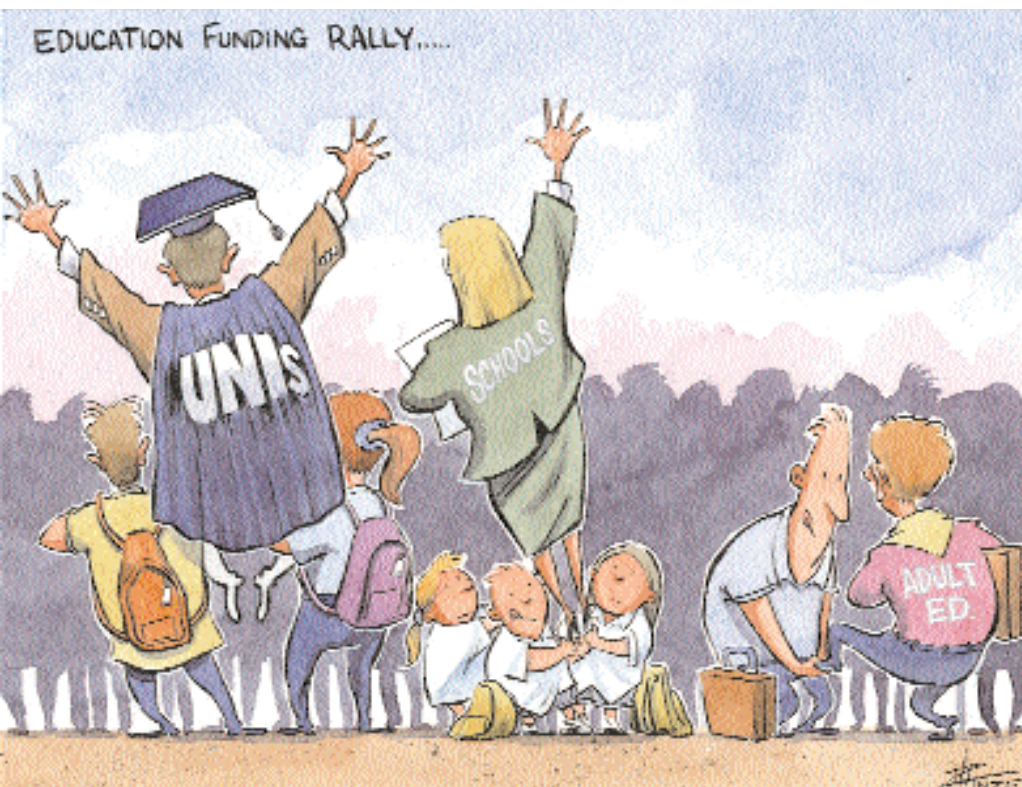


ISSUE 2 WINTER 2001

# ADULT LEARNING AUSTRALIA



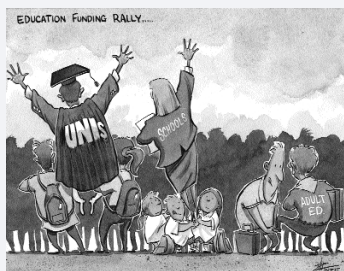
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© Hinze/Scratch! Media

ALA commissioned this cartoon to illustrate our lobbying campaign to 'Invest in lifelong learning'

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.

ARBN 074 892 005 ABN 78 533 061 672

#### 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)
- Jan Dunsby (TAS Branch Contact)
- Ellyn Martin (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](mailto:info@ala.asn.au)  
<http://www.ala.asn.au>

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ALA also publishes the *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, in April, July and November. ALA members receive this publication as part of their membership. Non-members may subscribe for \$66 (in Australia) or \$70 (overseas). Single issues are \$20 plus postage.

ALA gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Australian National Training Authority. In addition, we thank the many volunteers who submit material to *Adult Learning Australia*.

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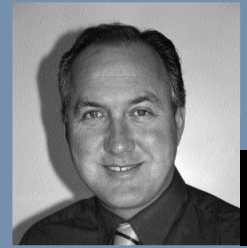
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## FROM THE EDITOR

TONY BROWN



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# Redefining our purpose

Reviewing and redefining an organisation's purpose is essential if it is to meet the new challenges that are constantly emerging.

Two years ago ALA adopted a new name to indicate a clearer purpose about its orientation and work. And last year the Executive re-focused on identifying the key values, purpose and goals of a national adult learning association at the start of the 21st century.

Over its 40 years, the Association has had different emphases. Today it still combines different roles – it is a mix of a professional association and a network of practitioners and researchers. It has a lobbying and representative role and provides information services, and it draws in a broad range of individual and organisational members. For some this diversity leads to misunderstanding.

Recently I had dinner with a good friend who told me that ALA was too academic. At other times people have said ALA is too focused on neighbourhood houses, too dominated by NSW (or Victoria), or still reflecting 1970s community-style education. In the membership survey last year one respondent said ALA is too dominated by left-wing environmental and Aboriginal issues while another said ALA is just a mouthpiece for government departments.

It is possible to see all of these things in ALA's activities but none seem to present an accurate portrayal of the Association's work. The composition of the current

Executive reflects the breadth of the Association's membership. There are five members from ACE centres, three from university adult education centres, two consultants working in the community sector, one from TAFE, one from a business education centre, one from a community centre and one from a continuing education languages centre. There are members from every State and Territory, eight women and six men. And it could still be more representative.

In this context it is important for the Association to state clearly what it stands for, what values it promotes and to indicate how it intends to achieve those goals. In this issue we reproduce the Directions Statement which was considered by the National Conference last November and approved by the Executive in February this year.

Our major activity in 2001 is to promote the importance of lifelong learning and to ensure that it is understood as more than re-funding universities, resourcing innovation and scientific research. It is equally about redressing the learning divide, opening access to information and communication technologies, to making sure that adults have increased control over their learning.

The key to this activity is to involve as many organisations and interests as possible in developing a national lifelong learning policy. The potential of a national policy is to integrate the array of individual initiatives and

needs that are currently being worked on or proposed.

A national policy can incorporate the separate innovations going on – scientific research, citizen education, learning circles, learning communities, learning accounts and other tax proposals, vocational education, internet access and information literacy, bridging the learning divide, new approaches to informal learning, the learning needs of the ageing, connecting public education campaigns, special education needs for the disabled, sector specific initiatives such as Farm Bis, and more.

Clearly, a wide range of organisations and individuals support new initiatives for lifelong learning in Australia. In this issue we reproduce part of a recent paper from the Business Higher Education Roundtable on this topic.

What is missing is the necessary policy authorisation and facilitation that only the national government can provide. While there are a number of important and exciting initiatives being developed by some companies, some State Governments, some community organisations, they remain one-offs until there is the supporting framework of a national policy and commitment.

Ignoring the need for that framework means that the work needed to coordinate existing initiatives will be delayed at a growing cost to Australia. ■

## British blind to Canadian research

Teresa Cairns' article 'For the sake of informality' (Adult Learning Australia Issue 1, 2001, p.8) explores an important and little recognised field of adult learning. However I was surprised to find in it a section headed 'Research' that began "We know very little about informal learning activities" and went on to describe areas in which the author sees urgent needs for research. Why does she not acknowledge Allen Tough, of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, whose groundbreaking research in the late 1960s opened up this whole field of investigation? The Canadian project New Approaches to Lifelong Learning (NALL) – which she mentions approvingly – clearly acknowledges Tough's work. Can it be that the unspoken 'tradition', whereby adult educators in the UK disregard anything in the field of education that emanates from the other side of the Atlantic, is alive and well in NIACE?

Allen Tough's first major contribution was his book *The Adult's Learning Projects*, published in 1971. His researchers had discovered that the vast majority of the adults they surveyed undertook many serious learning projects in the course of each year and that the overwhelming majority of these were undertaken without the involvement of any recognised education institution. Applied to

our Australian situation, this would mean that the statistics of adult participation in ACE represents only the tip of the iceberg of adult learning, the bulk of which is undertaken informally and goes unrecognised in educational surveys, particularly those concerned with lifelong learning.

In a talk he gave at the third NALL conference at OISE in February 1999 (within the timespan of Cairns' references), (*see* [www.oise.utoronto.ca/depts/sese/cs/ew/nall/res/toughtalk.htm](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/depts/sese/cs/ew/nall/res/toughtalk.htm)).

Tough's records that there have been something like 55 replications of that original research and sums this up by saying:

*It doesn't seem to matter where you are or what group you study, you get a very similar picture of informal adult learning, and that for me has actually been the highlight of all this research [...] people just don't seem to be aware of their own learning. They're not aware of other people's learning, educators don't take it into account, and so on. So there's this normal, natural thing going on, people are spending 15 hours a week at it on an average, and yet it's not talked about, it's not recognised, it's sort of ignored or invisible. It seems to happen in all demographic groups.*

'We know very little about informal learning activities'? Hardly, I think. ■

*Jack McDonell, Victoria*

## COMINGS AND GOINGS

**Peter Kirby** has been appointed as the new Chair of Adult Community & Further Education Board (ACFEB) in Victoria. Most recently responsible for the Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria, Peter is the Chair of National Centre for Vocational Educational Research (NCVER).

