

ISSUE 1 AUTUMN 2003

ADULT LEARNING AUSTRALIA



5 | ALA SURVEY

9 | ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK EVALUATION

14 | ST LOUIS CONFERENCE





▲ ALA representatives at the ALA/ANTA consultation on the 2004-2010 national strategy for vocational education and training.

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 picture on the front cover is of a meeting between ALA representatives from around the country with the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) to discuss the 2004-2010 national strategy for vocational education and training (VET). This was an important opportunity to convey to ANTA perspectives from adult education practitioners and learners. I would like to thank all those who contributed. (Notes about the consultation can be found on www.ala.asn.au)

Two themes dominate this first issue of *Adult Learning Australia* for 2003. The first deals with international events—in Taiwan, the United States, South America and New Zealand where various members have visited in the last few months. What is striking is the extent of the focus on learning all over the globe, even when most attention appears to be on matters of international security. This is one indication that lifelong learning can play an important role in nurturing greater understanding of the world and making more durable the peace we are striving to attain.

Garry Traynor talks in his article about the inspiration he drew from enthusiastic young Taiwanese community educators. Knowing what others are doing, against what odds and with what results, is certainly one way to

maintain momentum in our own work. That is one of the motivations behind ALA's newest project, the establishment of a learning communities website, which we hope will become a catalyst for new communities, virtual and real, for policy development and for initiatives in established communities.

Another international influence on our work this year is the fact that 2003 is the first year of the International Decade of Literacy. This has led to our decision to make literacy the theme for this year's Adult Learners' Week. The definition for literacy we are adopting is a broad one which in, the words of the Australian Council for Adult Literacy, is about

being able to participate as a citizen in a democracy, understanding and fulfilling one's role, being able to assess one's needs, having one's say and responding to the views and actions of others by engaging in the range of literacy/communication practices required in the public domain.

We are confident that this will give all those who participate in Adult Learners' Week great flexibility to promote their activities and achievements, while also helping us to bring to national attention the urgent issue of Australia's poor literacy levels.

The second theme of the newsletter is the art and results of surveys. We bring you the results of our own survey, to which around ten percent of the membership responded. That is only a very small sample of the Association. Nevertheless, within this group there were some consistent messages, which have encouraged the staff in the national office that we were on the right track. For those, however, who are concerned about the Association's commitment to positive social change, let me assure you that this underpins all the decisions we make on what issues to pursue and projects to implement.

ACNielsen recently completed a two-year evaluation of Adult Learners' Week which resulted in a very positive assessment of the week's contribution to our mission of promoting the value of learning. Its market segmentation suggests that around 60 percent of the population have positive attitudes to learning, while 26 percent have negative views. The rest seem to be indifferent. These figures pose a considerable challenge for ALA because we must still try to reach the uninterested and particularly the disengaged. This will be a strong focus of our research activities in 2003. ■

Francesca Beddie

CONGRATULATIONS MERLE

We were delighted to hear that Merle Henning, from the Koorda Learning Centre in Western Australia, was honoured with an OAM in the recent Australia Day awards. ■

TRAINING PACKAGES

A report on the qualitative impact of training packages is now available from ANTA. It found that the students have been satisfied with their training, especially with the close links between their training and their current or intended work.

However, it also found there had been a lack of strong leadership for the educational process during the introduction of the new system which did not ensure ownership and confidence among practitioners in the change process. It suggests that training packages need policy and training specifications to be translated into a clear picture of teaching, learning and assessment materials. ■

Contact Sangeetha Das (03-96309829 dass@anta.gov.au or visit <http://www.anta.gov.au>).

EQUITY TOOLBOXES

Teachers and trainers now have access to online learning toolboxes designed especially for learners in key equity groups.

The new toolboxes include:

- ▶ Truvision: an IT Help Desk—customised online

courseware to support Certificate I in Information Technology for people with a vision impairment;

- ▶ Certificate II in Horticulture for Indigenous learners; and
- ▶ Online Literacy and Numeracy Resource Centre—supporting students with literacy and numeracy difficulties.

Contact Vivienne Blanksby. p 03-96373734. f 03-93372220 e blanksby.vivienne.l@edumail.vic.gov.au or visit flexiblelearning.net.au/toolbox

2003 AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM EUREKA PRIZES

The Australian Museum Eureka Prizes will include new awards in 2003 for inspiring science; for innovative grains research; and for outstanding scientific research involving scientists in two or more disciplines. These join established prizes in education, industry and innovation, research and science communication. Entries close on Friday 16 May 2003. ■

Information and entry forms for all prizes are available at www.amonline.net.au/eureka

NEW (TAXATION) PHONE SERVICE FOR NON-PROFIT SECTOR

The Australian Taxation Office has launched the Non-Profit Infoline for the benefit of non-profit groups. By phoning 1300 130 248 non-profit organisations will have direct access to staff

trained to deal with non-profit inquiries.

The phone service follows recent upgrades to the For Non-Profit Organisations section of the Tax Office website. It has also expanded its A Fax from Tax service to include a new section specifically for non-profit organisations. By simply phoning 13 28 60 and following the prompts, non-profit organisations have specific tax information at their fingertips. ■

(Association Times Online)

MAKING CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE 2003 ACE

The Heart of Learning
20 and 21 June 2003

Following on from last year's very successful ACE conference we are all enthusiastically planning the 2003 event. ALA is one of a number of partners in this event which already looks like breaking last year's records.

The main themes for this conference are:

1. Exploring innovation in community learning
2. Getting ACE 'out there' – raising awareness and understanding
3. Involving more of the community in learning
4. Improving the quality of learning and getting better results

The call for papers is out now.

If you want to find out more email Neil, stara@inet.net.au the WA ALA representative on the committee.

RESPONDENTS LIST ADVOCACY AND NATIONAL POLICY AS PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE ASSOCIATION. THEY SEE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESS TO COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE AS THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP.

ALA Survey

The aim of the recent ALA survey was to gather information about members' requirements and to seek their views in relation to various key areas of ALA, such as publications (both printed and electronic), areas of interest and expertise, and priority areas for ALA activity.

25% of individual and 27% of organisational members—have involvement in the coordination and management of learning programs. (See Figure 1.) More individual members are policy makers, learners and educators in the workplace, with organisational members tending to be in community education and other categories.

