

ISSUE 3 SPRING 2001

ADULT LEARNING AUSTRALIA



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▲ EdNA (Education Network Australia) finally has a dedicated section for Adult Community Education. This image of a laughing photographer was considered to be more representative of ACE than VET. See the new ACE section and the rest of EdNA's brand new and improved site at <http://www.edna.edu.au>

Adult Learning Australia Inc. (ALA) is the peak body for organisations and individuals involved with adult learning in Australia. ALA informs and fosters networks of adult educators; advises and lobbies government; promotes policy development; represents Australia on international education bodies; coordinates Adult Learners Week; and more.

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ALA EXECUTIVE 2000/2001:

- President: Ned Dennis
- Immediate Past President: Dorothy Lucardie
- Ron Anderson (NSW Branch Contact)
- Allan Arnott (NT Branch Contact)
- Rita Bennink (SA Branch Contact)
- Christopher Carroll (VIC Branch Contact)
- Rachel Castles (VIC)
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- Barbara Pamphilon (ACT Branch Contact)
- Georgiana Poulter (QLD)
- Helen Schwencke (QLD Branch Contact)
- Wendy Shearwood (WA Branch Contact)
- Garry Traynor (NSW)

NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF:

- Executive Director: Tony Brown
- Executive Support Officer: Margaret Bates
- Coordinator of Adult Learners Week: John Cross
- Manager, Learning Circles: Mary Hannan
- Information Manager: Janet Burstall
- Manager, Print and Web Services: Cath Styles
- Office Administrator: Jennie Della

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Adult Learning Australia
 PO Box 308, Jamison Centre, ACT 2614
 p: 02 6251 7933, f: 6251 7935, e: info@ala.asn.au
<http://www.ala.asn.au>

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THIS WILL BE THE FINAL NEWSLETTER BEFORE THIS YEAR'S FEDERAL ELECTION, AN ELECTION WHERE EDUCATION WILL BE A KEY DECIDING ISSUE.

A new learning ecology

The parties will try to differentiate their approaches to university funding, scientific research, innovation and early childhood education. But more is at stake than just compiling policies on separate education sectors and interests. Here is an opportunity for the parties to present a vision of how education and learning can contribute to a more informed, productive, tolerant and democratic society.

The first election of the 21st century carries with it more than symbolism. In the 20th century, establishing compulsory school education and then later opening access to higher education were seen as progressive measures closely aligned to ideas of increasing democratic participation.

In the 21st century there are new needs. We no longer believe or behave as though we have acquired the knowledge and skills that will equip us for life by the age of 18 or 21. Extending learning opportunities throughout one's life, especially

to those who have previously missed out, is the new challenge for strengthening democracy and equipping people with the knowledge and skills for a rapidly changing society.

We need to do more than just open up classrooms. We need to rethink where learning takes place, people's motivations for learning, and to develop policies that recognise that people learn in diverse sites. People learn in classrooms but also in clubs, trade unions, workplaces, within political and social movements, voluntary and community associations, around issues of health, the environment and welfare, orally among indigenous peoples, and so on.

Canadian research into informal learning shows that on average a Canadian adult spends four times as much time pursuing informal learning as they do in formal education. It is likely that a similar situation exists in Australia. We need to conceive of a new learning ecology that incorporates both the formal and informal and asks: How can

learning be fostered and supported in the community?

Barry Jones' diagram or mind-map in Knowledge Nation is one attempt to sketch such an ecology. Rather than hold it up to ridicule we would be better off if the idea of identifying and strengthening links between various learning sites and interests was taken seriously and discussed.

In this issue we reproduce statements from the political parties on what they plan for adult learning after the election. We also invited a group of adult educators to make three wishes of the incoming government.

This is also the final issue before Adult Learners Week, where for one week the focus of the adult learning community is on the achievements and aspirations of learners. The Week presents an opportunity to discuss the issues involved in winning a broader understanding of learning, and to consider what the learning age in Australia would be like. ■

Tony Brown

PLANNING IS WELL UNDER WAY FOR THE 2002 NATIONAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN TASMANIA. WE HAVE BOOKED THE VENUE 'THE OLD WOOLSTORE' IN CENTRAL HOBART.

Conference 2002 in Tasmania

To take advantage of State Government financial support, we have decided to hold the conference from 10–12 August.

We are working around the theme 'To catch a tiger by the tail...', wanting to encompass learning ideals such as 'widen the circle' and 'making the most of it'. Obviously, these are subject to development.

We will be offering a variety of accommodation options including backpacker and home host. But we would like to encourage as many delegates as possible to stay at the Woolstore, to acknowledge the substantial discounts they have provided to us.

We have appointed a car rental firm, a pre- and post-conference tour organiser and an agent to handle airline and ferry bookings – all of these at no cost to us. Airfares will be at 55% of regular economy cost and fully flexible and Qantas will be the preferred carrier.

The National Link Conference will run in conjunction with the ALA Conference. On the day prior to the conference opening, we will offer a tour of Hobart that will incorporate visits to some Community Houses.

Even at this early point, we welcome any expressions of interest in presenting a workshop. We also intend to keep delegate costs to a minimum to encourage greater numbers to attend this Conference. ■

Jan Dunsby

CONFERENCE 2001



And if you're quick, you can still book to attend this year's conference-with-a-

difference, at Jabiru in the Northern Territory, with Delia Bradshaw as rapporteur. Along with the usual conference features of paper presentations and workshops, there will be case studies, discussion circles, and educational tours to local heritage and Aboriginal sites. For details, see www.ala.asn.au/conf.

BALLARAT WINS AGAIN

For the second year in a row Ballarat's ACE College, BRACE, has won the CGU Insurance Customer Service Award for the Service Industry. ■

SECOND NATIONAL LEARNING CITIES CONFERENCE

Dates for the second Australian Learning Cities Conference have been set. The Conference, which will build on the successful inaugural conference in Albury-Wodonga in 2000, will be held in Ballarat from 27–29 September 2002. ■

SCOPE OF AUSTRALIAN ACE GOES ONLINE

NCVER's report on the *Scope of ACE in Australia*: is now available at www.ncver.edu.au/cgi-bin/gda.pl?id=1948. Volumes 1 and 2 scope the provision of adult and community education in Australia; scope the current collection of data at the national and State levels, including the purpose of the data for measuring achievement against objectives; identify gaps in data collected nationally, including looking at the feasibility of expanding the current collection arrangements to allow for a more comprehensive collection and reporting of ACE delivery;

estimate the costs nationally (and to States/Territories) of any possible expansion of reporting ACE delivery. ■

PHILANTHROPIC TRUSTS CAN GIVE, GST-FREE

The Tax Office has stated that in certain circumstances “a gift to a non-profit body is specifically excluded as consideration for a supply”. Thus, a grant by a philanthropic trust may be considered to be a gift and no GST applicable – more information at www.taxreform.ato.gov.au/ind_partner/charities/qna/qna3.htm#2july. ■

OECD COUNTRIES STRUGGLE TO MEET DEMAND FOR EDUCATION

OECD governments are increasing their investment in educational institutions to keep up with rising demand. But only in a few countries – Turkey, Greece, New Zealand, Portugal, Denmark and Italy – is public spending keeping up with overall economic growth. That's one of the conclusions of the latest edition of the OECD's *Education at a Glance* at www.oecd.org/media/publish/pb01-23a.pdf which provides annual comparisons in key educational indicators across the world's main developed countries.

Among other things, Education at a Glance 2001 shows that, education brings large rewards for individuals in terms of employment prospects. Labour force participation rates rise steeply with educational attainment and particularly so for women. Unemployment among 30 to 44 year-old men without upper secondary education is, on average, more than three times as high as among university graduates and more than twice as high as among upper secondary graduates.

A significant challenge therefore is the attendant risk of social exclusion. In many countries people have limited opportunities to catch up later through continuing education and training. Adults aged 25 to 64 years without upper secondary qualifications participate, on average, in only 17 hours of job-related continuing education and training over the course of a year, compared with 40 hours for adults with an upper secondary qualification and over 64 hours for those with a tertiary qualification. ■

THIS IS LIKELY TO BE THE LAST ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER BEFORE THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL ELECTION. TO ASSIST READERS IN MAKING AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EDUCATION AND LEARNING PLATFORMS TO BE PUT TO THE ELECTORATE ADULT LEARNING AUSTRALIA INVITED EACH OF THE MAJOR PARTIES TO STATE WHAT THEY WOULD DO TO SUPPORT A LEARNING SOCIETY.

Federal election 2001: Is there hope for adult learning?

PROUD OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ACHIEVEMENTS

In the highly competitive world in which we live, our success as a nation depends on our own excellence and an absolutely crucial factor in achieving this success is in the skills of our people.

Skilled people help business be entrepreneurial and able to adapt to change. However, education and training is more than the acquisition of skills. It is about developing questioning minds and promoting creative and innovative thinking – all features of a vibrant and prosperous society.

In this context, adult learning in Australia is very important. People of all ages need access to quality education and training. I am proud of the Government's achievements in this area.

Australia ranks well internationally in adult participation in education and training. For people aged 30–39, we rank equal second among twenty OECD countries in terms of enrolments as a percentage of the population in that age group – with the percentage being nearly three times that for the OECD average in 1999. For people aged 40 and over, the story is even better with Australia ranked number one and more than five times the OECD average.

Australia's schools are providing the foundation skills people need to be active in education and training throughout their lives, including literacy and numeracy, analytical thinking, and the ability to process complex information.

