It is a society lacking a wealthy class with a background of education or culture; hence few students have entered the universities for the sake of the intellectual life they could live there. It is a society which has been on the whole anti-intellectual; not able to see clearly the value of thought or scholarship or scientific enquiry unconnected with concrete social and economic advantages, nervous about argument and speculation which seemed to clash with moral, religious and social orthodoxies, quick to resent professional pronouncements which question vested group interests; and generally inclined to regard the intellectual as a creature apart (quoted in Hyde 1982: 110–111).

The point Partridge was making perhaps still needs to be made: it is that the Australian public has never been particularly receptive to slogans about learning for learning's sake. It expects a concrete return on its investment in education, a sentiment politicians must heed and which has made Adult Learning Australia's job all the more difficult.

From 1956 to 1966 the number of universities in Australia grew from nine to fourteen; the student population in universities trebled, and the proportion of the gross domestic product allocated to universities by governments in the form of grants doubled (Gallagher 1993).But by the sixties this expenditure caused a rethink, as articulated by Prime Minister Menzies to the Chairman of Australian Universities Commission, L.H. Martin, in November 1960:

> The Government is by no means sure that this state of things —more and more students requiring proportionately more and more outlay—can proceed indefinitely. On the contrary, it is our view that the money which would be required is very likely to be completely out of reach. Therefore, the Cabinet takes the view that, beginning now and over the next 12 to 18 months, the most

> vital task of the Commission will be to address itself, and find solutions, to the problems of providing the necessary amount of tertiary education within financial limits which are very much more modest than under our present university system (Davies 1989: 33).

One has to wonder if a similar rethink may take place when the implications of the entitlement system put forward in the Bradley Report and accepted by the government become clear. Certainly, Professor Vin Massaro (2009) foreshadowed this problem in his early response to the Bradley Report:

> An unlimited number of student entitlements is unlikely to get past Treasury because it would constitute a blank cheque with no precise controls over the quality of the product. The Report suggests that any student who can find an institution that is prepared to offer him or her a place would have an entitlement to enrol in that place—there is an assumption that all institutions will have minimum entry standards and rigorous progression rules and that no institution would attempt to game the system by enrolling all-comers in the interests of access and equity. Treasury is unlikely to be quite so trusting with its money.

Massaro goes on to suggest:

> Perhaps one of the unintended consequences of the Bradley Report is that we create a new binary system with most of the new places in new colleges or dual sector TAFE institutions that could offer degrees without aspiring to full university status (i.e. without research). The cost of capital development would be lower and it is likely that staff costs could be reduced as well.

This is pretty much what resulted from the 1960s Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education (Martin Review), which Menzies instigated in order to find a way to supply industry with qualified professionals, while preserving the broad liberal education he valued from universities. The final report presented to parliament in 1965 proffered the view that tertiary education should be available to all who had the capacity to undertake it, and suggested three distinct

categories be developed: universities, colleges or institutes and teacher training facilities (Laming 2001: 247).

These would cater to different groups of students, preserving the elite nature of university, while meeting the needs of the business. The government did not agree to separate teacher training facilities but did support the establishment of non-university tertiary institutions that were to be known as colleges of advanced education (CAEs). This was the first binary system of tertiary education, one which was to strive for a dual system that was 'equal but different' (Davies 1989: 36).

It was an approach that did not prevail last century—the Dawkins' reforms of the late 1980s replaced it with 'a unified national system' —but may be worth re-considering today as we think again about the place of non-university institutions in the tertiary education sector. And in so doing, we might do well to heed the words of E.L Wheelwright, who edited a series of papers presented at a seminar on higher and technical education at the University of NSW in 1964. Wheelwright (1965: xvi) called for attention to 'measures of quality and excellence… to channel our educational 'revolution' [his quote marks] from a quantitative to a qualitative phase'.

At that seminar, Sol Encel regretted the vocationalism of higher education, which he thought detracted from the generation of new knowledge. He dubbed universities the 'service stations' for government, saying they had become mere training schools for public servants. In his response to the Encel, Partridge counselled realism: 'the democratisation of the universities is surely bound to accentuate the vocationalist spirit…[and] the policy of encouraging a steadily growing proportion of the young to enter universities … means… that the university is the gateway to a better sort of job (Wheelwright 1965: 34–35)'. Analysis of 25 years of Australian Bureau of Statistics' census data confirms that a four-year degree also brings the promise of higher income. For a man graduating in 1981 it was a return on

investment of 13 percent a year; for a woman 18 percent. By 2001, a fresh graduate could expect even more: a lifetime rate of return of 20 percent a year for men and 19 percent for women. In the boom years in the mid-2000s the rate fell back, but was still significant: 15 percent for men and 17 percent for women (ABS 2010).

Such returns underwrite a policy that encourages more people to get the sort of education they need to compete in the labour market. The question we now face is how that education is best organised. Here, Partridge had advice that bears repeating today. In 1965, he thought he was on dangerous ground when offering a view that might offend ‘the love of uniformity and of equality which all of us Australians hold so dear’. It may still be a touchy subject, but we should contemplate his point that higher education needs much greater diversity of character, organisation and aims. Partridge wanted to see institutions that gained a national reputation for doing one or a few things ‘supremely’ well: to become the best liberal arts college or a dedicated undergraduate teaching university or a specialist institute of technology. He went on to argue it would ‘very foolish indeed for all our universities, old and new, to aspire to be eminent either for their post-graduate schools or as centres for research’ (in Wheelwright 1965: 42–43). Striving for diversity and excellence might still be a recipe for success for the future tertiary education sector.

It is here that I return to the role of Adult Learning Australia, an organisation one step removed from the institutional machinations our current policy settings have triggered. From that standpoint, Adult Learning Australia might be able to encourage a discussion about how all these higher qualifications we are aiming for will meet our needs, how best they are taught and in what settings. These are questions that deserve answers before we see a flurry of higher education providers as ‘service stations’ pumping out graduates to meet the targets and competing for dollars. In 2010, we have another opportunity to marry idealism and pragmatism as a way of shaping the way Australia approaches adult education.

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Recollections on the Association over five decades

The first three contributions were presented by the authors at the 30th Conference Dinner in December 1990, and subsequently published in: Harris, R and Willis, P (eds.) (2002) Striking a balance: Adult and community education in Australia towards 2000*, Adelaide: Centre for Human Resource Studies, University of South Australia and the South Australian Branch of the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education, pp. 140–148.*

The last two contributions were specifically requested for this issue of the journal.

1. AAAE IN THE 1960s

Arch Nelson
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I would say you are taking a grave risk, when you ask me to reminisce. That is a very dangerous request to a person in his 80th year! I would like to say first of all that my attitude to the Association can be attributed to my previous experience of adult education.

I worked in Adelaide in the tutorial class department as a tutor for a number of years and I recall that our secretary in those days, a very efficient secretary, was one Colin Lawton. As a matter of fact when I was a primary school teacher here in SA, I had as many as four WEA tutorial classes in each single week. And one of my recollections is that we had no trouble about the organisation of these classes. The theory of the WEA tutorial class arrangement was that the WEA looked after the consumers; it was the community representative so to speak. It was very efficiently done here in SA. I do not want to reminisce about them but I do recall that one was down at Largs Bay, and that was a fairly highly respectable, middle class group. I had one at Port Adelaide which was tremendously interesting. It included Marxist and Henry George people, people of various brands of political sympathy and I had an entertaining and educative evening once a week with a dozen or so people. I also looked after a group at Port Augusta. I wrote the lectures in handwriting and sent them up to Port Augusta and somebody up there had the job of imparting them to a group and fostering the discussion afterwards.

My first thinking about the Association was that I should support it for a number of reasons. I had in mind that we had made some quite substantial advances over the years. I spent some time in army education. Whereas my experience in Adelaide had been restricted, it was broadened in army education. One of the questions I asked myself when I went into the army was whether the kind of thing that I did with those highly specialised groups that I taught in Adelaide could be done with ordinary troops. I found that it could be. One of my jobs was to go around and instruct officers in running the current affairs discussions. Senior officers were very sceptical that the material that came from Army Education Headquarters could be used. I was sent out to show them it could be. I remember I went into Western Command, WA, and General Robertson grinned at me and said, ‘Well Nelson, if you are able to instruct my officers in the use of those comic book pamphlets that come from your HQ every two

weeks, in order to inspire discussion among the troops, you're a better man than I am'. It occurred to me that l expected to be a success. But my response to the general was simply, 'Well, Sir, I believe that you have some criticisms of the *Current Affairs Bulletin*'. But I did find out when I went around that ordinary men and women were capable of discussing the issues put forward in the *Current Affairs Bulletin*. Two things impressed me in my three or four years in the army about the troops. One was that the ordinary fellow had a much greater capacity to discuss the issues of the day than he was given credit for, provided he was reasonably led. The other was what one man described as the 'pathetic gratitude' of those people who were being given literacy training in the army. I went to Singleton in the course of my travels. The headmaster of the high school there was Bert Madgwick's brother. He was very active with the troops at the Singleton training camps and the people who were being helped to improve their literacy at his high school in Singleton were to use his words 'pathetically grateful'.

When I came to consider the proposed Association back in 1960, it occurred to me that there were three things that we should think of it as doing. One was to help us to hold the things that we had gained in adult education. We were better off after the war in the field of adult education than before. It always struck me that there was a danger that we might go backwards, and lose the advantages that we had gained. The second thing that I thought was very necessary was that we should promote rational discussion among adult educators. After the war there was a bit of tension in some camps; there was, for example, tension between people at universities and people outside universities and so on. There was not always harmony, and I felt that there was a need for discussion. The third thing that I felt was necessary was that we should learn to be more innovative than we had been. Perhaps I might look at the Association in those terms.

First of all, it certainly has been successful in promoting discussion and it also has been successful in assisting us to hang on to the things that we had already achieved, and in that respect I'm reminded of the year 1966. Those of you who have been reading the history of adult education or who were active in the field at that time will remember that in 1966 there was a kind of crisis in university adult education. The University Commission stated that it would not provide any money for adult education in universities after the year 1969. I was happily working at New England. I should perhaps have been very worried about this but I was not particularly, because I was very confident about the work that we were doing then. Nevertheless, I realised that there was a possibility that in 1969 we might not have any money. So I thought that some action should be taken. I spoke to Des Crowley who was Chairman of this Association. I said. 'Des, I think you should make representations to government'. He said, 'Yes, Arch, we're doing that'. I also had a talk one evening, a long talk, with our local member Ian Sinclair. I told him that I thought it would be a tragedy if there were no money for adult education at the University of New England. He said, 'Yes, Arch, people say to me Armidale is a peculiar place to have a university. Why did they put it there? Why do students have to go all that distance?' He said, 'Yes, possibly there is something in that but, you know, it has been worthwhile having it there for the influence that it has had on local communities through adult education'. I was reasonably confident, but I still realised that there was some danger. It happened at that time that the mayor of one of the rural places that we were serving came to me and said, 'I notice that down in Grafton you have a fine community development effort, could we have a similar one in X town?' I said, 'Yes, we'd be very happy to move into X town and to establish a regional office there, and implement a scheme of community development similar to that in Grafton, but you know there's a danger that we might not have any money in 1969'. He said, 'Well, that's a serious business.

I'll get on to local government people in the area and talk to them about it'. He did that and I understand that at a national meeting of local government authorities, this was ventilated and an appropriate resolution went to government.

Now three approaches had been made. I appreciated the approach made by this Association. It came from a professional body, and I'm sure that the Deputy Prime Minister had some influence. But I think most influential of all were the people from local government, because by dint of their efforts, national government felt that the people were behind us, that communities were concerned about adult education.

The next point that I made was that there was a need for discussion at this time. How well did the Association in those early years in the 1960s promote discussion? I think it did it magnificently well. Some people have suggested the Association at that time was not very effective. But I remember early in 1968, we held a conference at New England—I was the Chairman at the time—on rural adult education. Discussion was lively and rational, and I hope—I'm vain enough to hope—that that meeting and that discussion had a valuable influence on the future development of rural adult education in Australia. In fact, I found myself as a result of it, moving around Australia to places beyond universities, talking about rural adult education and the work that we were doing.

Now those are two aspects in which the Association has been active and successful. The third important thing I suggested the Association ought to do was to promote innovation. Here I'm going to trespass on Barrie Brennan's field into the 1970s. Early in the 1970s I attended a meeting of this Association and there was a working party set up on adult literacy. I was interested in this field and had been asked by the International Association of Adult Literacy Methods to produce a couple of volumes on adult literacy in Australia. So I

went into the meeting on adult literacy which had been midwifed by this Association and we talked. We talked about the need for an association on adult literacy. We went around the table and people said, 'What do you do and what do you do?' I said, 'I used to be a Director of Adult Education but recently I've been downgraded to become a Professorial Fellow in Adult Education at the University of New England'. And they said, 'Well, if you're a Professorial Fellow, you're just the person we want. We'll make you the Chairman for the Australian Council for Adult Literacy'. So I became Chairman, and I remained Chairman for a number of years, and since I stopped being Chairman about six years ago, they have made extremely great progress. These days, I look with pride on the achievements of the Australian Council of Adult Literacy, but I would like to congratulate this Association on the fact that it is, in effect, the midwife of the Australian Council for Adult Literacy.

The last point that I would like to make is that I think we were very wise to act as midwives for the Council. I think work in adult literacy is of supreme importance. There is a danger in university circles and elsewhere that we concentrate on the already successful, and it's my hunch, and I have thought deeply here, that the whole of the field of education from primary, secondary, university and adult level, is not going to be as successful as it ought to be until we concentrate on this problem of adult literacy. My hunch is that the really weak link in the educational chain is in the home and in the society, and among the people who are less literate. What we have to do is to develop their confidence and develop their interest in education so that they become effective family and community members, and effective family and community apostles for education.

2. AAAE IN THE 1970s

Barrie Brennan
University of New England, Armidale

I have admired and respected Arch Nelson as an adult educator and as a contributor to adult education in Australia during my whole career as an adult educator. So, having that in mind, I will not try to match Arch in terms of the way he has been able to share his experience and talk about days beyond the memory of most of us. My brief is to talk about the AAAE during the 1970s.

What I am going to do is to liken the AAAE in the 70s to a period that we have all been through ourselves and suggest that the AAAE in the 70s was a period of the Association's *adolescence*. We can all think back to a point in our own lives when we went through that delightful time of adolescence. What was it all about? For most of us perhaps it was about having high ideals, having an idealistic view of the world and an optimistic view of the future. In adolescence we enjoyed meeting real and anticipated challenges. On the negative side we were troubled by anxieties and fears and also lacking the realism that later maturity might bring.

So let me suggest to you how I see that the AAAE in the 70s was the stage of the Association's adolescence. Let me talk about the AAAE's adolescence, its idealism, its high optimism.

There were many constitutional changes in the 70s, but I think two were of very great importance. The first was to change the membership base of the Association. The founding fathers—we need to use that term because the executive was dominated by men—made a distinction between the professional people, most of whom worked for universities or the State Boards or the WEA, and the second grade citizens, the amateurs. That worked well in the 60s, but by the 70s there were some very different people in the Association. I will

mention some names because if I do not mention names, then this paper becomes really de-personalised. People like Chris Duke who came from England to the Australian National University suggested that it was wrong to have these divisions and it was better to try and see a much wider membership potential. So in the 70s the Association did away with types of individual members and looked on all those who could support the ideals of the Association as being members, fully entitled to all the rights and privileges.

The second major constitutional change was the creation in the mid-70s of the option of the Association having branches. The change was a very far-sighted move, far ahead of its time in terms of where the people were because the Executive was absolutely unsuccessful in establishing one of these branches although they tried in places like Hobart and Adelaide. But the initiative was that sort of adolescent idealism, saying this is something that perhaps is down the track but we ought to set the plans up for it now, and we did.

The second aspect of this idealistic, optimistic approach that the Association had for the world was looking at some of the specialist groups that needed to be catered for. I am talking about the 70s now, but the AAAE was running conferences on Aboriginal education. There were not many Aboriginal people there, but the important thing was the notion of the Association bringing some leadership to those in the community and adult education in general about the special needs of Aboriginal education. Before the term ‘multi-cultural education’ was as high on the priority list of politicians and journalists, the AAAE was in fact endeavouring to bring together people whose birthplace was not this country, trying to bring them together in an organisation called Ethnic Forum. I recall that Alan Davies organised meetings in Sydney at football clubs that were dominated by particular ethnic groups. The AAAE, a small organisation, saw the need to address the concerns of adults in cultures other than the white Anglo-Saxon.

The question of women's education, as it was called, was brought very strongly to the AAAE and its Executive through the person of Gwen Wesson who had a real battle to convince the group of males that this was an important issue. But I think to the great credit of the AAAE in the early or mid-70s, some of the first ever interstate conferences in women's education were organised by Gwen and paid for, supported and sponsored by the AAAE. The point is the enthusiasm, not always the success, nor were the activities always properly evaluated, and the notion that in the 70s these sorts of projects were seen as being part of the brief of the Association.

There were additional special activities that were taken on. To all the enquiries that were held in the 70s, the AAAE with its small resources base tried to respond, whether the enquiry was about the way technology would impact on Australia through the Myer committee, or on teacher education, or on education and training by Sir Bruce Williams. The AAAE through its Executive tried to have an adult education position put forward. Macquarie University in Sydney had a good facility for the media and the AAAE ran a number of workshops, 'hands-on activity' we would call it today. The workshops tried to bring together the people who were trying to make educational film and video with the people who were going to use them. Particularly through the people at Macquarie University, and Doug Robertson, the national secretary at the time, the workshops brought many people in contact with an area that they had never heard of called adult education.

I want now to note some major events. If you have a look in libraries of major institutions, you will probably find a bundle of documents that were produced through the work of the AAAE and particularly the Centre for Continuing Education at ANU, for what was called an Audit Conference. The purpose of the audit conference, arising from a request from UNESCO, was to try and see what was happening in

adult education in Australia in the mid-70s. No one else was prepared to do this, so the AAAE decided it would and as a result two things happened. There was a conference and a major publication. If you want a picture of what Australian adult education was like in the mid-70s, then look at the reports of the AAAE Audit Conference. From that, and that sort of thinking, the AAAE Executive produced things called five year plans. Most optimistic documents, full of enthusiasm or zeal to see that adult education would move from the margins to the centre of educational provision. The Executive even issued a manifesto. Finally it was not called a manifesto because that was thought to be a bit risque but it was called the Canberra Statement. Dig in the archives of your organisation to see if you can find that statement which, I think, still has a great deal of relevance to those who seek to work in the field of the 90s. The AAAE became involved in research, the first time it had become involved in a major research project through the now defunct Educational Research and Development Committee. The Association sought funds from the US Kellogg Foundation to establish the Association as a major leader in the provision of services to adult education in Australia. The approach was unsuccessful, but was part of what its adolescence was all about.