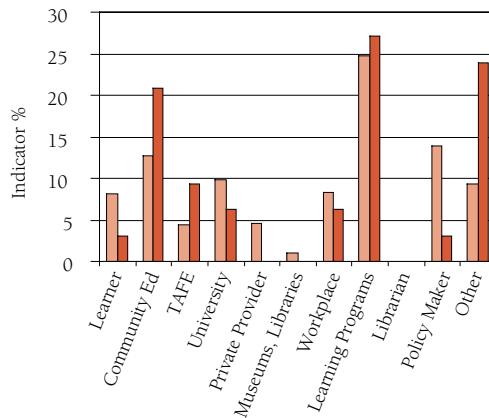
SURVEY RESPONDENTS AND AGE OF RESPONDENTS

Although response rates differed between states and territories, we received survey forms from all states and territories (and overseas), totalling 17 organisational and 33 individual members. This is slightly less than 10% of the current membership. Over 60% of respondents were in the 45-64 age bracket.

YOUR FIELD OF PRACTICE

A substantial proportion of respondents—

(Figure 1) Field of practice



STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

For ease of comparison of responses of individual and organisational members many of the Figures show individual and organisational responses as a percentage of their respective totals. Thus, for example, the Figures allow readers to see readily that the proportions of organisational members who find the e-newsletter (Figure 5) useful differ from the corresponding proportions of individual members but keep in mind that there are substantially more individual members (328) than organisational members (186). N/A indicates the question was not answered.

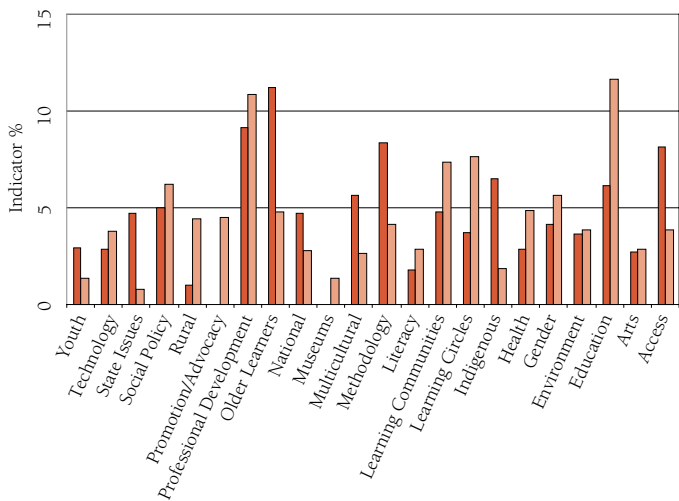
Indicator: Where respondents were able to tick several boxes (for example, in stating priority areas for ALA activity) the indicator used to show the interests or preferences of respondents allows each respondent one 'vote'. When respondents ticked two boxes, half of their 'vote' was allocated to each category; if they ticked three boxes, one-third of their 'vote' was allocated to each of these categories; and corresponding fractions were allocated if they ticked four or more boxes.

Key: Individuals
 Organisations

INTERESTS IN RELATION TO ADULT LEARNING

A high proportion of individual members are interested in education and professional development; whereas organisational members have a focus on older learners; professional development; methodology and access issues. Interests not listed in the survey included research and transformative learning. (See Figure 2.)

(Figure 2) Interests of members



ASSESSMENT OF METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

Overall, printed material was well received by respondents. A very high proportion of both organisational and individual members rate both the newsletter and journal highly. The annual report is also rated highly by organisational members, although a smaller proportion of members find it not useful. Other comments included requests for the return of the topical and challenging publication, The Commentary.

- ▶ ALA plans to reintroduce the commentaries again this year, once we have the staffing resources to do so. Contributions of 500 words on topical issue are welcome!

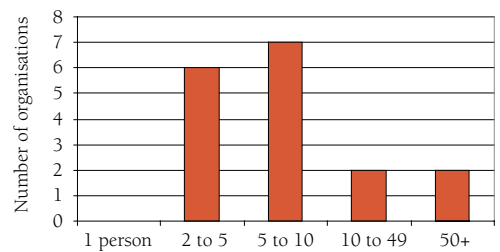
ACCESS TO ALA MATERIAL

ALA material is widely read, many respondents indicated that ALA material is available throughout their workplace for colleagues to access. (Figure 3.)

The ALW materials are regarded as either very useful or useful by the majority of respondents although a surprising 30% of organisations found the material not useful.

- ▶ We anticipate that this year's approach to ALW will ensure that materials are designed in a flexible way which will meet providers' needs.

(Figure 3) Numbers with access to ALA material

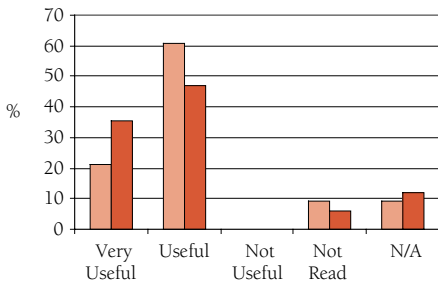


WEBSITES

A large majority of respondents found the ALA website either very useful or useful, a small minority had not read the site or had not answered the question. (See Figure 4.) The ALW website was also found to be very useful or useful, but quite a few organisational members had not read the site and individuals had not answered the question. The Learning Circles Australia (LCA) website has been found to be useful by those using it but many seem to be unaware of its existence.

- ▶ The LCA website will be undergoing substantial revision this year.

(Figure 4) ALA Website

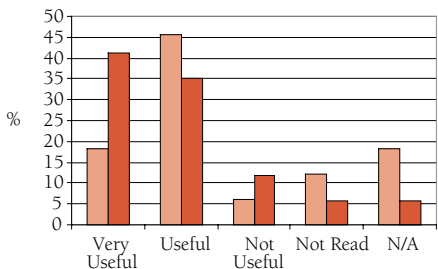


E-NEWSLETTER

The e-newsletter (*The Current*) is very well received by organisational members. 30% of individual respondents either had not read the e-newsletter or did not answer the question. (Figure 5.) Others commented on the time factor taken in accessing material and the format of attachments.

- ▶ We will take steps to streamline the transmission of *The Current*.

(Figure 5) e-newsletter

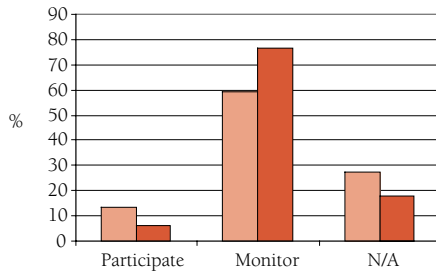


INTEREST GROUPS

The interest groups are not actively used with only 47% of organisational and 33% of individual respondents find them very useful or useful. Although the majority of respondents are happy to monitor the interest groups, only 13% of individual and 7% of organisational respondents participate in the discussions. (Figure 6.)