The vocational education and training system has been revamped, making it more attuned to industry needs and more attractive for people of all ages to achieve high quality, nationally recognised skills. In 2000, some 28.6 per cent of all of the 1.75 million clients in publicly funded vocational education and training programs were aged over 40 years.

One of the most significant achievements over the past five years has been the Howard Government's New Apprenticeships reforms, which have opened up many new training opportunities for adult Australians. Of the record 300 000 New Apprentices in training, some 38.7 per cent are aged 25 years and over.

Australia's higher education sector also has a role to play in advancing the lifelong learning agenda. Mature age entry to university, virtually unheard of in many countries, is relatively common in Australia. In 1999, the proportion of students aged 25 years or over ranged from 23–70 per cent across universities. Large numbers of university students study part time or externally and many of those students combine paid

employment with study. In 1999, the proportion of students studying part-time or externally ranged from 19.3 per cent to 79.1 per cent across the sector.

The measures announced in the Government's Innovation Action Plan, *Backing Australia's Ability*, will see the introduction of the Postgraduate Education Loans Scheme (PELS), which will help some 240 000 Australians over the next five years access income-contingent loans for fee paying postgraduate non-research courses. *Backing Australia's Ability* also provided \$151 million over five years for an additional 2000 university places each year (or 21 000 equivalent full-time places over the five years), with priority given to ICT, mathematics and science.

The adult and community education sector is also extremely important. Community providers deliver both vocational education and training programs as well as recreational and personal enrichment programs. It is estimated that in 1998, up to 1.4 million people were enrolled in some form of adult and community education.

The Government provides support to adult and community education through funding for research and development projects, support for Adult Learning Australia and for the highly successful Adult Learners Week.

Other Commonwealth programs to adult learners include the Workplace English Language and Literacy Program, and the Literacy and Numeracy Program.

Adult learning has an important role to play and the Commonwealth is committed to providing learning opportunities for adults in a wide range of settings – across all education sectors, in the workplace and in the community. ■



David Kemp is the Minister for Education

ALP: THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR OUR COUNTRY

Clearly, 2001 is a year of concerted political electioneering. John Howard effectively fired the starter's gun back in January when he responded to Labor putting education and Knowledge Nation on the agenda by releasing *Backing Australia's Ability*. We also had two decisive state elections and two by-elections that have heightened interest in the outcome of the general election expected at the end of the year.

In such a politically active year it is pleasing that education and training still consistently rate near the top of the list of issues voters believe are important. Political leaders would be foolish to ignore this fact, but only Labor has a rock solid commitment to ensuring adult education is properly supported at a federal level.

Recently, Kim Beazley was presented with the report *Agenda for a Knowledge Nation*. The report notes that a key characteristics of a Knowledge Nation is 'a 21st-century education system that provides all of its citizens with the opportunity to improve their skills and gain secure and well-paid jobs through properly funded lifelong learning and vocational education programs'. The Coalition cynically assembled a hit-squad of ministers, including the Prime Minister, on the day this report was launched, to ridicule and childishly attempt to undermine it.

In *Backing Australia's Ability*, the Coalition announced funding of \$2.9 billion, with 60 per cent of the funding to be provided in 2004 and 2005. It also only represents two-thirds of the \$5 billion John Howard has gutted from education, training and research while he has been Prime Minister.

One of the most disappointing aspects of the Coalition's short-sighted cuts was the disgusting treatment of the TAFE sector. A key to Australia's future, this sector had its funding cut by \$240 million in John Howard's first two budgets and had its growth funding effectively

frozen at 1996 levels for five years. Recently, the growth funding has been restored, but it is clear the Coalition is only interested in education in an election year.

This is in stark contrast to the approach Labor has adopted. Labor firmly believes that for Australia to succeed this century, governments must commit to significantly increase investment in education.

Public policy must be developed with a commitment to education that extends beyond the formative educational experiences. Labor's *Workforce 2010* research showed that half of the types of jobs that workers will occupy one decade from now don't currently even exist, so ongoing skills and lifelong learning are obviously vital.

Lifelong learning is not viable unless it is properly supported by a Commonwealth Government that starts from the position of being ideologically committed to it through policy development and spending commitments.

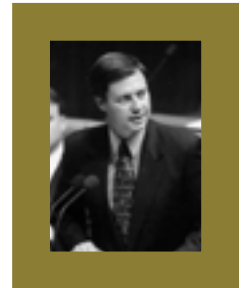
Labor has acknowledged the extremely hard work ALA and its members and associates have done to promote lifelong learning and 'learning communities'. This hard work has contributed to many towns in regional and rural areas either deciding to become, or seriously consider becoming, 'learning communities'. Labor solidly supports this work and looks forward to working with these communities in government.

Throughout the course of the rest of the year, when a clearer picture emerges about the state of the budget, Labor will put dollar figures next to its more than eighty detailed policy announcements (available at www.alp.org.au). To try to use speculative dollar figures now would be irresponsible to the sector and the electorate in general.

We intend to make 2001 the year in which education is recognised as the most important issue for our country. As we release more of our policies throughout this year and during the election campaign itself, we intend to offer

the Australian people a clear choice in education. ■

Michael Lee, Shadow Minister for Education



DEMOCRATS: A RICH LIFELONG LEARNING CULTURE

Access to high quality education is fundamental for overcoming disadvantage and to ensure all Australians have the opportunity to develop their potential and fully participate in their community throughout their lives as well-informed, tolerant, responsible and critical citizens.

The global knowledge economy is already creating massive transformations throughout our society, not least of all in employment patterns. Not only will many people now have four to five careers in their lifetime but also demands for increasing flexibility and mobility in the labour market means most people need opportunities to regularly update their knowledge and skills.

In this environment of increasing social, cultural, technological and economic complexity, the demand for lifelong learning will intensify. However, we believe that a culture of learning must be richer than simply an instrument of the economy.

There needs to be a significant shift in policy priorities. Our primary concern is the current ideological obsession with the marketisation of education. This has led to a decline in the quality of course offerings, an excessive focus on short-term vocational outcomes, marginalisation of non-market 'goods' and significant undermining of teaching as a vocation through casualisation and excessive workloads.

Increased demand for learning tends to focus on access and participation of young people for initial qualifications. While a high quality initial education experience is crucial for

establishing the bedrock for lifelong learning, we strongly support changing student income support arrangements, tax incentives and provision of funded places to better reflect the needs of adult access.

The needs and aspirations of increasingly diversified learner cohorts mean institutions need to be more flexible in course delivery and more closely embedded in their local communities with strong partnerships with local business, community organisations and unions. Having said that, we believe the biggest constraint on universities and TAFEs meeting demand are the cutbacks in operating grants.

The Democrats remain totally committed to the principle that it is the primary role and responsibility of Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments to ensure a well resourced, free, public education system. In the current environment of chronic underfunding of education and training, we oppose further dilution of public funding by extending deregulatory instruments such as competitive tendering and 'user pays' in VET.

We do, however, support closer cooperation between all sectors including ACE, to enhance partnerships, pathways and greater transparency in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policies.

This presupposes a clear regulatory framework for accrediting institutions and courses and appropriate AQF guidelines and descriptors (we are most concerned that quality control of postgraduate coursework programs in public and private higher education institutions, for instance, have been undermined, in part, by the lack of clarity in the AQF).

The Democrats strongly support the intent and scope of the Ministerial Council of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) draft National Protocol signed by all Commonwealth, State and Territory jurisdictions in April 2000. This protocol puts in place consistent national standards and criteria for accrediting providers and courses. It is extremely disappointing that to date no

jurisdiction has made the necessary legislative changes to implement the National Protocol.

One way to encourage greater participation in adult learning is to fix the absurd anomaly in the tax system whereby people can only claim self-education expenses for courses directly related to their current source of assessable income. However, people wishing to acquire knowledge and skills in another area cannot.

The Democrats strongly support legislative and administrative changes to allow self-education expenses for study at any accredited courses offered by registered education providers, including not-for-profit ACE providers, once all jurisdictions have enacted legislation to bring their accreditation processes and criteria in line with the National Protocol.

A rich lifelong learning culture is a profound 'public good' that is crucial for our future social, cultural and economic wellbeing – appreciating the key role and necessity of adequate public investment, as distinct from cost, remains a key policy challenge. ■

Senator Natasha Stott Despoja, Leader of the Australian Democrats



GREENS: DREAM OF NEW WAYS TO LEARN

“What holds us back is not the pressure of reality, but the absence of dreams. If enough Australians could come to see their current predicament and the possibility of a new way into the future then we could take the first steps towards that new world.”

Charles Birch, *Confronting the Future*, 1975.

In the last 20 years, Australians have been confronted by change at an unprecedented rate. The certainties of the past have been swept away by the insidious spread of

economic rationalism and the idea that the economy is everything. Smaller government, deregulation, privatisation, free trade and individual achievement have been preached as ends in themselves to the point where the idea of living in a society where people experience equality of opportunity and work together for the common good has been relegated to nostalgia.

The result is confusion. People are traumatised by the loss of services, jobs and a sense of community. Because Liberal and Labor have embraced this agenda, few people have any faith in the political process to deal with the problem.

Learning has been a victim of economic rationalism. The idea of learning for its own sake or to promote the common good or to strengthen civil society and a robust democracy has been largely abandoned in favour of education and training for the needs of the economy.

This has to change now.

Australia will never find the solutions to its ecological and societal problems whilst constrained in an economic rationalist mentality expressed in a vocational education and training straitjacket.