**John McIntyre** has retired from his position as Director of the RCVET at UTS. John is a former ALA Executive member and has been a key researcher into ACE.

Also retiring from UTS at the end of 2000 was **Griff Foley**, the first Director of the Centre for Popular Education.

**Rodney Wangman** has taken up his new position as CEO of the Continuing Education Centre (CEC) at Albury-Wodonga. Rodney replaces **Dorothy Lucardie**.

**Vaughan Croucher** has left the ACT Office of Adult Education and Training to become Dean of Canberra Institute of Technology's Division of Learning Services.

**Daryl Dymock** has moved from UNE to take up the Deputy Director position at Flinders University's Centre for Lifelong Learning and Development.

At ACOSS, **Betty Hounslow** has retired as Executive Director, and been replaced by **Megan Mitchell**.



## A 'TRULY NATIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING SYSTEM'

"There is widespread agreement, in Australia and internationally, that any nation without a genuine commitment to lifelong learning will find itself disadvantaged in the global economy in which knowledge is the prime economic resource." So said Peter Veenker, chief executive of the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) at the AUS-TAFE Conference in Darwin. "It is critically important Australia matches the European Union's commitment to lifelong learning (which describes it as an essential policy for the development of citizenship, social cohesion and employment)."

## CAPITAL FUNDING FOR ACE IN VICTORIA

Ninety-five adult education providers received funding under the Victorian government's \$9 million ACE Capital Funding Program. Two complete new facilities were funded, though these weren't the most costly projects as some renovations cost up to \$700 000. One third of the applicants sought funding to add or extend teaching space, and 10% specified the need for information technology facilities. Funding was also allocated for building restoration and upgrades (20%), amenities including car parks, kitchens, storage areas, offices and toilets (20%), and facilities such as air-conditioning, heating and security systems (15%). [Source ACE(Vic) Newsletter, March 2001]

## NEW NCVER REPORT ON ACE

NCVER is about to release a new report on ACE statistics based on 1999 figures. This is the most up to date collection of ACE statistics and NCVER's intention is to make it an annual report. *Australian Adult and Community Education: Overview* has been prepared by the Data Reporting and Analysis branch.

## CHARITIES INQUIRY EXTENDED

The Inquiry into the definition of charities and related organisations has been extended by the Treasurer to 30 June 2001 to complete its report. The Committee has received more than 350 submissions from interested individuals and organisations. Given the number of submissions to be considered by the Committee, and the complexity of the issues involved, the Chairman of the Inquiry, the Hon I.F. Sheppard AO, asked that the Government extend the reporting date from 31 March to 30 June 2001.

## YEAR OF THE VOLUNTEER

To keep up with the range of activities, awards, conferences, postcards and other information for the International Year of the Volunteer go to [www.iyv2001.net](http://www.iyv2001.net). The site has been developed and is maintained by Volunteering Australia and provides links to the UN's site at [www.iyv2001.org](http://www.iyv2001.org). An international Conference will be held in Melbourne between 21–23 October on the theme 'Volunteering: Real choice, real change'. More information is at the website.

## LLENs

The Victorian Government has granted 15 regional communities funding for Local Learning & Employment Networks, a new program for young people. Of the 15, Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and South Gippsland all have ACE centres working on the projects. The next newsletter will feature a story on South Gippsland LLEN activity.

## MIT OPENS ACCESS TO COURSE MATERIALS ON THE WEB

Other universities may be striving to market their courses to the internet masses in hopes of dot-com wealth. But the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has chosen the opposite path: to post virtually all its course materials on the web, free to everybody. President Charles M. Vest of MIT said that the giveaway idea came in a 'Eureka moment' as the institute – like nearly every other university – brainstormed and soul-searched about how best to take advantage of the internet. "We've learned this lesson over and over again. You can't have tight, closed-up systems. We've tried to open up software infrastructure and that's what unleashed the creativity of software developers; I think the same thing can happen in education." ■

ALA CAN HELP YOU LOBBY FOR BETTER RESOURCES FOR ADULT LEARNERS.

TONY BROWN EXPLAINS HOW.

## Campaigning for lifelong learning

There's no two ways about it; the Commonwealth government's support for community based adult education is paltry.

*No other area of organised education activity in Australia receives as little Commonwealth support as adult education and learning.*

Nearly 1.4 million adults enrol in a course at a local adult education centre each year. It might be at a community college, a U3A or a neighbourhood house. It might be an environmental education course or a parenting course in a community health centre. It might be an introduction to the internet or a short advanced course on web directories. Or it might be one of a hundred other interests adults pursue. What's sure is that unless the course leads to a qualification, the Commonwealth won't be supporting it.

At the present time, the Commonwealth provides around \$750 000 for its 'Adult and Community Education' Program. All of that is given to support research into adult education, to promote Adult Learners Week and to support a national non-government body ALA. None of it goes to directly support adult education providers or adult learners.

No other area of organised education activity in Australia receives as little Commonwealth support as adult education and learning.

And yet the political parties say they support education and learning and recognise the need for Australia to become more knowledgeable and more innovative.

What can we do about it? Firstly, we have to realise that changing this situation requires adult educators and learners to become active in raising these issues. Nothing will change without sustained effort and education. Secondly, we have to inform the policy-makers, especially politicians, just how critical adult education is to Australia's future.

For these reasons, ALA has compiled a lobbying toolkit for the 2001 federal election. *Lifelong Learning: Investing in a Better Society – A guide to lobbying for the 2001 federal election* provides a summary of the policy and funding proposals sent to all MPs and Senators before this year's Budget, and a do-it-yourself guide to lobbying. It includes draft letters for organisations and learners to use when writing to politicians, and comes with a poster and a bumper sticker. Encourage those in your centre and community to support this campaign to invest in lifelong learning. The toolkit will help adult educators prove to local members that adult education is a crucial community asset.

Invest in  
**LIFELONG LEARNING**  
*for a better society*

Adult Learning Australia's agenda for the 2001 federal election. Get informed and involved at [www.ala.asn.au/agenda2001](http://www.ala.asn.au/agenda2001)

*The sticker sent out with the lobbying toolkit*

As the Canadian writer John Ralston Saul said, “Highly sophisticated elites are the easiest and least original thing a society can produce. And the most difficult and the most valuable is a well educated populace.”

Given that 4.4 million Australian adults have less than 12 years school education and 30% of school children have not completed their HSC, now is the time to stop the learning

divide from widening. And for that to happen the Commonwealth needs to increase its investment in lifelong learning for all. ■

*Copies of the toolkit are available from ALA (02 6251 7933) for \$8 (\$6 for members).*

*Visit [www.ala.asn.au/agenda2001](http://www.ala.asn.au/agenda2001) to download tools.*

## The critical importance of lifelong learning

The Business/Higher Education Roundtable Taskforce (BHERT) on lifelong learning recently released a position paper titled *The Critical Importance of Lifelong Learning*. It is the latest of a number of papers and articles from associations, organisations and networks arguing the need for a broad national approach to lifelong learning.

In the introduction to *The Critical Importance*, a number of priorities are identified as a starting point for policy discussion by federal and state governments, business, universities and other education providers.

*Policy must also address the fundamental, political and social issues that underpin these priorities.*

*The adoption of a multi-faceted approach to policy development (must) address the complex interplay of the three major aims of lifelong learning:*

- *a more highly skilled workforce,*
- *a stronger democracy and more inclusive society, and*
- *a more personally rewarding life.*

The paper refers to the international context of lifelong learning policy development and the themes that run through the deliberations of various agencies:

- *an emerging awareness that notions of the knowledge economy and the learning society are important and result in educational imperatives,*

- *an acceptance that a new philosophy of education and training is needed, with institutions of all kinds – formal and informal, traditional and alternative, public and private – having new roles and responsibilities for learning,*
- *the necessity of ensuring that the foundations for lifelong learning are set in place for all citizens during the compulsory years of schooling,*
- *the need to promote a multiple and coherent set of links, pathways and articulations between schooling, work, further education and other agencies offering opportunities for learning across the lifespan,*
- *the importance of government incentives – for individuals, educational providers, employers, and the range of social partners with a commitment to learning – to invest in lifelong learning,*
- *the need to ensure that by emphasising lifelong learning we do not reinforce existing patterns of privilege and widen the existing gap between the advantaged and the disadvantaged, simply on the basis of access to education.*

Continued access to education and training for all a country's citizens is seen as an investment in the future, a pre-condition for economic advance, democracy, social cohesion and personal growth. ■

*More reports and papers are on ALA's lifelong learning page at [www.ala.asn.au/lll.html](http://www.ala.asn.au/lll.html).*

WHAT AND WHO IS ADULT LEARNING AUSTRALIA? OUR DIRECTIONS STATEMENT HAS BEEN CIRCULATING AND DEVELOPING SINCE JULY 2000. DELEGATES TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN NOVEMBER APPROVED THE FINAL VERSION.

