

ISSUE 4 SUMMER 2002

# ADULT LEARNING AUSTRALIA



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▲ Discovering the delights of Balinese cuisine in an ACE course at the Hervey Bay Senior College. From left: Rosemary Hancocks (ACE Teacher), Judy Schimke and Rene Curley. This photo, taken by Christel Schrank, was shortlisted in the ALW Camera House photo competition.

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 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 \$70. Single issues are \$24 plus postage.



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## FROM THE EDITOR

The front cover of this edition features one of the photographs, *Discovering the delights of Balinese cuisines*, shortlisted for this year's ALW Camera House photo competition. I have chosen it in honour of those who died in the Bali bombings and as encouragement to all those adult learners who are striving to understand the rich and varied culture of Indonesia.

This is not the time to retreat from the world but rather to increase our efforts to find peaceful ways to address the problems of division which have become so grave that they incite gruesome acts of terror. As Professor Robin Jeffrey, one of the authors of a recent report, *Maximising Australia's Asia Knowledge*, has stated:

*We've got a quiet crisis...Australia's expertise on Asia...is withering away at the very time that more and more Australians engage with Asia regularly for work and pleasure. We are in danger of engaging more and understanding less...For Australia's long-term harmony, prosperity and security, we need a far larger proportion of Australians equipped with languages and knowledge of Asia.*

Inside the cover, things are happier. I would like to warmly welcome Garry Traynor as ALA's new president, and Vaughan Croucher as a new member of the executive, as well as to thank outgoing president, Ned Dennis, for his support during my first months as executive director. Ellyn Martin has also retired from the executive, having shepherded the association through the tumult of the introduction of the GST.

This edition has stories about some impressive achievements, from George Shipp's lifetime commitment to adult learning to innovations in environmental education. It also tells you about some of the winners of ALW awards and publishes one of the four winning entries in the Collins Writing Competition, *Abu Combination*. Here's what the judges thought of James Watkinson's poem:

*This poem effectively moves the reader's focus from learning a skill with a mentor to making visible an often hidden aspect of men's learning. It beautifully conveys the rich and unforeseen benefits that can emerge from a simple shared learning experience.*

I am also delighted to announce details about a new scholarship. ALA sees the Innovation

Research Grant as part of its contribution to the goal, articulated in the Ministerial Declaration on Adult Community Education, to expand and sustain innovative community-based learning models. It also hopes that the research it fosters will bolster the argument that, in addition to this declaration, Governments must work towards the development of an overarching lifelong learning policy for Australia.

A survey accompanies this newsletter. I urge you to take the few minutes it will require to fill it out, for its purpose is to find out how the association can best serve you, its members.

With very best wishes for the holiday season and the New Year. ■

*Francesca Beddie*

## A NEW ALA SCHOLARSHIP: the ALA/ANTA Innovation Research Grant

ALA is delighted to announce the introduction of a scholarship of \$5,000. This grant will enable an ALA member(s) to undertake a research project designed to develop and document innovative practice in a specified area of adult learning. It is available to cover research costs only.

In 2003 the theme for the research will be **intergenerational learning**. Applicants are invited to submit a proposal for a project which investigates how such learning takes place in the community. The research should produce findings which will be of use to others wishing to encourage greater collaborative learning between generations.

It is a condition of this grant that the research be presented in the form of a paper or workshop to be delivered at the annual ALA conference in November 2003. As part of the final report, recommendations should be made on the practical application of the research.

Proposals should be no more than three pages in length (excluding the covering application form) and must be submitted, along with a curriculum vitae, to the ALA National Office by 20 January 2003. The research is to be conducted in the first half of 2003, although final presentations can be made in the second half of the year.

Applications with full conditions of the scholarship are available from the ALA National Office or from [www.ala.asn.au](http://www.ala.asn.au).

### ARTICLES OF INTEREST

#### *Learning communities in education and training: volumes 1 and 2*

University of Tasmania. Faculty of Education. Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia. Launceston: CRLRA, 2002. (CRLRA Project Report, 01/1)

This report is on a two-year longitudinal study, 'The role of VET in regional Australia', funded by the Australian National Training Authority. The aim of the project is to provide detailed information about what is occurring in the field of vocational education and training in Australia's regions and the various ways in which VET contributes to the economic and social well being of the regions. Detailed case studies are included. ■

Case studies may be accessed at <http://www.crlra.utas.edu.au/>

ISBN: 0859019969 (v.1)  
0859019950 (v.2)

#### *Building a national vocational education and training system*

Ryan, Robin. Adelaide: Flinders University Institute of International Education, 2002. vii, 170 p. (Studies in comparative and international education, no.1)

This publication focuses on the policy processes leading to the creation of the Australian

National Training Authority and provides a policy history of Australian vocational education and training. The subject of this study is the creation of national institutions in VET and it argues that throughout the 20th century, the structures developed in the search for national cooperation and coordination in VET have reflected the changing character of the Australian federation. ■

ISBN: 0958070415

#### TRAINING ON THE BOX

The ABC TV series exploring the challenges of owning your own business. *Eight Days a Week* premiered Friday 29 November, at 6pm and will run for 10 weeks. The series looks at a range of small businesses and covers issues such as training, marketing and cash management. ■

For more details visit

<http://abc.net.au/tv/guide/h181946.htm>

#### WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

Shaping our future is the project to develop the next VET national strategy for 2004-2010. Visit <http://www.anta.gov.au/dapStrategy.asp> for an update on the progress of the report. The discussion paper, *Shaping our future*, is due out early next year. ■

For more information contact Joyce Turnbull. Ph: 07 3246 2482 or email [turnbullj@anta.gov.au](mailto:turnbullj@anta.gov.au)

#### OBITUARY FOR JAMES WILFRED WARBURTON (1917-2002)

Jim Warburton, OAM, former Director of Adult Education (later Continuing Education) in the University of Adelaide (1966-1981), died at the age of 85 in Lawson, NSW, on 10 October, 2002. He was a founding member of the Australian Association of Adult Education and the chairman of its Executive Committee in 1969 and 1970.