The more effectively individuals, groups and communities build cooperative connections, create democratic institutions and develop strategies at local, national, regional and global levels, the more quickly Australia can advance towards a sustainable future.

To that end we must value much more highly the learning that takes place outside formal courses and facilitate it. Adults want to choose the areas of interest, the venues and the means through which they learn.

For example, the environment movement recognises the need to educate activists not only about environmental issues or the logistics of campaigning but also about the political process and the imperative for them to be involved at the local, national and global level. This is adult learning, active citizenship and social capital-building taking place

outside formal courses and without any funding from government.

A learning society is one that values imagination as the raw material of the future and the thinker and the artist as innovators. It is one that facilitates learning circles and cities and towns as learning communities. It is one that applauds when a football team wears a green armband to support ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, recognising that learning and informed participation in a democratic society is taking place through a medium in which the participants are most comfortable.

Whilst either Liberal or Labor will form government after the federal election, the Greens in the Senate will be critical in pushing or pulling the government towards a more progressive vision for Australia. But we can only play that role if people are courageous enough to change their vote; to vote Green in the Senate.

The Greens opposed the GST when it was pushed through by the Liberals and the Democrats, and we still do. We would strongly support a review of the impacts of the new tax system on learning and the removal of the GST from courses offered by not-for-profit ACE organisations.

The Greens want to direct an extra \$2 billion dollars a year to education by opposing the Howard government's cut to the corporate tax rate from 34 to 30 cents in the dollar. This funding initiative would guarantee the \$22.725 million over three years that Adult Learning Australia is asking to implement its policy initiatives.

The Greens want Australians to dream of new ways to learn, to participate and to really advance Australia in the 21st century. All it takes is enough people to vote accordingly. ■

*Senator Bob Brown,
Leader of the Australian
Greens*



ADULT LEARNING AUSTRALIA INVITED FIVE FIGURES FROM ACROSS THE ADULT EDUCATION SPECTRUM TO LIST THE THREE THINGS THEY WOULD MOST LIKE THE NEXT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO DO TO SUPPORT A LEARNING SOCIETY. THESE ARE THEIR RESPONSES.

I wish the Australian government would...

A RECOMMITMENT TO ADULT LITERACY

The Australian Council of Adult Literacy has one major request of the next Federal Government: a recommitment to adult literacy that addresses the many contexts in which adult literacy concerns are present.

This means acknowledging adult literacy needs beyond a current short-term focus on employment outcomes to be achieved through narrowly defined education and training programs. It requires the implementation of a national adult literacy strategy that provides substantial, long-term federal government commitment as well as mechanisms that guarantee the commitment, appropriate material and human resourcing and accountability of the states. In particular there must be mechanisms and resources that bring a whole-of-government approach that works with the community in addressing the inter-relatedness of literacy to those social and economic factors through which people experience poverty and become excluded from society.

All Australian citizens are entitled to the opportunity to participate in the labour market, and to a 'living wage' that brings with it whole-of-life security for themselves and their families. They are entitled to equality of access to opportunities to develop and apply the

latest information and communication technologies for personal and social purposes, and to the forms of lifelong learning that are relevant to them at various life stages.

Such a goal would result in a dynamic, professional adult literacy sector that works with relevant government agencies, industry and the community in providing meaningful, quality assistance to people across a range of formal and informal learning contexts within workplaces, education and training, community and family life. ■

Geraldine Castleton, Australian Council of Adult Literacy

RESOURCES FOR LOCATING AND EVALUATING INFORMATION

Libraries and their professional staff are a very important community resource for adult learners. Library professionals have always assisted adult learners to access and evaluate information for their learning activities. With the proliferation of technology, the ability to use computers to access information is increasingly important for people to succeed in their education and careers. But access to electronic information and networks is insufficient. People also need to understand how to locate and evaluate the available information.

Funding is vitally needed to train library professionals in information communications technology applications so that libraries can offer programs to develop and enhance the information skills of adult learners, which are essential if they are to be lifelong learners.

ALIA believes that books and serials should reclaim their tax-exempt status. A tax on books hinders the development of skills that Australians need to be lifelong learners and to compete in the information economy. The GST on books discourages people from buying books, which in turn increases pressure on library resources, and may ultimately result in people opting out of learning activities.

ALIA looks forward to the Commonwealth Government continuing to fund programs that develop language and literacy skills. By participating in such programs, Australians become aware of adult learning opportunities and the support that libraries offer learners, and are encouraged to participate more fully in society. ■

Marie Murphy, Australian Libraries and Information Association

RECOGNITION, RESOURCES AND RATIONALISM

When asked what three things Neighbourhood Centres want from the next government, it is tempting to say 'Money! Money! Money!' But such a statement is more likely to repel than convince public bursars. A more convincing argument might be found in a favoured adage of many parents and

grandparents: a return to the 'three Rs'. However, the millennium mutation of this would be 'recognition, resources and rationalism'.

The country's 900+ Neighbourhood Centres need to be recognised as legitimate providers of lifelong learning opportunities, particularly for our society's most disadvantaged and marginalised people. Recognition would make visible many of 750 000 non-learners that NCVER estimates are learning in the margins of communities: for example the 19 000 participants per week in unsanctioned groups and courses at NSW Neighbourhood Centres.

If *recognition* is granted then adequate *resourcing* becomes the obvious second item on our wishlist. In a climate of contracting funds, Centres need adequate resources (and this includes realistic administration hours) to continue to facilitate lifelong learning opportunities for the non-learning members of the 'all' in 'lifelong learning for all' rhetoric. Ironically, this provides the (somewhat vulgar but useful) third item on our wishlist: *rationalism*.

Centres have an impressive history of 'fishes and loaves' stories. And the learning happening in Centres provides economic outcomes for participants that sanctioned providers often fail to deliver. When Centres' contributions to a learning nation are suitably recognised and resourced, a useful rationalist argument can then be constructed that they provide excellent value for money: both in economic and social terms. ■

Donna Rooney, Local Community Services Association

INVESTMENT AND INCENTIVES IN THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

Regardless of its political complexion, the incoming Federal Government should restore Australia's commitment to the education process, and meet the demand for lifelong learning opportunities for Australian adults.

The global knowledge economy creates a need for opportunistic and affordable learning, retraining and reskilling, provided within a framework that suits the client rather than the institution that provides it.

The first thing the Federal Government should do is providing the whole parliament with formal exposure to the implications of a knowledge economy. This exposure might eliminate the fixation on bricks and mortar comparisons to the education system of yesteryear, and introduce new understandings of lifelong learning. It might also bring people like Mark Latham in out of the cold.

Secondly, the Government should invest in community schools, where new primary and secondary schools are integrated into community hubs that provide meeting places, night and day learning venues, common sports arenas and naturally occurring communities of young and old from a variety of backgrounds.

Thirdly, the Government should create incentives for universities to mix and match their degree components, and revise their schedules, so that useful degrees can be gained in one year instead of three or four. It should encourage incentives to promote exchange between academia and industry so that each reinvests in the other. And it should enable the wage system for academics to

better reward achievers, and formalise the understanding that academics are facilitators of knowledge, not its keepers. ■

Tony Cutcliffe, The Eureka Project

A STRATEGY FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

While both parties make motherhood statements about improving the quality of our education, I want to know how they are going to do it. Does either party have a blueprint for the sort of education we need for the digital age? It's not a matter of putting the old system online – it's about having an entirely new system that resources the entire community, throughout life.

I don't want another statement about the need for a clever country and a list of promised funds for existing institutions. I want to know what new initiatives will be taken; just how the government of the day expects to meet the demands of 'any topic, any place, any time, any pace – just for me and for as long as I like' learning. And I want to know how they propose to get this learning to every member of the community.

Online students are not necessarily those that can't get to the classroom. Even the students who are in the classroom are online – using the web to enhance their learning, to find new ways of doing old and new things. So what's the strategy to ensure that there's no digital divide – and that e-learning is for everybody?

Thirdly, I want an advertising campaign that stops 'vocational' and 'skills' from being regarded as dirty words; that gets rid of the notion that the knowledge delivered in universities is superior to the knowledge you can do something with.

Half the money spent on the GST campaign should do the trick. ■

Dale Spender, author and commentator

WHAT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE TO ASYLUM SEEKERS IN AUSTRALIAN
DETENTION CENTRES? JANET BURSTALL INVESTIGATES.

Education under detention

When the politicians who make up the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade visited Australia's immigration detention centres they were shocked by what they saw, as the *Hansard* record indicates:

double gates, large spaces between high fences topped with barbed or razor wire ... Inside the centres, the strongest memory some Committee members retained was the despair and depression of some of the detainees, their inability to understand why they were being kept in detention in isolated places, in harsh physical conditions with nothing to do.

So far, little attention has been paid to the Committee's proposal for doing something about these conditions. In its report to Parliament, the Committee made education a priority in its top three recommendations:

- to provide an updated and expanded range of educational, sporting and exercise facilities, as well as access to an appropriate range of newspapers,
- to have local schools provide school education, and
- as well as English lessons, to encourage detainees to participate in classes about life in Australia.

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) contracted Australasian Correctional Management (ACM) to run the centres. Chapter Four of the report suggests that the educational and other activities ACM provides are inadequate:

In spite of all the assurances given about facilities, staffing and treatment at the various centres, there was a pattern in the

statements that the Committee received that cannot be ignored. It was possible, therefore, that ... the educational facilities were limited in most centres and that the range of activities was not adequate for the number of detainees, especially for children and older children in particular.