# Your national adult learning organisation

Adult Learning Australia (ALA) is the peak national organisation for adult learning providers and facilitators and a voice for adult learners. ALA is a non-government organisation with a membership drawn from the broad spectrum of adult education and learning in the public, private and community sectors. Established in 1960, ALA has state and territory branches and a national office in Canberra.

*Through leadership, advocacy, advice and action we promote and support lifelong learning, working towards a learning society that is democratic, nurturing, productive and sustainable.*

- ALA is committed to promoting the learner's voice and needs and working for systems of adult learning that value learners' active involvement in decision-making.
- ALA is committed to developing processes of action and critical reflection so that it models and supports good practice in the field of adult education and learning.

## OUR PURPOSE IS TO:

- represent the interests of adult learners,
  - work for a learning society that widens and extends opportunities by securing access to learning for adults at every stage of their lives, in both formal and non-formal settings,
  - work collaboratively with organisations, institutions and individuals concerned with adult learning to strengthen advocacy for lifelong learning,
  - inform all those interested in the field of adult learning through writing, exchange, discussion, and professional development,
  - advocate learning as central to the process of community development and to work towards building learning communities, and
  - celebrate the joy of learning.
- ALA members share a commitment to build a learning society. We believe that learning through life provides a means by which people can grow and develop, and make an active contribution to the development and transformation of their own community and the society in which they live.
  - ALA recognises the key role adult learning plays in combating poverty, inequality, ignorance and social exclusion as well as promoting democracy, creativity, imagination and economic development.
  - ALA is committed to striving for adult learning provision that is accessible to and inclusive of all, particularly those who experience educational, social or economic disadvantage.



## OUR AIMS ARE TO:

- promote the importance and value of adult education and learning,
- participate in developing adult learning policies that shape and enhance adult education and learning at local, regional and national levels,
- advocate for and represent the interests of adult education learners, providers and deliverers,
- build positive working relationships with other organisations committed to lifelong learning,
- develop a national adult learning community of educators, facilitators and enablers,
- foster new educators and support the on-going professional development of adult educators in their diversity, and
- develop as a learning organisation.

## KEY ACTIVITY AREAS

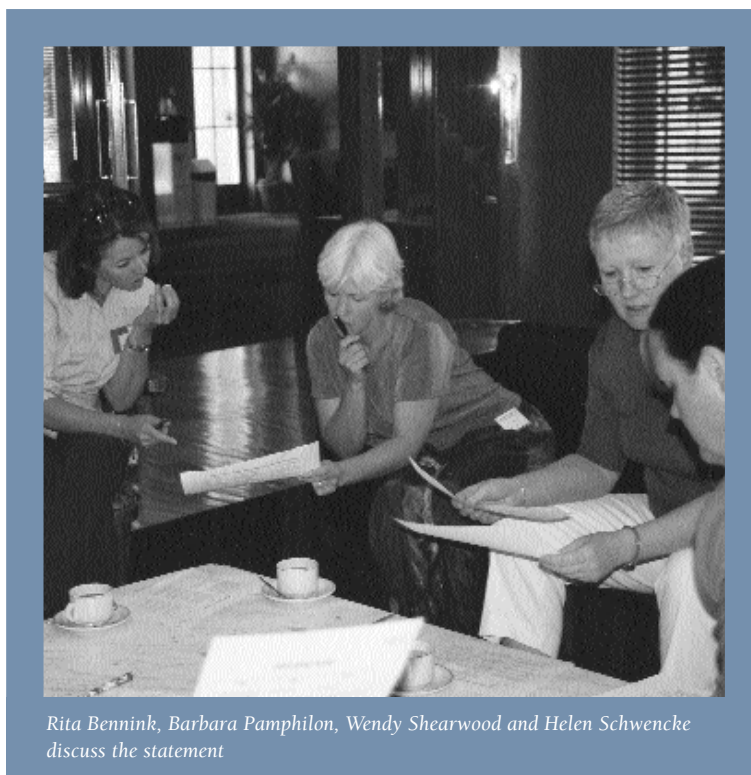
*Representation, advocacy and action:* ALA takes up adult learning issues with national government and agencies, industry and community organisations.

*Information and innovation:* ALA keeps abreast of communication technologies in print and electronic media to support and inform members and the adult learning community.

*Alliances and networks:* The field of adult learning is broad and diverse. ALA seeks co-operation on common concerns with other organisations and networks, within Australia and internationally.

*Governance and resources:* Democratic and inclusive governance directs ALA's management of resources to promote lifelong learning. Renewing and developing leaders underpins ALA's governance practices.

*Principles, participation and policy:* ALA plays a role in broad issues of civil concern, highlighting learning's importance for an active informed citizenry.



Rita Bennink, Barbara Pamphilon, Wendy Shearwood and Helen Schwencke discuss the statement

## CURRENT STRATEGIES

*Representation, advocacy and action:* national summit & policy on lifelong learning; remove the GST on ACE; support learning cities/towns and communities.

*Information and innovation:* learning circles – national and local initiatives; informed print and web resources on adult learning; understanding new ways to work with technology.

*Alliances and networks:* collaborative work with other educational and non-educational organisations on policy areas of common interest; strengthen networks through common activity; maintain international links.

*Governance and resources:* develop future adult learning leaders; develop new advocacy skills and information services; aim for greater financial self-reliance; expand membership within adult learning fields.

*Principles, participation and policy:* reconciliation – learning together; educating for active citizenship; investigate a code of ethics for members. ■



# Make the connection

WITH ADULT LEARNERS WEEK, 2-8 SEPTEMBER

Adult Learners Week celebrates lifelong learning in Australia. It serves to:

- promote learning opportunities available to all Australian adults,
- recognise and reward the efforts of those who have devoted time and energy to study or to providing the best possible learning experiences, and
- provide an invitation to everyone to consider what form lifelong learning can and should take in this country.

This year will be the seventh time Australia has hosted Adult Learners Week and it will be the second international Week.

In 2001 a focus for Adult Learners Week is 'connections'. The wording of the slogan 'Make the Connection' emphasises two key aspects of learning in contemporary Australia.

'Make the Connection' is a call to action for all Australians to actively seek out learning opportunities, and to get in touch with learning providers. The allusion to information technology emphasises the importance of online communications as an important source of information and, in an increasing number of instances, a source for learning in itself.

'Make the Connection' also alludes to a key benefit of learning. Learning is not simply an end in itself, but a way of making connections to the world, to the nation, to the local community and to family. Learning is also a way of making connections within one's own life and life-path, providing a link between past experiences and aspirations.

In a world filled with information and global communication, learning to connect, and using learning as a way of making connections, is of vital importance. Through encountering new skills, thoughts and pieces of information, and through participating in learning activities, everyone can become more connected.

Adult Learners Week plays host to many hundreds of activities. Most events are organised at the local level, by learning providers large and small, as a way of offering members of their immediate community direct access to the experience of adult learning.

In the past, learning providers have held open days, sample classes, learning fairs, displays of student work, performances, competitions, or have taken their organisation 'on the road'. Such activities promote adult learning and offer members of the community an insight into what is involved in adult learning, who offers it and where.

**PROMOTE YOUR EVENTS AT** [www.adultlearnersweek.org](http://www.adultlearnersweek.org)

Learning providers can promote their activities free of charge on the Adult Learners Week website. It contains comprehensive information about the Week specifically for learning providers, including handy hints and downloadable promotional materials. A generic advertisement is available, in two sizes, for use free of charge in newsletters, journals and the free press.

The website also contains the latest information on guests' itineraries and everything else you need to know about the Week.

## HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE

Each State and Territory hosts lectures, launches and other key events, and offers a number of awards. Two awards are offered nationally, and two competitions are held, for photographs of and writing about adult learning.

## TOLL-FREE HELP FOR LEARNERS

This year Adult Learning Australia is also coordinating a toll-free adult learning helpline pilot project to coincide with Adult Learners Week. Conducted in Tasmania during the Week, the pilot scheme will be used to gauge the feasibility of a conducting a helpline on a larger scale in the future. Modelled on a highly

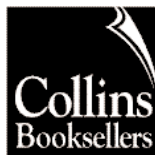
successful service operated in the United Kingdom, the helpline will provide callers with information about learning options in their area, and possible learning pathways and other information such as childcare and finances.

## AWARDS

A number of awards honour the efforts and achievements of adult learners and adult learning providers. There are two national awards, and various awards in each State/Territory, for learners, providers, tutors, programs, communities and so on. National awards are as follows. The Reconciliation Learning Program award recognises programs designed to promote reconciliation and learning among non-indigenous and indigenous Australians. The Community Learning Leader award recognises an individual, organisation or program that has successfully extended learning opportunities beyond educational institutions. Nominations must be submitted on the official award form and must be received by the close of business on 31 July. All nominees receive a certificate. For details of awards in your State/Territory, contact your State/Territory Coordinator.