Let me move on to the other aspect of adolescence where you have fears and anxieties. One of the things I think you can see in retrospect that the AAAE never really came to grips with was the new monster that grew in the 70s called TAFE. Here was the old 'Tech Ed.', given this great blessing from the Commonwealth Government, and tremendous resources with a brief that said, 'We can do everything for everyone'. TAFE was so big and so powerful that this little organisation called the AAAE never really realised the full implications of what TAFE was all about. There was another organisation that was launched with many pigeons and much fanfare in the fair city of Melbourne called the Australian Association of Community Education (AACE). It also was a fear and anxiety

producing organisation for the AAAE, because here was the AACE with all its resources and all its political support and poor little AAAE by comparison was so small and weak. So these were the anxieties of the AAAE in the 70s.

I think that the lack of realism that I have mentioned really came to the fore at the end of the 70s. Many very important things were done, and conferences on innovation in adult education were conducted. Such activities had never been done before. The conferences brought together a whole lot of very interesting people who had innovations to report and these provided a very important stimulus for hard-working people out in the field. The AAAE in the 70s did many significant things, but the problem was that the AAAE at the end of the 70s was still a voluntary organisation. It had an office in Canberra with a national secretary, Doug Robertson, who served the Association throughout the whole of this period, and some additional clerical assistance. But to take on large projects and carry them through, to be able to go and speak with authority to governments, without solid financial and membership support was not possible and, as the 70s came to a close, many people were feeling a degree of frustration and anxiety because of the promise of the 70s in the AAAE's adolescence. As the 80s came on, to many it seemed that the AAAE was not going to be able to deliver in the 80s what the 70s had promised.

Individuals are usually excused for the successes or failures of their adolescence. The AAAE should not be blamed for its adolescence in the 70s. Its efforts, its idealism and its optimism, though not always producing results, produced exciting times. In the harsh times of the 90s, the freedom of the 70s may take on a new attractiveness.

3. AAAE IN THE 1980s

Dianne Berlin
Council of Adult Education, Melbourne

Since Barrie Brennan has suggested that the 70s marked a period of adolescence for the Australian Association of Adult Education (AAAE), then I will continue the metaphor for the 80s. The 80s, I would contend, saw the AAAE mature into *young womanhood*. I will go further, and contend that for the 80s, it was the decade of women in the Association.

I would like to start by using two personal anecdotes that I hope will illustrate several points I want to make about how the Association changed in the 1980s.

My first participation in an AAAE Conference was at the University of New England in Armidale in 1977. The conference theme was Australia—The Next Twenty Years and that illustrates one point where the Association has not changed. Like all good adult educators, it has always been a forward looking organisation, attempting to work out where adult education will be heading, what the needs are. So in that sense there has not been a change, because looking into the 90s and beyond is a major priority for everyone.

My distinct recollection of the 1977 conference (apart from being immensely stimulated by it) was that there were a lot of men there, and many of them came from the academic continuing education sector. We saw at the 1990 AAACE Conference what diverse fields we come from, how geographically far flung we are, and how many of us are women, including importantly, Aboriginal women who have been a constant presence at conferences in the 80s.

So if I could sum up the 80s in one phrase, I would call it the decade of women. For the first time, we had a woman President, Pauline Seitz—in 1983–84. 1 was elected President in 1987 and 1988, and

now we are entering the 90s with a women President, Ann Whyte. Our membership has expanded and it has been women who have been joining.

For the first time in several years, the Executive is going to have to take account of its gender balance policy, because the elected Executive has eight women and six men and the constitution allows it to co-opt a further five or six people to ensure balances from state representation and interest areas across the field of adult education. So it is going to have to look at co-opting some men. What a change that is!

Another way the Association has changed, which represents a difference from the 70s, has been the growth in networks and interest groups, from the Cross-Cultural Network to the Prison Educators' Network and all the networks in between. These reflect the increasing diversity of practice and provision, as well the particular interests of some of the members, and they are the sign of a healthy organisation.

Another anecdote. At the 1984 Conference in northern New South Wales, a tall gentleman named John Wellings tapped me on the shoulder and told me that the Executive had just been meeting, that it needed to co-opt a representative from South Australia and that my name had been suggested. The point of that story is that I was very nervous about accepting. I had no idea who was on the Executive but assumed that they were all eminent, highly important people and I wondered what I could possibly contribute as a humble education officer in the Workers' Educational Association in South Australia. Well, all that has changed because we women are much more confident these days. And Executive has more, I hope, of a human face. We have attempted over the years to be visible at the conference, we write profiles of ourselves in the newsletter, we use the newsletter as the official channel of communication, consulting with members on all policy matters. After all, we have been elected by the members, and we want to represent their interests.

I think that has been a significant change in the 80s, where the Executive has genuinely attempted to consult closely with the membership. It has meant that annual general meetings in the 80s have been largely procedural affairs, with little debate, because matters have been previously canvassed. In earlier decades, I gather, annual general meetings were often quite controversial because of some lack of consultation and lack of true representativeness.

Another change. In 1983, in Adelaide, we held the first joint conference between the Australian Association of Adult Education (AAAE) and the Australian Association of Community Education (AACE). It was a big conference, with almost 400 participants and amongst other things, the conference resolved to amalgamate the two organisations. For reasons I will not go into, that did not eventuate until 1989. However, we have finished the decade with a new name and, very importantly, a new structure. The South Australian Organisation of Adult and Community Education (SAOFACE), which was formed in the early 80s in anticipation of the amalgamation, is now the South Australian Branch. And there are now branches, albeit some of them fledgling ones, in most of the states and territories of the nation. I do not think that we can underestimate the importance of this decision, because whilst the Executive can and does influence national policy on adult education and lifelong learning, the reality is that funding for adult education, particularly when it occurs in community-based organisations, is largely a state matter. And if we are going to branch further into training, award restructuring and workplace-related education and training, then direct negotiations will need to take place within state structures.

Talking of policy, my final point is that whilst the AAACE always has wished to influence national policy on adult education, in the 1980s the Executive made a strategic decision to meet frequently with Canberra-based politicians and bureaucrats. AAACE is now known, acknowledged and consulted by the power brokers in Canberra. That is a significant change, and augurs well for the field.

So if I can sum up the decade, it was a decade of women, of diversification, of strategic reorientation, of consultation and of organisational restructure. I think that those descriptors are significantly different from ones that would be applied to the 70s, and I hope to be around in the year 2000 to see what changes this decade has wrought, and whether the Association has effectively addressed its key issues. I wish the Association well as it heads towards its fortieth birthday. Let us hope that it does not have a midlife crisis in the year 2000!

4. AAACE IN THE 1990s

Alastair Crombie
President AAAE 1988–1990; Executive Director AAACE 1993–1999

The 1990s was, literally, the decade of 'AAACE'—'book-ended' by two changes of name. The 'C' was added in 1989 when the Australian Association of Adult Education amalgamated with an ailing Australian Association of Community Education, whose core focus was the community learning role of schools. 'ACE' subsequently became the standard designation for the field—but without that particular connotation of 'community education'.

In 1998, after a great deal of debate, the membership supported a further change—to Adult Learning Australia (ALA). This was in large part a response to the paradoxical situation that, while overall participation in adult education and training was growing and diversifying, some of the 'traditional' providers of adult education were struggling to stay afloat. ALA now laid claim to being the peak advocacy body on behalf of adult learners, as well as the providers. This was bound to be a difficult act to sustain.

By 1990, the National Training Reform Agenda was becoming a tectonic force. The 1988 national wage case set in motion a massive process of Award Restructuring within which skilling Australia

to become the 'Clever Country' was the central pillar. The Hawke Government had earlier restructured the operating landscape with the creation of the 'mega-Department' of Employment, Education and Training (DEET), a new Ministerial Council (MOVEET) and a National Board (NBEET).

These new structures, together with the Unified National System of Higher Education, the Hobart Declaration on schooling, and in 1994 the establishment (in Brisbane) of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), were emblems of a decisive new **national** approach to education and training into which ACE, after its years in the wilderness, gradually got drawn.

The Training Guarantee, mandating expenditure on training by larger companies, and in 1994, 'Working Nation', the White Paper on Employment and Growth, pressed skill-building as a national priority—and created major new opportunities and challenges for ACE providers in the burgeoning domain of labour market training.

While the ramifications of the National Training Reform Agenda thoroughly permeated AAACE through the nineties, the beginning of the decade was also strongly influenced by International Literacy Year in 1990. After an initial, rather nominal involvement, the Government made the interesting 'discovery' that ten percent of Australian adults were functionally illiterate—an enormous ballast in the tanks of the 'Clever Country' ('No Quick Fix'). Various new measures—and additional funding—followed.

However, the landmark event that most shaped the decade for AAACE was the 1991 report of the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, chaired by Senator Terry Aulich, *Come in Cinderella*. The Association had lobbied for such an inquiry for several years—it having been nearly half a century since the previous such inquiry, the Duncan Report of 1944.

The regular Canberra lobbying undertaken by the national executive from the late eighties had revealed a challenging 'first base' problem; most of the parliamentarians and bureaucrats did not know what we meant by 'adult education'. In response to this, the Association pioneered a National Directory of adult and community education organisations, with an initial edition listing more that 1,000 of them (later editions identified double this number).

With some bravado, this was branded as education's 'fourth sector'—extensive, dynamic and diverse, but un-charted, un-recognised and under-supported. This conceptualisation, together with a broad typology of four main types of adult education, and five types of providers, gave the field a scope and structure that policy-makers were able to get hold of.

The Committee report was very positively received—and not only for its long overdue recognition of the distinctive contribution made by the field:

> ... the impressive achievements of the sector have taken place despite its minimal resources, variable levels of official recognition and a lack of overall policy direction... It is grossly inefficient for governments to ignore or neglect the sector's remarkable education and training capacity, particularly as relatively small additions of guaranteed funding to the sector will reap additional benefits in terms of overall levels of skills formation, to say nothing of the abundant personal and community benefits.

Many developments flowed, in one way or another, from this path-breaking report.

The first recommendation—that there should for the first time be a national policy on adult and community education—was implemented in 1993, and through many revisions, the ACE national policy has continued to provide direction and priorities for the field. Provision was also made, albeit on a modest scale, for a national 'desk officer' for ACE in the Commonwealth Department, and subsequently within ANTA.

Having worked closely with the informal Conference of Senior Officers in Adult Education to help get the inquiry underway, then to shape the national policy, the Association was pleased to see this grouping now given formal standing as the ACE Task Force of MCEETYA, and gradually given substantial responsibilities—for monitoring the national policy, allocating R&D funds, managing a new national data collection process, and so forth.

Most importantly for the Association, the report greatly strengthened our bid for additional resources to service the sector, advise governments and represent the sector internationally. This met with success in 1992, when our grant was increased to $185,000 a year, enabling the appointment of an Executive Director from January 1993, and movement of the national office from borrowed quarters at the ANU to its own offices at Cook. At the same time, additional funds—initially $450,000 per annum—were allocated to research and development, and this proved to be incredibly valuable in supporting documentation and analysis of the ACE sector and its many contributions.

In 1995 the Association was commissioned by ANTA to review ACE research funded under this program, and by other means, for the period 1992–1995. This project identified fifty-seven such projects—a massive surge in such inquiry compared with preceding years. AAACE itself became a beneficiary of this new research and development fund, undertaking projects in such areas as disability access and competency standards for the ACE sector.

While the Association had previously carried out or assisted with small research undertakings on a rather *ad hoc* basis, during the nineties it became common for the Association itself to be managing, or have some involvement in, several such projects. It also now became routine for the Association to be consulted by governments in relation to any significant developments impacting on the broad domain of lifelong learning.

With its additional staffing capacity, and firmer financial base, the Association was able to spawn two other important initiatives—Learning Circles Australia (LCA) and Adult Learners Week (ALW).

Drawing from both Scandinavian and north American experiences (Study Circles Resources Centre, then in Connecticut), the Association's first and very successful Learning Circle program was on Aboriginal Reconciliation, funded by the Aboriginal Reconciliation Council, and personally supported by its Chair, Pat Dodson. Learning circles kits on Blue Green Algae, Civics and Citizenship, Citizens and Crime, Sustainable Rivers and other topics followed, and the Association became known as a champion of the learning circles movement, and a resource centre for it.

Adult Learners Week was also 'borrowed'—in this case from the United Kingdom. On his visit to Australia in 1993, Alan Tuckett, Director of the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) in the UK, impressed both the AAACE Executive and DEET officials with his briefing on the success of Adult Learners Week in the UK. AAACE was commissioned later that year to test and develop a proposal for an Australian version, and as a result our first ALW took place in 1995, with a budget of $250,000 and AAACE as national coordinating agency. This major initiative added a national ALW Coordinator to the national office staff, and gave the Association a prominent and rewarding role in this on-going celebration of and advocacy for adult learning.

Aided by the fact that Alastair Crombie, the Executive Director from 1993 to 1999, was for much of that time a member of Executive Committees of both the Asia-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE) and the International Council of Adult Education (ICEA), the Association also became during the nineties an active and respected participant in the international adult education movement. This was exemplified in particular by the hosting in Darwin in 1996 of the four-yearly ASPBAE General Assembly, and the sending of

an eight member Australian delegation to the Fifth UNESCO World Conference on Adult Education in Hamburg in 1997. The Association also maintained involvement with the International Community Education Association. For this Conference, UNESCO adapted the 1995 logo for ALW in Australia, and the Australian example was used, with others, to successfully make the case for an **international** ALW.

As a result in large part of the Association's success in garnering funds from AIDAB to support their work, ASPBAE opened a regional office in Australia, which was co-located with the AAACE, resulting in a number of regional programs being conducted in Australia and neighbouring countries, including a regular Leadership Development Program.

As well as ASPBAE, the Association also provided a 'home' at various stages for the Federation of Independent Aboriginal Education Providers, and for the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia, for whom secretariat services were provided on a commercial basis.

After the change of national government in 1996, it became harder for the Association to gain support for its agenda, which by then included a heavy emphasis on 'demand side' interventions to stimulate awareness, interest and participation in adult learning—particularly from the 25% of the adult population found to have had no structured learning experience since leaving formal education.

Nevertheless, in 1997 there was a review (*Beyond Cinderella*) of the 1991 Senate report which boldly recommended that existing national policies for ACE and VET 'should be brought together in a way which articulates the commitment to lifelong learning', and that ANTA should become 'NACVETA'—the National ACE and VET Authority. This report included a useful stocktake of progress since the first Cinderella report, but the government's response to it was very disappointing.

Beyond Cinderella is useful for encapsulating the abiding tension throughout this period between the 'vocational' and the 'non-vocational'. Invited in after years in the wilderness, Cinderella found herself co-habiting with a gorilla. VET and vocationalism were rampant, 'lifelong learning' a worthy but incoherent ideal. The Report urged that 'policy makers must abandon the assumption that learning for life and learning for work can be easily distinguished'. This 'vocational/non-vocational divide fails to accommodate the rich harvest of various kinds of educational experiences that make up a learning society'. Unfortunately, these urgings fell on deaf ears.

The Association's organisational strategy for responding to the enormous dynamism and diversity in the adult learning domain was branches and networks. The project of building a federated structure began towards the end of the eighties—the creation and support of State and Territory Branches, each sending a representative to the national executive (along with representatives selected from the membership at large). While this responded to the unforgiving geographic spread of members, special interest networks were actively cultivated to try and give focus to work in particular areas—disability, research, higher education, prisoners, and so on. Both structures were fragile, depending heavily on the presence of a 'champion' to give leadership and direction, but they also brought some significant achievements.

By any measure, the resources available to the Association increased dramatically during the decade. In 1990, the budget was $75,000; by 2000 it was $370,000, with around $145, 000 of this garnered from sources other than the annual grant. In addition, the office was routinely managing several hundred thousands of dollars of project funding. Staff had grown from two to eleven, and the website launched in 1996 had become a major communications vehicle, alongside the newsletter.

The Association was well served by a series of highly experienced and committed Presidents—Anne Whyte (1990–92), Prue Madsen (1992–94), Jim Saleeba (1994–96), Roger Morris (1996–98) and Dorothy Lucardie (1998–2000)—who each brought a distinctive dimension to their leadership of the organisation. Inaugural Executive Director, Alastair Crombie, bowed out in 1999, making way for the appointment of Tony Brown. While others came and went, Mary Hannan provided her enduring commitment.

5. ALA IN THE 2000s

Roger K. Morris

A personal note

What follows is obviously not ***the*** *story of Australian adult education and ALA over the past 10 years. It is just one story—it is* ***my*** *story. I joined the National Executive (the Board) of the* ***Australian Association of Adult Education (AAAE)*** *at the Annual General Meeting in 1987, the same meeting at which Dianne Berlin became the President. I was the last President (before the Association's current name,* ***Adult Learning Australia)*** *of the* ***Australian Association of Adult and Community Education (AAACE)****, the name we had adopted in 1989. These three names are very important markers of change in the recent history of adult education in Australia and the Association's response to those changes.*

The broader context

Arguably the term 'adult education' has become outmoded. Partly, this is a result of the broader adult education project having been largely successful, in the sense that there are now many more opportunities for adult learning available across the lifespan. Adult education, reconceived as 'adult learning' or 'lifelong learning', is thus no longer clearly recognisable as a separate entity, as a separate sector of education or as a social movement, as it once was. There has

been a shift to a concern for 'adults learning', no matter where that learning occurs—in the work place, in the VET sector, or in higher education. Recent figures from DEST (2005) reveal that the majority of commencing students in higher education are no longer traditional school leavers: 41 per cent of commencing students are now aged 25 or over while more than 60 per cent are over 20 years of age.

More broadly, there has been an acceptance of the need for a more cohesive national approach to education in Australia, driven by two principal factors: an **economic** concern to develop a more skilled and adaptable workforce in the context of increasing globalisation and a **social** concern to provide more opportunities for an increasingly diverse population. Education, now more than ever, is being seen as an instrument of government policy and as having the potential to remake the economic and social fabric of Australian life. Contemporary adult education in Australia needs to be understood within this broader educational context. Changes in 'adult education' must be seen as part of a range of changes occurring more broadly across the whole of education: increasing school retention rates; mass participation in higher education; promotion of a more open education and training market, with a range of government, private and community providers; increasing links/movement between different educational sectors; growing emphasis on vocational outcomes; more flexible pathways of learning and ways to skill formation; growing concern with common standards; and more strident demands for quality and accountability.

Beginning in the early 1980s, the time when I and many of my colleagues entered the field of adult education (like so many others, from another career, in my case, teacher education), a critical mass of issues—regarding lifelong learning and recurrent education, including retraining, re-skilling, up-skilling, second chance learning, access and equity—came together to create what seemed to be a very positive climate for adult education. This period could, in retrospect,

be described as the beginning of the 'golden years' of Australian adult education. The broad field of adult education and the Association were confident and growing. Greater government support was sought and to some extent received. However, such government recognition was not without its drawbacks. Increasingly, adult education and the Association were seen, by Government **and** by some adult educators, as being part of the broader Government agenda for education outlined above.