According to Margaret Piper of the Refugee Council of Australia, what adult education there is in detention is often of poor quality, unaccredited and provided by unqualified teachers. One detainee, who has been at Villawood for 11 months, and who considers herself a prisoner, rather than a detainee, confirms Piper's statement. In her experience, the English language classes are a waste of time because they are for beginners, so there is no scope for improving or furthering English language skills.

Lack of educational opportunities has a big impact on the many people who seek asylum in Australia. Around 8000 people a year (7500 adults and 500 children) are held in the centres, with about 2000 people held at any one time. In addition, there are about twice as many asylum seekers again in the community. The only access to educational opportunities for most of these people is at overseas student fee rates, which are prohibitively expensive given the position of refugees. Refugees only gain access to education once they are granted permanent protection, and detainees from the centres who are granted visas are by policy of the Minister only granted temporary protection for three years, delaying their access to education yet again.

The consequences of this policy are tragic, as Margaret Piper argues, using the example of about 1600 East Timorese living in Australia since the early 1990s. Many arrived as young adults, and all have had temporary visas for seven to nine years. These are largely wasted years for them. Now they can consider returning to East Timor, but instead of returning with the skills and qualifications much needed by East Timor, they return as adults who have been marginalised in Australia.

The parliamentary committee report also noted that the scale of the refugee problem had increased in recent decades.

From about 'one million people of concern' to the [UN] in the late 1940s, numbers had grown to about eight million in the early 1980s to just over 15 million by the end of that decade. By the middle 1990s, one estimate of the figure was 27 million people.

Australia is by no means the only country in the world where people seek asylum, and in comparison to many other countries, the number of people arriving here is relatively low.

A recent report by the UK National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, included an audit of the skills and qualifications held by asylum seekers in Leicester, and the employment, education, and career support that could be made available to them. Its authors, Sue Waddington and Fiona Aldridge, found that many asylum seekers were well qualified: 85 per cent had some education or training qualifications, ranging from school certificates to higher education and professional qualifications; 80 per cent were in paid employment before they came to the UK; and many had been involved in occupations such as medicine, business, engineering and teaching.

As a result of their research, Waddington and Aldridge argue that better learning pathways are required – “further training or conversion-type courses” – so that refugees’ skills are not

wasted. In addition, they assert that the research “will enable a more informed debate and the opportunity to look at the systems for the recognition and conversion of skills and qualifications gained outside of Europe”.

The report also confirms the Australian evidence that learning opportunities in detention are inadequate, since many asylum seekers have attained a higher level of education than that on offer in detention.

In both Britain and Australia, once asylum seekers’ applications for residence are approved they are expected to find employment. Given that most applications to remain in Australia are approved, it is in the interests of the refugees and the wider community that they are provided with the educational opportunities to enable them to make a productive contribution for themselves, their families and Australian society.

In relation to asylum seekers, a number of educational questions deserve more attention. In addition to the need for a more mixed and intensive program of educational courses for refugee applicants, a skills analysis should be undertaken of those seeking asylum, so that the waste of their skills and abilities is limited.

More information about the detention centres can be obtained by visiting the following official and unofficial web sites.

Refugee Council of Australia at
<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/>

Refugee Action Committee at
<http://www.refugeeaction.org>

Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs <http://www.immi.gov.au/> and especially the DIMA Illegal Migration Issues page at <http://www.immi.gov.au/illegals/illegal.htm>

Recognising asylum seekers’ skills’, NIACE report by Sue Waddington and Fiona Aldridge, at <http://www.niace.org.uk/organisation/advocacy/Asylum/Default.htm> ■

Janet Burstall is Information Manager at Adult Learning Australia

Wesley Payne



McClendon, Jr.

Adult Learners Week 2001 international guest

Wesley Payne McClendon, Jr. is an organisational change manager at Deloitte & Touche Consulting Group and the McClendon Research Group. His academic background is in sociology, but he also has a history of involvement with adult education. For example, Wesley chaired the Maryland State Department of Education's Advisory Committee on Adult Education and Community Services.

Working with public sector institutions (the US Departments of Education, Labor and Health and Human Services) private sector companies (Johnson & Johnson and Siemens), McClendon has been involved in several national and international workforce development initiatives. He was also an appointee to the Clinton administration's Working Group on Welfare Reform and a

delegate to the 1997 Adult Education Conference in Hamburg. McClendon has also on the economics of illiteracy in London and Santa Monica.

If you are in or near Melbourne, Ballarat, Sydney or Canberra, you can hear Wesley Payne McClendon speak during Adult Learners Week. Visit www.adultlearnersweek.org for full details of both Wesley's and Bill Lucas' tour itineraries. ■

WESLEY PAYNE McCLENDON, JR. WRITES

Henry David Thoreau may have only been half right when he claimed that things don't change; we change. However, one thing is for certain in today's global marketplace – the pace of change is tremendous and only getting faster.

Given the pace and depth of change, it's no surprise that all strains of organized groups – including government agencies, private sector businesses and community-based organizations – are being swept away in a maze of new and constantly expanding technology, customer service expectations, staff size and resource limitations, and new skill and knowledge requirements.

Executive management and staff alike are constantly being asked to do more with less. To meet these new challenges, while remaining competitive and accountable, organizations must find new ways to identify and manage change – both internally and externally – in order to effectively harness and leverage its effect. Most important, organizations must develop a clear vision that compels direction, engages individual commitment and drives continuous improvement.

Unfortunately, many organizations do little to position themselves ahead of the evolutionary curve. Lack of organizational preparedness often results in the development of reactive or ineffective strategies that seldom achieve their intended goals.

ADULT LEARNERS WEEK

2 – 8 September 2001



get involved!

www.adultlearnersweek.org

A NETWORK OF AUSTRALIAN LEARNING COMMUNITIES HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, AND AS RACHEL CASTLES REPORTS, IT HAS ALREADY SET A COURSE FOR THE FUTURE.

Learning cities meet

In June, the Albury/Wodonga Learning City Consultative Council invited parties interested in the rapidly growing Learning City movement to meet. We wanted to discuss ideas of mutual concern and the possibility of forming an Australian network. Sixteen people came. Some represented communities already

We came up with the following reasons to become a Learning City:

- collaboration and cooperation – effective use of educational resources, breaking down the silos, challenge to competitive ethos, particularly collaboration between industry and education for planning and provision,

a strong Learning City network provides the opportunity for local and regional responses to economic change

established as a Learning City/Town/Shire/Community; others were from communities thinking about the benefits and how to get started.

An initial round-table allowed participants to introduce where their communities were at in terms of the Learning City philosophy and activities.

Next, we brainstormed the benefits of being a learning city. Our aim was to develop a consolidated approach in making a case for federal support. As ALA President, Ned Dennis noted ALA had forwarded recommendations in support of the Learning City concept to all federal members of parliament. (The ALA proposals are available on the ALA website at www.ala.asn.au/agenda2001.)

A consolidated approach from a formal network would be a good support for this.

- community action – related to community development,
- grassroots driven,
- reaching all – inclusive,
- strategy to deliver on social capital,
- links between economic/social/environmental,
- draws in local government,
- effective targeting,
- empowers community to develop a local vision, and
- a strong Learning City network provides the opportunity for local and regional responses to economic change.

Following the brainstorm, participants agreed to establish the 'Australian Learning Communities Network'. Jim Saleeba offered to draft a letter for

Network members to use when approaching local politicians. We recognised that ALA is ideally situated to play a communication role for the Network, particularly through its website.

The next steps for the Network are to:

- write to the Federal Minister for Education, and political parties, to inform them of the Network,
- draft a press release for local use, including a photo taken during this meeting, and
- use local governments as advocates for the Australian Learning Communities Network by encouraging them to write to the Minister for Local Government.

We discussed the recent ANTA-funded 'Learning Communities National Project 2001', whereby up to eight communities will be funded to develop and promote the learning community concept within their geographic region and to produce a case study. The Learning Towns Network in Victoria proposed the idea of mentoring other communities.

Next, we discussed support for small townships. In particular, we considered ways to encourage smaller communities to keep running with the Learning City concept even if there is no funding. Our ideas included:

- placing case studies of other towns, for example Lithgow, which receives little



Inaugural members of Australian Learning Communities Network

- or no assistance, on the ALA website,
- reinforcing the Learning City movement, and

asking local government to look more laterally at the educational and lifelong learning role of some of their staff.

Finally, we discussed the 2002 National Learning Cities Conference. As a representative of the host city, Rachel Castles tabled the dates for the 2002 Conference as 27– 29 September 2002. Rachel requested that participants think about what they would like to discover from the conference, and tabled a feedback form.

Ned Dennis thanked Jim Saleeba and the Albury/Wodonga Learning City Consultative Council on behalf of all those present for convening the meeting. ■

Rachel Castles is Executive Officer of Ballarat Learning City

JUST HOW LOW A PROFILE DOES ACE HAVE AMONG TRAINING PROFESSIONALS? AND WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT? JOHN SAUNDERS INVESTIGATES.

Promoting ACE VET

ACE has recently extended its range of courses to include more vocationally specific programs. These ACE-VET programs are provided via an approach that is in keeping with ACE's philosophy of providing learning opportunities in relaxed and relatively informal learning environments. This approach is ideal for people who are returning to study after a long break, those who are forced to undertake re-training because of job changes, or those who have had unsuccessful learning experiences.