Jim was a New Zealander who, as a mature graduate, worked as a tutor-organiser in the extra-mural department of the University of Otago. He moved to Sydney as WEA Secretary in 1955 and then to the Department of University Extension in the University of New England in 1958. He used his early experience in Maori Affairs to involve Aboriginal people and administrators in several conferences on policies for the welfare of Indigenous people.

In Adelaide he continued his interest in Indigenous affairs, arranging intensive courses in the Pitjantjatjara language for professionals working with Aboriginal people, and courses for Aboriginal people involved in managing Lands Trusts.

Jim's concern for a university's role in promoting democratic citizenship was reflected in seminars and conferences on current issues in the 1960s and 1970s. He saw radio as providing a bigger audience for adult education and the University of Adelaide's radio station 5UV was his idea.

In retirement in Adelaide he taught for the University of the Third Age, and continued to volunteer for U3A when he moved to Lawson to explore the Blue Mountains. He was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1983, for service to the community.

Jim is survived by his wife Elizabeth, daughter Hilary and son Ben. ■

*Colin Lawton, Adelaide*

THE ASSOCIATION HELD ITS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 1 NOVEMBER. NED DENNIS RETIRED AS PRESIDENT AFTER TWO YEARS OF VERY ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT—WHICH WILL CONTINUE IN HIS CAPACITY AS IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT ON THE EXECUTIVE.

# Annual General Meeting

**T**he new President is Garry Traynor, a committed member of ALA for many years who served two terms as the association's treasurer. Vaughan Croucher fills the vacancy on the executive left by Elyn Martin.

Here are short biographical sketches of Garry and Vaughan:

Garry Traynor is the principal of Sydney Community College. He has been involved in community education for the past 20 years. He has a Masters in Adult Education from the University of Technology in Sydney. Garry is deputy president of the Sydney Institute TAFE Advisory Board and a member of the NSW TAFE accreditation council.

Vaughan Croucher is the Dean of Learning Services at the Canberra Institute of Technology. He has a strong commitment to lifelong learning. He has been a member of ALA ACT since 1991 and was an inaugural member and later Executive Officer of the ACT ACE advisory council. He has served on the MCEETYA ACE Taskforce and the ALW National Steering Committee as well as on the national executive of the Australian Council for Adult Literacy.



*Garry Traynor, newly elected President of ALA.*

At the subsequent meeting of the executive, the following positions were filled:

Vice President: Rita Bennink

Treasurer: Jan Dunsby

Secretary: Roger Morris.

Lou Tod was welcomed as interim representative of the Queensland branch, which is in the process of re-forming. Members continuing on the executive are: Ron Anderson; Ned Dennis; Terry Dunt; Rachel Fry; Ann Lawless; Dorothy Lucardie; Barbara Pamphilon; Georgiana Poulter and Wendy Shearwood. ■

*The Minutes of the AGM are available on the website. Contact the National Office on 02 6251 7933 if you require a hard copy.*



# Eureka!

## THE 2002 ALLEN STROM PRIZE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Francesca Beddie was a judge for the Allen Strom Eureka Prize for Environmental Education Program, sponsored by the NSW Environment Protection Authority. The award encourages excellence in the design, implementation and evaluation of environmental education programs. It commemorates 40 years of dedicated work by Allen Strom, one of the founders of the conservation movement in New South Wales.

The task of the judges was a difficult one. The initial shortlist of 16 made great reading and prompted several exchanges among the judges. In developing their consensus a number of individual favourites did not make it onto the list of finalists. That said, agreement was reached and the winners were announced at a sparkling event hosted by the Australia Museum at Fox Studios on 13 August 2002.

The winner was:

*Teaching and learning for a sustainable future*, a joint program between Griffith University and UNESCO. They produced a multimedia teacher education resource with 100 hours of professional development in environmental education to be distributed around the world. The project recognises that the world's 60

million teachers are key agents for bringing about the changes needed for a sustainable future.

[www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/](http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/)

The other finalists were:

*Futurescapes internet program* developed by the Gould League. This is an interactive, internet-based environmental education program that takes young people on a futures journey to understand the effects of their lifestyle choices on the environment. [www.gould.edu.au](http://www.gould.edu.au)

*The International River Health Program* culminates in a biannual student-run River Health Conference. The program, which involves year 5 to 11 students and their teachers around Australia and internationally, is striking for the level of student involvement in the design and delivery of conference topics.

[www.riverhealth.com](http://www.riverhealth.com) & [www.fire-starter.com.au](http://www.fire-starter.com.au)

*Land & Learning Program*, developed by the Landcare and Environmental Health Unit, Tangentyere Council, Alice Springs, to provide environmental education to schoolchildren in remote Aboriginal communities in the southern Northern Territory. The program teaches children both traditional and 'western' ecological knowledge and land management concepts, and

develops education resources linked to the school curriculum.

Francesca's other favourite was a CSIRO project which had particular resonances for those of us involved in encouraging learning in the community and with an interest in intergenerational learning. It concerns that well known beast the bridal creeper leaf hopper.

Bridal creeper is an exotic weed that poses a major threat to biodiversity and conservation in Australia's temperate ecosystems. The CSIRO found an effective biological control of the weed, which uses the bridal creeper leafhopper to feed on and destroy the plant. But it did not have funds to distribute the leafhopper widely to community groups so instead the CSIRO developed a program which gave people the ability to produce their own. It conducted workshops in schools and community landcare groups to show how to rear the insect and release it into affected areas. This process not only addressed the weed problem but also raised awareness about the principles of biological control. It has also proved to be a popular and cheap science project and a way of connecting schools with other community activities.

<http://www.ento.csiro.au/bridalcreeper>



WITH OVER 530 EVENTS LISTED ON THE OFFICIAL ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK CALENDAR, THE EIGHTH AUSTRALIAN ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK WAS THE LARGEST CELEBRATION OF LEARNING THIS COUNTRY HAS SEEN.

## NEVER STOP LEARNING!

Results from an AC Nielsen survey show that 29% of Australians knew about Adult Learners' Week. This is a high level of awareness for a campaign of this type and confirms the value of the Week as a powerful tool for learning providers to promote themselves to the wider community.