The new millennium

So just how did Australian adult education and its professional association, the newly named Adult Learning Australia (ALA), enter the new millennium? There was a lot of continuity among the key providers, most of which had been a part of the adult education scene for many years, including the Evening and Community Colleges; the Community Adult Education Centres; the Continuing Education Centres; the Neighbourhood Houses; the Local Community Centres; the University of the Third Age (U3A); the Colleges and Institutes of TAFE; the universities' continuing education or extra-mural provision; the WEA; and the Council of Adult Education. Most of these provider types were represented among the ALA membership as it entered the twenty-first century.

The big issues also seemed to persist, including the reluctance of Government to fund 'general' adult education and some non-vocational, social purpose adult education; the ongoing debate about the identity of the sector; the tension between vocational and non-vocational outcomes; the unsettled question of the role of the volunteer as opposed to the professional adult educator; and the fight for real recognition beyond the field's marginal status. Again, the ALA was centrally and crucially involved with, and impacted upon in its own operations by, all of these issues.

However, it seemed (to me at least) that more and more, questions of survival in the new century, both for many in the field and the Association, came down to choosing the economically rational alternative. The old-time debate over what counted as 'adult education', narrowly defined as non-vocational, not-for-credit 'liberal education' in the so-called 'Great Tradition', as distinct from what was merely the **education of adults**, had given way to an even narrower and economically-driven version of adult education: **lifelong vocational education and training**. Some adult educators, remembering John Ohliger, were now asking: is there vocational education and training after death?

In more practical terms, just how did the Association deal with the context in which it has operated in the recent past? We probably need initially to clarify what the Association is about and what it sets out to achieve. To me, the ALA is:

- first, a professional association of adult educators no matter where they work (that is, it serves **individual practitioners**);
- second, a classic interest group consolidating and presenting to government and other significant bodies the views of the field (that is, it serves **the providers and the field**);
- third, a body which seeks to promote adult learning as a social good across the community (that is, it serves **the broader society**);
- fourth, a body which represents Australian adult education in the wider international arena—in ASPBAE, ICAE and UNESCO [that is, it serves **national goals**); and
- finally, like all other organisations, a body that seeks to sustain itself and to survive (that is, it serves **internal organisational goals**).

The Association has continued to serve its individual members. It remains the only professional association of adult educators to operate across the broad field of adult education including in its

membership all types and levels of people, who identify as adult educators. In meeting the needs of these members for professional development and refreshment, ALA has continued to provide an annual conference, an excellent professional journal, an informative newsletter, an exceptionally useful website, and a range of regular emailed news comments and commentary. ALA, in fulfilling its second, lobbying role for the field, has convened focus groups, workshops and working parties that addressed specific issues. It has met both formally and informally with politicians and bureaucrats. It entered into memoranda of understanding with similar organisations both within Australia and internationally. It has sought to ensure that Australia was well represented in the councils of the international adult education movement. In terms of promoting the value of and need for adult learning, the Association has maintained pressure on both the federal and the state governments to produce a clear and implementable lifelong learning policy. Organisationally, in order to better operate in a changed world, ALA has made a number of changes: it moved from a federal structure (with state branches) to a more unitary national structure; the size of the National Board was halved and its method of election and term of office revised; the number of Board meetings per year was reduced; and the activities of the Association became more focused in and on the National Office and the Staff.

Though the National Board members and the Staff laboured long and hard, it cannot be said that the ALA has been particularly successful in recent years. We may have had some successes but largely the Association has been in a holding pattern. Costs were increasing but there was reluctance or an inability on the part of the membership to pay for these increasing costs. Attempts to provide alternate sources of funding came to little. Government grants failed to keep pace with rising costs and were increasingly tied to particular governmentally defined outcomes. Other more sectional adult education or learning associations were reluctant to concede

a leadership or even a coordinating role to the ALA, even though it remained the only organisation that encompassed the broad field of adult and community education, both in terms of fields of practice and geographical spread. Despite ALA's strongest representations, Australia did not finally send an official delegation to Brazil for Confintea VI in 2009. And, perhaps, most crucially the development and active promotion of a national policy at the governmental level remained problematical.

Over much of its history, adult education in Australia has operated without the benefit of formal legislative foundation or overt policy. Governments have seemed to believe that adult education was a good idea as long the demand on public funds was small. Australia does not have a lifelong learning policy as such. Instead, there have been a number of national enquiries and consultations with catchy titles, which have had little direct impact on policy or funding. In 2002 all states and territories endorsed a 'Ministerial Declaration on Adult and Community Education', which emphasised the importance of learning in building community capacity and the importance of adult education as a pathway to further education and training for 'second chance' learners. But the major thrust has been, not with the adult education sector as such, but with adult learning in the context of the range of education available.

Some directions for the future

The term 'lifelong learning' has been largely co-opted by the economic rationalists and is currently being redefined in rather narrow, instrumentalist terms. As Roger Boshier wrote in 2000, lifelong education as a concept traditionally has been seen as being **life-wide** as well as **life-long**. It was/is about the total person, not just the employee. It was/is concerned to democratise education and the wider society so as to eventually create a truly educative learning society for all. However, the 'newer' conception of lifelong learning, as many politicians and bureaucrats see it and use it, is not concerned

with the emancipatory project or social justice. Rather, this lifelong learning agenda seems to be directed at creating better lifelong servants of the 'system'. Some, following Bowles and Gintis, would even argue that the success of such individualisation and privatisation of learning is crucial to the survival of contemporary capitalism.

I agree with John McIntyre, who outlined in 2005 those changes in direction that need to be adopted for adult education to recapture some of its original intent as a powerful vehicle for the development of a learning society:

- There is a need for national policy leadership to give coherence to efforts to promote adult learning.
- There is a need for an ecological perspective on adult learning, emphasising strategies to facilitate learning in workplaces and communities.
- There is a need for adult learning to be understood in relation to broad social policy.
- There is a need for 'learning communities' to be a key focus of provision, especially the formation of partnerships of educational providers, community agencies, local government and employers.

It is in pursuing directions such as these that the major thrust of ALA's future efforts must be focused.

A concluding comment

The story of adult education, in Australia as elsewhere, has been characterised by a fight for formal recognition. Such recognition (albeit as 'adult learning') has now largely been achieved. Lifelong learning will become an increasing reality for many. But there will always remain those who are without access to quality education during the adult years. As ever, it will be those adults that adult education and its peak body, Adult Learning Australia, must continue to serve, to include and to empower.

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Agenda for a national association

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I was reminded of my schoolboy days when I read the opening words of the first number of the Newsletter, to be issued quarterly by the Australian Association of Adult Education. In our textual study of *Macbeth* (does this sort of thing still go on?), we were asked to say what punctuation mark we thought most appropriate after Lady Macbeth's famous words 'We fail', when trying to screw her husband's courage to 'the sticking place'. A question mark, indicating that the possibility of failing had never occurred to her before? A full stop, suggesting resignation, or fatalism? An exclamation mark—to be accompanied by a scornful tone of voice? Which of these alternatives fitted in best with our conception of Lady Macbeth's character? I plumped for the exclamation mark. (The edition I now have gives a colon—that would have floored us!)

The opening words of the Newsletter were simply "WE ARE!"—and I wondered whether the Editor had used the exclamation mark to indicate surprise, relief, triumphant satisfaction at difficulties overcome, or a sense of exhilaration at future prospects. More than a little of each would have been justified, in view of the issues involved and the unconscionably protracted period of gestation—the duration and difficulties of which would have shamed even an elephant. The need for some sort of nation-wide organization in the field of adult education has been felt, and I thought agreed upon, for over forty years. Is it any wonder that considerable impatience was expressed during the past few years at the inability of the relevant groups, at conference after conference, to agree upon the appropriate form, composition, and functions for such an organization? Now, at long last, it is launched—or born, to keep to our previous metaphor, and it is up to all of us to see that it neither dies from neglect nor is expected to run before it can walk.

It may be salutary to remember that this new Australian Association had a predecessor (in the Federal Council of the W.E.A.) to acknowledge its achievements and to probe for the causes of its eventual failure. Perhaps it was too narrowly based, too restricted in its appeal, or too 'alien' ever to become properly assimilated in Australia. Or was it simply that the time wasn't 'ripe'—whatever that means? Mr. Hutchinson, in a companion article in this number, reminds us of a similar 'false start' (or what I should prefer to call a similar 'gallant effort') in the international field. The World Association of Adult Education during the twenty years of its effective existence not only published a very informative Bulletin, but sponsored a number of occasional publications such as the 70-page booklet on *The Present Position of Adult Education in Sweden* prepared by W. H. Marwick in 1938. The prefatory note is worth quoting: 'Mr. Marwick held a Bursary awarded by the World Association for Adult Education for tutors and organizers engaged in Adult Education to visit a country other than their own'. Quite

a useful precedent for our own Association. Even after the World Association stopped publishing, it remained an extremely useful centre of information. I still remember, with gratitude, the prompt and generous assistance given me by its secretary, Miss Dorothy Jones, when I was preparing a report on adult education for the Commonwealth Government, in *1944.*

Likewise, it is worth recalling that one of the first enterprises of our W.E.A. Federal Council was to publish a series of books 'for the use of students in tutorial classes and elsewhere'. They were certainly read and used 'elsewhere'; indeed, several of them came to be recognized as landmarks in their respective fields. The first, a modest paperback of 71 pages which appeared in *1919,* was called *Democracy and Freedom: an Essay in Social Logic* by Elton Mayo – then Lecturer in Psychology and Ethics in the University of Queensland, but later to become famous throughout the academic world as Professor of Industrial Research in the Graduate School of Business Administration at Harvard University. This was followed by two contributions from Victoria: *The New Social Order: A Study of Post-War Reconstruction* by Meredith Atkinson (then Director of Tutorial Classes at Melbourne University) and a pioneer *History of Trade Unionism in Australia* by J. T. Sutcliffe.

The Sydney team (Portus and Bland—the latter still happily with us) published *Marx and Modern Thought* in *1921* and *Shadows and Realities of Government* in *1923,* both of which attracted favourable attention from such men as A. D. Lindsay at Balliol and H. J. Laski at the London School of Economics. A South Australian contribution also appeared in *1921: Modern Economic History—with special reference to Australia* by H. Heaton (then Director of Tutorial Classes in Adelaide, and later to become a front-ranking economic historian in America). If I remember aright, this substantial work of nearly *300* pages of close print, first appeared as supplements to the W.E.A. journal *The Australian Highway,* and

was the edited version of lectures which Heaton delivered at Broken Hill—travelling up from Adelaide week by week to do so. These were the days when Broken Hill was, like Milton's London, a ferment of ideas and radical speculation.

Perhaps the most famous of all the W.E.A. series was Number 6, which appeared in *1922,* called *A New Province for Law and Order* by Mr. Justice H. B. Higgins. The province of industrial relations may not have proved as amenable to law and order as Higgins hoped it would be, but compulsory arbitration seems likely to remain a lively issue throughout the industrialized world—with Higgins' name and work figuring prominently in the continuing debate.

Thus, within the first five years of its existence, the W.E.A. Series had brought out no less than seven creditable works. Most of them were modest in scale, all of them unimpressive in appearance. But, remembering the limited, non-affluent market for which they catered, and the heavy lecturing and administrative burdens shouldered by their authors, one can appreciate the courage and the 'sense of mission' that must have informed the adult education movement in those days. With bigger staffs nowadays, and a wider, more affluent market—surely here is an immediate challenge to our new-formed Association. Perhaps not 'immediate', in the sense that a similar venture should be given top priority, but at least a 'standing' challenge to us, to be worthy of our predecessors.

Just what are the most urgent problems, demanding the immediate attention of the Association and its executive officers, it would be presumptuous for me, as an outsider, to say. But there are plenty of important tasks with which it could, and I hope eventually will, concern itself. The first that occurs to me is a matter of morale, springing from inner conviction. Granted that the phrase 'a sense of mission' has an old-fashioned ring about it (not quite as bad, perhaps, as the pious 'self-improvement' of the 19th century), how

is it to be replaced by something giving strength and direction, and yes, integrity, to those who work in the field of adult education? Knowledge was sought by the early 'missionaries' for the power it would bring—the power to reform and transform society; a 'liberal' education was thought to be a means of 'liberating' people from the chains of ignorance, prejudice and narrow horizons. Do people think like that now, or respond to that sort of appeal? Do newcomers to the work, even full-time tutors, know anything of its historical background, its purpose or philosophy? Has it one, these days? If so, how is it to be adapted to changing needs, how are newcomers to be initiated, and the 'old brigade' sustained and invigorated?

Well, first of all by the mutual stimulation made possible by organization. Let me cite some examples from personal experience. Within the past few years there has been an appreciable 'lift' in the morale of three groups with which I am connected, brought about largely by more effective organization. The first consists of teachers of political science in Australian universities. We have formed an Australian Political Studies Association, in imitation of a similar body in the United Kingdom, and this, in turn, was the result of a suggestion made by Unesco (which works, wherever possible, through 'learned bodies' rather than scattered individuals). Both the Australian and the U.K. Associations now have well-established journals and regular conferences, and I, for one, can testify that the U.K. conferences are an immense boon to visitors on study leave.

Not only political scientists, but University staffs as a whole throughout Australia, now show more signs of life and vigour than ever before. The main reason for this is, of course, their rapid growth in numbers made possible by the increased Commonwealth grants which resulted from the Murray Committee report. But the various Staff Associations now have a Federal Council, with a voice of its own in its journal *Vestes*. The rapid growth of this journal in size, format and appearance, and range of issues discussed—has been

quite remarkable. Its attention is no longer confined to salary scales and similar bread-and-butter issues (it hasn't forgotten these, of course!), but ranges over such matters of principle and policy as the dismissal of Professor Orr; the failure to appoint Russel Ward; 'failure rates' within Universities; the content of the curriculum; the need for, and problems associated with, the establishment of new universities; and so on. It looks as though University staffs are organizing themselves into a professional body of considerable force and significance.

The third group I have in mind are the librarians—a group, like adult educators, still struggling for recognition as a distinct profession. Each of these groups still has a long way to go in convincing public authorities of all kinds of the importance of its work, that it should be treated as an integral part of the whole educational system, and that the supply of its type of service will very quickly uncover a latent demand for it. But librarians at least have, during the past fifteen years, made a considerable impact on these authorities, and have organized themselves into a nation-wide organization, with the usual journal and regular conferences. Having attended some of these conferences I can vouch for the enthusiasm and sense of purpose which they both exhibit and kindle. I can still remember how chastened I felt, as an ex-adult educator, to return from one such conference of librarians in Sydney in 1959, at which morale was so high, to find the adult educators in Adelaide still wrangling and at cross-purposes about the need for any national association.

But agreement, or at least a substantial measure of it, has at last been reached, and we can now get down to an agenda—jobs to be done. Again I must remind myself that I am a mere 'fellow-traveller' (or, at best, when my subscription is accepted, an 'associate'). So I shall confine myself to broad issues and long-range plans. The national association will no doubt—and quite legitimately—press for increased financial assistance for its own work. But should it not also contribute

ideas, and perhaps specific proposals, concerning educational policy as a whole? What I have in mind is the general point, made so convincingly by Sir Richard Livingstone in his *The Future in Education*, that the problem of schools can never be solved in isolation. No matter how long children are kept at school, he argued, and no matter what is crammed into their course of studies, they can never be equipped with an adequate education. It is only if and when a schoolmaster can take it for granted that his pupils will continue their education after leaving school, in other, and more appropriate, institutions, that he is able to design a curriculum suited to their needs and interests and degree of maturity. This needs saying, and emphasizing, now that so much discussion has been provoked by the Wyndham report on the one hand, and by the Murray Committee's suggestion that we need new types of tertiary education, on the other. Should not adult educators have something to say about part-time education, about junior Colleges, about the range and balance of studies within Institutes of Technology, about the type and purpose of the many new Universities that are likely to be established within the next decade, about People's Colleges and residential adult education generally?

More specifically, isn't it time that the existing Universities (and the Universities Commission) were made aware of the many problems and fields of interest within adult education urgently in need of investigation and research? Could not existing Departments of Education within Universities devote some attention to adult needs and interests in various fields of learning, or Departments of Sociology make surveys of various kinds relevant to adult education? And might not inquiries and requests of this kind do something to break down the wrong-headed opposition within most Australian universities to the development of the social sciences? Outside stimulus is probably needed to persuade Departments of Economics to tackle such dangerous fields as industrial relations, but surely here adult students have a lot to contribute from their

own experience. The need for town planning and the implacable opposition to it from a variety of vested interests—calls for academic study and widespread discussion before legislation, with teeth in it, is attempted or enforced. Likewise in the field of local government, or trade union affairs, or pressure group activities—the very stuff of politics—little is being attempted. Provided the Universities are not asked to solve practical problems, or to fashion policy, but are allowed to confine their efforts to genuine investigation and critical discussion, these are community needs to which they should be responsive, and the formulation of specific projects within these fields might well come—*inter alia*, of course—from adult educators.

Likewise, within the field of training, Universities should be prepared to help, provided they are not asked to provide courses of a technical nature. All sorts of groups in Australia are now trying to acquire status by attaching the prestige of a University degree to their training courses. One of the crudest of such attempts was a recent request for a degree course in 'timber'—not even forestry! Such requests emphasize the need for institutes of various kinds, at the tertiary level. But there are already a number of post-graduate diploma courses within Universities, and it is perhaps through some such course that the adult educator, like the librarian, will, in future, be initiated into his professional work.

Another field in which fruitful co-operation should be possible between University staffs and adult educators is in devising and presenting such TV programmes as 'University of the Air'. The content and design of some of these talks, and especially the language used, shows that some of the speakers have no idea how to communicate with 'lay' audiences. Their whole approach and focus seems wrong. Eminent scholars of the calibre of R. H. Tawney and G. D. H. Cole had the humility to confess that they had to learn this art when conducting their first tutorial classes, and, in the process, learnt a good deal about their own subject. Except in some abstruse fields

it is not necessary to be superficial to be intelligible. To popularize is not necessarily to vulgarize. It is more a matter, as James Harvey Robinson put it years ago, of 'humanizing' knowledge. And I am more and more being driven to the conclusion that the least humanized of scholars are those who profess the 'humanities' within Universities.