## TELL US A STORY ABOUT ADULT LEARNING

Write 750–1500 words of original, unpublished work, and you could win one of two \$500 Collins Booksellers vouchers. It could be your story. It could describe your fears, your goals, your experiences, your sense of fulfilment. Or it could be a work of fiction set within an adult learning situation. Entries for the Collins Booksellers Writing Competition close 31 July. Before you send your story you must obtain a copy of the conditions of entry.



## SHOW US WHAT ADULT LEARNING LOOKS LIKE

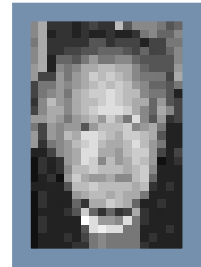
What does adult learning look like? Where does it take place? Who is involved? What do adult learners do? Take a photo of a class, a learning circle, an activity, or a visit to a zoo.



Enter the Ricoh Australia Photo Competition for a chance to win one of two Ricoh RDC 6000 digital cameras. Entries close 31 July. Before you send your photos you must obtain a copy of the conditions of entry.

## PATRON

Governor-General designate, Archbishop Peter Hollingworth, will be the new Patron of Adult Learners Week. His background in community and social issues and his personal experience as a mature-age learner makes him an ideal Patron for the Week. He has been Executive Director of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, President of the Victorian Council of Social Service, Australian of the Year, and Victorian Father of the Year. He has written four books on poverty and community affairs, and the National Trust has declared him a living treasure.



## GUESTS, FRIENDS AND FACES

A feature of the Week is a visit from overseas by people prominent in the adult learning world. The guests tour around the country giving talks, and taking part in other national activities such as the Adult Learners Week Symposium. Within Australia, prominent people are invited to become 'Friends of ALW', as a way of raising the profile of the Week, and to encourage more Australians to become actively involved in lifelong learning. 'Faces of ALW' are learners with inspiring stories to tell. Their faces and their stories form the basis of promotional material for the Week.

## INTERNATIONAL GUEST: BILL LUCAS

Bill Lucas is the Chief Executive of the Campaign for Learning (UK), which has launched Family Learning Day, created the National Learning Forum, organised Learning at Work Day and created a new organisation: the Talent Foundation. He is also part of the national Individual Learning Accounts Advisory Group, a government panel on Sustainable Development Education, and the Editorial Boards of the *Journal of Change Management* and the *Journal for Lifelong Learning Initiatives*.



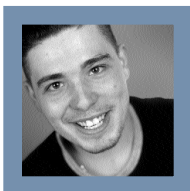
Bill advises various large organisations on learning matters. He writes regularly in the national press, has a monthly column in *t* magazine and is the author of more than 20 books about education and learning environments. His latest, *Power Up Your Mind: Learn Faster, Work Smarter*, will be published by Nicholas Brealey in June 2001.

Before his appointment to the Campaign for Learning he was Chief Executive of Learning through Landscapes. During this period he edited a government good practice guide on the learning environment of schools and received a Guardian Jerwood Award for excellence in voluntary sector leadership. Bill has also been Deputy Headteacher of a large secondary community school, a Commissioning Editor and the Head of a Creative Arts faculty.

For details of Bill Lucas' Australian itinerary visit [www.adultlearnersweek.com](http://www.adultlearnersweek.com)  
The Campaign for Learning website is at [www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk](http://www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk).

## FACES

Promotions for Adult Learners Week 2001 once again feature four faces. The people featured in the campaign are real people with real stories to tell, and they represent the experiences of hundred of thousands of Australians who have changed their lives through participating in learning.



*Paul*

Paul left school in year eight for the streets, living in a world of crime and despair and drifting without clear goals. Realising he had few prospects for a happy or fulfilling life, Paul decided that he wanted to turn his life around. He enrolled in a Certificate in General Education at Blacktown District Community College.

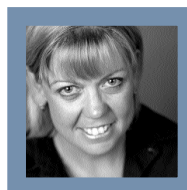
Initially finding the study hard going, Paul persisted, spending long hours in the park completing his homework or reading his course books. His aunt Mary and his friend Joe helped Paul settle into the life of a student, and gave him tips on how to succeed. Paul has now completed

Certificates I and II in General Education for Adults, as well as a Certificate course in Information Technology. Now he intends to go to university, and hopes, ultimately, to join the army as an information technology specialist.

For his achievements in learning, Paul was the winner of the ALW 2000 award for Outstanding Learner in New South Wales.

*Denise*

Denise is a mother of four who had not studied for over 20 years. She enjoyed school but then the realities of life – family, money and work – all got in the way. Once her children had started school, Denise began looking round for something to do with her life. She came across a course brochure from her local community college and she and a friend looked through it picking out the courses they would like to do. Together they enrolled in a childcare course.



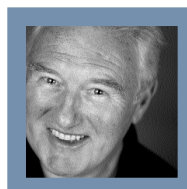
Studying with four young children was hard going, but Denise says she just put her mind to it and her determination got her through. She was determined that she would obtain a career that was more satisfying than her job as a sandwich hand.

As well as gaining her employment in a field that she loves, Denise's achievements in study also won her the 2000 Adult Learners Week Outstanding Learner award (Victoria).

*Alan*

Now aged 63 and retired, Alan worked for much of his life as a policeman and as a security guard. Seizing upon his retirement as an opportunity to develop new skills and interests, Alan enrolled in the University of the Third Age to learn French and to play the recorder.

Although enjoying music all of his life, Alan had never learnt to play an instrument or to read music. "When I started with the



University of the Third Age, I had no idea what the little black dots meant.” Now he reads music quite well, plays the recorder and participates in a University of the Third Age recorder group comprised of a wide range of people, most with little prior musical experience.

For Alan, learning in his retirement has changed his life. He has made new friends and is as active now as he ever was. Alan did not want to end up like his father, or other men of his own generation who become frail old men sitting in their gardens with no contact with the world. He wanted to continue to grow.

#### Zahra

When Zahra moved to Australia from Iran a few years ago, simple, everyday tasks like buying food from the shops were a nightmare. She could neither convey her wishes nor understand what people were saying to her. Zahra now speaks English beautifully, thanks to her determination and to classes run by the Adult Migrant English Service.



Having left school at an early age, Zahra never dreamt that she would have the opportunities that returning to study has offered her. With a new language, and good friends, Zahra has gained the confidence to dream. She dreams now of undertaking more study and embarking on a whole new life.

Zahra was eager to become involved in the Adult Learners Week 2001 faces campaign because she wants to inspire others in her position to do what she has done. She believes that everyone, especially Australians of non-English speaking backgrounds, should participate in adult education. It makes you strong, and is a great way to meet other people in similar situations and to share stories.

#### FRIENDS

“Teaching film history at the Centre for Continuing Education (in Sydney and in

Canberra) is the most rewarding thing I do. As someone who came late to teaching adult classes, I find adult education the most stimulating experience of my life.

“Lifelong learning is important as the excitement of new discoveries provides constant stimulation. I believe that to become a clever country, Australia needs to have a government that doesn't tax books and that realises the overwhelming importance of education.”

*David Stratton, film critic, lecturer and co-presenter of 'The Movie Show' on SBS Television*



“As a child, I was expected to accept without question, whatever my parents believed. As an adult, I discovered the joy of questioning and finding new facts, new ideas and new ways of tackling problems.

“We need to take a more caring and compassionate approach to people and value society rather than attaching a monetary value to everything. We also need to support free education for all who want to learn, including migrants and older people. Resources put into good education are never wasted.”

*Rosemary Stanton, nutritionist*

“I believe that there are two reasons to pursue lifelong learning: 1) acquiring new skills unlocks one's creativity and stimulates brain power, and 2) we often don't realise we have a particular skill, until tuition or coaching unlocks it.



“Australia needs to realise that investment in education at every level produces returns in every sector of society. I will never forget the joy I saw on the faces of older people in my former homeland of South Africa, as they acquired reading and writing skills.

“As I've discovered from 15 years in broadcasting and an eternity in life, one never stops discovering new elements to one's craft and skills. Doesn't it make perfect sense to seek professional assistance to speed up and maximise that process?”

*Anton Enus, presenter of 'SBS World News' on SBS Television*







"It always strikes me as a tragic notion that learning ends at school or university. I'm fortunate enough to work in a learning job – journalism – and that always reminds you how much more there is to know. Refuse to vote for any politician who doesn't emphasise the importance of education, science and new technology. They are our highest priorities.

"I want to learn more languages, astronomy, history and archaeology... The course books always seem very alluring so even if I didn't start off with a subject in mind, I end up wanting to do all of them."

*Jennifer Byrne, presenter of 'Foreign Correspondent' on ABC Television*



"My mother and I have gone along to short courses together and really enjoyed it. It gives us new things to talk about!"

*Julie McCrossin, presenter of 'Life Matters' on ABC Radio National*

"I am constantly involved in informal adult learning and, as I learn, I give to others what I have learnt. One needs goals and challenges in order to stay really alive. Routine is OK, but you can be deadly dull. Learning exercises the brain and imagination brings soul to the person.