This year, for the first time, we gained live national TV coverage of the Week with the appearance of John Gates, one of our international guests, on Channel Nine's Today Show. John Gates and our other guest, Johan Norbeck, from Sweden, also participated in a very lively discussion on Australia Talks Back on the ABC's Radio National. Upon his return, Johan Norbeck reflected on his visit and wrote to ALA's executive director:

Dear ~~Ms~~ *Beddie, Francesca*

It was fascinating for me to visit the Australian adult education sector. Of course it was too short a time to really be able to understand many of the activities that I saw or heard about. But I do keep thinking about the events I attended, trying to form a mental pattern of what I experienced.

I shall never forget my visit to the Tresillian Community Centre. The atmosphere was very similar to what we have in the folk high schools in the Nordic countries: great motivation, pride, happiness, interest and warm human emotions. Nor the Marion Learning Festival in Adelaide: what energy and

imagination! What impressive voluntary efforts by people of all ages to promote adult learning! And that evening in Sydney at the Community College Awards Night: what first-rate entertainment produced by adult learners! And what a family feeling in that large group of teachers, adult learners, the Rector and members of the board!

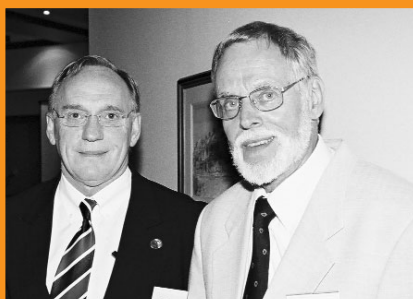
I sensed that your adult learning community is getting stronger. You have so many different forms of adult learning. Apart from the classical, rather formal, kinds, you have more and more of the informal ones. I saw well-developed learning circle programs. I also detected a feeling that more liberal forms of education were necessary—forms which will take people to higher educational levels but carefully and in more genuinely human ways, while still making it possible for some people to get formal credits and to go on to even the most advanced levels of learning.

That's what is happening in the Swedish folk high schools where learners are not graded in the old sense, that is with a scale of marks given for each subject. In the folk high schools, all the teachers sit down at the end of the academic year and formulate judgments together, evaluating the individual learner's capacity for study. They have to take seven factors into account:

1. Capacity for analysis and treatment of subject matter



2. Formal skills and their improvement over time
3. Level of knowledge and its improvement over time
4. Capacity for breadth of view
5. Capacity for organisation of studies
6. Ambition; Perseverance
7. Social capacity (co-operation, responsibility for joint work etc.).



*Garry Traynor, Principal of Sydney Community College and President of ALA, with Johan Norbeck, an ALW guest from Sweden.*

That judgment mirrors a much broader idea of what a good scholar might be and what is useful for acquiring real knowledge. It also makes it possible for some students to go on to a higher level, e.g. to the university. We consider that those students will take characteristics from their folk high school learning environment with them to enrich the university in a way which those coming straight from the secondary school cannot.

If some Australian adult learning organisers and teachers would only come to visit us in Sweden, we could go on jointly examining the problems and discussing the solutions we have on both sides of the globe, for mutual benefit!

Thank you for what I already got from you and "Welcome to Sweden". ■

*Johan Norbeck*

#### ABU COMBINATION.

by James Watkinson

After one basic lesson in  
The art of fly casting I  
Bought myself an Abu  
Combination -an 8' 6"  
Abu Gold Max, a fly max  
Reel, the line, two leaders  
And a Mrs. Simpson nymph.

Now it is all a matter of  
Practice – back cast to  
10 o'clock, pause, then forward  
Cast to about two o'clock.  
All this to the beat of one,  
One, two (the timing as any  
Raw Army recruit knows the  
World spins on).

I shall cast to an empty feed  
Bag on the lawn, with my son's  
Mentor's eye on all my actions,  
As my eye shall be on his – we  
Are learning together – so we  
Shall at least be skilled enough  
To cast the waters of the Light  
And Gilbert before we try the  
Snowy Mountains and the trout  
Waters of Tasmania.

This is more than learning to  
Fly fish, together we are casting  
The flies of love that father and  
Son should hook into, but often  
Don't.

Together we are hatching our  
Need for each other, tying the  
Blood knots, and if we catch a  
Trout that will be a bonus.

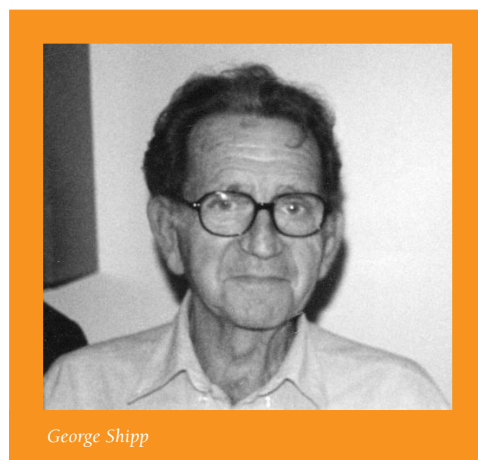
THIS ARTICLE IS BASED ON A SPEECH GIVEN BY ROGER MORRIS AT ALA'S NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN HOBART IN AUGUST 2002 AT WHICH GEORGE SHIPP WAS MADE A LIFE MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION.

# A Champion of Liberal Education

There are not many adult educators, here or overseas, who could claim a record of service to the field that comes anywhere near that of George Shipp, who was born in Vienna but came to Australia in 1938, a refugee from Nazism.

In 1956, a selection committee set up by the Workers Educational Association (WEA) of NSW interviewed a young printer. He had just completed his Bachelor's Degree in Economics and had begun to read for his Master's Degree—that young printer was George Shipp.

It transpired that George was to have a relatively short career as a paid employee with the WEA, serving as Assistant Secretary and, at various times both Metropolitan Secretary and the NSW General Secretary. His career as a volunteer office holder was much longer and continues today. He has been a long time member of WEA's Executive, its standing committees—particularly the Education Committee—and has been elected President on three separate occasions.