This leads me to express another long-range, perhaps pious, hope. How are the 'two cultures', to which C. P. Snow has drawn attention, to be reconciled—or, at all events, prevented from drifting still farther apart? The most likely suggestion I have seen is that made by Sir Eric Ashby in a chapter on 'Split Personality in Universities' in a recent book on *Technology and the Academics*. He boldly declared that 'specialist studies (whatever they are: metallurgy or dentistry or Norse philology) should be made the core around which are grouped liberal studies which are relevant to these specialist studies. But they must be relevant; the path to culture should be through a man's specialism, not by by-passing it'. But, as he goes on to point out, 'If technology were to become the core of a new twentieth-century humanism (as Greek became the core of a new fifteenth-century humanism), several adaptations would be necessary in British universities'. For 'adaptations' I would be inclined to say 'revolutions'. It would require great courage and imagination on the part of both teachers and administrators.

But it might be attempted, especially if the possibilities of such an approach were revealed in pioneer attempts in a number of different fields. And this is where the adult educators might blaze the trail. They are not tied to an examination syllabus; nothing very serious happens if an experiment of theirs gets bogged down; and, in any case, class members would be able to contribute from their own experience in a way quite impossible with last year's schoolboys. Take the history of technology, for example, which I know has an immediate appeal to engineering students, and on which there are now some excellent books available. But little attempt has been made,

so far, to link such histories of technology with class structure, or the wider economic forces at work, or the prevailing ideas of the time. If this were done I'm sure the engineers would 'take it', and be just as 'humanized' as they would be by conventional courses in history. I know it is much easier to say things like this than to do them (like teaching history 'backwards') but 'split personality' is a danger which threatens our whole community, as well as our universities, and if the split widens, where do we finish up? It is difficult to provide asylums for whole communities.

Short of bridging such a fundamental cleavage in our ways of thought and our picture of the world, there are many other ways in which adult educators can set about closing gaps, if only within their own field of work. Surely greater co-ordination of effort is possible, without in any way jeopardizing their independence or autonomy, between such bodies as the W.E.A., C.W.A., Arts Councils, Agricultural Extension Departments, and evening Colleges as well as Universities and Adult Education Boards. Even wider than this, have such bodies, either separately or in a concerted effort, thrown themselves behind the library movement—first of all to get free public libraries established, then to make full use of their resources (and their premises) and ready whenever necessary to spring to their defence in cases of attempted censorship. Authors, publishers, librarians and adult educators should all feel attacked by any attempt to restrict the free circulation and communication of ideas. Some impressive examples of co-operation between these groups in the U.S.A. might well be emulated in Australia.

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Agenda for a national association … 50 years on

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I was honoured to be asked by the current Editor to write a response to W.G.K. Duncan's 1961 paper, 'Agenda for a national association', in the first number of the *Australian Journal of Adult Education*, the journal of the newly established Australian Association of Adult Education (AAAE).

The brief has been interpreted in this way. Duncan viewed AAAE as an 'outsider' and proposed challenges for the new association without giving guidance as to how the challenges may have been met. As an 'insider', I propose to review Duncan's challenges, how they were dealt with, or ignored. Then I plan to look at newer challenges that the growing association has had to meet and some current concerns. As with Duncan, the means to achieve the goals will not be proposed in any detail.

Walter George Keith Duncan (1903–1987) is described in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB)* as 'an adult educator and political philosopher' (Stretton nd: 1). He was educated at

Sydney University and gained his doctorate at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He returned to Sydney University and was Assistant Director and then Director of Tutorial Classes (or adult education). He edited the famous *Current Affairs Bulletin* from 1942–50 and made a contribution to the development of the Australian Army Education Service (Dymock 1995).

He was seconded in 1944 to investigate adult education in Australia. His subsequent report that detailed a post-war national adult education service was not considered and not published. The problem for the Commonwealth Government was that its implementation would have required the cooperation of all the states, a post-war problem Prime Minister Chifley did not wish to face. In 1951, Duncan moved by invitation to Adelaide University to a Chair in History and Political Science. Ironically, the Department of Adult Education of whose Board he was Chair published his 1944 report in 1973, with commentaries, as *The vision splendid* (Whitelock 1973).

His journal paper then was written 17 years after his report, 12 years before the report was published and 10 years after his arrival in Adelaide. It was also the first year of this new national adult education association and its journal. Politically, Sir Robert Menzies held sway in Canberra.

So the author of the article had been an academic leader in Australia's adult education and written a report designed to set up a post-war national adult education service. He had moved on to a chair in other disciplines in Adelaide but was chairman of that University's Board of Adult Education.

The statements of the previous paragraphs are made because of the ways in which Duncan describes himself in his paper, for example, as a 'fellow traveller'. At the time, the term was used for persons with 'communist' links, though his ADB biographer Stretton (nd: 1) identified him as a 'left-wing liberal, not a communist'. Why then

does Duncan use that term? He also noted that he would only qualify as an 'associate' member and is here perhaps criticising the AAAE membership structure with its preference for professionals over volunteers and amateurs.

In spite of his long experience with, and knowledge of, Australian adult education, Duncan writes his paper on the association from the point of view of an 'outsider'. But he seemed to agree with the definition of adult education at that time, that is, non-credit and non-vocational education.

What Duncan does present to the new organisation and its members are some suggestions. He notes the importance of publications and provides examples to set the tone and level of such publications.

An important part of the paper is that he suggests, from his experience, that there are other similar types of organisations from whom the newly formed AAAE may gain ideas for its development, namely from organisations of librarians, political scientists and university staffs. These are certainly professional and important occupations.

In addition to suggestions, there are challenges offered by Duncan. There is the challenge for the AAAE to become involved in training for adult educators. That was a difficult demand as the offering of named awards in adult (or continuing) education was not seriously promoted, and then not from any AAAE initiative, until the mid-1970s.

Then there was the challenge relating to adult education and television. At the time of the writing of Duncan's Report, there was strong advocacy for exploring the potential of the movie film as a technique in adult education. In 1961, black and white television, from the ABC and commercial channels, was widely available in the capital cities and moving into regional areas. How would the AAAE,

as a national organisation, seek to deal with such an important new media? There was a long-running program in Sydney organised by Sydney University with Channel 7. But the use of the medium in general for adult education was not successfully developed.

Duncan used the metaphor of the missionary to question the degree of commitment and enthusiasm of the adult education professionals in seeking to extend the scope of, and participation rate in, adult education. Was this language likely to be well received by the professionals from an 'outsider'?

Duncan sought to keep the agenda on a high intellectual plain by asserting that the solution to the problem cited by C.P. Snow of the cleavage between the theoretical and the practical could become a task for which the AAAE could seek to provide an Australian remedy. A noble objective, but surely beyond the scope of this new, small organisation.

Having sought ideas from other groups and suggested that other agencies and additional areas within universities could become promoters and deliverers of adult education, Duncan concluded rather abruptly. He suggested that cooperation between traditional providers and new agencies such as libraries and agriculture departments may be a means of helping adult education, and hopefully the new national adult education body, to progress.

As an admitted outsider, Duncan provided the words but was leaving the translating of the words into action to this new national organisation. His agenda was going to be very difficult for the AAAE to translate in projects and programs.

The AAAE did initiate a journal that has developed into an important international publication. It conducted many significant conferences and gave support to those working in the field, as well as those agencies that provided adult education or developed policy in the

field. But the AAAE does not appear to have taken on the challenges that Duncan posed in his paper.

The current writer has a different perspective from that of Duncan. In the first place, he is and has been a member since 1973. He was on the Executive in the mid-70s to 1983 and was Chairman in 1978–79. He was also Editor of this journal under its older title of *Australian Journal of Adult Education* from 1984–1989.

An additional reason for the writer's ongoing interest in the name changing AAAE/AAACE/ALA has been his 'amateur' rather than professional interest in the history of organisations with which he is associated. He has been involved in the celebration of AAAE's 30 Years (Nelson, Brennan & Berlin 1992), ALA's 40 years (Brennan 2001) and now the 50th Birthday.

The 2001 paper offered five topics for future exploration by the organisation. These topics will be initially used to link Duncan's paper with the ways the organisation has evolved and provide a structure for looking forward. The order the topics are examined varies from that of the 2001 paper. These topics are used because, while Duncan's paper had stimulating content, it had a rather loose structure. The topics are planned to be treated in the following order: international relations, its role, membership, resources, governance and staffing.

Duncan's paper shows an awareness of the national but also the international dimension of adult education. The writers quoted are international, from C.P. Snow to Tawney and Elton Mayo. Reference is made to UNESCO. What ensued was that the AAAE in fact provided significant leadership for adult education internationally and especially in the Asian-Pacific region. The AAAE provided the base for the Asian and South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE) which had links to the International Council of Adult Education (ICAE) and was recognised by UNESCO. In the 1970s and into the 80s, the headquarters of ASPBAE were in Canberra and in the 90s a

Regional Officer of ASBPAE was located within the AAACE's offices in Canberra.

The participation in, support of and contribution to ASPBAE have declined. The lowering of the national government's concern for relationships with international adult education agencies, such as the 2009 UNESCO Conference, marked a shift in the scope and value of ALA's international relations. In the recent Annual Report (accessed from the ALA website, http://www.ala.asn.au, 10 June, 2010), international relations appear to be focused on bilateral arrangements, for example with New Zealand and South Korea, and depend on personal contacts. Examination of the association's publications to members, for example recent copies of *Quest*, indicates less content on, and attention to, the international dimension of adult education compared with earlier decades.

It seems ironic, then, that in the age, say 1970s and 80s, of the telephone and postal service as the major means of maintaining contact, the AAAE was able to have ongoing and effective communication with adult education in Asia and the Pacific—where technology was not advanced. But in the era of the internet and i-phone, where the global dimension is evident in all that we do, the ALA's international contacts and activities appear to have declined.

The second topic is concerned with the association's role. As Ginger Mick pondered, 'What's in a name?', so may those with an interest in the ALA. Until its most recent name change, the focus was on a special type of educational provision. It was not necessarily a widely recognised or respected field of education, but then the association's role was to raise the level of its acceptance. So that has been its challenge to promote the sector.

In many ways it was successful. The AAAE in the 70s took a lead in promoting women's education. The Executive sponsored a series of special activities organised by Executive Member, Gwen Wesson.

The AAAE Executive made a conscious decision to support women's education and accepted the offer from a collective of women on the North Coast of New South Wales to conduct what was a very successful Annual Conference at Valla Park in 1984. In the report of the Adelaide 1990 AAAE Conference (Nelson, Brennan & Berlin 1992), the speaker on the AAAE in the 80s, Diana Berlin, defined it as a period of women's mature contribution to the organisation.

The AAAE was also successful in promoting the need for attention to adult literacy. That resulted in the establishment of the Australian Council on Adult Literacy and a new subset of adult education was recognised. The AAAE supported other specialised areas of adult education, for example in prisons and a special number of this journal was devoted to this theme (29(2), July 1989).

But as Foley pointed out (2004: vii), the general field of adult education has been replaced by specialist fields—vocational education, HRD, community-based education, workplace education, recreational (outdoors) education, education for seniors and prisons and adult literacy from the previous paragraph—and these specialist fields have established their own organisations to represent them. For example, there is the Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association (AVETRA) (http//:www.avetra.org.au) for the teachers and researchers of vocational education. So the shift in the organisation's name from 'adult education' to 'adult learners' was an adjustment to a change that had already happened.

However, to make a claim that the ALA has the role of representing adult learners is, as I suggested in 2001, both 'presumptuous and pretentious' (Brennan 2001: 378). The great irony of much of the work of the ALA, and the AAACE before it, was that good research and programs were developed on behalf of adult learners in the study circle movement that AAACE promoted, in adult literacy groups or in conservation-type programs for indigenous and non-indigenous

adults in remote areas, but these activities did not produce members for the association from these groups.

This important point is made because it is central to the next issue, that of members.

In the new AAAE in the 1960s, the situation was clear there were professionals and amateurs and the organisation was most interested in professionals. The professionals were in three groups: administrators (the directors), the programmers and the tutors. The amateurs were a diffuse group, and many were students. In the 70s and 80s the membership broadened with people in the 'new' areas of adult education provision. Also, many of these new members had different roles, being involved with media or in the writing of materials or in counselling/advising of their adult students.

There was also the important category of membership for 'organisations'. However, the parent organisation never seemed to be able to harness the energies of these member organisations. The situation was rather one of the parasitic use of the resources of these organisational members by the Executive in the 70s and 80s, for example the departments at ANU, Sydney and New England, the CAE in Victoria and the Sydney WEA and the NSW Board of Adult Education, for the actual running of the association.

Then of course there was the constitutional problem. The AAAE was supposedly a national organisation but adult education, despite Duncan's Report, did not have until the 1970s any sort of adult education presence nationally until the advent of TAFE and an AE in FE (Further Education). Adult education remained as a state focus and the different ways in which it was organised in each state was a problem nationally. The AAAE went federal, and state branches were set up, but their effectiveness varied from state to state and year to year.

So there is a declining membership of individuals identifying as 'adult educators' and a mix of organisational members. But the ALA as a 'professional' organisation provides limited services for its members: a magazine, a journal, an annual conference, email information, an occasional professional development activity and a website. Is that competitive for a professional organisation in the Australia of 2010, not 1960?

What then is the point of proceeding to discuss resources, governance and staffing, the last three topics of the 2001 agenda? The larger issue of the role and goals of the association needs to be clearly scrutinised. What worked quite well in previous decades and allowed the AAAE/AAACE/ALA to coast along is no longer relevant, operationally. But one value of being 50 years old is that the organisation can review its past and see if there are features in its history that can be dug up, revised and re-activated. That is what is being suggested in the following.

What is proposed is a return to AAAE's 'roots'. Specifically, the suggestion is for ALA to seek to become a peak level national/international organisation with a focus on adult learning. But the new concern is not **all** adult learning and **all** adult learners. The new target proposed is particularly and specifically learning of a non-vocational, non-credit style. That was how adult education was defined in the 1960s.

That changed focus would mean a shift away from VET, from the concentration on jobs and preparing for them and the gaining of awards, certificates and diplomas, to indicate the achievement of identified work skills. The ALA would seek to gain the support of those organisations involved in recreational, health, sporting, religious and other similar types of adult learning. The emphasis would also be on the less formal delivery of education and emphasising these other forms of learning, in contrast to

the vocational. The traditions of individual and organisational membership could be maintained but guided by the new emphases.

Importantly the concept of the amateur/volunteer member—a distinction from the 60s—could be revived to include all the volunteers who are associated with adult learning in historical societies or museums, art galleries, men's sheds, U3As, Landcare, organic farming or playgroups. The list is very long. Then there are all the groups that are concerned with crafts, from pottery to painting and sporting and recreational clubs that have as part of their agenda the teaching of their sport or craft. Then there are the many organisations concerned with health and welfare, most of which have as a central part of their agenda, encouraging their members and the public to learn. These important areas of adult learning have been sidelined and overlooked, as the central issue of how much ACE contributes to VET has been examined and re-examined.

When he was Commonwealth Minister for Education, Brendan Nelson instituted an enquiry into adult learning. The writer gained some advance notice of the enquiry and of the 'hearings' that were to be conducted and that a hearing was to be held in the writer's home town—Tamworth, New South Wales. There was limited promotion of the hearings, so the writer undertook to visit and phone those who 'provided' adult learning opportunities. Contact was made with government agencies, state and commonwealth, with the traditional providers, for example the community college, but also representatives from the types of groups noted in the previous paragraph. Also, commercial agencies delivering services in hardware and DIY and home furnishing and organisations focused on the aged or adults with physical or intellectual problems. There were some general responses. Most groups had not heard of the Minister's enquiry but were interested to be informed that the Minister was interested. They responded that in terms of 'learning', they had little or no contact with other groups but indicated that they could

be positive towards some organisation that provided information and the sharing of ideas and programs. My contact was the first many had received about their role in adult learning/education. At the Tamworth 'hearing', these groups were not represented, nor were they represented at the meeting sponsored by the Minister in Canberra. My contact with over 25 organisations which were involved and indicated a potential interest in further meetings contrasted with the four groups represented at the actual hearing: TAFE, Community College, Education Department and the Smith Family.

The type of initiative proposed for the ALA in changing its direction could take the form of a follow up to the foray at the national level in 2009 into the area of informal learning. A major reasons for noting this particular option is because, in those groups noted above with their non-vocational goals, the less formal aspects of learning are evident (along with the more formal).

Trying to continue as the national group representing the highly diversified areas of adult education/learning in a period when the focus is on the vocational aspects of adult learning and the gaining of awards and credentials will result in a gradual and further decline in role and membership, as has been evident in the past decade. There are more important long-term issues for the adult world than being restricted to the degree to which traditional adult education contributes to vocational education.

Claiming to represent adult learners and all adult education is beyond the association's resources, as has been demonstrated over the past decade. In addition, the association has lost its standing as a credible advisory body. With the high degree of specialisation within adult education, particularly in the VET area, ALA cannot achieve a role as the 'professional association' for adult education professionals. It could provide some CPE/CPD, but not a complete program. It does not have the capacity to provide other services comparable with other professional associations. ALA also has very little to offer the

many private organisations now involved in adult training. Besides, they have other bodies, such as the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) with its 1200 members (http://www.acpet.edu.au).

So the proposal is that ALA seeks to become the major focus at the national level (and potentially the international/global level) for the non-credit, non-vocational areas of adult learning. It would seek to ally with peak national bodies in sport and recreation, services for the elderly, craft organisations, those within health and welfare and so on, that had, among their objectives, adult learning for their members and/or the public. U3A would be a good example. There is **no** agency that has such a brief. The fact that the educational and social welfare bureaucracies seem to have difficulties dealing with informal learning/education within their fields is evidence of the need for a peak group to focus on the issue and act as a clearinghouse and provide a leadership role. An organisation that has survived for 50 years in the tough area of adult education could fulfil that role.

As with Duncan's agenda, the details of proceeding in the new proposed direction are not provided. These need to be worked out in a consultative way with those who are involved in adult learning in these areas and who have at the moment no clearly identified support group.

There is also a sense of valuing its origins and history if the ALA were to return to supporting and fostering the type of adult education that was its central brief back in the 1960s. It is a very different world today from the conditions of the 60s, but the need has arisen when the non-credit/non-vocational functions of adult education and learning require a national focus.

I wonder whether Duncan would approve of the suggestion?

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The international importance of a national association

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It is my experience that some of the most perplexing and time-consuming problems that face the chief executive of a National Association in Adult Education, arise out of international contacts. I think it is very wise that the Australian Association should give attention to the matter early in its existence. By so doing, it can perhaps avoid some of the pitfalls and can offer creative leadership and example that may be of the greatest value in the next half century. One thing is certain—there is no established pattern of international relationships into which a new national association can fit comfortably and conveniently. There are a number of connecting strands but there is nothing approaching an organized network with a clearly discernible pattern.