- ▶ With the appointment of Jacqui Levan as website manager, we hope to be able to give added impetus to the discussion groups.

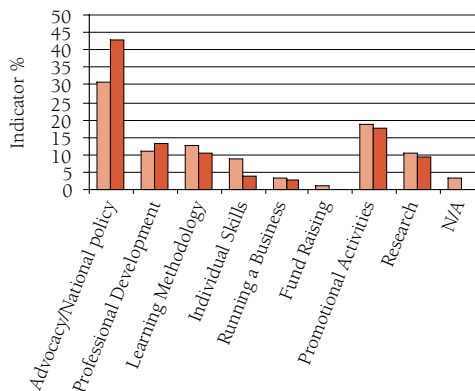
(Figure 6) Do you participate in interest groups or monitor?



PRIORITY AREAS FOR ALA ACTIVITY

Respondents rate advocacy on national policy as their highest priority followed by promotional activities (such as ALW). (Figure 7.) Professional development, learning methodologies and research are also areas of priority for ALA activity. Additional comments indicated interests in older learners and Aboriginal literacy.

(Figure 7) Priority areas for ALA activity

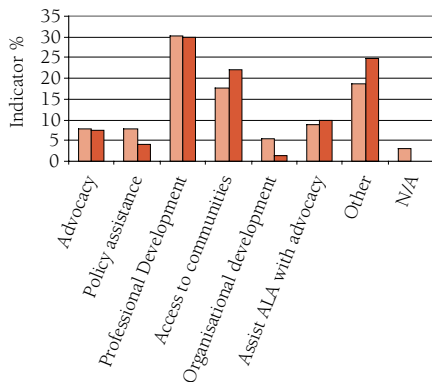


BENEFITS FROM ALA MEMBERSHIP

The survey indicates that most respondents seek professional development and access to communities of practice. (Figure 8.) The comments we received show that gaining up-to-date information, networking opportunities, support and having international contacts are the other benefits respondents regard highly.

- ▶ ALA will be providing professional development workshops during ALW, at the national conference, plans on increasing the network of learning circles and hopes to introduce accredited facilitator training.

(Figure 8) Benefits sought from ALA membership

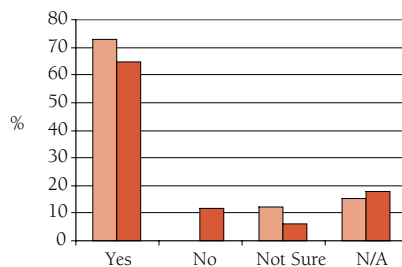


GOOD VALUE FOR MEMBERSHIP

The majority of respondents feel that they receive good value for membership. (Figure 9.) The general feeling is that ALA gives members the opportunity to be involved, keeps them informed, and to stay up-to-date with adult learning issues. Other comments indicate that ALA might pay more attention to management

and leadership issues in educational settings; and is not sufficiently focused on social change. An international member would like to see more attempts made to consider comparative adult education.

(Figure 9) Do you receive good value for your ALA membership?



- ▶ Social justice is at the heart of ALA's agenda. The question of learning and leadership is one we wish to explore further. This will be done before we go forward with any future leadership courses. Management issues will be addressed where appropriate although these may better be considered at State level. Contributions from members on comparative adult education would be very welcome. ■

Margaret Bates
Membership Officer

ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK, A WEEK-LONG PROMOTION TO ENCOURAGE LIFELONG LEARNING, IS WIDELY VIEWED AS A POSITIVE INITIATIVE THAT SHOULD CONTINUE.

Adult Learners' Week evaluation provides positive results

The evaluation of Adult Learners' Week (ALW) in 2001 and 2002 was conducted by ACNielsen and funded by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). It found that three out of four Australians feel positively about learning and that 29 per cent of people had heard the term 'Adult Learners' Week'. Those who saw or heard ALW publicity identified two main messages in the campaign:

- ▶ Adult learning is available for people of any age
- ▶ It doesn't matter how old you are, you can still learn.

The evaluation investigated what people think the term 'adult learning' means. This included:

- ▶ learning through short structured programs offered through a training or education institution,
- ▶ learning that is more 'serious', longer-term and leads to a qualification
- ▶ informal learning done simply out of interest.

ACNielsen held focus groups with three types of learners: committed learners; males aged 45-60 years living in regional or rural areas and people who felt there were too many barriers to resuming their

learning. For *committed learners*, the research revealed that learning is about enjoyment and exploration. They have had positive past experiences and are keen to revisit the sense of achievement and skill development they gain from learning. For *males aged 45-60 years living in regional or rural areas*, the aim of learning is to keep pace with the world. They require tangible benefits and rewards from learning. These people do not see learning as a totally positive experience. Therefore messages to attract these learners need to portray learning as fun as well as beneficial. For this group the barriers are often existing commitments to family, work and social activities. Those with *barriers to learning* show ambivalence and a sense of disconnection from learning. This group finds it easy to make excuses not to learn. To entice them, messages should provide reassurance that learning is not about exams or lectures, that it can be fun and lead to earning more money, gaining new skills and perspectives on life. Disincentives to learn for this group include cost, lack of motivation, unsatisfying experiences in education in the past and a sense of fear about trying again.

Adult Learners' Week was first established in 1995 to promote and encourage lifelong learning. This is an aim that resonates

with many people. For the future, the evaluation points to the need for continuing with a campaign that targets specific segments of the population and which further develops supportive networks of state and territory adult learning coordinators and learning providers.

The evaluation of Adult Learners' Week was managed and published by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). The report will be available from www.ncver.edu.au or from Adult Learning Australia's website at www.ala.asn.au.

PUTTING THE ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK EVALUATION IN CONTEXT

During the period of ACNielsen evaluation, the national ALW campaign had an overall budget of \$500,000 annually, of which \$250,000 was divided among the State governments (who, in most cases, passed much of this money to learning providers in the form of activity grants).

Of the remaining \$250,000, given to ALA for the national co-ordination of the campaign, roughly \$110,000 was spent on the development and implementation of various marketing activities, including print and electronic promotion. The rest was devoted to consultation processes, activities such as the national tour of international guests, seminars and publications, and staffing costs. The budget did not stretch to paying for the placement of TV or print ads; however, some State governments did take out paid print advertising.

It is hard to find other campaigns that have exactly the same timing, scope and

promotional activities as Adult Learners' Week but the following are offered by way of comparison:

The **Active Australia campaign** (phase 1) was conducted in NSW during February and March 1998. It was aimed at people 25-60 who were motivated but insufficiently active. The campaign consisted of a direct mailout to all GPs in NSW, paid print and television commercials, a PR strategy to optimise unpaid media coverage, and community level support mechanisms. This State-based campaign had an implementation budget of \$700,000, with the value of unpaid media coverage estimated at \$300,000.