*George Shipp*

George became a very well respected academic at the University of Sydney and later the University of NSW where he specialised in Soviet politics and published academic papers. He retired as a senior lecturer in 1986.

The importance of George Shipp to the development of the WEA in Sydney and its firm placement within the liberal adult education tradition cannot be overestimated. He has always been a passionate defender and advocate of liberal education and he has always seen

the WEA, a voluntary association governed by democratic principles, as the ideal vehicle for such education. But as well as advocating sound educational ideas, he has been a very hard working, practical, and sensible volunteer officeholder/administrator—to take but one example, he advocated that the WEA should acquire its own property. This it has done.

For the past fifty years, George has been active in adult education more generally. At the State level he was also involved in the affairs on the NSW ACE Council—and at the national level in what is now called Adult Learning Australia. George was in Hobart when the Association was formed

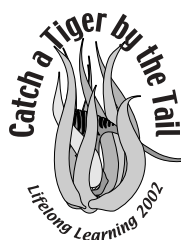
in 1960 and served a term as National Secretary in the 1960's.

George's role in adult education has been to ensure that there always has been a place for the serious, sustained and impartial study of the big questions of history; philosophy; religion; literature; the sciences and the arts. In honouring George's half century of work in the field of adult education, we are reminding ourselves of the history of adult education as a process focussed on the rational, intellectual development of Australian men and women. ■

## Diversity is WEA Sydney's strength

WEA is rapidly approaching its 90th anniversary in 2003. Long renowned as one of the last centres where subjects in the humanities and social sciences can be studied, WEA Sydney was also at the forefront of the introduction of computer training for adults, with its first specifically designed courses on offer in the late 1980s. It also pioneered specific computer courses for seniors, launching an Over-60s program in 2000, and it was this activity that was honoured in Adult Learners' Week 2002, with the Outstanding Adult Tutor in NSW award going to Ron Lawrence, the man responsible for that first series of courses. WEA Sydney's traditional subjects are also going from strength to strength, with over 30 students enrolling in the Term 3 Pathways study linkage to humanities at the University of New England. Add to this mix the continued success of WEA Sydney's distance education program, the Discussion Group, which provides study materials to adults all over NSW, and it is clear that diversity equals success for Australia's oldest adult education provider.

*For those interested in the history of the WEA, see Darryl Dymock's book 'A Special and Distinctive Role' in Adult Education. WEA Sydney 1953-2000. Published by Allen and Unwin, 2001.*



# Catch a tiger

REPORTS FROM ALA'S 2002 NATIONAL  
CONFERENCE IN HOBART

# by the tail...

Lorelie Ball, Mary-Jo Bellew, Rita Bennink and Janet Chambers were all part sponsored by the South Australian branch of ALA to attend this year's conference in Hobart. They wrote a comprehensive report on their experiences. The following is an abridged version of that report, which gives snapshots of many of the sessions they attended over three sunny days in Hobart in August. Full versions of some papers will be reproduced in the Australian Journal of Adult Learning.

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER: JANIE DICKENSON,  
MAYOR, LAUNCESTON CITY COUNCIL**

Janie grew up in Launceston but as a young adult, like so many others, decided to leave for the big smoke, Sydney. She returned to look after her ailing mother and stayed. Janie started working with young people at risk and went on to be a local councillor and then mayor at the age of 28. She is now transforming the city into one attractive to all its inhabitants.

Launceston strives to be a city of learning and innovation and to think differently. It was helped to do so in 2002 by Edward De Bono who became the King of Launceston during 'Thinking Week' which prompted thousands of Launceston residents to think creatively about their living environment.

Janie's work is about bringing people together and strengthening ties. Community development opportunities have led to projects which invite participants to connect with people who are different to them, such as intergenerational history projects. The university and TAFE are working to break down

pathway barriers. Along the river, new boardwalks, well lit at night, have brought residents out to walk their dogs, hold children's parties and get together for a barbecue. Instead of staying at home, people are out and about, participating in civic life.

Growing communities is not necessarily about formal learning but about people learning to be positive, to interact and to be proud.

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER, LESLEY HARRISON,  
UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA**

**A case for the underestimated informal side of  
lifelong learning**

Lesley's paper outlined her research into informal learning, the sort that occurs during everyday activities, which is 'taught' by an informal teacher, someone who is present in the learner's milieu. Such learning occurs in civic, sporting, conservation and other groups, usually face-to-face or by word-of-mouth. There are no particular teaching methods, the learning is dynamic and the teacher/learner relationship is an equal and sharing one.



*Pyramid building at the National Conference.*

For urban dwellers these informal teachers are usually parents, family members, friends, colleagues or the boss. In the country, it's more likely to be a respected member of the community—a doctor, an accountant, a local councillor—whose advice is sought.

Lesley concluded that informal learning needs a champion. Ubiquitous but lacking recognition, we need to acknowledge its true value.

#### TASMANIAN COMMUNITIES ONLINE-TRAINING AND PARTNERSHIP SUCSESSES

Andy Norris (Program Manager)

Andy outlined the achievements and challenges involved in

centre in their area. Most centres are based in libraries, some in schools or community centres. All are community managed. This does pose challenges. For while there are many willing volunteers there are few who are qualified to manage such an enterprise, particularly when it comes to industrial relations, budgets and so on. To overcome these shortcomings the communities have established partnerships with other local organisations (e.g. schools, local government). There is also an operations manual available to the centres.

For more information:

[Andrew.Norris@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Norris@education.tas.gov.au)

of us needs to decide whether we will be an asset or a burden on society. In retirement we have the opportunity to choose our activities for ourselves. By being mentally, physically and socially active, older people create community, structure and meaning in their lives to achieve wellbeing and independence, thus postponing the lifestyle diseases and deterioration of mature age.

#### CARERS ON LINE

Rowina Maddalena, Community Connections, Australian Capital Territory (ACT)

This was an inspiring session about a fantastic program operating in the ACT. Rowina works three days a week providing individualised computer instruction for carers in their homes. Each carer has a one-hour lesson per week (sometimes two if necessary at the beginning). The program has brought lots of benefits to the carers, including breaking down their sense of isolation.