One reason, of course, is the paucity of national associations themselves and the great variety of internal structures that they display. Secondly, international relations in adult education by no

means wholly depend on the activities of national associations of an inclusive kind. They are sustained to a far greater extent by the direct links forged by or through groups with special objectives, University Extension Departments, Workers' Educational Associations and Trade Unions, Country Women's Associations, Church Organizations, etc. Thirdly, the marginal character of adult education in all countries means that the money equivalent of the time and effort needed to sustain international connections is very hard to come by.

This having been said, I would add, with conviction born of experience, that it is not possible to establish a nationally representative body in adult education without the rest of the world assuming that it is a proper point of reference and contact. To make the most of this fact without falling foul of the rightful autonomies of the member bodies can be a very difficult operation. In large measure solutions have to be found *ad hoc* in the light of experience but a clear recognition, at the outset, that 'National' and 'International' are not wholly separable terms, will almost certainly ease the task.

The nature and extent of national associations

It may be useful to remind ourselves how few national associations actually exist which are at all inclusive and representative. The following list is not necessarily complete but it comprises all that are known to me, and it will be seen that they are virtually confined to the Commonwealth and the United States.

> Canada: The Canadian Association for Adult Education, 113 St. George Street, Toronto (publishes *Food for Thought,* monthly).
>
> New Zealand: The National Council of Adult Education, 192 Tinakori Road, Wellington.
>
> Norway: The State Adult Education Council, Arts and Culture Division, Ministry of Church and Education, Oslo.

India: The Indian Adult Education Association, 17b Indraprastha Marg., New Delhi (publishes *The Indian Journal of Adult Education).*

United Kingdom: (a) The National Institute of Adult Education, 35 Queen Street, London, W 1 (publishes *Adult Education, six* times a year); (b) The Scottish Institute of Adult Education, Education Office, Alloa, Clackmananshire (publishes *Scottish Adult Education,* quarterly).

United States: The Adult Education Association of the U.S.A., 743 North Wabash Avenue, Chicago 11, Ill., U.S.A. (publishes *Adult Education,* quarterly, and *Adult Leadership,* monthly).

Even this limited list may be misleading in suggesting uniformities of structure and purpose that are denied by the facts. The two Institutes in the United Kingdom are essentially federal associations of corporate bodies, including the public education authorities, although they have limited provision for individual membership. They are not expected to provide, and are indeed constitutively restricted from providing, any direct service of adult education. The U.S. Association, on the other hand, is fundamentally an individual membership body with overlapping links with the National Association of Administrators of Public Schools Adult Education and a working connection with the Council of National Organisations which, itself, is more akin in structure to the Institutes in the U.K. The Canadian Association has an elastic structure and has gone further than either its U.S. or U.K. counterparts in direct action, notably in its association with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Through its sponsorship of a 'joint planning commission', it has promoted working relations between a large number of national voluntary organizations, outside the framework of the Association itself. So one could continue, and the position is further complicated by the fact that there are several countries in which a national body related to a particular sector of adult education performs at least some of the functions of the 'inclusive' type of association. If one looks for a single

focus, in Ghana, for example, one turns to the Peoples' Education Association, or in Western Germany to the Federal Association of Folk High Schools.

The common element underlying these differences, and the one that gives international significance to the work of the bodies mentioned, is that they offer channels of communication and provide in their publications the widest forum for continuing presentation and discussion of ideas and experiences. To the extent that their regularly published journals, in particular, circulate beyond national boundaries and accept responsibility for presenting other peoples' experience to their home readership, there is a slow but persistent percolation of information.

I speak with diffidence of another element of persistence which a national association provides in a way that cannot be achieved merely by periodical representative conferences. On however limited a scale, a permanent association implies a standing machinery of government and a secretariat, 'secretary', 'director', 'administrator' —under whatever titles he works, a full-time principal executive officer is identified with the association to a degree almost inevitably greater than any member of his governing body. If he is at all worth his salt he becomes the personal repository of a knowledge, which it is his peculiar business to put at the disposal of all comers. He will be more than human if he does not develop some special affections and interests, if at a particular moment he does not regard some activities as more important than others, but he fails in his job if he is not continually aware of the whole estate. He is like the man in a church belfry who cannot ring changes until he has the knack of 'rope sight'—the ability to hold all the tufts on the ropes in his eye at once. These considerations are important within the national compass but even more so at the international level: it is not the task of a national association secretary to pass judgments on the work of the member bodies, but if he is to help the enquiring foreigner, as he will certainly

be expected to do, he must be willing to estimate the relevance of particular activities to the best judgment he can make of the needs of the enquirer.

I do not think it is only making a virtue of my own experience to say bluntly that a national association cannot play a full role nationally, and certainly not internationally, unless it can sustain a separate existence and a responsible secretariat however small. In saying this, I put person before place, and I would plead, also, the virtue of an independent operating headquarters—a permanent address, a place of resort with an accessible collection of books and records whether dignified with the title of 'Library' or not. There are sadly too few such focussing points throughout the world to which students of adult education—and the student of adult education is often a very senior adult—can be directed. Field study is more rewarding if it follows even a few days study of documentary material adequately classified and catalogued.

The framework of international contacts

In what I have so far written, I am clearly pre-supposing that contacts across national boundaries are valuable for the development of adult education and that they should be encouraged and enlarged. To those already deeply implicated, this may seem self-evident and in no need of justification. I can only say that those responsible for the development of national systems of education show no great eagerness to make it possible. Particularly in the advanced countries we have far to go before the resolutions of the Montreal Conference last year, calling on governments to treat adult education as an integral part of their total national systems, are likely to be fully implemented. Without this, international connections will continue to depend, in the future as in the past, largely on individual initiatives and on sporadic benevolences from charitable foundations and international agencies.

I found it instructive in Montreal, and tried not to find it depressing, that I could identify only one former member of the World Association of Adult Education that was in existence from 1919, effectively until 1939, and formally until 1947. Certainly not more than half a dozen knew that this was not the second World Conference, but unquestionably the third, the first having been held, not at Elsinore, Denmark, in 1949, but under the auspices of the World Association, in Cambridge, England, in 1930. Created largely by Albert Mansbridge in the flush of educational enthusiasm that emerged during the first World War, and presided over by Thomas Masaryk, the first President of Czechoslovakia, no international body ever had more devoted secretarial service than was given to the World Association by Miss Dorothy Jones who is happily still available to bear witness. I recently shared with her the rather melancholy task of disposing finally of surplus Bulletins and other documents, after having incorporated much valuable material into the Library of the National Institute in London.

It is true, that, since 1947, the microcosm of an international agency has again existed in the Adult Education section of the Education Department of Unesco, but the comparative indifference of governments has meant that the section has had a low esteem as judged by budgetary appropriations and consequently by its staffing and range of action. In two matters Unesco has exceeded the performance of the pre-war World Association. Apart from two 'world' conferences it has mounted, and encouraged others to mount, a number of regional seminars, and it has helped to bridge the gap between 'Fundamental' and 'Adult' Education. The first of these was not within the financial compass of the World Association, whilst the second scarcely existed as a recognized issue. To set against the quarterly Unesco Bulletin of Fundamental and Adult Education there are the two series of Bulletins of the World Association published without a break from July 1919 to February 1946.

This brief historical excursus may serve to point some of the difficulties that now prevent, and will probably continue to prevent, the re-establishment of a formal World Council or Association of Adult Education. It is the typical hen and egg situation—without large funds pre-committed, no justifying activity is possible; without previous evidence of usefulness no one is in fact likely to commit funds at all, and certainly not on the scale required to make formal organization viable. This was clearly the reasoning of the great majority of the delegates present in Montreal last August, reinforced by quite legitimate doubts as to just what could be the terms of reference of such a body, given (a) the willingness of Unesco to perform certain functions generally admitted to be desirable; (b) the established existence of specialized bodies such as the International Federation of W.E.A.s., the Associated Country Women of the World, and the probability of other links being forged in the fields of University and Residential adult education, and as an element in the potentially very powerful World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession.

What emerged from lively and at times heated discussion was modest enough, but useful if the interested parties, including National Associations, intend that it shall be so. Unesco was asked to maintain and extend what it has in fact been doing in the way of publication and encouragement of personal contacts through seminars and conferences, but to bring into being a more permanent consultative committee, with a known basis of membership, drawn from people with appropriate kinds of experience of field work and of promoting co-operation at national, regional and international levels. In relation to the great variety of practices to which the words ‘Adult Education’ attach, to the difficulties of equating geographical and political representation and to the mere problem of linguistic diversity, whatever Consultative Committee is created, within realistic limits of size and expenditure on meetings, will be a very modest mouse to come out of the mountain.

When representative national associations are thicker on the ground and much more firmly rooted in their own plots than they commonly are now, they may be the obvious points to which Unesco should look for an important part of the membership of a permanent Consultative Committee. But I fear that day is far off. In any case, this refers mainly to cross-connections between organizations. Special reference was made in the Montreal recommendations to Unesco, to the importance of providing an international focus for people professionally concerned with adult education as a matter of content, process and administration. The pressure for this came mainly from the U.S.A., the only country where a sizable number of people regard themselves as professional adult educators at large, rather than as professionally employed in the service of a specific organization. Certainly so far as the United Kingdom is concerned, there is no very widespread understanding of what our American friends are driving at. Despite our long and properly respected experience, there is nothing in Britain that can be identified as an organized profession of adult education. There are many small groups of people who associate on the basis of common occupational interests, as for example, Tutors employed by University Extra-Mural Departments and the W.E.A., in the Tutors' Association; Community Centre Wardens in the Society of Neighbourhood Workers, Principals of Residential Colleges, Teachers in Evening Institutes, etc., but there has been little attempt to define entry standards or to sponsor organized training even for such groups, much less to seek for any common core of theory and practice that might become the basis of a recognized qualification for service in a number of different fields.

I suspect that this is an area in which growing awareness of other people's attitudes and problems may exert considerable influence. However little we in the U.K. may feel the need to rationalize our experience for our own sakes, we are compelled in some measure to do it for other people. It is something of a paradox that Manchester University should recently have established a Diploma course in Adult

Education primarily for students from overseas, and that the much longer established Diploma course at Nottingham University should, over the years, have attracted larger numbers from abroad than from the United Kingdom.

There is a point of substance here for those concerned with national associations based mainly on a corporate membership. They may have little meaning for the main body of field workers and particularly for that great majority in all countries to whom adult education is only a limited part-time commitment. Representative national bodies tend, almost inevitably, to be employers' associations, and if the benefits of international contacts are to flow into the daily work of adult education, there is need for a balancing force of organized employees. This is not so apparent in the case of voluntary organizations where professional service usually carries a large element of commitment to the objectives, explicit and implicit, of the organizations; or as regards the modern residential colleges and centres where the unit is commonly small and discrete. But it certainly applies when universities employ Extra-Mural or Extension staffs of some size and, even more strongly, when public education authorities are directly involved in programme planning and execution. It is particularly as regards the last category, that the Adult Education Committee of the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession may come to assume a good deal of importance.

What are the practical implications of all this for a National Association of Adult Education? Here, for what it is worth, are my own answers:

1. The very creation of such an Association will bring a response from other parts of the world.
2. Much of this response will be in the form of personal enquiries, some of them only tenuously related to the declared purposes of the Association.

3. In order to deal intelligently with them, the Secretariat will have to know all it can about the background circumstances in the enquirer's own country. When, for example, a correspondent in the U.S.A. asks for details of 'Summer Schools' in England, it is important to know that he is almost certainly looking for a University Summer Session where his studies will rank for credit at home. Such possibilities are virtually non-existent in England, but we have many scores of —in our own terms—'Summer Schools'.
4. To build up the requisite fund of knowledge, a National Association must receive – and someone must try to digest —a veritable mountain of paper, much of it excruciatingly dull. There is vitally necessary work to be done in organizing translation and abstracting services, and this is certainly a matter in which Unesco is the only conceivable world agency at the present time. It will not act without continuous pressure from those who want the service.
5. The Association's officers must be aware of the existing agencies for international contact and must have opportunities to meet, in person, as many as possible of the people working for them. At the present time, I would have in mind:

   Unesco—primarily, but not exclusively, its adult education section. The Exchange of Persons, Librarian and Museum sections, are also relevant.

   The Adult Education Committee of W.C.O.T.P. based in Washington (D.C.), U.S.A., but now acting with the aid of consultants (of whom Mr. Hely is one) in the major regions of the world.

   The International Federation of Workers' Educational Associations operating from the headquarters of the British W.E.A. in London.

   Although not of 'world' status, the *European Bureau of Adult Education,* working from Bergen (N.H.) in the Netherlands, has promoted useful contacts, particularly in the field of Residential Education, including three 'trans-Atlantic encounters'.

Following a meeting at Sagamore in the U.S.A. after the Montreal Conference, plans are on foot to maintain connections between people with particular concern for University adult education. The Editor is better informed about this than I am.

I have avoided a rhetorical approach in writing this article. I know only too well that a new national association, operating on a continental scale and against a background of long-established autonomies, will have plenty of internal problems to resolve. But the Australian Association emerges at a time when it is impossible for intelligent men and women not to be aware that the well-being of their fellow-countrymen is inextricably interwoven with the well-being of all men everywhere. There can be no more useful service than to keep that fact in the forefront of educational policies at all levels.

The role of adult education

It seems sometimes to be assumed that in the economically developed and educationally sophisticated countries the problems are few or none, that adult education is of only peripheral importance, and that the help which Unesco can give is minimal. None of these assumptions is true. However, it is also true that the needs of the developing countries are even more urgent—indeed spectacularly urgent. ... Some of the developing countries can meet these needs from their own resources, and seek nothing from outside save sympathy and understanding. Many others, and in particular countries in Africa and Asia which have recently attained independence, must look to the developed countries for help of various kinds. We believe that this help the developed countries should give generously, speedily and unconditionally...

It is relevant to stress again that what is new is the *rate* of change in this mid-twentieth century. Even twelve or fifteen years of full-time schooling is inadequate equipment for fifty years of adult life; what

we, who are now adult, learnt at school is partly out of date, and certainly needs to be supplemented. This will be even more true of the next generation. Adult education alone can meet the needs of our situation, and here and now it must be accepted as a normal and necessary part of the sum total of educational provision. That is its role in a changing world. (*Report of Commission I, Unesco World Conference*)

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National and international associations… 50 years on

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Looking back fifty years is a salutary experience. There is a sense that everything changes, and everything stays the same. Whilst we now have a global non-government organisation to support national bodies in the field of adult learning, most of the national members have a fragile financial base, and the International Council for Adult Education struggles to find secure funders for its global advocacy work. If the profession of adult education has grown dramatically since the 1960s, it feels in too many countries as though it is now well past its zenith, with the optimism of mass literacy campaigns in the 1970s and 1980s giving way to the narrow focus of the Millennium Development Goals—where you look in vain for the explicit recognition of the role of adult education.

Still, we are here, and carry on working together. The development of the internet has made possible global networks of a more intimate

kind. The Bretton Woods architecture may have privileged the interests of affluent countries and of capital but the explosion of creativity that characterises the World Social Forum surely shows that 'another world is possible'.

Back in 1961, in its first year the *Australian Journal of Adult Education* published a paper by my predecessor bar one, Edward Hutchinson, who was then Secretary of the National Institute of Adult Education (the nomenclature has changed) on 'The International Importance of a National Association'. He was writing to celebrate the creation of an Australian Association, and offered modest, practical advice on how to deal with the international dimensions of the work. There was then, little global advice to draw on. There were international federations of Workers' Educational Associations and of country women's bodies. There were hints that university adult educators and residential folk high schools might get together, but there had been nothing like the World Council of Adult Education since its demise in 1947.

Hutchinson noted, a little grudgingly, that in the same year, 1947, 'the microcosm of an international agency has again existed in the Adult Education section of the Education Department of UNESCO, but the comparative indifference of governments has meant that the section has had a low esteem as judged by budgetary appropriations and consequently by its *staffing* and range of action'. Yet he was writing just a year after the second in the sequence of global conferences that UNESCO has mounted every dozen years or so since the late 1940s, just as this piece is written a year after the latest, CONFINTEA 6, took place in Belem at the mouth of the Amazon in Brazil. There has been, in my view, no initiative of greater importance in securing a recognition of the importance of lifelong learning than the global UNESCO conferences—most memorably perhaps the 1997 event at Hamburg, where under Paul Belanger's guidance, UNESCO recognised not only the value of adult education as a thing to be

celebrated and defended for itself, but also its powerful role as a catalyst in the achievement of other social policy goals.

There seemed little likelihood at the beginning of the sixties that the global movement could sustain an international organisation. Hutchinson reported the barriers to the creation of a world association, discussed by participants at the Montreal UNESCO conference. 'It is the typical hen and egg situation—without large funds pre-committed, no justifying activity is possible; without previous evidence of usefulness, no one is in fact likely to commit funds at all, and certainly not on the scale required to make formal organization viable'. From the vantage point of 2010 the analysis is familiar. Despite the successes of the International Council for Adult Education since its formation in 1972 (after yet another UNESCO conference), it continues to sweat to put together a patchwork of funding to secure reasonable participation by educators from the global South for many of its activities. And the pressure Hutchinson recognised is familiar to many national associations, too, as the last decade of the history of Adult Learning Australia illustrates.

The 1960s were, though, a less accountable age, at least in England. Hutchinson argues that one merit of international dialogue is its role in helping us understand ourselves better: 'However little we in the UK may feel the need to rationalize our experience for our own sakes, we are compelled in some measure to do it for other people'. This was an age before cost-benefit analysis. Now much of my working life is spent arguing to government, funding bodies and to the wider policy community that not only is adult learning of value in itself, but that it has measurable economic benefits in the achievement of other social policy goals. The case has been helped by the findings of the Wider Benefits of Learning research centre at the Institute of Education in the University of London, which shows the measurable benefits to health (with attendant reductions in medical bills) arising from participation in any kind of learning. In the same way, studies

on the value of investment in adult education from the States or from Sweden are used by national associations in making the case for funding for the field.

One distinctive gain derives from the way new technologies have made possible collaborative and convivial work by committed practitioners across national boundaries. The sequence of international UN conferences of the 1990s—ranging from the population conference in Cairo, the sustainable development event in Rio and the women's conference in Beijing—each generated a series of promises by governments. So did CONFINTEA in Hamburg. Adult educators across the world, working with the International Council for Adult Education, established a global watch to identify how far governments went to act on the international agreements to which they had signed up. The findings of that work strengthen the advocacy case of national bodies.

Perhaps the most striking difference between the analysis of the work of national associations then and now lies in the importance now attached to advocacy—to making the case for adult learning. National associations continue to be sites of solidarity and mutual support, places to explore the best of good practice. But above and beyond that, the role of national bodies has become in many countries the focus for securing informed debate on the role of adult learning in national life. It involves what Harbans Bhola once memorably described as 'beating drums for attention'; that part of adult educators' work aligned to theatre; the creation of public manifestations, parties, celebrations. That surely was the genesis of Adult Learners' Weeks, which now take place in more than fifty countries worldwide. They take a myriad of forms, but share in common the celebration of existing learners in all their diversity as a stimulus to other adults to take up learning, and as a reminder to politicians and other policy-makers that adult learning transforms lives.