ACE VET can also benefit industry: it can help workers become more proficient in their work; its flexibility and ease of access enables it to be tailored to match enterprise needs; and it provides a way for employers to retain employees who would otherwise be lost through their reluctance to re-train.

There are also benefits for the mainstream VET sector (both TAFE and private training providers) in the form of increased enrolments in major courses to which ACE VET is linked, and better prepared students.

Despite these benefits, research conducted in NSW and SA by NCVER (Saunders, in press) has shown that there is little industry or community knowledge of ACE vocational programs. This article examines current awareness and opinions of ACE VET and ways in which the perceptions of ACE VET may be improved through better promotional activities.

HOW MUCH DO PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT ACE VET?

The Saunders study asked ACE VET students to comment on their knowledge of ACE VET provision. Three-quarters rated their knowledge as adequate or better – a predictable result, since they were already enrolled. However, three-quarters also indicated that, when they first enrolled in the program, they had not been aware of the existence of provisions for credit transfer and other means of linking to mainstream VET. The finding that students were not aware of linkage options is a matter of concern, because about half of the them also reported that, had they known about linkage options, it could have influenced their enrolment decisions. Perhaps others who didn't enrol might have done so had they known about linkages.

Lack of knowledge about linkage to mainstream VET can be attributed, in part, to the fact that only about a quarter of ACE providers indicated they provided this sort of information to prospective students. This was not so surprising when it was also found that close to half of the provider personnel surveyed believed that they had poor knowledge of relevant mainstream VET programs (to which ACE VET might be linked).

There was also low awareness of ACE VET within industry bodies such as ITABs,

employer organisations and unions. This limited knowledge, more evident in SA than NSW, reflected a general finding that ACE VET had a stronger presence in NSW than in SA. Almost all of these bodies were interested in what ACE had to offer and were favourably disposed towards receiving appropriate information.

‘The general level of awareness of ACE in the ITAB is pretty close to zero – and I [suspect that] employers, [too], don’t know much about it. In my running around the traps, I don’t think I’ve ever heard anybody mention ACE at any stage.’

(ITAB Executive Representative, SA)

‘[Our organisation’s] knowledge of ACE vocational provision is very patchy. Some [of our people] in their local regions have struck up associations with ACE people and they know a little about what is going on, but not in a comprehensive way.’

(Employer Association Representative, NSW)

WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK OF ACE VET?

When ACE VET students and providers of ACE VET programs were asked to indicate characteristics that were important in distinguishing ACE VET from mainstream VET their responses were similar. ACE’s informal and non-threatening environment was the most frequently reported distinguishing feature, being selected by about 90% of respondents from both groups. Other favoured features, selected by more than 80% of respondents from both groups, were: ACE’s emphasis on skills mastery rather than course deadlines, its supportive teachers, its capacity to serve students from diverse backgrounds and its capacity to meet special needs of employers and students.

ACE students were highly satisfied with the quality of the training and information they received in ACE VET courses. The opinions of ITABs, employer associations and unions were more mixed, with those who had greater knowledge of ACE VET generally speaking

more favourably of it. This suggests acceptance of ACE VET by some of these bodies could be improved just by increasing their knowledge of it.

‘In NSW, ACE is ideally placed in many ways to pick up [our] training package because they deliver short courses and they have also got the flexibility. The industry wants short courses, but it hasn’t happened. If some of the ACE colleges already interested in [our industry area] could become more focussed, they could certainly get a lot of business and I’d be happy to work closely with them.’

(ITAB#1 Executive Representative, NSW)

‘I think ACE is an under-utilised component of the training structure, particularly in thin markets where ACE is the only provider in the area.’

(ITAB#2 Executive Representative, NSW)

‘The problem we would have with the ACE sector in regard to formal training is the capacity of the ACE sector to develop or deliver vocationally relevant training. I do not have a great deal of confidence in the ACE sector being able to harness the expertise and qualifications required for that delivery.’

(ITAB Executive Representative, SA)

REACHING POTENTIAL STUDENTS

The importance of friends and relatives as a mechanism for spreading the word about ACE VET should not be underestimated. With their high levels of course satisfaction, ACE students could make ideal informal ambassadors for ACE, spreading positive impressions of ACE and communicating information about ACE VET to family members, friends and work colleagues. However, for this to happen, ACE must ensure all its students are informed of ACE VET and the way it may be linked with mainstream VET. Providing such information to non-vocational students may also lead to them enrolling in ACE VET themselves.

PROMOTING TO INDUSTRY

Small businesses comprise the major proportion of employers in Australia. If ACE wishes to reach employees with information about ACE VET it should not overlook the importance of doing so through contact with small business proprietors. This is an area that ACE providers have already pursued fairly strongly – many have made a point of contacting local businesses and informing them of the vocational learning they offer. Some ACE providers have facilitated communication with employers by becoming members of the local business association in their area.

Employer organisations, ITABs and unions are all in a strong position to assist in the promotion of ACE VET to industry. Virtually all of these organisations indicated willingness to disseminate relevant information to employers, however most also indicated that their knowledge of ACE and ACE VET was limited. ACE should take steps to ensure that information on ACE VET is made available to them. As well as contacting employer organisations, ACE should not overlook business enterprise centres that foster the establishment and development of small businesses.

In making contact with employers, ACE providers need to consider the different types of approaches that may be necessary. Large employers may often have a personnel manager or training officer who should be familiar with the Australian Qualifications Framework, the notion of accredited training, and contemporary training practices. Smaller employers, not having personnel in charge of human resources or training, are less likely to have this background knowledge. Unions tends to focus on the VET that can be applied to union-related activities, such as workplace leadership, communication, and negotiation, rather than technically oriented aspects of the job – these are areas of training that ACE is well equipped to deliver.

In an era of ‘rationalisation’ and ‘downsizing’

brought about by rapid technological change and tightening economic constraints, many employees are today faced with the prospect of additional training – to cope with changes in their existing job, to enable them to be redeployed in another work role, or to re-train for a completely different occupation. Many of these employees may not have studied for some years and will be apprehensive about returning to ‘formal’ study with mainstream VET. Because ACE is able to offer an attractive opportunity to return to vocational study in a relatively informal, friendly and supportive environment it should make a special effort to reach these people. This might be done, for example, by direct contact with employers (particularly those known to be undergoing workforce change), with Centrelink, with unions, and through employment and career sections of the media.

THE NATURE AND CONTENT OF ACE VET PROMOTION

If ACE is to successfully promote ACE VET, it needs to take into account several factors: the mediums through which it is promoted, the content of the promotion, and the nature of the communication (such as special characteristics).

Many people advocated the use of electronic media as a means of communicating information about ACE VET – to the general public, to the educational sector and to industry. Websites are well suited to client-initiated delivery of broad-based information about ACE VET at national, State, and individual provider levels. Email can be used for provider-initiated delivery of more individualised communication. With its diverse network of providers and consequent ability to offer courses across most geographical areas, ACE should benefit from the wide coverage offered by the use of electronic media.

‘Email would probably be the most useful form [in which to receive information] because, not only can I send it round the

office with the click of a button but also to interested members.'

(Employer Association Representative, NSW)

Because ACE and ACE VET are not well known in industry, ACE needs to establish its reputation as a capable VET provider by demonstrating the relevance and value of its courses. Case studies chosen to demonstrate various aspects of ACE VET are an effective mechanism for this promotion. They can illustrate collaboration and cooperation with enterprises, industry bodies and mainstream VET and the successful application of course outcomes by students.

Along with poor awareness of ACE VET in industry, there is poor understanding of the concepts of pathways, linkages and credit transfer between ACE and mainstream VET. Because they are important to ACE VET students, it is important that these aspects are explained and promoted as part of the ACE VET package. Indeed, some providers see their availability as an asset to be used in promoting ACE VET.

PROMOTING THE ACE IMAGE

If ACE is to be seen as a legitimate and dependable provider of VET, it must look closely at projecting a favourable image of its involvement in VET provision. For example, it should present itself at national, State and local levels as a single entity with common goals and standards rather than appear to be a disparate group of individual organisations, and ACE providers who are registered to provide VET programs should make sure they publicise their Registered Training Organisation status.

'While it is good that ACE is seen as a friendly, informal organisation, the downside is that ACE still has to battle the image of a hobby course and evening course provider. ACE does not have a generic Australia-wide name like 'TAFE'. Instead the name [and image of ACE] varies across states.'

(ACE association representative, NSW)

Awareness of ACE and ACE VET could be improved by ensuring that any promotional materials are consistently branded with logos and easy to remember acronyms. Terms like 'ACE' and 'ACE VET', and 'Adult and Community Education' should be associated with ACE vocational provision through repetition in ACE VET promotions.

'People don't know we are ACE, most just know us as an evening college. The term ACE is little used by students, it's mainly used by the bureaucracy... There are probably more people calling us TAFE than ACE.'

(ACE principal, NSW)

Having a high-profile person who, through participation in promotional activities on television, on radio, and in the print media becomes identified as the 'face' of ACE, may be another mechanism for the promotion of ACE and ACE VET. However it is important that this person be well-liked and trusted, so as to engender confidence in ACE as a provider of VET.

If maximum benefit is to be derived from the use of branding and a figurehead in ACE promotion, it is important that ACE administrators be provided with professional assistance in developing and implementing promotional strategies. A combination of local promotions by ACE providers with access to professional advice and assistance, coupled with centrally based professional promotion of the ACE image, should not only provide better promotion of ACE and its courses but also be more cost effective.