"Learning should be fun! It's surprising how much easier it is when you don't make heavy work of it. Don't pursue activities you really don't enjoy or have a real interest in. Follow your heart and your instincts."

*Elizabeth Chong, author, teacher of Chinese cooking, consultant and regular cooking segment presenter on 'Good Morning Australia', Channel Ten.*

## PRIME MINISTERIAL SUPPORT



"It gives me great pleasure to send greetings to participants in Adult Learners Week from 2–8 September 2001.

"I understand that Adult Learners Week is now an international event with Australia one of over 40 countries participating in the first International Adult Learners Week in 2000. This year participants in Australia will

celebrate a second international week by taking part in a range of diverse and challenging activities based on the theme of *lifelong learning and Australia as a learning society*.

"Adult Learners Week is organised by Adult Learning Australia, the peak organisation for adult and community education providers. The Association undertakes a range of activities including an annual national conference and facilitating a number of special interest networks focused on people with disabilities and cross-cultural education. The Association's work is supported by many Australians from all walks of life who recognise the value of formal and informal learning throughout an individual's lifetime and who share an ongoing passion for learning. In an increasingly complex modern society a commitment to lifelong learning benefit both individuals and Australia as a whole.

"I send my best wishes to everyone involved in Adult Learners Week 2001 and wish you success in your future learning endeavours."

*John Howard, Prime Minister* ■

## CONTACTS

For information on Adult Learners Week 2001, try the website, the phone link (which, for the cost of a local call, will connect you to the office of the Coordinator in the State/Territory from which you dial), or the National Coordinator.

[www.adultlearnersweek.org](http://www.adultlearnersweek.org)

1300 303 212

National Coordinator: John Cross,  
p 02 6251 9887, f 02 6251 7935,  
e [j.cross@ala.asn.au](mailto:j.cross@ala.asn.au)

SINCE 1948, THE ADULT MIGRANT ENGLISH PROGRAM HAS HELPED MILLIONS OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

# Jennifer's English



When Jennifer Wang arrived in Australia from China in 1995, a simple English "hello" was beyond her capabilities. "I couldn't understand anything, not even 'hello, how are you?'. My ambition was to resume the career I had in China, but I knew if I was going to get anywhere, I had to begin by learning the language." Jennifer started studying with the Adult Migrant English Service in Oakleigh.

"The first sentence I remember learning was 'how long have you been here?'," she said. Armed with this new knowledge, Jennifer would practise her sentence on other people while waiting for a bus. To her surprise, people responded

positively to her on-the-spot interview. "They would answer my question and help me with my English", she said.

As well as class lessons in English, Jennifer was also able to study English at home through the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) home tutor scheme. "My home tutor was very patient and went out of her way to tailor the lessons for my needs. Because of her, my English improved very quickly, and I was given a job permanently and got a salary raise. [...] When I feel ready, I'll return to Chinese medicine. Then I will have achieved my ultimate goal, to help Australian people benefit from the natural treatments that Chinese medicine offers."

Since its establishment in 1948, the AMEP has helped more than 1.6 million migrants and refugees learn English. English-language tuition is administered by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs through the AMEP in each State and Territory. It is available to both:

- newly arrived adult migrants and humanitarian entrants from overseas, and
- people already in Australia who are changing from temporary to permanent resident status.

Clients are eligible to receive 510 hours of tuition. ■

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→ Lobbying Toolkit (Includes the booklet Investing in a Better Society: A Guide to Lobbying for the 2001 Election, 1 poster, 2 stickers) .....	\$8.00	(\$6.00)
→ Adult Learners Week promotional video .....	\$20.00	(\$16.00)

**Bulk buyers (of 10+ copies) receive a 15% discount.**

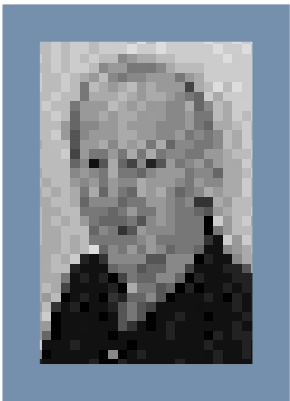
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# The future of ACE research

FOR JOHN McINTYRE, A NEW NCVER STUDY CREATES CLEAR DIRECTIONS

FOR ACE RESEARCH.



Where should ACE research go in coming years? Answering this question has just become easier thanks to a 'consolidation study' of past research published by NCVER. *A Consolidation of ACE Research 1990–2000* was commissioned by NCVER and authored by Barry Golding, Merryn Davies and Veronica Volkoff.

This is a timely, ambitious and comprehensive review, and the authors have taken stock of the last decade of research in a refreshing and critical way. It is a timely work because during 1990–2000, a wealth of material on ACE was produced. Some of this material was stimulated by the sector's need to position itself with regard to national training reform. Some of it emerged in the wake of the new legitimacy given to the field by the first Senate report – the 'Cinderella' or Aulich Report – which recommended that research document the sector's claimed achievements. These factors have created research of some breadth and depth about the sector.

The study is forthright yet balanced. It takes a broadly thematic approach, yet it is thoroughly grounded in the literature. Golding et al made a crucial decision to give us a commentary on the shaping forces that construct 'ACE research' rather than a dry account of many studies. (In a sense, the second Senate report has saved the authors the trouble of going over the ground in unnecessary detail.) The authors foreground the 'discourses' of

ACE, the frameworks that shape the meanings in play in research and that, consequently, mute alternative meanings.

The authors are sensitive to the politics of ACE, and aware of the way research was used strategically by various players (providers, national organisations such as Adult Learning Australia, and state authorities, especially in NSW and Victoria) to position 'ACE' in national and state policy. They recognise that boundary problems and definitional issues are part and parcel of 'the ACE sector' as it has been constructed since the Aulich Report. Going beyond the accepted research agendas, the study presents the 'dimensions' of ACE research in a persuasive way. It then addresses the challenge of finding new directions for ACE research, 'official', sectoral, private and scholarly.

*ACE research has become stuck.  
The field needs some new directions.*

Undoubtedly, the study needed to take such an approach, for in truth, ACE research has become stuck. The field needs some new directions, and the success of this study is that it clearly points a way forward.

This reviewer may be grinding his own ACE research axe, but the authors recognise that research is done from different perspectives; they appropriately criticise the dominance of policy-driven research; and

they illuminate the range of perspectives from which research can be ‘done’ and read, including those of practitioners, providers, bureaucrats and scholars. Perhaps there is an underlying sympathy for provider perspectives and that is entirely right, since they note that much state-sponsored work has indeed been done ‘on’ the sector rather than by practitioners.

A precis of the report is not needed here. Readers will find the executive summary succinct and (indeed, like the whole study) highly readable. It will be taken up by all those looking for an account of recent research but also for a grasp of the challenges facing the sector, as reflected in the glass of research. These challenges include self-definition and promoting itself within the greater Australian education and training context.

Future research will be influenced by the question of the scope and definition of the sector, which stands at a divide in its development since the Aulich audit of 1990–1991. If it is true that ACE research was implicated in defining and positioning the sector, then the future of ACE research cannot be separated from the future of the sector. Research will not get much further without a concerted effort to resolve the contradictory meanings of ACE in national and state policy.

As the debates around the naming of the Association brought out, the meaning of ‘adult community education’ is not infinitely elastic. It is not useful to have ACE include everything that is captured by the broader notion of ‘adult learning’. Is it desirable to continue with the official view that ACE denotes a sector of educational activity, a type of course (that is not exclusive to ACE providers) and a

kind of educational organisation? If in the narrow sense ACE refers to bona fide community agencies providing adult learning services, then this sharpens the focus for future research.

As this study shows, researchers have often struggled with the national consensus on the meaning and scope of adult community education and encountered difficulties in doing genuinely ‘national’ studies across the states and territories.

Thus the review is valuable in highlighting the agendas that drive ACE research. This is nowhere better illustrated than in the case of the degree of attention given to outcomes research. Such research was valuable in several ways: it helped to challenge the false distinction between narrow training and liberal adult education. It helped to broaden the meaning of vocational education and training in Australia. Within ACE, it focused attention on the relative narrowness of the ACE client base and directed attention to strategies to widen participation by identifying barriers and creating pathways.

The study suggests we might have been too narrow in conceptualising outcomes and not gone far enough in tackling the more difficult questions about how different kinds of outcomes are achieved for particular client groups. Indeed, for all the claims of the uniqueness of the ‘community’ sector we have yet to really show what kind of benefits, social and economic as well as individual, ACE provision has for the communities that ACE organisations serve. A broad view of outcomes must include the recreational

*The meaning of ‘adult community education’ is not infinitely elastic.*

and personal transformational, as well as economic and employment-related benefits.