Further evidence of the importance of advocacy can be seen in the success of the sequence of training and development events mounted by ICAE for emerging leaders in adult education. The lCAE Academy for Lifelong Learning Advocacy has been running now for six years, creating a cohort of educators able to work together trans-nationally to better make the case for adult learning. They worked together to great effect in Belem, and must offer optimism for the future.

The aspiration to understand each others' experience and to assert the common humanity we share across boundaries fired my own early engagement with international work, through the International League for Social Commitment in Adult Education—a wonderfully utopian initiative that had no money but still managed a dozen international conferences that forged lifelong solidarities, and incidentally was the trigger for my first chance to visit and learn from Australian educators. Alas, ILSCAE lives on only in our memories now—but was no less important for that. Edward Hutchinson was surely right to emphasise the fragility of the links we manage to sustain with each other. The international movement would be weakened dramatically were the German government to withdraw the funding for national bodies DVV International provides. But if finances are tight, that should be no inhibition to dream, talk together, share ideas, research, and imagine better futures. And fifty years on, what the WEA used to call 'this great movement of ours' continues to make itself anew, as it will I am sure for the next fifty years.

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An experiment in method

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A one week's school for training in the work of Co-operatives for Aborigines was held at 'Tranby' by the Australian Board of Missions in February this year, organized by the Rev. Alfred Clint. It was the third successive year in which such a school was held. As in former years it consisted of two courses for two groups—one for aborigines, the other for European teachers, administrators and missionaries working in aboriginal settlements. The main part of the course dealt with the principles and practices of native Co-ops and experiences with them in the Pacific, Australia and elsewhere. I had been asked to give one lecture to the European group in 1960, on 'modern techniques in adult education', and feeling this was quite inappropriate, had applied the method described below to an aspect of their work. This had resulted in my being asked to take three sessions and try the same method with the aborigine group at this school, as well as one session with the Europeans. Only the former is reported here.

This article consists of a report on these sessions, together with some reflections and questions on the relevance of this method to other aspects of our work, in particular to that of the ordinary lecture-discussion session. The method used in the sessions reported on is not new. Americans have been using it for years. Its application in this instance (and in two or three other instances by the writer) arose from experience in a 'tutors' workshop' in 1959–60, and subsequent experiments by other tutors in two short courses and with some groups.

The particular 'experiment' in method described above may not, in itself, have much intrinsic or extrinsic value. But it raises, once again, questions in my mind about our dependence on the lecture-discussion method in adult education. Do we too uncritically assume that this is the most effective method of teaching adults?

It may be that a critical appraisal of the method used in this instance will lead to the conclusion that even with this group, the lecture-discussion would have been a better method to have used. Certainly, if there were any advantages in the method used, it must be established what these were and whether they were as educationally valuable as those which would have been secured from a lecture followed by discussion.

Even if it were concluded that this method was perhaps more suitable than the lecture for such a 'problem-solving' situation, can it have any useful application where the teaching objective is different? Again, would it be usefully applicable to more sophisticated groups at more advanced levels of study? Is it a pre-requisite for its application that the audience must be reasonably homogeneous in levels of experience, background and education? Has this method any useful applications to some teaching, some of the time, in 'subject' fields of ordinary classes? Personally, I do not think the lecture can be dispensed with entirely in any course—but maybe its value could be enhanced by more discriminating use of it and other methods.

Would it be worthwhile for a group of tutors to study how this method might be applied in a subject field?

It is obviously a method that is much ‘slower’, will ‘cover’ less ground, than the usual lecture-discussion, because the pace at which a subject is covered in the latter is largely determined (and usually pre-determined) by the tutor, hardly at all by the students; and we all know a lot more than our students, and—possibly—assume that having uttered it is *known* to them, also, and we sweep on to the next lecture. Is it better for being slower?

This method tends to rate higher than is usual in the tutorial class situation, the motives, interests and ‘objectives’ of the students—do we normally make too many uncritical assumptions about these; or ignore them?

This method may also involve more thought about the educational objectives of a class session (or a course) and the method of presentation, than perhaps is normally given to these; it does not necessarily involve any less thought by the tutor about the subject or the content of the lecture or course. Do we normally think closely enough about the ‘objectives’ of our teaching in relation to content and methods of presenting materials?

The method used in the Co-Op. Schools raises also the question of how far we, or we and the students, usually attempt to appraise what is being done in a class or course, apart from reading and written work. Within the narrow limits set in the Tranby sessions of 1960 and 1961, the tutor was in a position to make some ‘appraisal’ of what students had contributed in relation to what he would have told them had he lectured on the subject instead, because all the main heads of his ‘subject’ arrived on the blackboard by dint of questioning; and in asking students to explain or to discuss what they thought was involved in this or that, and supplementing what they offered by direct explanations of his own, or by further

questions, the content under 'headings' was orally filled out, relations between parts of the whole traversed, and some attention drawn to principles involved. But does the fact that the main content of what otherwise would have been given in a lecture, was finally elucidated in this way, establish that what it was sought to teach had been taught, or learnt, as thoroughly, or that as much had been learned, as would have been learnt from a lecture-discussion? The only *certainty I* have is that it was much harder work for the tutor than lecturing-and this may be accounted a defect; and that it obviously tried the students harder than being lectured to or at. Sleep was impossible, inattention difficult and dangerous—the tutor might pounce with a question.

But did it 'try' the students in any 'educative' way? Professor Gibb fears that this method results only in students airing, and having aired being confirmed in, their own prejudices and ignorance. Was this all that happened, in fact, in this instance? And has distinction to be made between what (it is assumed) was learnt by those who contributed and those who were silent? May it have been that the latter, or both, would have learnt more from a straight lecture? How effective a test of what has been learnt from the lecture is the subsequent discussion? Is it, or can it be made, of any value as a test of learning?

Composition of the group

The group consisted of 15–16 aborigines from northern N.S.W., already working in a co-op.; four or five from Condobolin-Lake Cargelligo area where they have no co-op. at present; eight to ten from the Townsville and Palm Island region, in the first of which is a co-op.; one from South Australia; several from Torres Strait; one, I think, from one of the Pacific islands; and one or two from Brisbane, including the only woman in the group, a Mrs. __________.

Some of these were half- or quarter-caste (about six or eight); one (aged 15) was half American negro, half aborigine. Some were from Native reserves; some were or had become free citizens and were urbanized. A small number were skilled tradesmen (plumbers and drainlayers; carpenters; a butcher; mechanics and fitters) and some others were part qualified as tradesmen. Ages ranged from 15 to 65; the median about 40. The levels of education varied. One young half-caste from Palm Island was a certificated (Queensland) teacher who had been through Teachers' College; Mrs. ________ had had secondary education and was a trained concert singer; the qualified tradesmen had done their technical college courses while serving apprenticeship, while others had served full apprenticeship without completing a technical college course; others (trained on a Native Settlement or Reserve) had a thorough trades training, with very little schooling at all; all had had some primary education, but ability to read in English seemed to vary very widely; with a few it appeared to be little more than ability to read English words aloud without being able to interpret what was read. (This may have been shyness?)

Their interest, in my own and those other sessions at which I was present, varied considerably, and since we met in a marquee with raised sides, egress was easy if attention flagged or was diverted. There was constant interruption from outside the tent. Attention varied considerably—the better educated had their attention readily 'engaged' and kept; but those, like the Torres Islanders, who clearly found the subjects, content and vocabulary of the (European) speakers difficult, were often clearly not really 'with us'.

What was attempted

(i) My first session with the group was early in their course. I was apprehensive I might fail to secure any response. At the outset I made it clear that I knew nothing about co-operatives among their peoples and knew nothing about their problems as aborigines. What

I was concerned to do in this session was to help *them* to discuss some aspects of their problems in *forming* a co-operative, and to see what they thought were the best ways of taking the *first* steps. I was too ignorant to tell them; they must tell me. We would assume that they had decided to form a co-op.: What did they think were the first things to be done in order to put their decision into action? Would someone suggest one thing that they thought had to be done? I asked for and secured a 'chalker' to write on the blackboard the suggestions that they would make. By my watch we sat in silence for 1½ minutes before they cracked. I got one strangled word 'meeting'. We were off. By dint of questioning, and as little suggestion as possible, we had by 4.45pm, nearly three hours later (less a tea break), worked back through 'meeting' to 'seeking members' to 'seeking facts about their people and conditions' to the setting up of an informal 'organizing committee' and thence to the main tasks and problems of an organizing committee *before* it set out to make its first contacts with members to put the idea before them of coming to a meeting to be called to hear about co-operatives. By this time we had 1½ sides of the blackboard filled—by them—with the headings and subsections of the steps involved, and had canvassed in broad terms, what kinds of tasks were involved in their 'fact finding', 'methods of communication', what 'resources' they would need to communicate, what kinds of 'obstacles' they might anticipate, and what they might do to prepare in advance to meet them. Out of 25–27 continuously present, only 12 had spoken: two of these, Mrs. _______ and the 15-year-old Negro-Aborigine, had had to be checked early because they were making too many suggestions (all to the point). If I'd let them, the rest would have been content to let those two act as spokesmen.

In winding up I explained that the purpose of this workshop had been to show them a way of thinking and planning for action in any venture they chose to undertake—not just in terms of co-ops. Did they see this? There was an immediate response from a number—what I

had been getting them to do was too difficult, and they could not see how they could apply it. At this point Mrs. _______, the half-caste teacher, and one of the tradesmen, took over and successively and clearly to some degree successfully, rammed home their need to think through their problems, and to think about how to plan, at every stage of a venture, in just the sort of ways that had been illustrated in this session. There seemed, after they had spoken, and answered some questions put them, much more acceptance of the notion that this way of thinking and acting was necessary, but very difficult.

It had clearly been very tough going for all of them—partly because they expected to be lectured to; partly because the 'identification' and the naming of the problems, and the stages of thought and action about them, was making very heavy demands (a) on their ability to grasp what it was all about (this gradually was seen), (b) on their willingness to vocalize their ideas; and partly—and I became acutely conscious of this quite early but could not effectively remedy it—my *vocabulary* was an obstacle to effective communication of my ideas and concepts to them. Again and again I would use a term and realize at once I had to try to find a simpler more meaningful word or words for it. Almost as bad as groping for the equivalent in a foreign language of which one is largely ignorant.

(ii) My second session at 2pm two days later did not take place. The morning's speaker had asked for some of my time to complete an exercise he had planned with the group in the earlier session. This was to be a practical exercise in conducting a meeting—both for three chairmen, in turn, and for the members of the meeting. Every member had been allocated a task (moving a motion; an amendment; or participating in discussion on a motion, etc.). The chairmen had also been instructed. Each had his specific role typed out for him and in his hands. He had only to do as his instructions indicated, imaginatively filled out, at the appropriate time. It was a well-planned exercise. But it was obvious within ten minutes after 2 that what he

was trying to do was quite beyond this group—carefully though they had been groomed; helpful as he was at every turn. Each chairman was so nervous as to be almost inaudible, and incapable of doing what had to be done; each of the meeting members, though their task was simple, in writing, in their hands, had to be cajoled into doing his task, and did so almost inaudibly and very badly. At 4.30 my fellow lecturer wound up his session and prepared to concede the field to me, but the audience, as though called to attention by an inaudible but imperative word of command, stood up and walked out—before him. The method used, and the preparation was sound enough—for a carefully taught and reasonably experienced group of people—say at the end of half-a-dozen sessions on the subject. From this group it seemed to be demanding far too much.

(iii) The next afternoon at 2 I had my second and final three-hour workshop with this group. This time I asked them to suggest quickly a number of topics or problems related to their communities and to the concept of trying to form co-operatives among them; when we had a number of suggestions, they could decide what order of importance these had to them and discuss them in that order. I had the same 'chalker' and in a few minutes we had six or seven topics on the board—'economic insecurity', 'trades training', 'social inequality', 'finding capital and thrift', 'adult education', 'training management (of co-ops.)', 'children's education'. It was decided to take the last first. There was then a quite good discussion of what were the kinds of problems this involved for them – in relation to schools, parents, and the needs of their community. It brought in also the problems of these people in different States and different parts of some States, and of different 'civic' status (e.g. the Natives on the Reserves, on Mission stations, full citizens). The blackboard was filled with headings of what they suggested as the main problems to be faced, with headings of possible fields of action. We also interlocked consideration of the problems of trades training. Then we moved on, at their desire, to look at what they needed in adult education. They quickly nominated

—English expression, arithmetic and bookkeeping, chairmanship and conduct of meetings, homemaking (including practical carpentry) and dressmaking and cooking. Means of securing institutional help in these respects were then briefly canvassed and the importance of their undertaking themselves the task of convincing their own people of their need for adult education were brought out and emphasized by several of them; the inter-relation of adult education with that of children's education, to secure parental support of education for the child, and the place of education in their future as a people, were all stressed.

There were several interesting aspects of this session. First, in contrast to the lamentable session on meeting procedure the previous day, the whole meeting was attentive and animated and a majority spoke (even two of the Torres Islanders), some frequently, a majority several times. The three almost inaudible Chairmen of the previous day, with little encouragement, spoke frequently, clearly, and forcefully. Once, early in the meeting, when a group at the back got into an animated argument about a statement that had been made, the shyest of the Chairmen from his seat in the front row turned round and *roared* for silence and gave them a lecturette on manners in a meeting of this sort. The audibility, vocabulary and clarity of thought of many of those who had no sounds and no words at the previous day's session was revealing. They stood readily to speak, challenged each other's opinions and statements, asked each other or me for clarification of points made, and readily elaborated on statements they made if I asked them to explain more fully, or to explore what they had said more fully—'What did this mean?' 'What would that involve?' 'What do you think *you* should or could do about that?' and 'What do you think the most important ways of going about it?'

The several Europeans present at both my sessions (and the one I did not have)—three with long experience of working with either

aborigines or Melanesians—expressed satisfaction with the 'method'. One of them who has worked for several years with the co-op. group which was well represented in this School, said he had never known his own people could be so fluent, clear, and forceful. For himself, he realized that much of what he had been attempting had been wrongly approached, and he was certain that he must try to use these more informal and direct methods of working with them rather than on them. The general satisfaction of the audience was evident. The half dozen obvious 'leaders' in the group expressed their conviction that they really had learnt a great deal from these two sessions about how they should think about their problems and methods of approach to their people.

The above may be too uncritical an overall impression. I should have had a much better idea of how successful, or not, this method of discussion had been if I could have had, as originally planned, the three sessions—the third of which would have sought to get them to discuss in detail what was involved in a 'second step' in forming a co-op. It is clear that the order in which the two topic areas were taken, was the reverse of what I should have done; they should have been encouraged to select the general first and then moved to the particular and more abstract and remote from experience. Greater familiarity with the method employed, and the greater self-confidence secured by more effective participation, should then have made it easier for them to provide the 'materials' for their discussion of the more difficult approach.

Again, I probably erred, in the first session, in trying to get them to push on too quickly to provide the whole 'framework' of an organizing committee's tasks, so that they could see the inter-locking relationships between tasks and between 'sub-objectives' within the broad objective of 'their meeting'. If I had been content to secure a few points and then to discuss these in breadth, if not in depth, more participation might have been secured and more understanding

of what was being attempted emerged earlier and more clearly—especially to the majority. I was trying to get them to move too fast. What I had aimed to do in three sessions was cramped by the loss of one session, and probably required four or five sessions to do better and more slowly.

The conditions were not good. The group was too large; too varied in composition in terms of education, experience, ability and willingness to speak in a mixed group of this kind. They sat in rows on backless benches in the tent, which became oppressively hot at times. They were, in the rest of the course, accustomed to being lectured to for the bulk of each period. And—the unknown to me—there were all the cross-currents involved within such a group, among themselves; and the gulf between the group and Europeans. What they were really thinking and saying among themselves, about the course, etc., only they knew. When, at the opening held at the end of the Aborigines' course and the commencement of that for the Europeans, one of the Europeans asked why they didn't come into the rooms where afternoon tea was being held—where the Archbishop, Canons, the Minister for Education and other dignatories were assembled, together with Sydney visitors, European tutors and students—the reply was a muttered 'Look at them—they don't even mix with each other—let alone with us'. Fair comment.

The quality of some of the men (and Mrs. ________) was impressive; they were thoughtful, reflective, and widely experienced; their intelligence was obvious, and one wishes there had been more opportunities for them to exhibit their capacity for leadership. The man from South Australia who moved the vote of thanks to the Minister and the Rev. Clint did so with a brevity, lucidity and sincerity —and a vocabulary—that anyone might envy.

These are all questions, and there are others to be asked, that any group of tutors may find profitable to hammer out. There are numbers of problems involved in using some variant of this 'workshop'

method, in either the ‘problem’ or the ‘subject’ situation. It does not afford a substitute for the lecture, but it may offer a useful variant.

A postscript to the session at Tranby. From four different aborigine groups represented at the School has come word that they are hard at work on lines discussed in the sessions reported above.

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Response to 'An experiment in method' (J.L.J. Wilson)

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In celebration of the first edition of the Association's journal, published in July 1961, the current editor has asked me to respond to one of the original three articles which appeared in that issue. J.L.J. Wilson was Director of Tutorial Classes for the University of Sydney, and NSW Chairman of the Australian Association of Adult Education, as ALA was known then. Reading Wilson's article from a distance of 50 years highlights a number of ways in which we as a nation, adult education as a field, and the journal itself have moved on and progressed significantly—not only in terms of the way we understand learning for marginalised groups in society, but in the very language we use to discuss it.

In 1960–61 Wilson was invited to give lectures on 'modern techniques in adult education' as part of a training school for those involved in the work of developing 'Co-operatives for Aborigines' which were

sponsored by the Australian Board of Missions—the national mission agency of the Anglican Church in Australia, and an organisation that is still active (http://www.abmission.org/). In Wilson's own words, the school 'consisted of two courses for two groups—one for aborigines, the other for European teachers, administrators and missionaries working in aboriginal settlements' (p. 20).

To his credit, Wilson decided that lecturing either of the groups on modern techniques in adult education was inappropriate, and instead conducted what he considered at the time to be 'an experiment in method'—a problem-solving approach based on group discussion using the knowledge and experience brought by the participants to an issue that was meaningful and relevant to them. The article therefore consists of a report of these sessions, with Wilson's reflections and questions on the relevance of this method more generally to adult education, compared with that of the 'ordinary lecture-discussion session' (p. 20).