Here are some useful websites for information and tutorials:

[www.learnthenet.com](http://www.learnthenet.com)  
[www.seniorsonline.net.au](http://www.seniorsonline.net.au)  
[www.U3online.com](http://www.U3online.com)  
[www.getmega.com.au](http://www.getmega.com.au)

*Catch a tiger by the tail—the theme of the 2002 conference—reflected, for me, a sense of the diversity of our sector, the various issues we face, and the innovative approaches that many are taking to move forward in our ever changing world.*

establishing online access centres throughout regional Tasmania—64 of them! The centres are funded through Networking the Nation Commonwealth grants and set out to address the digital divide in regional areas. They provided low cost, one-on-one flexible learning, formal (including accredited) and informal courses. A project officer provides support with technology issues.

Communities set up groups to apply for funding to establish a

#### ALL YOU NEED IS A DOOR—ACCESS TO THIRD AGE LEARNING IN TASMANIA

Rowena MacKean, Peer Educator, TALENT (Third Age Learning Network of Tasmania)

Rowena described the four ages of learning and challenged her audience to consider their third age, that time, at least potentially, of active independence and personal fulfilment. The demographic revolution is seeing huge growth in the over 60s group. Rowena asked, 'What is your role in the third age?' Each

## LIVE ONLINE CHAT SESSION

### Network of Education, Ageing and Technology

This session showed how a learning community can break the usual boundaries of distance using the Internet. It was a virtual session led by Ros Foskey in Armidale and June Hazzlewood in Hobart. Participants linked in from several states across Australia to chat thus becoming connected to the conference.

### BEYOND THE TRAINING RING AND THE CONFESSORIAL – INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR GROUP WORK

Barbara Pamphilon, Head, School of Professional and Community Education, University of Canberra

Barbara gave an inspirational presentation about how to move beyond group work that tended to end up in an ‘inward spiral’ to getting people to tackling external problems and to move on from these. She spoke of two groups she had worked with: young offenders and PhD students.

She asked participants to talk not about themselves but rather to explore their issues through the development of stories about others in a similar situation. For example, she asked the youths to create a profile of a ‘kid’ who was put in their institution, to look at his life story at different ages, asking what sort of family life he had had, what sort of parents,

what life had been like when he was ten. These stories helped the young men to look outside their own experience to broaden their perspectives. Similarly the PhD students were asked to create a story about a mythical PhD student, thus helping them to focus more constructively on their own work.

### OHS&W ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MANAGERS ONLINE

Rita Bennink, E-learning consultant, Adelaide Iglobal, Adelaide

Rita demonstrated an online training program developed by Adelaide Iglobal for Workcover in South Australia to deliver mandatory occupational health, safety and welfare training of managers in a government department.

The benefits of the innovative

*Attending the ALA national conference in Hobart provided a chance to learn more about the adult learning sector ... It was an opportunity to take time for reflection and contemplation, for some personal, professional development to broaden my horizons and to absorb some of the wisdom and experience of others.*

program include its low cost (no facilitators are needed), flexibility (it is accessible at home or work so that the user chooses when and where to learn and at what pace) and the program is easy to update (changes are available online).

Designed to maximise student engagement, content is kept to a minimum but there are lots of

links to resources for further information, e.g. the relevant Acts. As the student completes each section of the program, they sit a test which they have to pass to be able to proceed.

### LIFELONG LEARNING IN THE HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN ADULT EDUCATION – THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND MECHANICS INSTITUTES

Roger Morris, Associate Professor, Adult Education, University of Technology, Sydney

Roger gave a fascinating history of the Schools of Arts and Mechanics Institutes which were founded in Australia from the 1820s and which grew in number under a variety of names (e.g. Literary Schools, Miners Institutes, Soldiers Halls).

Their original purpose was to provide scientific and technical information for skilled workers

and to provide ‘rational recreation’ as an alternative to the consumption of the demon drink. They conducted lectures on astronomy, chemistry, and electricity as well as on history, languages, drawing and so forth. They also provided libraries, meeting and reading rooms. Many had billiard halls which later became the source of the larger part of their incomes.



From the 1900s Institutes got a second wind because of rapid suburban expansion. They provided facilities for new communities to conduct religious services; hold dances and other social activities such as bingo; to establish libraries and cinemas.

After the Second World War, the Institutes went into decline as specialised education providers, municipal libraries, licensed clubs, church and dance halls took over many of their functions.

But in many towns and suburbs throughout Australia, the buildings remain, proud reminders of their important place in the development of their communities.

#### **AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION: PLAYING A ROLE AS AN INDUSTRY TRAINER**

**Chris Casey, Manager, Accredited Training, ABC**

The ABC has progressed from conducting internal training programs to become a nationally recognised accredited training organisation. It has a long tradition in media training with forty percent of Australian Film Institute nominees between 1993 and 1998 having worked and been trained at the ABC. However, that training was not aligned to a specific qualification so in 1997 a new training model was introduced which was linked to organisational goals as well as to individual performance plans.

The ABC also sought out partnerships with other learning organisations. For example, it is involved with a VET in schools project in South Australia and in Queensland it is bridging skills gaps with undergraduates.

#### **PEER EDUCATION: LEARNING AND EMPOWERING**

**Jacqui Maginness, Department of Health and  
Human Services, Tasmania.**

This was a panel discussion about why peer education is such a powerful tool for knowledge sharing. The focus was on how to get the message on health and well being to the older community. It was found that interactions between group members had the most powerful impact. Peer education is about 'doing with': it uses a collaborative approach between peer educators and professionals causing information to spread through networks. Governments are beginning to recognise it as a cost-effective way of conveying health promotion messages.

#### **ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK BEYOND 2002**

**Margo Couldrey, Director, Client Relationships,  
ANTA; Ned Dennis, President ALA; Maggie Aird,  
Tasmanian State Coordinator, ALW**

During a discussion about the objective of ALW, the workshop groups agreed that the Week was not only about celebrating learning and its successes but was also an opportunity to bring into focus adult learning and its

benefits. Some of the ideas canvassed for future ALWs included: involving media and marketing students as part of promotions' teams; pushing the boundaries and reaching out to more potential learners; a long-term strategy to engage the ABC; other media; and to bring industry into ALW partnerships by expounding to them the benefits to them of a learning society.