A six-month tracking of the campaign showed that at the beginning of the tracking period only 2.7% of respondents recalled any promotional messages about physical activity. This rose to 20.9% at the end of the tracking survey. From prompted recall, where the interviewer reads out specific components of the marketing campaign, 60% of respondents recalled the strapline after the campaign, with one in four able to recall the exact commercial or message. Additional theme recognition increased from 2.3% (prior) to 28% (post).

Among the high profile campaigns, the **Victorian Transport Accident Commission's (TAC)** powerful road safety campaigns achieve recognition ranging from 70% to over 90% market recall. The TAC's budget is estimated to be around \$30 million, making it one of Victoria's largest advertising accounts.

Probably the most effective low-budget community campaign has been **Red Nose Day**. Its main expense is the production of

the sale items, which involves an upfront outlay of \$450,000. Development of the campaign theme and all advertising material is undertaken by a major advertising agency on a pro-bono basis, and most of the television and radio advertising is also offered free-of charge. Through the sale of merchandise and the involvement of high profile celebrities, the Red Nose campaign achieves approximately 95% recognition among the Australian community, with 86% having an understanding that the Day supports the many programs operated by SIDS organisations. *(For more information about Red Nose Day and its impact visit www.sidsandkids.org/aboutrnd.htm)*

Finally, to put all these efforts into perspective, it is useful to consider the 'hierarchy of communication' proposed by W.J. McGuire in 1984. Writing about public communication as a strategy for promoting behavioural change in the field of health, McGuire outlined a theoretical model of halves, which suggested that of a certain target audience, if 50% are exposed to the message, approximately half of these may pay attention to it. Of that group (25% of our original target group), only half may understand what they are supposed to do, and only half of the group who understands may agree with the message. Half of this group may *intend* to act, of which only half may actually *do* something – around 1.5% of the original target group. Assuming a 50% success rate of the activity, then only around 0.75% of the original target group may actually achieve the desired behavioural objective.

Still, we'll keep trying! ■

John Cross
Research Manager

LESSONS FOR ADULT LEARNING AUSTRALIA

- ▶ It was an achievement to reach 29 percent recognition of ALW but we can't expect to keep reaching more people on a small budget. We must now aim to consolidate the message and emphasise the call to action.
- ▶ The Week is still an effective marketing tool. Its message is relevant, understood and seen as positive. Having an event embedded in the calendar forces people to pay attention, to take ALW out of the in-tray!
- ▶ From a marketing perspective it may not be worth targeting those who are negative about learning, because they are not receptive to our messages. That may influence our next promotional campaign but ALA cannot ignore these people—reaching the unreached is what ALA is about.
- ▶ The 2002 outreach campaign was very successful in increasing awareness of the campaign among older men in rural areas. The faces and stories were credible and down-to-earth and people liked the men's smiles.
- ▶ The evaluation suggests that ALW needs to more work on local activities. The Week represents an opportunity for ALA members to showcase their work, something the National Office is keen to assist in.
- ▶ There is no immediate plan to have another ACNielsen evaluation of ALW but it is important that we continue to track ALW's results.

Francesca M. Beddie

Community Based Education in Taiwan

In May 2002, I was invited to speak at a conference in Taiwan. The occasion was the fourth National Conference of the Association of Community Universities. In Taiwan, a Community University is equivalent in structure and purpose to the NSW Community College. Although I was initially concerned that I had been invited under some misguided



The conference banner commemorates the fourth National Conference of Taiwanese Community Universities.

belief that I was an academic or person of significant other reputation, it became clear to me when I arrived, that the Taiwanese had good reason to invite me. By this I mean not me in particular, but certainly anyone with a working knowledge of Adult and Community Education in NSW.

I had sent a draft of my speech in advance just to make sure that I was not going to embarrass anyone, particularly myself. It

was very much a draft and when I got word that the content and direction were okay, I re-worked the paper and laboured over a Power Point presentation to accompany it. I arrived at the conference venue in a noisy city about 200 kilometres south of Taipei. Having been to many Australian conferences focussed on adult education, I expected that it would have a rather home spun feel. I was surprised, to say the least, to find about 600 enthusiasts milling about and talking excitedly. Surprised also that my draft speech had been translated into Mandarin and published verbatim in the conference proceedings. The plan was for me to read my speech while the audience read from the papers. Luckily, I had a copy of the original draft with me. The Power Point presentation was abandoned and I flew by the seat of my pants. At the end of my speech there were questions which seemed to me more like declarations, often taking five minutes or so to deliver. Translation was never instantaneous and I was only able to get a sketch of what was being said. This alerted me to an interesting difference in our cultures. The Taiwanese like to add meaning to a presentation

by giving an extensive interpretation of what is being said. We, on the other hand, ask polite questions of the presenter and rarely contribute publicly in any extensive way unless it is in opposition to the speaker.

There was a small hiccup in my presentation. I had spoken about the challenges facing Adult and Community Education. I had raised the issue of the vocational versus non-vocational funding regimes. In the translation of my draft, this became 'holiday versus non-holiday education'! I didn't learn this until day two of the conference when I was approached by a delegate with very good English skills who asked what I had meant. When I realised that 'vocation' had become 'vacation' in the translation, we both had a good laugh. Now published in the official proceedings I will be known as the Australian advocate of holiday education!

Despite the major language problems, I came to understand that the Taiwanese had adopted a system that was largely a mirror of what happens here in NSW. Community organisations were being seed funded by government to establish educational opportunities for adults in many differing

locations and situations. The responses, like here in NSW, were many and varied. In large cities like Taipei and Taijung, schools were being used to run big programs not at all dissimilar to our own at Sydney Community College. In small rural villages, education was being planned and delivered in churches, community spaces and, in one very innovative situation, a produce cooperative.

Taiwan is a young democracy. Being very innovative, the Taiwanese may very well have come up with their model for community education by themselves. Viewing NSW Adult and Community Education as a reference point for a fledgling movement in a booming Asian economy is certainly a flattering compliment, however it was the raw enthusiasm with which the various practitioners have taken to their cause that most impressed me. Usually under thirty-five years old, these young people have for the first time in their lives been allowed to put in place some of their long-held beliefs about community development, justice and equity.