Claims of the sector are great when made in terms of the 'transformation of communities' (compare Victorian developments) but research lags. The

*Claims of the sector are great when made in terms of the 'transformation of communities' but research lags.*

merits of the Victorian 'portraits' research notwithstanding, good social analysis is yet to

substantiate such claims. It will do so by showing how, in particular contexts, providers assist certain social groups to achieve social and economic as well as personal goals. Myths like these sustain the sector, but research needs to test them.

A new keyword here is ACE 'clientele', referring to a group of clients that share similar characteristics. Research shows that ACE caters to various clienteles of different socio-economic backgrounds, advantaged and disadvantaged. We need to know much more about the conditions under which providers identify and meet the needs of these different client groups. The notion of 'clientele' is crucial if ACE research is to meet the challenge of understanding providers in their community context, showing how they contribute as a social and economic force. This contribution is not reducible to what courses do for individuals. It is about organisations and their clienteles within particular social contexts. We need a better understanding of the 'ecology' in which ACE operates.

*A Consolidation of ACE Research* provides an excellent conceptual base for advancing this kind of work, and expanding the rationales for doing so. Though it seems a little equivocal about policy-driven

research of the post-Aulich period, such research was valuable precisely because policy-makers saw how policy could use research strategically. There is nothing like good research to challenge sectoral myths (such as the myth that vocational courses are incompatible with ACE philosophy), leading ACE to strike out in new directions.

At the national level, recent research directions have been wayward. This study is a noble exception that will also help correct future research directions. It will make stakeholders, particularly state and national agencies, more aware of where the research effort needs to go, while widening our understanding of the parameters that need to be taken into account and our 'terms of engagement' with ACE research.

NCVER's latest study has provided the sector with a critical apparatus for designing that future research effort. It will inform the MCEETYA ACE taskforce's policy work as well as its input to the design of national research projects. Any student of ACE who is contemplating a research degree will find this a valuable resource for framing their work. And not least, for those of us engaged in the field, this study lends new interpretations to the ACE research we have done. ■

*With his UTS colleagues, John McIntyre has researched the sector and commented on the ACE policy process over the last decade. He completed his PhD by publication in this area, and recently retired from UTS as the Director of the Research Centre for Vocational Education and Training. He continues to be involved in the work of Adult Learning Australia.*



SHOULD WE COMMIT TO ONLINE LEARNING IN ACE, AND IF SO, HOW?

AS ONE OF ONLY TWO ACE PARTICIPANTS IN ANTA'S FLEXIBLE LEARNING LEADERS

PROGRAM, JOSIE ROSE CALLS PROVIDERS TO ACTION.

# Getting real: Online in ACE

*How do we truthfully integrate technology into the community? [...] We need to think about how we bring technology to the community, and not just use the community as a dumping ground. This turns out to be a much more difficult question than anticipated. [...] You have to design a facility that is built around the community. You have to get your community to buy into your vision on its own accord before you even begin to plan to build a physical space. You have to get real.*

*M. Menchaca, 'Field of technical dreams: If you build it, will they come, and what if they do? Issues of equity online', 1997*

For the last four months of 2000, I had the wonderful experience of being part of the nationally funded ANTA flexible learning leader project. As a language and literacy teacher with a specific interest in the design and delivery of accessible content, I did not set out specifically to examine the role of ACE in the development of online teaching and learning. But I have some observations that I am keen to share.

It would be fair to say that the majority of ACE providers have computers that are hooked up to the internet. Does that mean that they are delivering online? Yes and no. For the foreseeable future, most ACE providers will be helping staff and students acquire the skills necessary to use the internet. So how do we have to get real? What might make a difference? A few critical factors need to work together for the implementation of online teaching and learning to become a reality.

Firstly, we need to bring about organisation-wide cultural change. As Menchaca would put it – we have to get the community to buy into our vision for online ACE. By 'community' here I mean the people that manage the centres. It is vitally important that managing committees understand, support and invest money into integrating online technologies across their programs. Vigorous debate around issues related to the introduction and maintenance of online learning needs to happen. Many teachers – not only in ACE – believe that online learning will diminish or erode the role of face-to-face teaching. They need to be given a voice in the discussion about the introduction and implementation of online services, and to understand that it will never be an either/or situation but a case of one enriching the other.

A second stumbling block for online ACE is the reality of internet and general computer access by teachers, students and centre workers. Most computers in the centre will be networked, but to one modem with internet sharing software, rendering connections to online learning platforms painfully slow. Access for teachers may mean fewer classes or that administrative work does not get done. It is a continuous juggle, as our greatest strength is also our greatest weakness. Because community provision is localised and often small, it can meet the demands of the community and react very quickly, but not when it comes to



*Because community provision is localised and often small, it can meet the demands of the community and react very quickly, but not when it comes to technology.*

technology. Often, equipment is outmoded or insufficiently vigorous to cope with the demand.

If online learning is to work, we need powerful machines and fast, reliable internet access. In addition, our computer systems need continual maintenance and regular upgrading. It is important for ACE to continue to lobby for continued and greater infrastructure support from funding bodies, as well as looking for partnerships with local businesses. In partnership with funding bodies and volunteers within business, we can make this happen.

The third – and for me most important aspect of the online ACE issue – is professional development. It is the key to a sustainable future for online ACE, because going online necessitates a steep learning curve for teachers. Suddenly they must be technical experts on HTML and web design, e-moderation, instructional design and trouble-shooting within their own centres: a big ask.

The sessional nature of the ACE workforce means that teachers work at many centres. That makes continuity and sustained professional development of any kind very difficult to achieve. But having said that, I see that more and more ACE teachers are keen and interested. Many have taken it upon themselves to learn more, and are enrolling in professional development offered by various organisations and government-sponsored agencies.

We need a critical mass of ‘master practitioners’ who can support the introduction and development of online teaching methods and course development. In order to do this we need funding for

professional development activities that are able to meet the local needs of providers for the long term. It will take some time before we have developed a critical mass of master practitioners. And even if and when we do, we will find that some centres will miss out. One (or if you are lucky, two) early adopters at a particular provider will be quite a luxury. There is a considerable burden on these people to continually fly the flag and convince management and their colleagues of its value. For online services to succeed in any ACE organisation, the issue needs to be taken up across the centre’s program delivery, not just in pockets. Staff who show interest and ability need support to train others through work-based learning projects as well as mentoring and coaching. Such a task requires a considerable investment of time and needs support.

If the powers that be are going to get real about developing online services, ACE policy-makers need to dedicate funds to adequately resource it. Funding sources such as LearnScope are excellent, but matching funding is a real issue for most community providers. We need to develop a professional development model for online education for teachers as learners that has a regional focus with strong local or provider-specific input.

ACE providers need access to the same software and hardware arrangements as schools and TAFEs. The introduction of notebooks and the flexible managers funding initiative in the Victorian TAFE system – which excluded ACE organisations – is a case in point.

So, what is the reality? How might online in ACE best be achieved? Regional networks



and partnerships are the key to developing sustainable and productive online communities that can share teaching resources and content. The Victorian Learning Networks is an excellent example of ACE organisations or TAFE and ACE organisations cooperating to produce and deliver quality online content that enhances and enriches face-to-face delivery. This arrangement allows teachers who have the interest and ability to become content developers. It will also allow those who are interested in teaching online to work alongside colleagues with specialist skills in

web design and instructional design to develop courses that suit them and their students, without having to become experts in multimedia.

What we need are good online teachers or e-moderators. This is an emerging skill – or even profession. We need teachers who can give students the same experience as they will find in the classroom and more – and I believe that ACE has always done that – and can do it. We know what's real! ■

*Josie Rose is Educational Technology Manager at Narre Community Learning Centre*

NEW RESEARCH REFUTES A COMMON PERCEPTION OF THE DIGITAL DIVIDE.

# Overcoming the digital divide

Access to and use of the internet and other telecommunications services are rapidly becoming a critical part of commerce, education and social participation. Groups with little opportunity to participate in the services provided by new technology will be increasingly disadvantaged socially and economically.

The concept of a 'digital divide' is being used to describe disparities in the use of the internet and new telecommunications services across different social groups. In Australia the debate has taken a regional focus because of differences in metropolitan and regional rates of access. Government policies have focused on supply-side issues such as the quality and cost of supply in regional Australia. However, evidence from overseas studies suggests that socio-demographic factors may also influence access to new

technology. This study explores the social and economic characteristics of Australians with different levels of access to and use of communications services.

The results show that a large proportion of Australians do not participate in the knowledge economy – not because of where they live, but because of their economic and social circumstances. The most important driver of internet access is educational qualification, followed by income. After accounting for other factors, region and residence by themselves do not explain differences in internet take-up rates. This result suggests that supply-side policy solutions will not be sufficient to overcome the digital divide. ■

*Rachel Lloyd and Otto Hellwig are researchers at the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling at the University of Canberra. This is an abstract of their research.*

RICK FLOWERS DESCRIBES HOW MARK LATHAM'S NEW BOOK CONTRIBUTES TO THE CRITICAL DEBATE OVER HOW TO EXTEND COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING.