(John Cross is currently working on a kit for providers about how to engage older men—the topic of another of the ALW sessions at the conference.)



*Judy Elsworth (Hawthorn Community Education Centre, VIC); Rod Mitchell, (Learning Centre Link, WA); John Cross (Adult Learning Australia); and Bill Whitting, (Older Men: New Ideas, NSW); at the National Conference.*

LEARNING MUST BE AT THE HEART OF ANY SUSTAINABLE CHANGE, NO MORE SO WHEN IT COMES TO ADDRESSING THE DISADVANTAGE SUFFERED BY INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS. HERE ARE SOME CURRENT INITIATIVES IN THE INDIGENOUS ADULT LEARNING FIELD.

# Indigenous Learning Culture

*'An Indigenous learning culture has been fundamental to the ability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, over many thousands of years to meet the challenges of a changing Australian environment. Education and training specifically, and lifelong learning more generally, must be at the cutting edge of economic, social and cultural development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in the new millennium.'*

*(Kevin Bromley, Chair Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Training Advisory Council.)*

## INDIGENOUS PROJECT OPENS WINDOWS

Lyndy is an Indigenous mum with seven kids living in public housing in Canberra. At nights, she clears a patch among the family chaos on the lounge room floor to write the short stories and poems that she now publishes and performs regularly.

The *Writing Us Mob* Indigenous creative writing project gave Lyndy the start she needed. Based at the Canberra Institute of Technology's Yurauna Centre, *Writing Us Mob* was an initiative of the ACT Indigenous Writers Group. By 2003, it will have produced a body of work ranging from an anthology of poems to a youth

magazine and have expanded to Certificate IV level.

Course convenor, Jennifer Martiniello, believes the key to the success of Indigenous education and training is to shape the program to fit the people, rather than force the people into Western ways and time constraints.

'We have an education system that disadvantages a lot of people, not just Indigenous people, because of its strict format and structures,' she says.

*Writing Us Mob* is built on traditional community practices and values. It uses principles such as collaborative learning groups, talking circles and learning from elders.

'We use "grow time". You plant the seed; you nurture it and allow for its own natural growth time and cycle of development.'

For Martiniello, each of her students has an inspirational story to tell.

'You open a little window, and someone steps through and it opens up a whole new world for them.' ■

*Jennifer Martiniello. Ph: 02 6201 2290  
email: kemarre@bigpond.com*

## ABORIGINAL ADULT ENGLISH LITERACY FORUM

During Adult Learners' Week a forum was held in Alice Springs to develop strategies to address the low levels of adult English literacy in Aboriginal communities.

Over 60 people from the fields of health, education and policy development, including the Northern Territory (NT) Minister for Education, Syd Sterling, and the NT Minister for Health, Jane Aagaard, attended the Forum. They focussed on a case study of the current situation for Aboriginal Health Workers.

Adult literacy has been identified as a critical issue in Aboriginal health affecting the ability of Aboriginal community members to participate in contemporary Australian society. In particular the expectations of accredited vocational education and employment is mismatched with the actual English language, literacy and numeracy competence amongst the majority of the adult Aboriginal population in the Northern Territory.

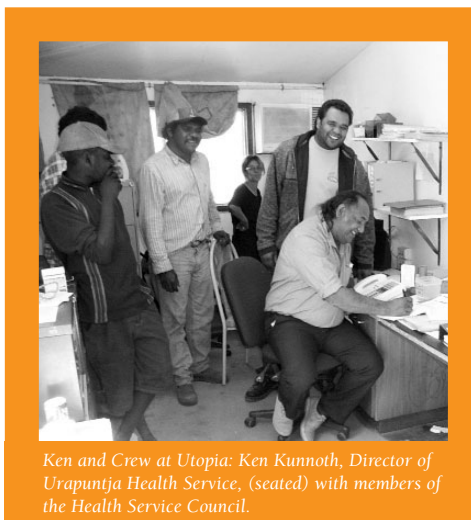
The introduction for Aboriginal Health Workers of the new registration requirements against the National Competency Standards (NT customised version) with a new set of assessment procedures are having a negative impact on recruitment/retention rates in the Aboriginal Health Worker profession.

The Forum has proposed the establishment of an Aboriginal Adult English Literacy Task Force in the NT, which would work across government portfolios to develop comprehensive strategies to improve English literacy amongst Aboriginal communities. A steering group is pursuing these recommendations with the NT government.

## URAPUNTJA: BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Just under 300 kilometres from Alice Springs, the Urapuntja community is building on the solid foundation of 24 years community control to further develop their capacity to deliver better primary health care services.

A community Health Council controls the delivery of primary health care from Utopia Clinic and 19 outstations across an area of 3,230sq km. 1,082 people live in



*Ken and Crew at Utopia: Ken Kunnoth, Director of Urapuntja Health Service, (seated) with members of the Health Service Council.*

the Urapuntja lands. The Alyawarr people live on the northern outstations, the Anmatjere populate the south, with both cultural groups in the central area. Just nine Aboriginal Health Workers, three nurses and one doctor service this vast area. A director and administrator, as well as members of the Urapuntja community, manage the service on behalf of the Health Council.

Urapuntja approaches primary health care from a holistic model, taking into consideration factors such as housing, water, education, employment, recreation and aged care, which influence health

outcomes. The health service plan also highlights the particular issues faced by the community:

- ▶ 60% of the population are under the age of 25 years.
- ▶ High unemployment and low socio economic status of the community.
- ▶ Difficult communications.
- ▶ Poorly maintained roads.
- ▶ High morbidity and mortality rates.
- ▶ High staff turnover.