Taiwan, like many of the world's industrial economies, faces real problems. Unbridled industrial and urban development has strained the environment to breaking point. The 1997 earthquake devastated much of the island's rural economy and

now the external pressure of globalisation is causing many Taiwanese to re-think their future. Perhaps, for the Taiwanese there has never been a better moment than now for the growth of community education.

Throughout the world, where it exists, community-based education is less constrained by state regulation. It is therefore able to move quickly and freely. The very fact that it is lean to the extent of being resource poor means that can also be creative and innovative, adapting to local demands in a timely and effective way. After viewing many examples of Taiwanese community education in practice, I came away with renewed vigour and commitment. I am truly grateful to the many committed educators there who revived my belief in the essential values of community-based education.

POST SCRIPT

In December 2002, we were able to continue the contact with Taiwan. A group of adult educators from Ping Tung County in the very south of Taiwan, came to Sydney for the Centre of Popular Education (UTS) conference. I was very happy to meet with my friend Associate Professor Ching-jung of Kaohsiung University. She was leading the delegation of mainly aboriginal adult educators.

(Taiwan has a very active indigenous population.) The ALA NSW branch hosted a dinner for the delegation, which also had the opportunity to meet Karen Vaughan from the Aboriginal Education Unit at



UTS, Amanda Moore, Acting Director of the NSW Board of Adult Education, Arthur Kapanzian, formerly of the Ethnic Communities Council and to visit Tranby Aboriginal College.

Should you wish to make contact with the Taiwanese Community University Movement, please email me for addresses.

garry.traynor@scc.nsw.edu.au ■

Garry John Traynor is President of Adult Learning Australia and Principal of Sydney Community College.

IN NOVEMBER 2002 ROGER MORRIS ATTENDED THREE CONFERENCES AT THE OLD UNION RAILWAY STATION IN ST LOUIS, MISSOURI: THE 51ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION (AAACE); THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR COMPARATIVE ADULT EDUCATION AND THE COMMISSION OF PROFESSORS OF ADULT EDUCATION CONFERENCES.

Meet me in St Louis

The French established St Louis in 1764 as a trading post. Following the sale of the remaining French 'possessions' in North America to the newly-established US of A under the Louisiana Purchase, the town served as a gateway to the west for the early immigrants and as a major port for the steamboats travelling the Mississippi River. Today, the city's principal landmark is the soaring polished steel Gateway Arch built in the 1990s to commemorate the western bound pioneers.

One hundred years earlier, in 1894, St Louis' Union Railway Station opened as the largest railway station in the United States. The main building contained offices, waiting rooms, a hotel, and a restaurant as well as a huge concourse built in the style of a medieval Grand Hall. The platform area was covered by an enormous single span roof. This was one of the largest train sheds ever built, spanning more than 40 platforms.

Following the decline in railway travel, the station closed in 1978. In 1985, it reopened, after extensive restoration, as a specialty retail, restaurant, entertainment, convention, and hotel complex. It remains one of the largest adaptive re-use projects ever undertaken in the United States.

The AAACE, the national adult education organisation in the United States, is very much like ALA. Indeed for many years we shared the same acronym, AAACE, with the American association only a few years older than ALA. AAACE has state-based affiliates as well as seven commissions that cover general fields of practice within adult education, the largest at the moment being the Commission on Military Education and Training (CMET) and 26 units representing specific areas of interest to adult educators.

The International Society for Comparative Adult Education Conference was attended by over

50 participants from more than 20 nations. Some papers covered developments in Germany and Switzerland, the US and Taiwan, Croatia and Slovenia, and in the Arabic-speaking world. Others took a thematic approach, for example, investigating women's education in a number of countries.

(Ed.: Keep an eye on <http://www.uni-bamberg.de/ppp/andragogik/iscae/> for the papers)

The theme of AAACE's conference was 'Blazing trails to success'. Some 400 participants registered to attend. There were three keynote speakers, all more notable for their entertainment, rather than any real educational value. However, over the three days of the conference, 120 papers and/or workshops were presented in concurrent sessions. Some were first rate. Obviously with so many papers to choose from—you needed to follow some sort of a path as you navigated your way through the program. I chose the theme



The Union Railway Station

approach, attending a series of papers that dealt with adult education and the older learner. The papers I attended related to: Changing seniors from passive observers to empowered learners through their use of video production; Senior citizens and the digital divide; Successful

feeling about adult education. Put simply, it is that to those, who already have, that more shall be given. Those few of the elderly who are already well-educated and enjoy comfortable retirement incomes are having a wonderful time—running community-based TV stations,

Listening to those papers reinforced for me a long-held feeling about adult education. Put simply, it is that to those, who already have, that more shall be given.

ageing: What senior athletes report; How do we remember? Why do we forget?; Educational and parental success; Citizen Grandpa: The citizen and grandparent social roles; Integrating work skills and life skills; Personal learning and the older adult in a national park; and motivations of older adults in distance education.

Listening to those papers reinforced for me a long-held

taking travel study tours, competing in the senior 'Olympics' and pursuing all sorts of educational experiences. But what about those of their cohort who were mercilessly sifted out of the educational system in their early teens, spent their whole life doing hard but unskilled work and have now retired, with their sole income the old age pension? What does adult education offer these

senior citizens? This question has yet to be answered.

The Commission of the Professors of Adult Education is the organisation for those who teach adult education as an academic subject at the university level in the USA. The focus of the deliberations of the hundred or so professors (ie university teachers) who attended was on 'reframing the field of study of Adult Education'. Now that the slogans of lifelong learning, the learning organisation, the learning community and the learning society are on the lips of almost every politician and bureaucrat, many of the long time concerns of adult education have been mainstreamed and its concepts embraced by all sectors of educational endeavour.

Some go further and claim that adult education is an idea whose time has now passed. While there may be a lot of talk about the crucial importance of adult learning to our future, everywhere adult education as a field of study is in retreat. This discussion, though very heated and most interesting, did not come to any real consensus except that all agreed there are both serious challenges and wonderful opportunities confronting adult education in the early years of the twenty-first century. ■

Roger Morris
University of Technology Sydney

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN ON EDUCATION

The Global Campaign on Education (GCE) held its Board Meeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil from 17-19 January, 2003. The GCE is a worldwide coalition of national, regional and international NGOs and teachers' unions, operating in more than 150 countries, collaborating to advocate for the right for all people to quality, accessible, affordable education.

The GCE has been working to ensure that the six Education for All (EFA) goals are fully resourced by the international community. It works in international forums and lobbies institutions such as the World Bank and G8 on education policy and resourcing matters. GCE is also increasingly supporting the work of national coalitions especially in poorer countries to influence education policy at a national level.