'[Promotion of] the general ACE image should be done centrally because colleges don't have the time or the expertise to handle it – a lot of what is done [by providers] is well intentioned amateurism.'

(ACE principal, NSW) ■

John Saunders is a research fellow at NCVET

A leadership challenge: Take a risk with your ego!

ALA'S SECOND NATIONAL COMMUNITY LEARNING LEADERSHIP PROGRAM COMMENCED IN JUNE AND WILL CONTINUE UNTIL THE END OF 2001. FOLLOWING THE THREE-DAY RESIDENTIAL IN BALLARAT, MAL MCCULLOUGH WAS INSPIRED TO OFFER THESE WORDS OF REFLECTION.

There is growing recognition that the survival and revival of communities depends not just on jobs, infrastructure and services but also the ability of community members to participate, cooperate, organise and interact.

J. Cavaye & G. Lawrence, 2000

For too long we have been socialised into believing that there was 'education' and there was 'training' and that the two were inextricably linked. Other activities that community members undertake for individual and community benefit are recognised as valuable but not as learning.

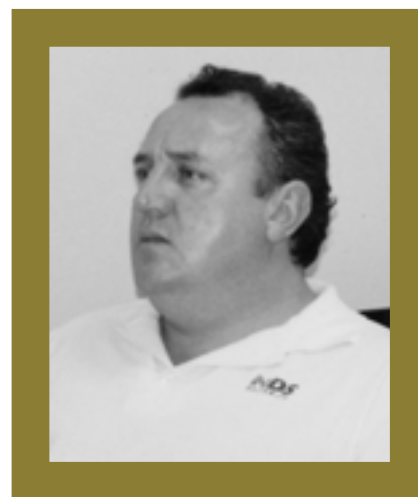
Within the community sector, people have begun to question what is education, what is training, and what is this thing called learning. Despite this questioning, learning has been characterised as either formal or informal, or (and this is understood to cover everything else) 'further education'.

With the increasing awareness of 'learning' it is puzzling that the Victorian Government Department that funds, coordinates and promotes lifelong learning and community learning programs through

Neighbourhood and Community Houses and the Learning Towns Program still refers to itself as Adult Community & Further Education (ACFE). The name ACFE maintains the myth that Adult and Community, and Learning and Further Education, are separate and distinct. I have lived through a plethora of departmental name changes, and can vouch for the confusion such changes create, but a title that better reflects community learning (whether formal or informal), on which ACFE is focused, would be more appropriate.

To develop the concept and practice of community learning, we must establish cooperative and collaborative relationships, use existing networks, support innovation, improve access to information, encourage hidden leaders, and define our community assets. We need to emancipate communities from any perception of powerlessness and assist them to recognise that they can make a difference.

Because many of our current political leaders have emerged from large educational institutions, Australians currently have a learning agenda focused on those large



institutional structures. Knowledge Nation and Knowledge Society – the latest efforts by the major political parties in Australia to address the learning divide – demonstrate the lack of current understanding of Community Learning and the place that it holds in the positive development within our communities and the fabric which holds it together. Mark Latham comes closest to understanding community learning, as demonstrated in his book *What did you learn today?*

Political parties need to engage in a form of what Giddens termed 'emancipatory politics' in relation to education and learning, to "shed shackles of the



past, thereby permitting a transformative attitude towards the future". Resources need to shift more from mass systems of education toward greater community efforts. We need bipartisan political support for learning as a priority.

In addition to developing the foundations for community learning, there is the equally important need to address the inequities that affect individuals' and groups' ability to engage in community learning. Determinates for community learning are similar to those for good health: social and emotional wellbeing in particular.

For me, the most valuable advice for leaders in the task of promoting and supporting community learning comes from ALA President Ned Dennis, who has been immersed in community leadership for over 20 years: "Take risks with your own ego".

To those in positions of leadership within their communities, and to current Federal and State politicians who are in a position to offer a positive future for the development of community learning, I say: take a leadership role, remove the shackles of the past, resist the domination of large institutions, and engage the Australian community in community learning. But how, you ask?

Just take a risk with your ego! ■

Mal McCullough is Executive Officer of the Kyabram Learning Town

AUSTRALIA'S ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF ADULT LEARNING, ADULT LEARNERS WEEK, IS A GOOD TIME TO CHECK OTHER FESTIVALS AND THEIR WEBSITES FOR IDEAS. AND FUNDING OR SPONSORSHIP IS AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT OF A SUCCESSFUL FESTIVAL. THIS QUARTER, JANET BURSTALL EXPLORES FESTIVALS AND SPONSORSHIP.

FESTIVALS FOR LEARNING AND THINKING

FESTIVALS

In Adult Learners Week knowledge cities, if not a knowledge nation, are celebrated at local learning festivals held in Geelong, Victoria and Marion, South Australia. Their brief pages of information on the web may inspire other learning communities to plan festivals for ALW in 2002.

The Adelaide Festival of Ideas (Adelaide 12–15 July 2001) "aims to strengthen our sense of community and identity as thinking and engaged citizens, committed to creative leadership and life-long learning." Festival presentations are archived on the website of Radio 5UV (ALA member, Adult Learners Week supporter and lifelong learning radio station).

Ideas at the Powerhouse (Brisbane 16–19 August 2001) is the ALA site of the month award for August. It uses a number of interactive features to stimulate interest and ideas. The festival engaged leading thinkers and practitioners and non-experts in panels, forums, discussion, live radio broadcasts and in online discussion on the site. The event was a joint effort by Brisbane city Council and the Queensland Government, and the support of ABC Radio National, so these forums should have had enough promotion to become an interesting read. The ideas online section of the

site includes other interactivity ideas. At 'Whose idea was that?' The State Library of Queensland provides an online Q&A service.

The National Science Festival (27 April–7 May 2001) site is focused very much on the real event, and encouraging participation in that, rather than providing a virtual experience itself. At its Smart Trader section you can trade materials for building Solar Boats for the Boat Race. At the Cool it Fair, you can learn about solar, wind, biomass, tidal and geothermal energy. It has an impressive list of sponsors and partners. The virtual exhibition provides a taster of stalls at the festival exhibition plus links to the exhibitor's own site, frustratingly captured in a very small window that I couldn't manage to enlarge. It kept me on the festival site and stopped me clicking away to another destination, violating user control, enforcing provider control.

The Age Melbourne Writers Festival (24 August 24–2 September 2001) has lots of fun and interesting events that could be applied tried out in ALW. The Cook Book Café concept allows you to taste the food, meet the chef and buy the book all in the one spot. The Great Australian Novel is a literary night out. There are two quiz nights, Harry Potter and The Great Age Melbourne Writers Festival Literary

Quiz. The site itself is essentially an online brochure about the Festival, with no obvious interactive features.

You can join in the Sydney Writers Festival (14–20 May 2001), other than by attending a lecture, by entering the writing competitions. Although the winners were decided back in May, disappointingly the site does not publish the winners' entries or even their names. The Festival may be fun, and the front page is striking, but the site is too brief to be inspiring.

SPONSORSHIPS AND FUNDING

Sponsorships and funding seem most readily available to sport and the arts. Festivals of learning might increase their chances of attracting support if they choose a cultural or sporting format, or are creative in other ways about fitting the criteria set by funding bodies. Here are

some sites where you can find out who to approach for grants or sponsorship. Good luck!

Communitybuilders.nsw is the pick of this list. Its index leads to a helpful description of each source. Many commonwealth and national funding sources are listed, in addition to NSW government programs. Most of the other sites referred to here are also linked from this site.

Sources of funding listed on the site of the Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies (ACYS) are for community projects and individual study, mainly with a youth focus. Whether you want to fund a festival or something else entirely, this site has some good ideas.

Festivals Australia is a grants program of the Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts.

There are two grant rounds each year. The program recently allocated a bit less than half a million shared between 31 grantees. The site is somewhat annoying to use, since you have to download Word documents for basic information, sometimes without warning, even to find out the answers to FAQ!

The Commonwealth government site GrantsLINK provides links to potential sponsors, but the links are so general that to follow through requires an intensive search effort at each destination. You may turn up some ideas missed out on elsewhere.

The ANU Library's Information Sources on Funding for Visual Artists page is a very up-to-date bibliography on more than just visual artists needs. It includes this year's book by sponsorship expert Mike Turner *Critical Funds: Sponsorships in Australia and How to*

SMART CITY: GEELONG

<http://www.geelonglearningcity.vic.edu.au>

MARION LEARNING FESTIVAL 2001

<http://www.marion.sa.gov.au/webverts.htm>

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL OF IDEAS

<http://www.adelaidefestival.org.au/red/popup/2001prog/1.html>

FESTIVAL OF IDEAS ON RADIO 5UV

http://www.adelaide.edu.au/5UV/fest_ideas_2001

IDEAS AT THE POWERHOUSE

<http://www.ideasatthepowerhouse.com.au>

NATIONAL SCIENCE FESTIVAL

<http://www.sciencefestival.com.au>

THE AGE MELBOURNE WRITERS FESTIVAL

<http://www.mwf.com.au>

SYDNEY WRITERS FESTIVAL

<http://www.swf.org.au>

COMMUNITYBUILDERS.NSW

http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/finding_funds/funding

FESTIVALS AUSTRALIA

<http://www.dcita.gov.au/festivals.html>

AUSTRALIAN CLEARINGHOUSE FOR YOUTH STUDIES (ACYS): SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIP

<http://www.acys.utas.edu.au/ncys/funding/default.html>

GRANTS LINK: COMMONWEALTH COMMUNITY GRANTS SITE

<http://www.grantslink.gov.au/>

ANU LIBRARY: INFORMATION SOURCES ON FUNDING FOR VISUAL ARTISTS

<http://anulib.anu.edu.au/clusters/ita/guides/artsfunding.html>

GRANTSEARCH AUSTRALIA

<http://www.grantsearch.com/>

OURCOMMUNITY.COM.AU GRANTS AND FUNDRAISING

<http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding.jsp>

Get Them. I recently heard Mike speak and his advice was very helpful. So his book probably is too!