## Mark Latham's vision of community-based learning



Mark Latham champions many of the things that ALA members have long valued. This is significant because Latham is an experienced member of the Australian parliament. Not so long ago, he was Shadow Minister for Education. We belong to an education sector that receives very little public or private funding and policy attention, so it is important that we read and engage with Latham's arguments. We need to encourage Latham and his parliamentary colleagues to exercise policy leadership around issues of community-based learning.

*What Did You Learn Today?* (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2000) is brief (100 pages of big font), and covers the whole gamut of education policy issues. In this review I focus on his ideas and arguments about community-based learning.

For Latham, education is "the one public policy which can deliver both economic efficiency and social equity" (1); and one of the few policy and program areas left where governments can significantly influence equity and regional development. He criticises government policies that continue to subsidise industry because he argues that free trade and the relentless expansion of giga-international corporations is inevitable. Latham asserts that corporations go where the skills and knowledge are. Therefore, Latham argues, governments should aim to invest in raising levels of skills and knowledge in

order to make regions more attractive to prospective investors. This is how he reckons governments can civilise global capitalism. His first book is, in fact, called *Civilising Global Capitalism*.

Latham's argument that education fosters development is, of course, contestable. Without accompanying structural change, will a vibrant learning community generate investment and jobs? Can we rely on free markets, even if many people do enjoy opportunities for learning and gain lots of qualifications?

Whatever position one has on the relationship between education and economics, a welcome feature of Latham's work is his recognition that non-accredited learning, be it inside or outside a classroom, should be considered an important part of any educational planning. He goes to great lengths to argue, as many of us engaged in the management of community-based learning have long done, that education does not just happen in schools, VET and higher education, it also happens in community settings. Latham says "with the emergence of the welfare state after WWII, government developed a mass system of formal education. It now needs to develop a new set of learning relationships with workplaces, parents, mentors, churches and other community groups" (6). Latham draws on the results of recent ANTA research about Australians' attitudes to education and learning to argue passionately that: "In an act of folly, state educationalists

have promoted the wrong kind of learning institutions, backing formal structures and qualifications even though the public has a preference for flexibility and informality” (77). (The ANTA research found that while the words ‘education’, ‘training’, and ‘study’ are turn-offs for many, the word ‘learning’ is a turn-on as it is associated with discovery, enjoyment and working with others.)

Like most ALA members, Latham values education that is responsive, flexible and informal. But what ideas does he have for supporting and extending it? It is around this question of ‘how’ that, I think, there is a need for more debate and discussion among advocates of community learning.

Latham suggests that education policy and funding needs a ‘third way’:

*Left-of-centre politics has usually asked itself: how can we shift more public money into government education institutions? Right-wing politics has taken a separate tack: how can we introduce market forces and increase the level of private investment in education? (4)*

Latham wants us to instead ask:

*Firstly, how can we extend the reach of learning beyond the classroom and into every life, in every part of society? And secondly, how can we mobilise more resources from all sections of society so that the potential of these new learning relationships is realised? (4)*

Is Latham arguing something that many in the so-called adult & community education (ACE) sector have long argued; that is, invest more money in ‘community-based provision’ and not just government provision? Either way, he raises the wider question about the role government should play in supporting community-based learning.

Latham’s position on the role of government is that it should act as a broker of community-based learning as much if not

more than as a funder. He argues for de-regulation of a particular sort; where funding is re-directed from institutions to individual lifelong learning accounts. If this were to happen, how would ACE providers and organisers of community-based learning fare? If one were to believe our propaganda about flexibility and responsiveness then ACE would have a bright future. How are Latham’s lifelong learning accounts different to ALA’s call for targeted learning accounts?

When Latham argues for individual learning accounts and for more learning partnerships I wonder if he is veering closer towards Ivan Illich’s vision (spelled out in *Deschooling Society*) of spontaneous learning networks rather than organised provision. When Latham engages in rhetoric about community learning building social capital I wonder if he sufficiently recognises the social class and age differences in participation and in qualification. While I recognise the need to enable a wide variety of partners – employers, unions, sporting clubs, health care providers, and others – to organise learning activities, I also support ALA’s call for the federal government to allocate \$12 million for a national Community Adult Learning Innovation Fund. A national organisation like ALA must exercise leadership in order to enable long term planning for organised provision, and to actively plan opportunities for empowerment rather than rely on goodwill and trust among unequal players in visions of social capital and learning communities.

Let’s take Latham’s example, and foster more discussion and debate about the strategies needed to extend community-based learning. ■

*Rick Flowers is Director of the Centre for Popular Education at the University of Technology, Sydney.*



IN THIS ISSUE, JANET EXAMINES SITES ON AND OF MUSEUM LEARNING.

# Museums online and sneaky learning

*“We like to think of ourselves as a place where people come for recreation. However, we like to enhance this experience by including information in all our exhibits that helps museum visitors understand themselves – as well as the society they live in – better. We call this ‘sneaky’ learning.”*

Kevin Sumption,  
'Where are the jobs in e-learning?', 2001

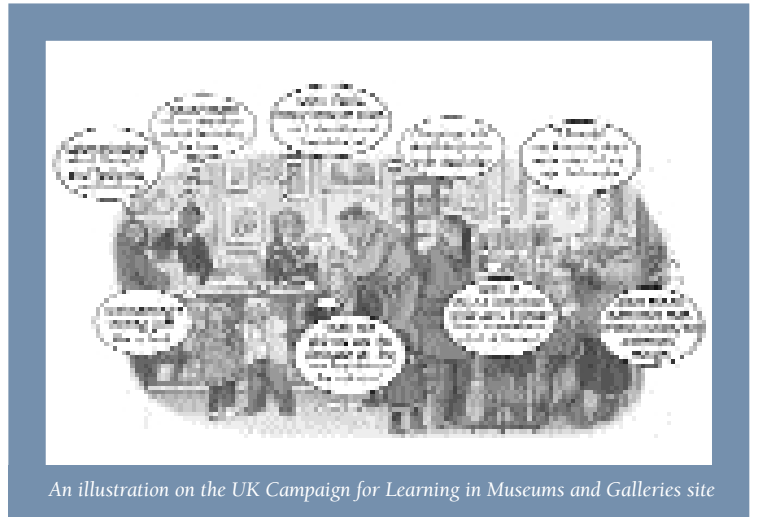
Campaign for Learning in Museums and Galleries “blends rhetoric and reality in pursuing learning in museums and galleries” in Britain. “The learning power of museums” is recognised by the Department for Education and Employment, which funds the site. This site is indeed a campaign, supporting and listing projects and encouraging involvement. Its illustrations by Posy Simmonds are a must see.

Archives and Museums Informatics and its associated site Museums and the Web annual international conference specialise in discussing museum websites.

Can a virtual museum visit be more satisfying than a virtual restaurant outing? The images of the objects on a computer

screen cannot match the impact of the real object. But collected into searchable databases, images of objects, plus text, can be used to plan museum visits, and provide access to people who cannot get to the physical museum.

Particularly helpful are searchable directories. Different approaches to creating directories are evident on AMOL:



Australian museums and galleries online and Picture Australia. The latter is a cross-collection search tool for finding images from the National Library of Australia and half a dozen other institutions.

AMOL – Australian museums and galleries online – is more than the directories at *Guide to Museums* and *Open Collections*. You can also pick up news of

developments such as this snippet  
 “Mildura Arts centre will host the  
 Dissolving Distance National Regional  
 Galleries Summit”.

‘Golden threads: The Chinese in regional  
 NSW 1850–1950’ is the best Australian  
 example I found of using the web as an  
 integral part of a museum project (rather  
 than simply a promotional tool for  
 exhibitions that would have been there  
 anyway). It catalogues references to  
 buildings and sites around NSW to  
 complement a travelling exhibition of  
 objects usually geographically dispersed  
 amongst regional galleries.

Powerhouse Museum Sydney:  
 science+design is distinctive for its online  
 web projects. You need to install Flash, or  
 Live Picture Zoomit to take full advantage  
 of 1000 years of the Olympic Games or  
 VR Photography of the Museum. Many  
 users won’t want to spend the time but if a  
 technology museum can’t experiment with  
 web applications, then who can?

The Open Museum Glasgow is a  
 promotion for outreach to the Glasgow  
 community, rather than an online learning  
 opportunity in itself. The Museum lends  
 “objects from the World’s largest civic  
 museums collection” and invites you to  
 “bring the wonder of Glasgow Museums’  
 collection into your own local venue”.  
 Another project of the site – 2000  
 Glasgow Lives – is “compiling a  
 multimedia oral history database that will  
 form an online resource”.

The Tate Museum site is not only  
 beautiful, vast (25 000 works and 12 000  
 images) and searchable. It also provides a  
 subversive interpretation of itself: the  
 Mongrel Tate website. Mongrel Tate is the

“home of 500 years of tasty babes, luxury  
 goods, own goals and psychological props  
 of the British social elite”.