The GCE Global Week of Action (6-13 April 2003) is a means of galvanising energy from the local to the international level on education policy and resourcing. This year it focuses on increasing learning resources and opportunities for women and girls. UNESCO is also supporting the Week.

On April 9, the GCE will organise the world's biggest ever



ASPBAE representatives at the UNESCO CCNGO Annual Meeting in Porto Alegre. Ms Nanjoo Yan, Research Fellow, Graduate School of NGO Studies, Sung Konghoe University, Korea; Ms Maria Almzan Khan, ASPBAE Secretary General based in India and Mr Bernie Lovegrove, ASPBAE Program Officer based in Canberra.

lesson. The lesson is simple: girls and women need an equal chance to learn. As the promotional material says: 'In more than 100 countries, in thousands of different classrooms, adult education centres, university campuses, churches and village halls, we will be teaching the same lesson to the world'.

For further information contact worldrecord@campaignforeducation.org

Or visit the website: <http://www.campaignforeducation.org>

EDUCATION FOR ALL

UNESCO held its Annual Meeting of the Collective Consultation of NGOs (CCNGO) on Education for All (EFA), also in Porto Alegre from 19-22 January, 2003. It established this consultation to ensure the strong involvement of civil society in international discussions on EFA. The meeting discussed progress made in achieving the six EFA goals and in particular the role played by civil society organisations. It concluded there was a tendency by some international donors such as the G8 and the World Bank in its Fast Track Initiative to focus only on universal

primary education (UPE), especially girls' education and on adult literacy, rather than addressing all six goals. The desire to see all six EFA goals addressed was reflected in the theme of the meeting: 'Towards Comprehensive Visions and Approaches to Education for All'.

The voice of adult education and the need for a life-long learning approach was strong in the meeting although much more needs to be done to bring community organised adult learning back on the agenda of national governments, of UNESCO, and international donors. One of the recommendations for the CCNGO was to encourage greater collaboration between the EFA movement and CONFINTEA V on adult learning. CONFINTEA, the International Conference on Adult Education, was last held in Hamburg in July, 1997. There will be a CONFINTEA Mid-Term Review meeting to be held in Thailand in September, 2003. ■

*Bernie Lovegrove,
ASPBAE Program Officer*

VALE BRIAN SMITH

Australian education lost an energetic champion with the death in December of Dr Brian Smith. A mature age undergraduate at University of Western Australia (UWA) in the 1960s, Brian completed his PhD at the Australian National University (ANU) then taught philosophy at the University of Queensland (UQ) before returning to UWA to become Deputy to Paul Birman at University Extension. Brian's most productive years were as Foundation Director of the Department of Community Programs at Newcastle University, 1973 to 1987. There he built a lively program of courses, workshops and conferences. As well, there were more exploratory offerings including, through colleagues John Turner and John Hill, a significant range of historical tours and radio and television projects designed to increase public participation in civic affairs.

Several Newcastle programs refreshed Australian adult education. Brian taught community and adult education before they became fashionable and highly stylised. Students won to such courses were always adventurous, there being few career options in the field. A large Trade Union Training program preceded the establishment of the Trade Union Training Association. Newcastle became firmly established on itineraries of touring artistic and cultural companies—it became the 'testing ground' for NIDA graduating class productions. Annual Eddy Memorial Lectures brought to Newcastle the most interesting and significant contributors to an Australian sense of identity and fairness. Brian's crowning achievement was in the field of non-standard preparation for university studies. His Open Foundation Course in particular has assisted thousands of adults back into mainstream education.

A prodigious worker, Brian often taught several classes each day. Each student could expect copious comments in miniscule handwriting on every essay completed. The comments were not always flattering or even polite, but always were apposite and helpful.

Brian is remembered with respect and affection by colleagues and by thousands of adult learners. He is survived by Sybil and children Sarah and Aneurin. ■

John Collins

LIFELONG LEARNING IN NEW ZEALAND

Garry Traynor and I returned from a Lifelong Learning Conference in Auckland, New Zealand the day before we had to put this edition to bed. There was not time therefore to put together a comprehensive report. Instead, here are highlights from the two days.

Visiting New Zealand for the first time was a salutary lesson in cross-cultural communication.

It was good to be introduced to Maori culture, where lifelong learning does not need to be lobbied for—it's inherent in traditional lifestyle. But, of course, Maoris like so many Indigenous people, are grappling with the results of colonisation and to preserve their language. There is also the challenge of finding learning systems appropriate to the various Pacific peoples who now live in New Zealand and who are struggling to maintain the vestiges of their home cultures.

Much however was familiar to all participants. All were committed to lifelong learning, though definitions varied. Problems were common. Like Australia, New Zealand must grapple with high levels of illiteracy, particularly amongst Indigenous communities and is striving to break down institutional rivalries

and constraints in the education system as well as to find ways to entice the reluctant learner back to learning.

The policy framework could not be more different. Adult and community education is enjoying a high profile in policy terms, though some depict this—rather pre-judging the new system—as a co-option of lifelong learning by the state. The newly-established Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) brings under one policy and funding umbrella all forms of post-school education. It explicitly recognises both the strengths of adult and community education in finding flexible, cost-effective solutions, and the burden under which it laboured during the nineties when government funding was almost non-existent. To assist the sector to rebuild, the TEC plans to establish networks of ACE providers as a means of ensuring better coordination both in terms of funding and service delivery.

We heard also how the British are trying to establish better coordination of learning across government and to assist the learner find their way through the maze of educational opportunities. Janice Shiner, the Director General for Lifelong Learning in the Department for Education and Skills—yes, there is such a person—was adamant that the system needed to work

before one could expect individuals to invest in their own learning. She was also committed to seeing a reintroduction of Individual Learning Accounts, albeit with a much more stringent accountability regime.

There is not space here to recount all the PALLACE projects introduced at the conference. Suffice it to say that this is an international endeavour established under the auspices of the European Commission which is funding several pilot projects to raise awareness of lifelong learning beyond the aficionados, to encourage public-private partnerships, to broadcast good practice, to develop e-learning modules, connect schools across the globe, explore learning in museums and other cultural centres, and to educate elected representatives about lifelong learning. See www.pallace.net

Along with Finland, France, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, China is a partner in the project. The scale of its challenges are hard to fathom! ■

China
Population 1270,000,000
GDP per capita USD900
15% of the population currently in higher education
**GOAL: by 2008 (Beijing Olympics)
50% to be in higher education**

Francesca Beddie

'FULL CIRCLE, FULL CYCLE (FC2)'—LEARNING CIRCLES AS A TOOL IN COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING IN CAMPBELLTOWN

The Campbelltown area lies within the Georges River Catchment and the Upper Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment. Both areas face problems with stormwater management, an issue of considerable importance to the preservation of the local environment.