You can also pay to receive information about grants. Grantsearch Australia claims to be "Australia's largest funding database, detailing \$8 billion, representing 18 000 opportunities from all levels of government, universities and private trusts, updated daily." You have to subscribe to find out if it is any good beyond one free listing. Subscription costs range from AU\$32.95 for a week to \$439.95 for a year. The grants and funding section of Ourcommunity.com.au sells subscriptions to newsletters. Join the site for free and receive newsletters at a reduced price. Golden Tips returned no results when visited.

If any readers try out either of these commercial sites, we would appreciate receiving your opinion of their services. Email info@ala.asn.au. ■

Janet Burstall is ALA's Information Manager

Study at home with UNE

Professional pathways for trainers and teachers of adults in Vocational Education and Training, Workplace Education, Administrative Leadership and Training Development BY DISTANCE EDUCATION.

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- Master of Administrative Leadership (coursework or thesis)
- Master of Ed (Adult Ed and Train) by coursework or thesis
- **Master of Training and Development (coursework or thesis)**

Applications close 30 November 2001.

For further information contact:
Faculty of Education, Health and Professional Studies
University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351
Phone: 02 6773 3856
Fax: 02 6773 3879
email: fehps@metz.une.edu.au
<http://fehps.une.edu.au/f/d/higher/higher.html>



Members receive a 20% discount	new ALA publications
<p>→ <i>View 2000: Commentaries on Adult Learning</i> \$12.50 (\$10.00)</p> <p>→ <i>Agenda for the Future: Proceedings of the Adult Learners Week 2000 Conference</i> \$25.00 (\$20.00)</p> <p>→ <i>Lifelong Learning: Investing in a Better Society – Policy and funding proposals</i> \$5.00 (\$4.00)</p> <p>→ <i>Lobbying Toolkit (Includes the booklet Investing in a Better Society: A Guide to Lobbying for the 2001 Election, 1 poster, 2 stickers)</i> \$8.00 (\$6.00)</p> <p>→ <i>Adult Learners Week promotional video</i> \$20.00 (\$16.00)</p>	<p>All prices include GST and postage. To order publications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • go to www.ala.asn.au/purchase_pubs.html • phone Cath on 02 6251 7933 or • write to ALA Publications at PO Box 308, Jamison ACT 2614.
Bulk buyers (of 10+ copies) receive a 15% discount.	

DULCIE STRETTON, 1924–2001

A PIONEER OF LIFELONG LEARNING HAS DIED. DULCIE STRETTON WAS A PASSIONATE AND EFFECTIVE ACTIVIST FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES.



A pioneer of lifelong learning has died. Dulcie Stretton was a passionate and effective activist for adult education and libraries.

She was a founding executive member of several key organisations: the Australian Association of Adult Education – now Adult Learning Australia; Adult Education Association of Victoria (President 1960–68); Australian Library Promotion Council, President 1967–87, and National Book Council, 1973–80.

Dulcie was an advisor to ABC radio talks, involved in international education issues as a committee member of ASPBAE and served on the National Commission for UNESCO from 1974–81. She was also a successful businesswoman.

Born in Melbourne, Dulcie's first, tentative, attendance at some AEA lectures in 1955 launched her straight into administration:

At the third meeting I realised I wasn't only there for the content ... somebody turned to me and said, 'Would you like to stay for a cup of tea?'. So I did, and chatted to people, and I thought now that's what I wanted, I wanted communication as well, because I had three small children, under the age of five ... And then the secretary left his wife, and the treasurer left her husband and absconded ... and they left all the records on my doorstep. And they were beautifully kept records ... and they left a note and said that they thought that I should be able to continue doing it.

(Interview for Deborah Stephan's history of the AEA 1948–89: *A Great Many Volunteers of all Kinds*)

The AEA had been founded in 1948 at a public meeting sponsored by the WEA and Colin Badger, director of the newly created Council of Adult Education, who envisaged a voluntary body that could engage and influence public opinion on adult education.

But the AEA appealed mainly to enthusiastic CAE students pursuing their interests through

special interest groups. Dulcie steered it into a wider range of public seminars and conferences with new audiences – such as weekend local government conferences for municipal officers and councillors on the functions, financing and future of local government.

Dulcie was CAE liaison officer (1957–68) and like that organisation, she adopted the owl as a symbol of wisdom and learning, and was rarely seen without her 'owl' jewellery.

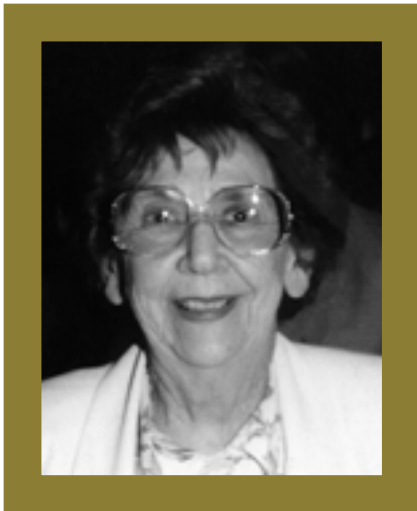
Moving to Sydney in 1974 she quickly became the first woman president of a State cultural organisation – the Library Council that governs NSW State Library where the Dulcie Stretton Lectures are one of her legacies.

Dulcie Stretton's public awards include a CBE; the Alfred McMicken Award; the Redmond Barry Award (1980) for library service whose recipients include Gough Whitlam, Justice Rae Else-Mitchell, and Frederick Alexander; and an honorary Master of Arts, University of Sydney (1997).

Dulcie is survived by her children John, Peter and Andrea. ■

Peter Fraser, Centre for Adult Education in Victoria (previously the Council of Adult Education)

VALE KATE CAMPBELL



Kate Campbell AM died in a Sydney nursing home on 28 June. She was a remarkable person who continued as a dynamic and innovative adult educator until eighty years of age. She was a key player in the great changes and developments in the provision of adult community education in New South Wales in the late 70s and 80s.

Kate was born in Western Australia but moved to Sydney with her husband after the Second World War. She became involved in adult education through being an active participant in classes offered by Sydney University and the WEA.

In the early 70s she commenced a community education program based at SCEGGS Redlands School at Neutral Bay. In contrast

to and in competition with the government controlled Evening Colleges of the day, she offered a wide range of courses based on community needs and established the advantages of flexibility in offering courses and good promotion. The task of leading and coordinating this program was an honorary one.

In 1980 Kate was appointed part-time Principal of the Mosman Evening College. She was one of the first women appointed to such a position and the first who did not have formal teaching qualifications. When Evening Colleges became community organisations in 1982 she was free to innovate and the college grew rapidly under her leadership. She established principles in the management of adult education that were adopted by other colleges and agencies. Kate continued as Principal until illness in 1999 forced her to leave the college.

When the NSW branch of the Australian Association of Adult Education formed in 1979, Kate became Honorary Secretary. She continued as Secretary and then President over a period of more than ten years. She also served for many years on the national executive of the AAAE and then the AAACE. Kate was honoured as a Member of the Order of

Australia for her contribution to adult education.

Kate was one of the first students enrolled in the adult education degree program of what is now the University of Technology Sydney, and became one of the first graduates of that program. She was chairman of the Sydney based Committee for International Cooperation in Adult Education. Her interests in international affairs included taking part in a study program in Germany in 1986 as well as hosting many overseas adult educators.

Sadly, the final two years of Kate's life were spent in a nursing home and she was too ill to communicate with her many friends and associates. She was 82 years old when she died.

As with others who are very task-oriented, Kate could be a little difficult at times, but she attracted the affection of thousands who studied or taught at her college. She believed that while there was a task to be done she would do her best to do it, and that age would be no impediment to her succeeding.

I am pleased to have been her colleague and friend. ■

John Wellings. Read the full obituary at www.ala.asn.au/pages/KCampbell.html

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

On 15 June the branch hosted a public forum attended by approximately 40 people. State politicians were invited to present their party's policies on lifelong learning and ACE and to respond to audience questions.

Guest speakers were Mark Brindal, Minister for Employment and Training, Stephanie Key, Shadow Minister for Employment and Training, and Mike Elliot, State Parliamentary Leader of the Australian Democrats. Each spoke for around 20 minutes, and then fielded comments and questions from the audience.

It was an excellent opportunity for those who attended to gain a feel for where the major parties stand on Adult and Community Education and it was also a good opportunity to keep ACE firmly on the agenda. Participants came from a range of community and educational organisations. ■

Rita Bennink

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Moving into the warmer months, Canberrans tend to come out of hibernation and back into society. The branch has been busy looking at ways to be involved in Adult Learners Week

and increasing the awareness of our presence and activities within the ACT region.

We have taken advantage of the up-coming elections and met with local Ministers, forcing ourselves onto the political agenda. Our message has been that Learning Communities enhance lifelong learning and benefit society. We have used examples from other states that have proved successful in this area.

Adult Learners Week will bring Wesley McLendon to Canberra. The ACT Branch welcomes his presence and will advertise his presentation to members and the wider community.