To deal with these, the Utopia communities have been set specific goals in the Urapuntja Community Strategic Plan:

- ▶ Be active and effective in their control of the health service through the Health Council and the Director.
- ▶ Develop their own community health programs that reflect their view of health and the causation of illness.
- ▶ Participate with health service staff in accessing services provided.
- ▶ Respond as a community to address the underlying causes of ill health including strengthening Aboriginal Law and Culture, improving environmental living conditions, employment, education, and other aspects of community life that impacts on health.

The Health Council works closely with the Local Government Council, Store Committee and Education Committee. In particular Urapuntja community has established a public health nurse position to work with the Aboriginal Health Workers, the Health Board and the

Director to develop programs targeting environmental health, health promotion and to implement preventative health strategies.

An integral part of the capacity building in Urapuntja is participation in learning programs for all staff, management and the Council.

The Central Australia Remote Health Development Services (CARHDS) provides ongoing in-service and training for Aboriginal Health Workers (AHW) using a model which is delivered on site in the community and clinic. During 2002 AHW in Urapuntja has been participating in an assessment project, which will link their skills and knowledge with the Certificate III in Aboriginal Health Work (NT customised standards which, unlike in other States, requires AHW to undertake a range of clinical tasks).

New staff at Urapuntja participate in an orientation program with CARHDS, introducing those new to Central Australia to the land, people and their culture. In particular this program emphasises the Aboriginal Community Control of the primary health care service. This is considered a significant factor in better health for Aboriginal communities.

In-service training is not only provided for clinic staff. The Health Board, director and administrator have commenced a long term learning program which will develop their management and governance skills, all part of the holistic approach to achieving better health outcomes. ■

*Dorothy Lucardie, CEO, Central Australia Remote Health Development Services (CARHDS)*

### GOING BEYOND THE TOUR

Statistically the museum sector is one of the largest providers of adult learning opportunities in Australia. However, many museums do not take on this role with full understanding of its potential or of the specific nature of adults as learners. In an effort to raise awareness among museums of their role as adult learning providers and to introduce the learning circle methodology to this sector, the ALA National Office, in partnership with the National Portrait Gallery, hosted “Going Beyond the Tour” during Adult Learners’ Week.

Participants were invited from the national museums and art galleries located in Canberra and Sydney to attend a workshop for museum educators—mostly volunteer guides—to discuss the learning circles methodology and its application to a museum environment. For many the challenge of the afternoon was to take themselves out of the role of expert and to consider that visitors to the museums, even if explicitly undertaking an educational activity, may learn different things and in different ways from those anticipated by curators.

Feedback from the event was positive and the activity initiated some lively discussions about how museums might operate

differently. Many participants expressed their delight at being able to take time out and reflect on what they do. Some were keen to take part in a full learning circle program while others were interested in exploring further the theory and practice of adult learning in its different forms. A few wondered if they would be able to use the learning circle methodology, in part or in full, in their museum context. More work needs to be done with the museum community, at both management and practitioner level, to help them move away from the notion of the museum as a disseminator of neatly packaged facts and towards a concept of the museum as a catalyst for active and ongoing discovery.

### EVALUATING LEARNING CIRCLES

ALA has been nurturing the Learning Circles methodology for some time because it sees great potential for this methodology as a tool for positive social change and the building of a learning culture. But it is time to evaluate our work, to see what works and what doesn’t and to improve our knowledge of what is happening in established learning circles. We have therefore started work on an evaluation of the learning circles program. This will document the outcomes learning circles can achieve (eg in terms

of flexible learning techniques, enhanced knowledge and ensuing action, greater community cohesion) and develop an evaluation tool for future learning circles.

We would be very keen to hear from anyone who has been involved in a learning circle about their experiences, or who have themselves conducted evaluations of the methodology. ■

*Mary Hannan and John Cross  
m.hannan@ala.asn.au*

### DISCOVERING DEMOCRACY Learning Circle Kits on Civics and Citizenship

Would you like to be better informed about Australia’s system of government?

Would you like to discuss how citizens of Australia can become more actively involved in the critical examination of our democratic system?

Would you like to discuss and explore issues around local government?

Participate in the Adult Learning Australia’s Civics and Citizenship Learning Circle Programme by ordering your Kits now!

*If you would like more information please contact Mary Hannan on 02 6251 9889 or email m.hannan@ala.asn.au*

# A Lifetime of Discovery

## Ballarat: A Learning City

At 5.30 pm on Friday 27 September representatives from a wide range of sectors across the nation launched the second Australian Learning Communities Conference at a Civic Reception in the Ballarat Town Hall.

The purpose of the conference was to draw together existing, emerging and potential learning community representatives to share ideas, experiences, successes and challenges.

Major themes for the Conference included:

- ▶ how to create and maintain the networks in our learning communities
- ▶ how to connect youth into our learning communities
- ▶ how to involve business, industry and local government in our learning communities, and why this is essential
- ▶ the keys to building our learning communities.

Peter Kearns of Global Learning Services, an international network of consultants with a special interest in lifelong learning, gave the keynote address, "Some History and a Little Prophecy: the Progress of

information and communication technology, libraries, learning networks, converging learning and skill strategies, and by building a whole of government approach. His message was clear:

*My sense of history is that learning communities in Australia have come a long way in two years, and much has been achieved.*

Learning Communities in Australia". He spoke of three waves of development of learning communities in Australia. The first was the establishment of the Victorian Learning Towns Network, in which the Adult Community Education sector has a strategic role; the second was the ANTA National Learning Community Project which supported ten communities to carry out learning audits. The third wave is being created by those developing their learning communities without government funding.

Mr Kearns's prophecy was for another wave of development to be driven by universities,

My sense of history is that learning communities in Australia have come a long way in two years, and much has been achieved. However, the challenge of building a learning culture, and values that support learning, ... is a large one, so that we all need to bend our backs to the oars and press on with renewed vigour, vision, and commitment.

The conference proceeded non-stop with presentations and workshops involving 90 conference delegates, all with a story, a lesson or a challenge. Topics ranged from networks to leadership, local government to industry, and projects for youth to skills for learning community



executives. The diversity of speakers and topics gave delegates a snapshot of current and developing initiatives in Australia's emerging learning communities movement, as well as some opportunity to delve deeper in the workshops.