The Campbelltown City Council therefore applied to the NSW Government Stormwater Trust for a grant to use learning circles as a means to educate and encourage broad community involvement in finding solutions to local stormwater problems. As part of that project, Adult Learning Australia (ALA) undertook an investigation to gauge community capacity to engage in a learning circle program on stormwater issues.

ALA held consultations with representatives of around sixty groups from the education, government, community, commercial and environment sectors, from which it concluded that people are committed to having a clean environment. They would get engaged in projects to limit the impact of stormwater pollution if the project complemented existing community activities and they

realised the urgency of doing so. They also need to have respected and committed leadership in the community. ALA's report cautioned that a learning circle program must harness existing communal energy, have a specific action focus and a hands-on approach.

LEARNING CIRCLES PROJECT FOR LONE PARENTS IN MT DRUITT, NSW

The purpose of this project is to empower Mt Drutt female lone parents, especially those with children aged 13 years and over, by providing a risk-free environment in which to consider their pathways for the upcoming 'Australians Working Together' changes. The project is divided into two stages. The first thirteen weeks will be a learning circle program which will introduce participants to their local environment and help them to plan personal pathways to training.

The second stage will move the group to external environments and introduce them to other opportunities available to them. For example, the local TAFE will commence Information Technology awareness outreach services to learning circle sites providing individuals with search tools for information they require, for example, about

public transport, home shopping, activities for children outside the area, legal services and job searching.

Adult Learning Australia was involved in the initial consultations with staff from GROW (Growing Regional Opportunities for Work) and will continue to provide advice and support to the Project Manager particularly about the content and design of the learning circle material and facilitator training. ■

NEW SOUTH WALES

On 3 December 2002, the AGM for the NSW Branch of ALA elected a new executive, with Cynthia Grant taking over from Ron Anderson as president. Other office bearers are: Roger Morris (secretary), Sue Phillips (treasurer), with Donna Rooney, Barrie Brennan, Ron Anderson, Brian Cobb, Ralph Catts and Arthur Kapantazan as executive members.

Introducing Cynthia Grant

I am a Project Manager at UNSW managing development assistance projects. I find working with and learning from people of other cultures very engaging. I only wish I had focussed on this kind of work years ago!

With some 12 years experience in the adult and community education sector as foundation Executive Director of the Manly Warringah Community College on Sydney's northern beaches, I am only too familiar with the ongoing concerns of recognition and funding in this sector. My apprenticeship in Evening and Community Colleges was served with Kate Campbell at Mosman Evening College. She once said she had 'taught me all I knew'. In 1983 Kate also roped me into what was then AAE to assist with the catering! I've been a member of ALA in its previous incarnations since then, and have

been President of the NSW Branch of AAACE and a member of the National Executive.

I would like ALA to become more pertinent to all those adult educators who never see themselves as such. Maybe it's all in the name? ■

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

A general meeting open to all South Australian members of ALA was held in December 2002 to establish the new state branch. A state executive was established: President, Lorelie Ball (President), Denis Binnion (Secretary), Roger Heath (Treasurer), Rita Bennink, Judy Fawcett, David Muscio, Mary-Jo Bellew, Darryl Dymock, June Millan and Sue Ross.

Introducing Lorelie Ball

I have a BA from the University of South Australia, with majors in Information Management and History, which I completed as a mature age student in 1993. My employment prior to returning to study and raising a family was in banking.

I commenced employment at the WEA in Adelaide in 1993 as a Project Officer (Adult Re-entry Secondary Education). I am currently the Senior Administration Officer, responsible for administration, IT systems management, the corporate secretariat (WEA

Board) and course planning of about 250 ACE courses per year, in craft, personal development and courses for women. I have led three overseas tours for WEA Travel to destinations in China and Vietnam.

My particular interests focus on providing diverse learning opportunities for the public. At WEA we attempt to motivate those people who are alienated from education to try again. I strongly believe that the learning undertaken in recreation, personal development, enrichment courses etc. (although not recognised for skills development) builds confidence and opens the door to other learning opportunities, social development and personal satisfaction. This in turn, helps to build a healthier society of interested, active citizens. ■

QUEENSLAND

The Queensland Branch of ALA has undergone some changes in the past year. Recently we established an e-network of members and are beginning to share information in cyberspace as well as with hard copy newsletters. This has enabled members from across the state to engage in discussion and to feel personally and immediately involved in providing feedback.

Francesca Beddie visited Queensland in mid-January. She suggested strategies by which

Queensland ALA might advocate for informal adult learning within sectors of our state that are not yet fully informed about community-based adult learning. She also rekindled energies to look at support for Community Learning networks. ■

Deirdre Baker

PIONEER LEARNING SUCCESS!

Pioneer Clubhouse at Balgowlah in Sydney is a community centre for women and men living with mental illness. Since the beginning of 2002, WEA Sydney has been assisting members of the Clubhouse to gain accredited computer course qualifications. A small ceremony on 17 December 2002 recognised these learning achievements with eight club members being awarded their certificates by WEA Sydney Executive Officer, Richard Pinder. During 2003, WEA Sydney will continue to assist members of Pioneer Clubhouse with a range of communication skills and confidence-building workshops. ■

Richard Pinder

NEW DEVELOPMENTS AT U3A ONLINE

U3A Online has introduced two initiatives that will materially benefit members, particularly isolated older people. The first is a joint partnership with the Third Age Trust in the UK, which has recently ventured into

online courses for its 120,000 strong U3A membership. Ultimately, this new relationship will substantially increase the range of online adult education courses available to U3AOL subscribers. Discussions about other possible joint projects are in the offing.

The second new development will ensure that U3AOL can continue to offer its high quality, online courses for nominal cost to third age learners, regardless of their location, for the foreseeable future. Griffith University has agreed to host the U3AOL courses site free of charge and in addition will provide in-kind expertise from its flexible learning unit to cover the cost of mounting eight new courses online. This will bring the total number of courses, each equivalent to about 8 weeks' work, to 18. As per the U3A philosophy, all course writer/leaders are volunteers, mostly retired. ■

www.u3aonline.org.au

Dr Rick Swindell

WORLD OF WORDS

The World of Words multicultural club is a social English conversation group formed by the Westfield library (Armadale, WA) in September 2000 for local residents whose first language is other than English. Under the guidance of a volunteer tutor, the club gives

members the opportunity to practice their spoken English skills in a social setting while sharing experiences from their country of origin. The library offers a range of resources and special language learning equipment for members' use free of charge. Skills developed are reinforced through social events organised by members themselves.