What is of great interest to this reviewer is the fact that the article: (1) presents a historical snapshot of a moment in adult education in Australia when an argument was being presented for the importance of introducing group methods in teaching adults—'Americans have been doing it for years' (p. 20)—and (2) gives a fascinating account of a non-Indigenous Australian grappling with ways to describe his experiences of working with a group of Indigenous Australians from different urban and rural areas and language groups, for whom English was not their first language, and who had varying levels of education and experience in 'European' formal instruction.

In terms of the first point, Wilson acknowledges the assumptions still being made in adult education in 1961 around the application of teacher-centred learning, based on particular subjects and exposition of set content, at the risk of ignoring the 'motives, interests and "objectives" of the students' (p. 21). Accordingly, his method in working with the group of Indigenous people was to

attempt to extract from them the important issues around forming a co-operative in their community, from their own perspective and experience 'by dint of questioning and as little suggestion as possible' (p. 21). Wilson seems almost amazed that in experimenting with his method, the 'subject' for the session, with headings and sub-sections, appeared on the blackboard from the input of the group rather than from a pre-determined lesson plan or lecture notes.

However, Wilson goes on to wonder in his article about how to evaluate or measure such learning that is not based on transmission and assessment of information, but on solving problems that require longer term transfer of learning in real contexts. He refers to a Professor Gibb, who 'fears that this method results only in students airing, and having aired being confirmed in, their own prejudices and ignorance' (p. 22). It is a stark message from the past about how far we have—hopefully—come in adult education in recognising self-reflection and personal narrative as a positive rather than a negative process for learner development. The only way Wilson appears able to determine the success or otherwise of his approach was that he found it 'much harder work' (p. 21) than simply giving a lecture—something I'm sure all adult educators could relate to.

Wilson shows how pre-occupied adult educators were at the time in determining *individual* learning, rather than the powerful learning that can take place due to the synergies and interaction of the group as a whole. He worries that, out of a group of around 25, only about half actually spoke during the entire first of two sessions; while one or two were consistently vocal and 'had to be checked early because they were making too many suggestions' (p. 23). Sounds like a typical group of adult learners! He thinks that this may have been due to shyness on the part of some participants, and also acknowledges varying levels of English literacy; but eventually the light bulb comes on and he reflects on his own limitations—'my *vocabulary* was an obstacle to effective communication of my ideas and concepts to them' (p. 24, original emphasis).

What is also interesting is that Wilson does not yet have the vocabulary with which we are now familiar to describe and discuss the processes he is reflecting on in this article. By the second session, Wilson appears to have developed as a *reflective practitioner* in his approach to the group and completely hands over his power and control, becoming a *facilitator* rather than an instructor. The result is a process of *student-centred learning* in which the issues for discussion and their importance are determined entirely by the group. The topics reported are as salient to Indigenous people now as they were then: 'economic insecurity, social inequality… finding capital and thrift, adult education… and children's education' (p. 25). The group then listed *action items* to address these issues in their own communities. They concluded with a *process check* and decided that, in terms of their own adult education processes, they needed *skill development* in English expression, arithmetic and bookkeeping, chairing and conducting meetings and so on.

As a facilitator, Wilson used nothing more in this session than the situation and the group itself as resources, as well as the judicious use of questioning to help achieve a useful and practical outcome from what could have been a patronising, one-way transmission of recipe-type information that may have reached some participants but certainly not energised the whole group. It is quite remarkable then to read the following statement from Wilson about the extent to which the group seemed empowered through:

> … the importance of understanding themselves the task of convincing their own people of their need for adult education… [and] the inter-relation of adult education with that of children's education, to secure parental support of education for the child, and the place of education in their future as a people… (p. 25).

The second point raised for this reviewer relates to Wilson's reflections on working with a group of Indigenous adults, which, despite his apparent sensitivities, are somewhat confronting to a

reader in 2010. To put the article in historical context, 1961 was a period in Australia's history when the politicisation of Indigenous issues was yet to occur, but was just over the horizon. The 1960s saw the Freedom Rides in 1965 organised by Charles Perkins, resulting in the 1967 referendum when Indigenous people were finally recognised as Australian citizens. The Aboriginal tent embassy of the early 1970s in Canberra was still a decade away when Wilson wrote about these Indigenous learners, labelling them in such terms as 'half or quarter caste', 'some from Native reserves… some free citizens and were urbanized'; and wondered how his method would work with 'more sophisticated groups' (p. 22).

The very context in which the article is set also reflects the policy of the times in taking a missionary approach to Indigenous affairs and issues, which has always been fraught with arguments about the benefits in terms of education and health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people versus the limitations of a condescending, patronising and assimilationist approach to their welfare based on European attitudes and Christian morality. Only two years before the article was published, Albert Namatjira had passed away—a man whose life was symbolic in terms of the missionary influence on his artwork which became celebrated and recognised, even though his own life and his own people were not.

It is interesting to note in Barrie Brennan's response to one of the other articles in that first journal edition of 1961 that, at the time, W.G.K. Duncan used the metaphor of the missionary to question the degree of commitment and enthusiasm of the adult education professionals in seeking to extend the scope of, and participation rate in, adult education. Whether participation in adult education still remains a mission for the ALA and its members in its 'Golden Jubilee' year is an interesting question, and perhaps something that the association may continue to debate at the 50th annual conference this year and beyond.

Australian Journal of Adult Learning
Volume 50, Number 3, November 2010

Significant adult education artefacts

We asked a number of people in adult learning to write a short essay on a significant book, article, artefact or media creation that they had experienced relating to adult education/learning sometime in the last 50 years, reflecting on what impact it made on them and their adult educational ideas and practices. All the respondents are long-time adult education practitioners, who also have had, or currently hold, positions of significance in the Association. Here are their responses ...

Dr Alan Arnott writes …

The brief was to write a short essay on a significant book, article, artefact or media creation that I had read relating to adult education/learning published sometime in the last 50 years, reflecting on what impact it made on me and my adult educational ideas and practices. I found this difficult in that I felt that there was really no single book or resource that had particularly deepened my identity as an adult educator. I have found instead over the years that there are some turning points where authors and ideas provide eureka moments, but

these often surround (for me anyway) finding evidence or support for those things I was mostly doing or knowing intuitively. For example, knowing that adults learnt differently (certainly a challengeable assumption) from the formal child education processes then in use and discovering Knowles espousing andragogy and self-directed learning was edifying. Or knowing that the way people learn on a day-to-day basis did not necessarily have much to do with formal learning approaches and then reading authors such as Kolb, Marsick and others talking of experiential and informal learning processes was reassuring.

However, perhaps of more importance to me while working as a community adult educator have been the words and stories of members of the community I have been working in. I believe that these words and stories had more impact on my ideas, knowledge and practices. Much of my work has been with Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory and I can thank them for the many, often salutary, insights/reality checks I have received.

Very early on, with my western knowledge and the enthusiasm of youth, I was excitedly outlining and driving options for programs and change when a very experienced and long-time Community Advisor quietly told me how he, when working with the Aboriginal community, had to check frequently that the people were walking alongside him and that he was not rushing ahead from where they were wanting to go. He said that you could hear much better if the people were alongside you—but, 'how could you hear them if you were distant on the road ahead?' A very important lesson about listening and working with people—a point that I still use to reflect on the programs I am working in.

There have been many instances over the years of Aboriginal people patiently reminding me of the breadth and depth of their culture and the difficulty westerners like myself often have seeing past their own cultural views. Listening to an old man talking about land and

country, and realising that my view of land was not much more than seeing it as a commodity, was one such instance. For the old man the land of his country was a living, spiritual and historical road map for him to follow. That knowledge resided there and that learning, while inherent in the practices of being on country, is not necessarily 'owned' by all and can only be told or taught by those designated to do so. Such concepts were/are difficult for me to really understand, steeped as I am in my own cultural perspectives. Perhaps the real point of hearing such views is that 'grappling' with them makes us critically reflect on our own cultural roots and who we are.

In another instance where a situation coalesced my growing awareness of difference and complexity, I was reminded by an older Aboriginal woman about the often compartmentalised and 'simple' responses that westerners sometimes seem to believe frame answers to questions. She was asked about whether there was much family violence in her community. Her response was a story about her grandchildren. It appeared on the surface as an obtuse response to the original question, and as a story of family and her as a grandmother rather than a story of family violence in that community. However, as the story progressed, it became apparent that it was a story of family violence, the ramifications of such, her role as major carer, the deterioration of aspects of culture, the 'health' of the community and many other interwoven elements of family violence and its impact. It was another lesson for me of taking a whole view of life and the ways things and events interact together. Our understanding and knowledge can be diminished when viewed in a 'compartmentalised' way.

So, the lessons of working alongside people, working to understand difference in ideas and worldviews, understanding that knowledge and learning can be multifaceted, and that reductionism and seeking only the simple or single answer is no answer at all, are all points that I have gathered along the community adult educator 'road'. I am not

sure that I could have learnt or gained these ideas and insights from books—it was the textual factors of living and working through them that perhaps gave them the impact they had. So, for me, while books, articles, artefacts and media creations remain important to those pursuing the role of adult educator, it may be that those who work in the field of community adult education are best served and defined by how they listen to and work alongside community members.

Dr Alan Davies writes …

I was recently asked if I would write on the book I had read that most influenced my adult education thinking and practice. I knew I would find that difficult as I did not read books—I only read at 60 words a minute, despite spending hundreds of dollars on speed reading courses in the 60s and 70s. In short, I had studied the sciences early on, because I had an interest, was moderately successful at it, and one could succeed with slow reading and an inability to spell. Even though I clearly have a reading disability, I was able to obtain a PhD in science, something I could not have done in any other area. Fortunately the spell check became available as I moved from the sciences to adult education/learning early in the 70s where one had to be over a large literature, write credibly and examine long, book-length theses.

How did I cope and manage a successful academic career? Ironically, this career included, at one stage, being a Reader at a major Australian university. Like many, he had formed the view, because I had been in academe for around 30 years and reached professorial level, that I was reasonably well read.

In fact, the reading side of things had put the fear of God into me early on and I spent much of one study leave trying to get up to speed, and completely failed. I came to the realisation that I largely learnt by doing, listening and reflecting on my experience and observation rather than from books. Then, partly by luck and partly by design,

I adopted the strategy of developing a network of well-read and connected contacts/informants across the areas I judged important to my interest and need. I told them of my dilemma and asked them to fax, copy, email anything they believed I should know about.

While they crossed all of my areas of interest, those I called on in the areas of learning/work/sociology/psychology/management/philosophy and research methodology include Bob Dick, Fred Emery, Don Shön, Stewart Hase, Des Hanlon, Shankar Sankaran and Merrelyn Emery, all of whom would send me stuff they thought I should read given my limitations, usually a few pages from a book, or a short article or a diagram. Sometimes they would summarise a book for me. Because I take things in more readily by hearing and arguing and observing, I am an avid Radio National listener. I download the transcript and interrogate the text using word search rather than reading the whole. For theses, I convert them from text to voice and listen while on the tractor or in the car or in bed at night to get an overview and then again use word search to interrogate the text. My reason for telling this brief story is that I think there is an important lesson for adult educators about how people learn and cope with and cover disabilities.

However, probably the two pieces that influenced me most in my practice and my understanding of adult education/learning were: an article by Fred Emery entitled 'Educational paradigms', which he presented to an AAAE [Australian Association of Adult Education] conference held in Richmond, NSW in 1974; and in the area of negotiation, parts of a book by McKersie on the theory of negotiations, referred to me by Des Hanlon.

I'll talk about the impact on me of the first of these, as it is more central to the matter of adult learning. It provided a unitary framework of explanation for my experience: as a parent of five, as I watched the kids learn to walk, talk, relate and learn at home and at primary, secondary and tertiary educational levels; in teaching

chemistry and engineering geology at the secondary and tertiary level; in teaching adults in crash programs; and enabling learning in informal sessions, workplaces, community organisations and planning workshops where learning was not the primary objective but an important secondary outcome.

Basically the article differentiated between two radically different forms of learning. The first is the learning we have evolved (or been hard-wired) to take from our natural and social environment, like learning to walk and talk. This is our 'first' language, the language(s) we are immersed in from birth to pubity. This learning can be assisted by others who can create and manage or manipulate the things in our environment to make it more or less learningful and from which we extract the learning by engaging with the environment. Much of this learning is tacit.

The second is the learning that we might call the acquisition of culturally accumulated and mediated knowledge. This is the learning that does not develop naturally from the environment, but is taught by somebody who has previously studied it—a teacher or instructor. The knowledge is based on a culturally acquired system of beliefs and/or axioms. Hence, there are different bodies of knowledge based on different beliefs and/or axioms. These have to be built up and stored over time, hence the book, library, database and the internet. It is even stored in different ways and places in the brain. Examples might include learning to read, languages learned after puberty, the disciplines. These are explicit forms of learning. We are not hard-wired to learn them. When we lose our memory with aging, we lose this knowledge first. For example, languages learnt after puberty fade well before those learned before. I have found this understanding to be crucial to my work and informing my thinking to this day.

Michael Newman writes …

My first encounter with adult education was in London in the late 1960s. I was short of cash and thought I might be able to teach English to foreigners, so I wrote offering my services to a number of colleges and institutions listed in a London publication called *Floodlight*. An adult education institute replied, offering me a class on Tuesday evenings called 'Writing for Pleasure', so I turned up at the appointed time at what was a girls school during the day but which, a bit like that pumpkin, turned into a branch of the institute at 6.00 p.m. every evening. I found my way into the building and up on to the second floor where somebody called a tutor-in-charge directed me to a classroom. I entered the room, alone and entirely unprepared, to find a group of some fourteen or fifteen adults sitting patiently waiting. Somehow this disparate group of people, with me following as much as leading, developed a pattern of activities that took us through the entire academic year.

All the classes at that adult education institute met from 7.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. and, it being England, everyone stopped at 7.50 for a tea break. People studying all manner of subjects—holiday Spanish, dressmaking, keep fit, classical French cinema, the stock market for the small investor, badminton, ballroom dancing, cooking, stammering correction and, of course, writing for pleasure—would go to the school canteen and queue for a cup of tea.

The tea was served from a massive metal teapot by a small, wiry woman wearing a blue smock. Sugar was optional. You could help yourself from a large bowl using one of the spoons stuck in the sugar or lying in the puddles of tea surrounding the bowl. But the milk was already in the cups, so you got your milk whether you wanted it or not.

The sight of the queue thrilled me. I was hooked. All these people were ready to come to an unprepossessing school building on a

chilly English evening in order to learn. There were no credits or qualifications to be gained, and no one can tell me they were there for the tea.

Sally Thompson writes …

I began my career in education as an adult literacy and TESOL [Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages] teacher in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. Both these fields involved engagement with adults from quite different cultural backgrounds to my own. In the former, the difference was around social and class culture; in the latter, the difference was around ethnicity and language. One of the great joys for me, as a new teacher in these environments, was that when you first met a learner, the differences between your life and theirs seemed enormous and you didn't think you had a lot in common. After a few short weeks, however, you soon discovered the many similarities. The differences didn't so much move backwards, as move into a different space, adding to the conversation, but not dominating it. My teaching work was a constant reminder of the intrinsic joy and struggle of our shared human journey.

I have a photo that I'm very fond of that reflects this experience perfectly. I was teaching a group of Pintubi-Luritja women from Kintore on the Northern Territory—Western Australian border. The Pintubi people are famous in Australia because their home in the Western Desert is so remote that they are said to be the last Indigenous people to make contact with Europeans. Most of the residents of Kintore have retained a strong connection with their traditional cultural knowledge and practices and their art is highly prized as a window into a starkly non-European way of looking at the world. The photo was taken when a federal politician visited and made a speech. It's of me sitting in a line with three Pintubi women. Though we are dressed differently and look physically different, the

four of us are all cross legged, all with our faces leaning on our hands, all with an identical look of boredom mixed with bemusement on our faces. Apparently cynicism with the political process, like so much else, is a cross-cultural experience!

Around the time I began teaching, I read an article in *Fine Print*, the newsletter of the Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council (VALBEC) written by Miriam Faine, who is now a teaching associate at Monash University, but who, at that time, coordinated the Migrant Women's Learning Centre at Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE. I've tried to track down the article recently to no avail. It would be interesting to see how much of what I think was actually in it and how much I've projected onto it over the years. Nonetheless, it had a significant impact on the way I viewed my work.

Miriam suggested that, for adults, language (and literacy) develops as a result of social inclusion, not as a prerequisite for it. She also posited the theory, to much consternation at the time, that many teachers are drawn to migrant education because of their fascination with difference. TESOL teachers, she suggested, tended to be travellers and adventurers, always pursuing the exotic. While there was nothing wrong with that *per se*, it lead to teaching practices which fore-grounded difference, inadvertently creating a barrier to inclusion and therefore to language learning.

The example Miriam gave was the frequency with which migrants were asked to write about their story of migration as part of their English language studies. She suggested that this topic constantly arose in ESL [English as a Second Language] classes because migration was utterly fascinating to landlocked, Anglo-Australian teachers with a yearning to travel. Whether recounting and recounting the story assisted migrant learners to engage with a new culture or to meet their vocational or social goals, however, was doubtful. Further, if Australia is a place where different voices are valued, the constant focus on the aspects of learners' lives that are the

most different to the teacher's own, could only reinforce the notion of a singular Australian experience, to which second language learners could only aspire.

It's a unique privilege to be invited to partner with another adult on their learning journey. And while it may seem obvious, I believe that teachers can never be reminded enough that learners are not empty vessels to be filled or problems to be solved. Miriam Faine's article reminded me of this seminal lesson all those years ago and I thank her for it.

Dr Peter Willis writes …

In 1980, my spouse and I moved to Alice Springs to work at the Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) which had recently separated from its original sponsorship with the Uniting Church to become an Aboriginal-owned and controlled, cross-cultural communication and training centre. With the exception of being involved in special cross-cultural communication courses for non-Aboriginal people seeking to understand Aboriginal culture and history, my job was mainly to develop programs for Aboriginal adults to assist in their living and working in central Australia. This meant consulting the Aboriginal board of directors and potential Aboriginal clients about their learning needs and demands and designing educational and training programs to meet these needs. Aboriginal learners wanted to attain necessary capacities and interests for employment and engagement in community management of large representative organisations around health, employment and legal matters.

IAD was in fact largely a centre for Aboriginal Adult Education about which pursuit little was known by its staff and certainly few in-depth guidelines were available for practical action. I had heard of Mike Newman, an expatriate Australian adult educator and writer living in London, and got a copy of one of his earlier books called *The poor*

cousin in the hope that there might be some insights and practical tips. At this stage, Mike was mentioned in the Australian Association for Adult Education newsletter, but I knew little of his background and style. I didn't know that he had moved from Sydney to London after his university studies and, after working as an actor in his early time in London, moved to engage in adult education administration and teaching in a range of adult learning centres around London. He had picked up on the long adult education tradition in the United Kingdom, where, along with the national system of colleges and universities, there was a complementary, small system sponsoring so-called non-formal (non-award) adult education which did not offer grades or diplomas but a kind of satisfaction of learning achieved and capabilities revealed and encouraged. As a small and less well-favoured educational service, it was often referred to as 'the poor cousin' of the more established and resourced educational system. It was Newman's agenda in his book of the same name to reveal its special character and benefits.