Christopher Carroll, Executive Director of BRACE Education, Training and Employment drew out some of the messages conveyed, and questions posed, at the conference:

- ▶ we must engage business, and those disengaged from work and learning
- ▶ what is our shared vision for our community and our country?
- ▶ why not strengthen the Learning Communities Network through organisations such as Adult Learning Australia?

- ▶ partnerships are essential for an inclusive community
- ▶ we must have management skills, it is not enough to just have passion.

With many new friendships formed, ideas created and possible partnerships in the wind, the conference closed with lunch on Sunday 28 September.

One evaluation of the conference reads:

*You know what I liked best? It was that no matter what the topic, or what stage the community being discussed was at I was able to connect my work and my community to it. I now have a whole list of actions "to do" and the enthusiasm to make them happen! I think that being a learning community provides your community with a long-*

*term vision for development, and builds lifelong learning into the very fabric of the community ensuring 'a lifetime of discovery'. By sharing experiences with other learning communities, we can enable Australia to grow as a learning nation.*

The third Australian Learning Communities Conference will be held in Newcastle in 2004. For further details contact Denise Hogarth at [dhogarth@ncc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:dhogarth@ncc.nsw.gov.au). ■

*By Rachel Fry  
Executive Officer*

*Editor's note:* ALA is responding to Christopher Carroll's question by developing a website, intended to be a clearing house of information about learning communities.



Adult Learning Australia  
Preliminary Announcement  
Registration of Interest, and Call for Papers.

COMMUNITIES OF LEARNING:  
COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

The 43rd Annual National Conference of Adult Learning Australia  
27th to 30th November 2003

BROADWAY CAMPUS  
UNIVERSITY of TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY (UTS)

If you wish to present a paper or conduct a workshop please submit, by 31st March 2003, a one page outline of the paper or workshop which includes details as to how you see the paper fitting into the overall theme of the Conference. For more information visit [www.ala.asn.au](http://www.ala.asn.au).

## COMMUNITY LEARNING

The Rural Futures Network (RFN) at Pomona, Queensland has introduced a Community Learning Program, which promotes the concept of “learning” as opposed to “teaching” and the notion of self-responsibility to distinguish the process from traditional, authoritative teaching.

The network has also been running learning workshops to encourage the sustainability of the community and its environment. In addition, it has developed a friendship project with a Filipino fisherfolk network, which won a global award last year for creating a futures-consciousness community. ■

*Janice Macpherson*  
 ph. 07 5476 4870  
[janmac@sun.big.net.au](mailto:janmac@sun.big.net.au)  
[www.ruralfutures.net](http://www.ruralfutures.net)

## AN EXCITING YEAR FOR ADULT EDUCATION IN WANGARATTA

Victoria’s oldest regional ACE provider has received the best kind of 40th birthday present. The Centre, Wangaratta was named Outstanding Provider at this year’s ALW Awards in Victoria.

The 40th birthday celebrations included a dinner attended by Sir Zelman Cowen who was present at the official opening of The Centre in February 1962.

The Centre’s 40 years were also celebrated with the presentation,

by the Minister for Education, Lynne Kosky, of awards to 40 people who have made significant contributions to its development—as teachers, learners, staff, committee, and volunteers. ■

## LIFE EXPERIENCE COUNTS (LEC)

For the last six years, NSW Local Community Services Association centres have run LEC programs in partnership with ACE providers. LEC has had great outcomes. Around 83 per cent of participants end up in further education and/or employment—not bad considering the program is targeted at non-traditional users of ACE (eg, NESB and Indigenous people, people with little formal education etc.). Here is one person’s story:

Rosemary was in her early fifties and not working. She was suffering from exhaustion and a lack of self-esteem. Rosemary was introduced to the LEC program at Canley Heights Community Centre where she was attending Folk Art classes. The program was a turning point in her life. It enabled her to recognise her many skills, which had laid dormant for years.

First, Rosemary volunteered her services, assisting in the office and teaching English classes, a task which she relished because she was helping people discover the talents within them. She was so eager to learn new skills she

went on to participate in TAFE Outreach courses such as Reception Skills, Floral Art, First Aid & Computer Skills.

When staff at Canley Heights Community Centre discovered that Rosemary had a diploma in Massage, Reflexology & Relaxation, they suggested she run a course. The first course was very well received. So she decided to enrol in the “Training Small Groups” course at Macarthur Community College and is now running her fifth massage class. ■

## WRITERS INK

“Westfield Writers” is a self-funded creative writing group that meets weekly in Armadale, Western Australia. The group formed in November 2000. Members have come and gone, but the nucleus of the group has remained.

In July 2002 the first issue of “Writers Ink.”, a quarterly magazine, was launched. It was welcomed enthusiastically and distribution exceeded expectation. And in September 2002 Westfield Writers received the WA ALW award for “Outstanding Group of Adult Learners”. The award was in recognition of outstanding progress in creative writing as well as personal and social development. ■

*Aileen Boyer, Coordinator*  
*Westfield Writers.*

# WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

## INDIVIDUAL

Fiona Adams	VIC	Derek Mulenga
Bridget Aitchison	NSW	Suzanne Pearce
Clifford Baxter	NSW	Jayne Pilkington
Daphne Brosnan	WA	Robert Redmond
Maree Gerke	TAS	Carolyn Reeve
Linda Ghys	SA	Joanne Shambler
Mal McCullough	VIC	Julie-Anne Smith
Christine Manuel	SA	Christine Worthington

## ORGANISATIONS

USA	Borallon Correctional Centre IPSWICH QLD 4305
SA	Intelli-Skills Pty Ltd YEPPOON QLD 4703
ACT	JCE Positive Outcomes SPENCE ACT 2615
VIC	Learning Network Australia TOOWONG QLD 4066
WA	Pathways Education and Training Solutions WILLETSON WA 6155

# 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  
                  
 Cardholder's name ..... Expiry date .....  
 Signature ..... Date .....  
 Tick to receive a receipt

## 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





Adult Learning  
Australia Inc

ALA wishes all  
its members and  
readers a happy  
and prosperous  
New Year.

*Never Stop Learning!*