As confidence has grown the group has undertaken a number of projects, including mounting an art exhibition, assisting with senior's programmes and multicultural festivals and participating in a specially designed computer course. The group meets every Tuesday morning at Westfield library. New members are always welcome. ■

*Bill Leigh, Branch Librarian,
Westfield Library
(08) 9497 2642.*



Adult Learning Australia

COMMUNITIES OF LEARNING: COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

The 43rd Annual National Conference
University of Technology Sydney
27th to 30th November 2003

Call for Papers

Strands of the conference include:

Learning at Work
Learning in Communities
Learning in the Family

The cross-cutting issues at the conference will include:

Indigenous learning
The needs of the older learner

Please submit, by **31 March 2003**, a one page outline of your proposed paper which includes details on how you see the paper fitting into the overall theme of the Conference.

The concurrent sessions at the conference will encompass a full range of activities including: workshops; research reports; round table discussions; and poster sessions. Submissions to run such a session are also invited. Proposals should reach the National Office by **30 April 2003**.

If your proposal is accepted you will receive full details as to how to prepare and present your paper or plan your workshop. It is intended to publish a set of refereed proceedings of the conference. There will be a prize for the best research paper presented by a student

Submissions can be emailed to info@ala.asn.au or sent to:
ALA National Conference
PO Box 308
Jamison Centre ACT 2614.

For regular conference updates see www.ala.asn.au

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

INDIVIDUAL

James Athanasou NSW 2032
 Rob Carolane VIC 3733
 Anthony Coates VIC 3630
 Sheree Creagh NSW 2283
 Jane Dewildt VIC 3690
 John Elworthy NSW 2360
 Merylyn Gander VIC 3672
 Susan Gelade NSW 2350
 Elaine Harris NSW 2040
 Alison Hooker SA 5573
 Stephen Noone TAS 7250
 Leanne Small NSW 2710

ORGANISATIONS

Community Connections Inc
 TUGGERANONG ACT 2901

 Community Services & Research
 Centre
 University of Queensland – Ipswich
 Campus
 IPSWICH QLD 4305

 Injury Prevention Unit
 Department of Health
 EAST PERTH WA 6004

Lesley Wemyss Training Consultancy
 PALM BEACH QLD 4221

 NCELTR Resources Centre
 MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109

 Volunteering Tasmania
 HOBART TAS 7000

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



INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF LITERACY 2003–2012

CALENDAR

9–11 April 2003

The Changing Face of VET

The sixth Annual Australian VET Research Association Conference. Convened by AVETRA and to be held at the Australian Technology Park, Eveleigh, Sydney.

Contact Karen Whittingham
p 02 4422 2207
e Karen.Whittington@det.nsw.edu.au

For further information
<http://www.avetra.org.au>

1–2 May 2003

TAE Directors Australia 2003 Annual Conference.

This conference will be held at the Regency Institute of TAFE, Adelaide.

Contact Jill Collinge p 02 6281 0181, f 02 6281 3720, e secretariat@tda.edu.au or visit <http://www.tda.edu.au/>

11–14 May 2003

TAFE in Rural Isolated Communities (TRIC) Conference

A biennial conference dealing with the issues of TAFE delivery in rural and isolated communities. The TRIC conference is to be jointly hosted by Wodonga Institute of TAFE and NSW Riverina TAFE and will be held in Albury/Wodonga.

Contact Linda McKenzie, Wodonga Institute of TAFE p 02 6055 6677 f 02 6055 6611
e lmckenzie@wodonga.tafe.edu.au
For further information see <http://www.wodonga.tafe.edu.au>

15–17 May 2003

Adult and Community Education Aotearoa

Rebuilding foundations & participation. To be held at the Chateau on the Park, Otautahi Christchurch, NZ. To confirm your interest and to receive further information contact Jan McGoldrick, PO Box 540, Christchurch, NZ.
e mcgoldrickj@cpit.ac.nz

20–21 June 2003

**Making Connections Conference 2003
ACE: The Heart of Learning**

The main themes for this conference are: Exploring innovation in community learning; Getting ACE 'out there' – raising awareness and understanding; Involving more of the community in learning; Improving the quality of learning and getting better results.

Contact Neil Carver-Smith
e stara@iinet.net.au

27–29 June 2003

Experiential, Community and Workbased: Learning Outside the Academy. An International Conference

The Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning (CRL) is hosting this conference which has developed out of research undertaken within the Centre on workplace learning and the accreditation of prior experiential learning. The conference will be held at the Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland.

If you would like further information contact Claire Scott on p +44 (0) 141 582 0346 or see <http://hp1.gcal.ac.uk:7777/crll/conf.htm>

3–5 July 2003

The Second International Inside Out Conference

A conference on Higher Education and Community Engagement Charting Engagement: Capital, Community and Citizenship Conference at the University of Queensland, Ipswich Campus.

For more information see <http://apo.org.au/webboard/items/00179.shtml>

9–11 July 2003

Social Inclusion Conference

Australian Social Policy Conference hosted by the Social Policy Reform Research Centre.

For further information see <http://www.apo.org.au/webboard/items/00207.shtml>

17–18 July 2003

'Skilled for Life' Community Services & Health Industry Conference.

The aim is to engage keynote speakers and run workshops that will showcase the best Skilled for Life training practices and tools being used by industry leaders in many different fields. The deadline for abstracts is 10 April. To be held at the Victoria University of Technology. For further information www.intraining.org.au

**1–7 September 2003
Adult Learners' Week**

Adult Learners' Week is a national celebration and promotion of all forms of adult learning.

For information see www.adultlearnersweek.org or call 1300 303 212

17–20 September 2003

European Festival of the Learning City and Region

To be held in Edinburgh, this Festival brings together decision makers and professionals from Learning Cities world-wide to debate, inform, to exchange ideas, expertise and knowledge on the nature and practice of the learning city and region.

19–20 September 2003

Literacy in Multiple Environments

The Australian Council for Adult Literacy is to be held at the Metropolis to Desert Sands Convention Centre, Alice Springs. Further information will be available at a later date. See www.acal.edu.au

27–30 November 2003

Communities of Learning: Communities of Practice

Lifelong Learning—From the Learning Organisation to Learning Communities towards a Learning Society. The 43rd Annual National Conference of Adult Learning Australia will be held at the Broadway Campus, University of Technology, Sydney (UTS).

For further information see <http://www.ala.asn.au>