Newman's *The poor cousin* explores the challenges and benefits of this non-formal, educational arena in which he found himself, firstly as an educator, and then as one of the program co-ordinators who researched learning needs and set up programs, recruited educators, managed the publicity, monitored enrolments and kept an eye on the planned classes when and after they were run. The main focus of Newman's book is on the challenges and enrichment of running an adult education program of multiple courses organised through an administrative centre, but often run in alternate, more appropriate venues closer to the potential learners.

As I read this carefully researched and accessible book with its comprehensive and accurate information and vivid, localised stores of actual practice, I was reminded again of the multiple linked steps that go into these non-formal adult education programs which must be carefully planned in advance. Newman, the master story

teller, integrates these processes and their requirements with vivid descriptions of what actually happened in courses he ran and some comment on their experiences and their benefits and costs and what unforseen challenges and possibilities emerged in the actual planning, publicising and presentation of chosen courses which amounted to significant challenges for change.

Most of the phases of my work at IAD in the 1980s had mirrors in Newman's earlier work in London nearly a decade earlier. The preparatory processes included: find out what people's learning needs and demands were, draft the general profile of the course for approval from the Director, recruit suitable educators, monitor the draft program for each course, advertise the projected courses and ensure enough people enrol. These preparatory processes form some of the more significant parts of Newman's stories, particularly when they described the antecedents of certain courses in community consultation, lobbying and formal approval application for a projected course and getting approval for it from the Director. Newman's stories of practice take the reader into more controversial areas than is usually encountered in Chinese cooking, Pilates or everyday French. When a group approached his centre wanting to run a course on understanding homosexuality, he found that almost every preparatory step to having the course designed and advertised was blocked. There was a common element with Newman's experience in my consultation with Aboriginal staff at IAD. The more the foundation questions were opened up for discussion at IAD, the longer it was going to take and the more searching questions were being asked.

For me reading Newman's *The poor cousin* was to be caught up in what could be called his pragmatic idealism. There is no doubt that Newman has always had a vision of a better, more equitable and convivial society and could see how the very freedom and flexibility of the adult education centres had the potential to create a critical and searching learning environment in response to local learning needs

and demands. Newman's radical, liberal, democratic ideals with a strong belief in participative democracy, the principles of which—clarification of ideas through discussion and disciplined reading, planned and reflectively executed action—had an excellent potential niche in the processes followed in non-formal adult education programs. I knew I shared these ideals, but it was Newman's pragmatic and idealistic narratives that I found equally helpful. The book is full of practical examples of what educators and planners actually did in canvassing ideas and needs for relevant learning programs, drafting the program and getting approval, recruiting appropriate educators, advertising effectively and running the course appropriately. His colourful writing takes the reader into the world of small-scale community life and government, where small innovations often take a huge amount of time and energy not really commensurate with the hoped-for benefit. The story of the processes of setting up the course on understanding homosexuality which covered endless meetings and discussions and proposals to the board of directors, and lobbying directly and indirectly through strategic use of the press and other sources of influence, had resonances with the challenges facing adult educators at work in Alice Springs in the early 1980s. This was particularly evident when attempting to run cultural awareness courses for non-Aboriginal people usually involved in human service work with Aboriginal people such as education, health and welfare services. Reading the comings and goings in *The poor cousin* around promoting accessible educational programs for locals was to feel a sympathetic resonance. It seemed that this writer knew the costs and benefits of local, non-formal adult education and believed in it strongly, even when the costs seemed so high and the benefits sometimes nowhere near the energy put out to make some significant course come to life. Reading *The poor cousin* was to be sitting in the corner of a pub with this literate, convivial and experienced fellow educator and trainer of adults who knew its costs and benefits and

still found it worth the energy. In my early work at IAD, Newman's book was a helpful, detailed and practical conversation.

There are three other impacts in my reading of this helpful book. The first is the value and flexibility of adult education and its importance in responding to learners in a rapidly changing and competitive society. Universities have long focused on the learning needs of its students in their quest for work and professional career, but have often been less able to create forums where there are democratic approaches to commonly-held problems. Non-formal adult education programs can turn local attention to local circumstances and create pathways to more formal educational programs which would otherwise be inaccessible. The second is the importance of relevant social theory. Newman spends considerable time on theories of community and community education at strategic parts of his book. His ideas of learning and educating are significant and helpful, and confronted me with examples of great exponents (and less great less often) of different kinds of pedagogy.

The final benefit from this book which continued in Newman's later writings was his largely unspoken affirmation of the significant 'calling' of the adult educator. I found myself tacitly included as one of the 'happy few' in his 'noble band' of adult educators. When Newman mentioned Keith Jackson and Tom Lovett in the UK, I began to see our own innovative adult educator pioneers: Yami Lester and Jim Downing at IAD in Alice Springs with their interest in language and communication; Alf Clint at Tranby College in Sydney with his interest in co-operatives; and John Ingram at the Aboriginal Community College in Adelaide with his interest in group development and existential learning. They all made vital contributions to a globalised adult education project particularly for those for whom mainstream offerings may not be connecting with their target people. Like quite a few of my colleagues, I had found a new and helpful author and a long-term, valuable mentor.

Australian Journal of Adult Learning
Volume 50, Number 3, November 2010

Journal objectives over 50 years

July 1961: "Policy" (Editors: Hely, Shaw)

The journal is intended to provide a forum for discussion on adult education matters. Opinions expressed in signed articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Association.

April 1973: "Journal Objectives" (Editors: Shaw, Allsop, Haines)

1. To describe and discuss activities and developments in the field of continuing education for adults
2. To publish accounts of investigations and research in this field
3. To provide a forum for the discussion of significant ideas about the education of adults
4. To review relevant books, reports and periodicals

April 1984: "Policy Statement" (Editor: Brennan)

The Journal is the principal regular publication of the AAAE. It should be of a quality that will command respect in Australia and overseas. It should provide substantial original information and views on the practice of and research into adult education in Australia and overseas and the reporting of original research of significance to Adult Education.

This statement is quoted from a longer policy decision made by the AAAE Executive in 1983 concerning the role and management of the AJAE.

"Journal Statement" (Editor: Harris)

April 1990: The *Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education* aims to provide information and analysis on the theory, research and practice of adult and community education. The publication is designed to promote critical thinking and research in this developing and increasingly significant field. Its prime focus is on Australia, though papers relating to other contexts are also sometimes published. Contributions are welcomed from both members and non-members of AAACE.

April 2000: The *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* (formerly the *Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education*) is an official publication of Adult Learning Australia (ALA). It is concerned with the theory, research and practice of adult and community education, and to promote critical thinking and research in this field. Its prime focus is on Australia, though papers relating to other contexts are also sometimes published. Papers in the refereed section of the Journal have been blind peer reviewed by at least two members from a pool of specialist referees from Australia and overseas.

Journal editors over 50 years

Years	Editor/s	Position
1961–1963	Arnold (ASM) Hely	Adult Education, Uni of Adelaide
1964 (July & Dec)	Des (DW) Crowley	Adult Education, Uni of Adelaide
1965–1968 (July)	John H. Shaw	Division of Postgraduate and Extension Studies, Uni of NSW, Sydney
1968 (July)	John H. Shaw (Joan W. Allsop: Assistant Editor)	
1968 (Nov)–1969 (July)	Acting Editor: Joan Allsop (*John H Shaw on sabbatical leave at the Kellogg Center, Athens, Georgia, USA*)	Department of Adult Education, Uni of Sydney
1969 (Nov)–1970	John H. Shaw (Joan W. Allsop: Assistant Editor)	

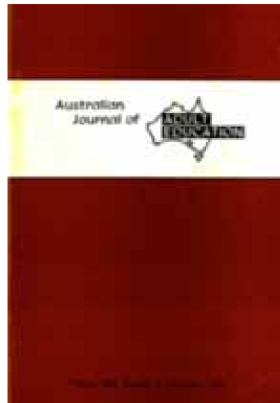
Years	Editor/s	Position
1971–1972 1973	John Shaw & Joan Allsop	Uni of NSW & Uni of Sydney
1974–1976 (April)	Joan Allsop	Department of Adult Education, Uni of Sydney
1976 (July)–1978 (Nov)	*Series of Guest Editors:*	
1976 (July)	Barrie Brennan	Uni of New England, Armidale
1976 (Nov)	Chris Duke	Centre for Continuing Education, ANU, Canberra
1977 (April)	Alf Wesson	Preston Institute of Technology
1977 (July)	Jack Mason and Jack McDonell	Dept. of Continuing Education, UNE, Armidale Centre for Continuing Education, Monash University
1977 (Nov)—1978 (Nov)	Doug Robertson	Secretary of Association and Business Manager of Journal, Canberra
1979—1983	Nicolas Haines	Centre for Continuing Education, ANU, Canberra
1984—1989	Barrie Brennan (appointed in 1984 "for two years") Chris Horton, editor for 7/84 Roger Harris: Associate Editor from 7/89	Department of Continuing Education, UNE, Armidale Clyde Cameron College, Wodonga South Australian College of Advanced Education, Adelaide

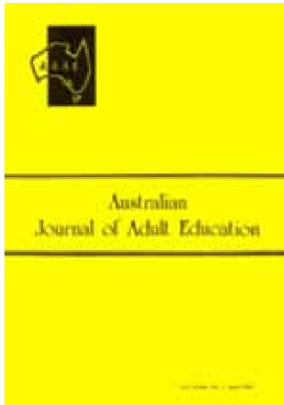
Years	Editor/s	Position
1990—present	Roger Harris	School of Education, University of SA
	Sue Shore: guest column, 7/90; and co-editor, 7/93	University of SA
	Sue Shore and Elaine Butler: guest editors, 4/94	University of SA
	Tom Stehlik: guest editor, 7/04	University of SA
	Josephine May, guest editor, 11/04	University of Newcastle, NSW
	Ann Lawless, guest editor, 7/05	University of SA
	Keryl Kavanagh: co-editor, 11/07	University of Newcastle, NSW
	Lili-Ann Berg: guest editor, 4/08	University of Newcastle, NSW
	Barry Golding & Coral Campbell: guest editors, 11/09	Uni of Ballarat & Deakin University

Journal covers over 50 years

Years	Covers
July 1961–Nov 1969	**Australian Journal of Adult Education** Aboriginal/abstract art designs in colour. One colour for each of the three issues per year: tended to be brown for first one, orange for second one, green for third one.
April 1970–Nov 1980	Coloured plain cover with a white band—in it was journal name and a map of Australia. Volume details at the bottom in small print. One colour for each of the three issues per year: yellow for first one, green for second one, brown for third one.
July 1981–April 1983	Different colours. Map of Australia in top left-hand corner with AAAE in it; band across the middle of the cover with AJAE in it, volume details in bottom right-hand corner in small print.
April 1984–Nov 1989	Top one-third—map of Australia in top left-hand corner with AAAE inside it, and AJAE and volume details across the rest. Double lines separating. Bottom two-thirds—theme usually in terms of multiple words, and sometimes with graphics.

Years	Covers
April 1990–July 1996	**Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education** Standard white cover with multiple green ‘trees’ all over, with journal name and volume details in a white band one-third the way down. Contents on the back cover.
Nov 1996–Nov 1999	Standard pale green cover. Journal name and volume details across the top and one green ‘tree’ only.
April 2000–present	**Australian Journal of Adult Learning** Standard design. Top one-third—grey/brown. Band across the middle with journal name and volume details each side of it. Bottom right-hand corner—one ‘tree’, with Adult Learning Australia Inc. under it. Contents on the back cover.

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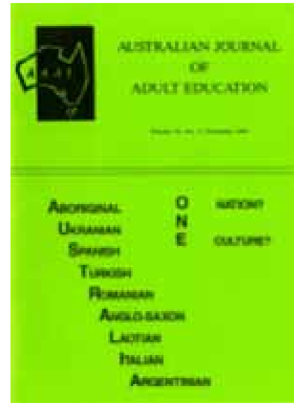
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Australian Journal of Adult Learning
Volume 50, Number 3, November 2010

Association conferences over 50 years

The Australian Association of Adult Education (AAAE) was founded at a meeting held in Hobart in 1960. In 1989, AAAE amalgamated with the Australian Association of Community Education to form the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education (AAACE). The name Adult Learning Australia (ALA) was adopted in 1999 to reflect a change in the adult education environment. It conformed to the Association's view that the learner must be the focus of attention, rather than the institutional form of delivery.

The conferences held by the Association since 1961 are listed below.

Year	Month	Location	Theme
1961	October	Adelaide	Adult Education—The Nation's Responsibility
1962	August	Sydney	Needs and Prospects for Adult Education in Town and Country
1963	August	Warburton, Victoria	No theme
1964	August	Canberra	The Library and Adult Education

Year	Month	Location	Theme
1965	August	Sydney	TV and Adult Education
1966	August	Canberra	Liberal Education for Today: Secondary, Tertiary, Adult
1967	August	Adelaide	The Organisation of Adult Education in Australia
1968	August	Armidale	Adult Education in Australia—the Next Decade
1969	August	Canberra	The Political Education of Australians
1970	August	Sydney	Community Advancement and Adult Education
1971	August	Perth	Continuing Education: Concept, Views, Implications
1972	August	Melbourne	Adult Education and the Quality of Life
1973	November	Canberra	Lifelong Education: Conditions, Needs, Resources
1974	August	Melbourne	National Priorities: The Role of the Australian Government in the Education of Adults
1975	November	Albury	Educational Innovation and Provision for Growth Centres
1976	October	Adelaide	The Future Needs of Continuing Education
1977	November	Armidale	Australia—The Next 20 Years
1978	December	Hobart	The Dimensions of Learning
1979	December	Gold Coast	Accent on Adults—A New Priority in Education
1980	Sept–Oct	Hawkesbury	1990 and Now
1981	December	Lorne	Continuing Education for Adults—Its Importance in Today's Society
1982	November	Canberra	Adult Education: Perspectives and Practices

Year	Month	Location	Theme
1983	December	Adelaide	Linking Experiences
1984	December	Valla Park	Peace, Participation and Equity
1985	December	Hobart	Adult Learning in the Community
1986	December	Canberra	Learning for Social Justice
1987	September	Halls Gap	Libraries and Adult Education—Partners in Learning
1987	September	Sydney	Focus on the Future: The Professional Development of Teachers and Trainers of Adults into the 1990s
1988	November	Newcastle	Adult and Continuing Education—Its Contribution to the Australian Economy
1989	September	Mt Gravatt	Fanning the Winds of Change: Crisis or Opportunity
1990	September	Adelaide	Striking a Balance
1991	December	Melbourne	Will it Work?
1992	December	Canberra	Adult Education for a Democratic Culture
1993	October	Alice Springs	Learning from the Centre
1994	December	Sydney	Adults—Education—Families
1995	November	Tasmania	Defining the Links—Strengthening Lifelong Learning Connections
1996	September	Coolangatta	Challenge: Values and Philosophies of ACE
1997	September	Adelaide	Learning for Life

Year	Month	Location	Theme
1998	November	Fremantle	Making Tracks: Journeying Through the Diversity and Creativity of Adult and Community Education
1999	December	Melbourne	Crossing Thresholds: Adult Learning in Times of Community Transition
2000	November	Canberra	Learning in Time: Learning From Time
2001	September	Jabiru, NT	Place and the Ecology of Learning
2002	August	Hobart	Catch a Tiger by the Tail
2003	November	Sydney	Communities of Learning: Communities of Practice
2004	November	Adelaide	Bridging cultures
2005	November	Canberra	Learners @ Work: New Directions and Connections
2006	November	Melbourne	Social Capital: Learning For Living
2007	November	Cairns	Understanding Today's Literacies
2008	Oct-Nov	Fremantle	Social Inclusion—Engaging the Disengaged in Life-wide Learning
2009			No conference
2010	November	Adelaide	Looking Back—Moving Forward: Celebrating 50 Years of Adult Learning Australia

NOTES FOR INTENDING CONTRIBUTORS

1. Papers are to be sent to the Editor, Professor Roger Harris, Adult and Vocational Education, School of Education, University of South Australia, Mawson Lakes Boulevard, Mawson Lakes, South Australia 5095. Phone: 08 8302 6246. Fax: 08 8302 6239. Email: roger.harris@unisa.edu.au
2. Submission of an electronic copy of a contribution is preferred, with one paper copy posted, against which the electronic print-out may be checked for accurate layout.
3. The paper should not exceed 5,500 words in length. The paper (and its title) is to be clearly typed on one side only of A4 paper.
4. Authors are also to submit, *separately* from the paper:
   (a) the title of the article (repeated), name(s) of the author(s) and your institutional affiliation(s);
   (b) an abstract of between 100 and 150 words;
   (c) a five-line biographical note on present position and any information of special relevance such as research interests;
   (d) complete contact details, including postal and email addresses, and telephone and fax numbers; and
   (e) a clear indication of whether you want your paper to be refereed (that is, blind peer reviewed by at least two specialist reviewers from Australia and/or overseas) – if there is no indication, the paper will be considered as a non-refereed contribution.
5. Any complex tables, figures and diagrams are to be supplied in camera-ready copy, on separate sheets with an indication of the appropriate location in the text.
6. Authors are to follow the style used in this issue of the *Journal*. Footnotes should not be used. References should be indicated in text with the author(s), the year of publication and pagination, where necessary, in parentheses; for example, Jones (1998), or (Collins 1999:101). References are then listed in full, including pages, at the end of the paper in consistent form; for example,

   for books: Athanasou, J. (ed.) (2008). *Adult education and training*, Terrigal, NSW: David Barlow Publishing.

   for articles: Hamer, J. (2010). 'Recognition of prior learning – Normative assessment or co-construction of preferred identities?', *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 50(1): 98-113.

   for chapters: Newman, M. (2009). 'Educating for a sustainable democracy', in Willis, P, McKenzie, S & Harris, R (eds.) (2009), *Rethinking work and learning: Adult and vocational education for social sustainability*, Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer: 83-91.
7. Papers are accepted on the understanding that they are not being considered for publication elsewhere. Authors of main papers accepted for publication in the *Journal* will receive one copy of the *Journal* and five reprints of their paper. Other authors will receive two reprints of their contribution.
8. Brief research reports and book reviews (of approximately 800 words) relating to adult learning would be welcomed.
9. Some issues of the *Journal* are thematic. While papers published in a particular issue are not restricted to the theme, intending contributors are encouraged to submit papers on themes announced from time to time.

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