We are currently planning an information workshop to bring together various funding bodies to inform participating organisations on the processes, requirements and contacts for accessing funding for programs within the ACT. This is planned for September and we are anticipating a large turn-out of organisations who will benefit from this much needed information. ■

Julie Phillips

TASMANIA

Enthusiastic Tasmanian branch members have been meeting every six weeks since our

reestablishment, with the main focus of our meetings being the 2002 Conference.

The branch has just put together a Newsletter to all members in the State. We hope that this will become a regular means of communication and that it will encourage new members.

Some discussion has taken place on the term 'lifelong learning'. This issue arose from the state-wide consultative forum known as 'Tasmania Together' and the many benchmarking committees that are currently reviewing public comments on the future of our State and the strategic plan to be adopted by Governments. The Community Wellbeing Benchmarking Committee has actually recommended that the term 'lifelong learning' be removed from the goals of the Tasmania Together outcomes. Our branch has raised an objection to this decision and Committee Member, Rowena MacKean, is seeking definitions of 'lifelong learning' from a variety of sources (including ALA). We trust that in the final adoption of goals from the Tasmania Together consultative process, the terminology will remain.

Finally, our Branch President Noela Foxcroft has been appointed to the Adult Learners Week Steering Committee. ■

Jan Dunsby

New members

INDIVIDUALS

Sue Aldred	VIC	Pete Meggitt	QLD	Dovaston Training and Assessment
Fabrizio Andreoni	VIC	Tom Murphy	NSW	Centre,
Jill Birtwistle	QLD	Chris Nichols	NSW	DARWIN NT
Hedy Bryant	NSW	Kaye O'Hara	ACT	Mount Isa Skills Centre,
Ray Carson	NSW	Brian Smith	VIC	MOUNT ISA QLD
Trevor Cooper	QLD	Kerry Strauch	VIC	National Museum of Australia,
Michael Copland	VIC	Alan Sumsion	VIC	CANBERRA ACT
Margaret Crisp	VIC	Peter Vine	NSW	Sandybeach Centre,
Heather Fuzzard	VIC	Tony Williams	VIC	SANDRINGHAM VIC
Angela Gee	QLD			SPAN Community House,
Jude Harrison	QLD	ORGANISATIONS		Thornbury VIC
John Haynes	NSW	Caron Egle and Associates		U3A Redcliffe Inc,
Emma Hunter	QLD	NICHOLLS ACT		REDCLIFFE QLD
Ian Jackson	VIC	Central TAFE		YMCA Institute of Education and
J M Kelly	NSW	EAST PERTH WA		Training – Qld Campus,
Alan Ling	VIC	Centre for Continuing Education –		BRISBANE QLD
Peter McWilliams	SA	ANU,		
Lynne Makin	VIC	CANBERRA ACT		
Helen Masters	VIC	Centrelink Virtual College,		
Esther May	SA	CANBERRA ACT		

JOIN ALA TODAY

ALL ALA MEMBERS RECEIVE THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER, THE AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF ADULT LEARNING, E-SERVICES, ACCESS TO A NATIONAL NETWORK OF ADULT EDUCATORS AND REPRESENTATION BY THEIR PEAK BODY.

ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

Annual Turnover	Annual Fee (includes GST)
Below \$70 000	\$77
\$70 000–100 000	\$165
More than \$100 000	\$214.50

Organisation name

Contact person

Position

Email

Address

State Postcode

Telephone Facsimile

Is your organisation a peak body? yes / no

Total enclosed \$

Cheque (payable to ALA Inc, PO Box 308 Jamison Centre ACT 2614)

or Bankcard Mastercard Visa

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Cardholder's name Expiry date

Signature Date

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INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

Annual Income	Annual Fee (includes GST)
Below \$25 000	\$49.50
\$25 001–\$45 000	\$77
\$45 001–\$65 000	\$99
More than \$65 000	\$115.50

Name

Address

State Postcode

Telephone Facsimile

Email

Organisation

Total enclosed \$

Cheque (payable to ALA Inc, PO Box 308 Jamison Centre ACT 2614)

or Bankcard Mastercard Visa

.....

Cardholder's name Expiry date

Signature Date

Tick to receive a receipt



CALENDAR

2–8 September

Adult Learners Week

To see the winning photos and stories, and to find an event near you, visit the website.

Contact: John Cross,
p (02) 6251 9887, f (02) 6251 7935,
<http://www.adultlearnersweek.org>

19 September

Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning

Staffordshire University is hosting a major conference, where policy and progress will be critically examined.

Contact: Carmel Dennison,
p +44 017 8229 5731, f +44 017 8229 4856,
http://www.staffs.ac.uk/schools/graduate_school/news1.htm

24–27 September

An Educational Odyssey: Issues in Open, Flexible and Distance Learning

The University of Sydney and The Open Training and Education Network (OTEN) is hosting this forum for ODLAA (Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia) in Sydney.

Contact: David Roberts,
p 02 6360 5687,
<http://www.oten.edu.au/odlaa/frames.htm>

27–30 September

Place and the ecology of learning: Adult Learning Australia Conference 2001

Sessions will include field-based presentations, case studies, learning circles and workshops. Guest speakers will include local traditional Aboriginal landowners, adult educators and indigenous park rangers.

Contact: Helen Spiers,
p 08 8979 2257,
<http://www.ala.asn.au/conf>

29 September–1 October

Education Futures and New Citizenship

The Biennial Conference of the Australian Curriculum Studies Association.

Contact: Australian Curriculum Studies Association,
<http://www.acsa.edu.au/2001confinfo.htm>

4–6 October

cpe.dot.com

A conference to explore the nature of Continuing Professional Education in the dotcom world, and the challenges for policy-makers, providers and practitioners. Our location for 2001 is historic Beechworth, Victoria, a venue refurbished and set in a vast botanic wonderland.

Contact: Learning Landscapes Australia Pty Ltd.,
p 0260 565560, f 0260 565560,
e dlucardie@albury.net.au,
<http://www.ala.asn.au/pages/cpe2001.html>

8–14 October

Refugee Week

If you or your community group wants to do something to help the world's refugees and displaced persons, get involved with AUSTCARE Refugee Week. There will be lectures, festivals, exhibitions, competitions, merchandise, conferences and picnics all over Australia.

Contact: AUSTCARE, p 02 9565 9111, f 02 9550 4509, freecall 1800 244 450, e info@austcare.org.au,
http://www.austcare.org.au/events/events_frame.htm

10–13 October

The Changing Face of Adult Learning

The Adult Higher Education Alliance/ACE co-sponsored 21st annual conference will be held in Austin, Texas, at the Austin Marriott Hotel. The theme, 'The changing face of adult learning' will feature four tracks: technology and innovation, learners and educators, values and conflicts, and globalization and diversity.

Contact: Danney Ursery,
e ursery@acad.stedwards.edu,
<http://www.ahea.org>

15–17 October

NET*Working 2001: From Virtual to Reality

The latest in e-learning, online communications, wireless deliveries and how to take advantage of them are just a few of the topics to be presented by world experts at this upcoming VET conference.

Contact: Lindy Smith,
p 07 3234 1852, f 07 3234 0860,
e networking2001@det.qld.gov.au,
<http://flexiblelearning.net.au/nw2001>

24 October

Youth Arts and Social Change

A one-day forum at UTS for youth arts practitioners, youth workers, arts and cultural policy makers and managers, youth and community health workers, community cultural development workers, regional artsworkers, indigenous artsworkers and educators.

Contact: Michael McLaughlin,
e michael.mclaughlin@uts.edu.au

25–27 October

Youth Performing Arts Australia (YPAA) National Conference at the Sydney Opera House.

Contact: Michael McLaughlin,
e michael.mclaughlin@uts.edu.au or
artsplus@senet.com.au

1–4 November

A Literacy Odyssey

Hosted by the Queensland Council for Adult Literacy, and held at the Parkroyal Surfers Paradise, Queensland, this conference will cater for teachers of literacy and numeracy, vocational and workplace trainers, researchers in adult literacy/numeracy, managers and policy-makers.

<http://cwpp.slq.qld.gov.au/qcal/arch/2001-odyssey.htm>

25–28 November

International Forum on Education in Correctional Systems Australia

AEVTI, the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute, as the largest provider of correctional education in Australia, is organising and hosting this conference at Charles Sturt University, Bathurst. There will also be an art exhibition (inmate art) being run concurrently, plays written and performed by inmates, a cocktail party, film festival and so on.

Contact: Colleen Henry, Executive Officer to the IFECSA Conference,
p 02 9289 1040, f 02 9289 1470,
e henry_colleen@hotmail.com

30 November–2 December

Information Literacy: The Social Action Agenda

How is information obtained, interpreted and used for social action? The 5th National Information Literacy Conference will be held at the Education Development Centre Hindmarsh, South Australia.

Contact: Irene Doskatsch,
p 08 8302 6279,
e irene.doskatsch@unisa.edu.au,
<http://www.library.unisa.edu.au/events/ilconf2001.htm>

2–6 December

Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Conference 2001 will be held in Fremantle on the theme 'Crossing borders: New frontiers for educational research'

<http://www.aare.edu.au>

5–7 December

Renewing Communities in the Digital Era

Global CN2001: 2nd World Congress of Citizens' Networks conference, at the Intercontinental Hoteal in Buenos Aires.

Contact: Ken Young,
e ken.young@chisolm.vic.edu.au,
<http://www.globalcn2001.org>