Museums’ and galleries’ currency is images  
 and objects. The web does text best now,  
 but as screen resolution improves,  
 bandwidth allows faster transmission of  
 images, and the capacity of workstations  
 grows, we can anticipate richer online  
 museum experiences. ■

#### CAMPAIGN FOR LEARNING IN MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

<http://www.clmg.org.uk>

#### ARCHIVES AND MUSEUMS INFORMATICS

<http://www.archimuse.com>

#### MUSEUMS AND THE WEB

<http://www.archimuse.com/mw2001>

#### PICTURE AUSTRALIA

<http://www.pictureaustralia.org>

#### AMOL:

#### AUSTRALIAN MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES ONLINE

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

#### ‘GOLDEN THREADS:

#### THE CHINESE IN REGIONAL NSW 1850–1950’

<http://amol.org.au/goldenthreads>

#### POWERHOUSE MUSEUM SYDNEY:

#### SCIENCE+DESIGN

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

#### THE OPEN MUSEUM GLASGOW

[http://ourworld.compuserve.com/  
homepages/Nat\\_Edwards](http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Nat_Edwards)

#### THE TATE MUSEUM

<http://www.tate.org.uk>

*Janet Burstall is Information Manager at  
 Adult Learning Australia. Please note that  
 the ALA website will soon be hosting a  
 ‘Learning in museums network (Limn)’.*

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Are you interested in what our politicians are going to do about increasing access to adult community education? Do you want to be able to make informed decisions at election time? We are hosting a free public forum and lunch on Friday 15 June from 12:00–2:00pm. Speakers from the three major state political parties have been invited to present their party's policies on adult community education and lifelong learning.

After the presentations the audience will have the opportunity to direct questions to the panel of speakers who will be: The Hon Mark Brindal, Minister for Employment and Training, Ms Stephanie Key, Member of the Upper House and The Hon Mike Elliot, Member of the Legislative Council.

All interested members of the community are invited to attend at noon for lunch, with the presentations commencing at 12:30pm, at Fullarton Park Community Centre, 411 Fullarton Rd, Fullarton.

Please confirm your attendance by emailing [DenisB@wea-sa.com.au](mailto:DenisB@wea-sa.com.au) or phoning 08 8223 1272 by 5pm 13 June. ■

*Rita Bennink*

## NORTHERN TERRITORY

We are busily engaged in the task of creating a national conference with a difference. What is different about this year's ALA National conference? Thought you would never ask!

Where do we begin? Firstly, remember that you will be in the very north of Australia, and it can be quite warm during the middle of the day in September. Also, you are in the midst of a timeless land, with wonderful scenery. It is a land in which the traditional indigenous land-owners take much pride.

Jabiru – where the conference is being held, in the belly of a large crocodile – is the site of many intersecting places. It will be a chance to visit country that many will only see once in a lifetime. We have built into our program the opportunity to see wilderness areas and areas of indigenous importance. After all, such trips are a continuation of our own learning journeys and knowledge of place. We will take you on such a journey as we present local case studies of community education programs and then discuss the lessons from these for us as educators.

Of course there is also a place for presentations that meet the theme 'Place and the ecology of learning' (see the ALA website), and we ask you to submit for such as soon as you can. There is only limited accommodation available at Jabiru and the surrounding area, so book early and avoid the rush, or disappointment as the case may be. ■

*2001 ALA National Conference  
Development Team*



6 June

## European Year of Languages Conference

A one-day conference on 'The European year of languages: Perspectives on culture, education and politics' at The Contemporary Europe Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Level 2, 234 Queensberry Street, Carlton. This is an interdisciplinary conference that aims to bring together specialists from the educational and government sectors. Speakers will address a range of issues related to policy in Australia and Europe, and teaching European languages, studies and culture in Australia.

Contact: Kerrie Pandey, CERC,  
p 03 8344 9502, f 03 8344 9507,  
e [kpandey@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:kpandey@unimelb.edu.au)

22–24 June

## (Net)working together: Whakawhanaungatanga

The Adult and Community Education Association of Aotearoa New Zealand is holding a national conference to foster collaborative and cooperative networks and pathways among all those who share an interest in adult learning.

Contact: Tineka Wanakore-Eruera,  
p +64 7 858 5205, f + 64 7 858 5214

29 June–1 July

## Researching widening access: International perspectives

Top be held at Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland, UK, the conference will focus on research findings regarding the impact of the growing number of policies and initiatives to widen access to education in a number of different national contexts.

Contact: Claire Scott, p +44 141 400 5726,  
f +44 141 332 8214, e [c.a.scott@gcal.ac.uk](mailto:c.a.scott@gcal.ac.uk).

1–3 July

## Lifelong learning: Global perspectives in education

To be held in Beijing, the conference aims to: identify the current status and development trends in lifelong learning; analyse the challenges and opportunities for lifelong learning in the context of globalisation; examine innovative approaches in adult literacy and education; review the agenda for the Future of CONFITEA V and the Dakar Framework for action and its implications for concrete action in lifelong learning and adult education; and foster collaborative learning and partnership among students, researchers, teachers and other practitioners from different regions of the world.

<http://www.discover-india.com>

7–10 July

## Languages: Our common wealth

To be held in Canberra, the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Association's biennial National Conference will focus on the links between culture and language and how classroom teachers can use these links to improve practice. It will also provide a forum for sharing knowledge, examining approaches and clarifying objectives.

Contact: AFMLTA Secretariat,  
p 02 6281 6624, f 02 6285 1336,  
e [conference@conlog.com.au](mailto:conference@conlog.com.au),  
<http://www.spirit.net.au/afmlta01>

8–10 July

## 6th International Conference on Lifelong Learning and the Arts: '2001 – A spatial odyssey'

To be held at Birkbeck College, London, the conference will focus on physical spaces (community arts resources, adult education centres, galleries, museums, concert halls, theatres and libraries and so on); the spaces people reserve in their lives for participating in arts activities; and the space in philosophy inhabited by the contemporary discourse on the arts.

Contact: David Jones,  
p +44 01205 351520, f +44 01205 358363,  
e [david.jones@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:david.jones@nottingham.ac.uk)

10–12 July

## Tertiary teaching and learning conference: 'Dealing with diversity'

To be held at the Northern Territory University, Darwin, the conference will bring together a wide variety of people. Sub-themes will deal with the diversity of learners, the changing nature of teaching and learning, globalisation, cross-cultural issues, new methods and approaches and the application of technology.

Contact: Ms Bev Jackson,  
p 61 8 8946 6180, f 61 8 8945 1495,  
e [bev.jackson@ntu.edu.au](mailto:bev.jackson@ntu.edu.au),  
<http://www.ntu.edu.au/tlc>

18–20 July

## Adult Education and Social Development

To be held in Kerala, India, the conference will review innovative practices in the fields of education, human services and human resource development in different parts of the world, and identify the role and impact they have on social development.

Contact: Cle Anderson  
e [discoveryjourney@msn.com](mailto:discoveryjourney@msn.com)  
<http://www.discover-india.com>

6–7 August

## Pathways – the 2001 Careers Expo

To be held at the Wrest Point Conference Centre, Hobart, the expo will help young people, teachers and unemployed people make career choices and identify training opportunities.

Contact: Traycee Powell,  
p 03 6224 2430, f 03 6224 3774,  
e [expo@cdesign.com.au](mailto:expo@cdesign.com.au)

9–12 August

## 6th World Assembly of the International Council for Adult Education

The 6th World Assembly of the International Council for Adult Education ICAE will be held in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, with the theme 'The creativity of women and men: A strategic choice for tomorrow: Building a new agenda for local and global advocacy'. There will also be special celebrations, fair and an exhibition.

Contact: ICAE Secretariat,  
p +1 416 588 1211, f +1 416 588-5725,  
e [icac@web.ca](mailto:icac@web.ca)

10 August 2001

## Unlocking training packages: Success stories and practical strategies

This one-day forum at the University of Sydney will provide participants with ready-to-apply strategies to help them implement training successfully within the national framework. The program will feature up to twenty hands-on workshops led by experts from industry, education and relevant government bodies.

Contact: Shay Keating,  
p 03 9820 1300, f 03 9821 4392,  
<http://www.admintraining.com.au>

12–14 August

## Edutech 2001

To be held at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre in conjunction with a seminar series, Edutech 2001 will include more than 100 exhibitors featuring hands-on interactive demonstrations of the very latest technology

Contact: George Angelis,  
p 03 9819 0211, f 03 9818 8553,  
<http://www.ate.net.au/edutech>

24–27 September

## An educational odyssey: Issues in open, flexible and distance learning

To be held in Sydney at the Australian Technology Park, Redfern. If you are a manager, academic, teacher, lecturer, educational consultant, web-designer, instructional designer, researcher, educational technologist, student or evaluator, this forum will enhance your knowledge about the appropriate use of technology in education.

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's 2001 conference will be held at Jabiru in the Northern Territory. 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, e [hspiers@ntu.edu.au](mailto:hspiers@ntu.edu.au),  
<http://www.ala.asn.au/conf>