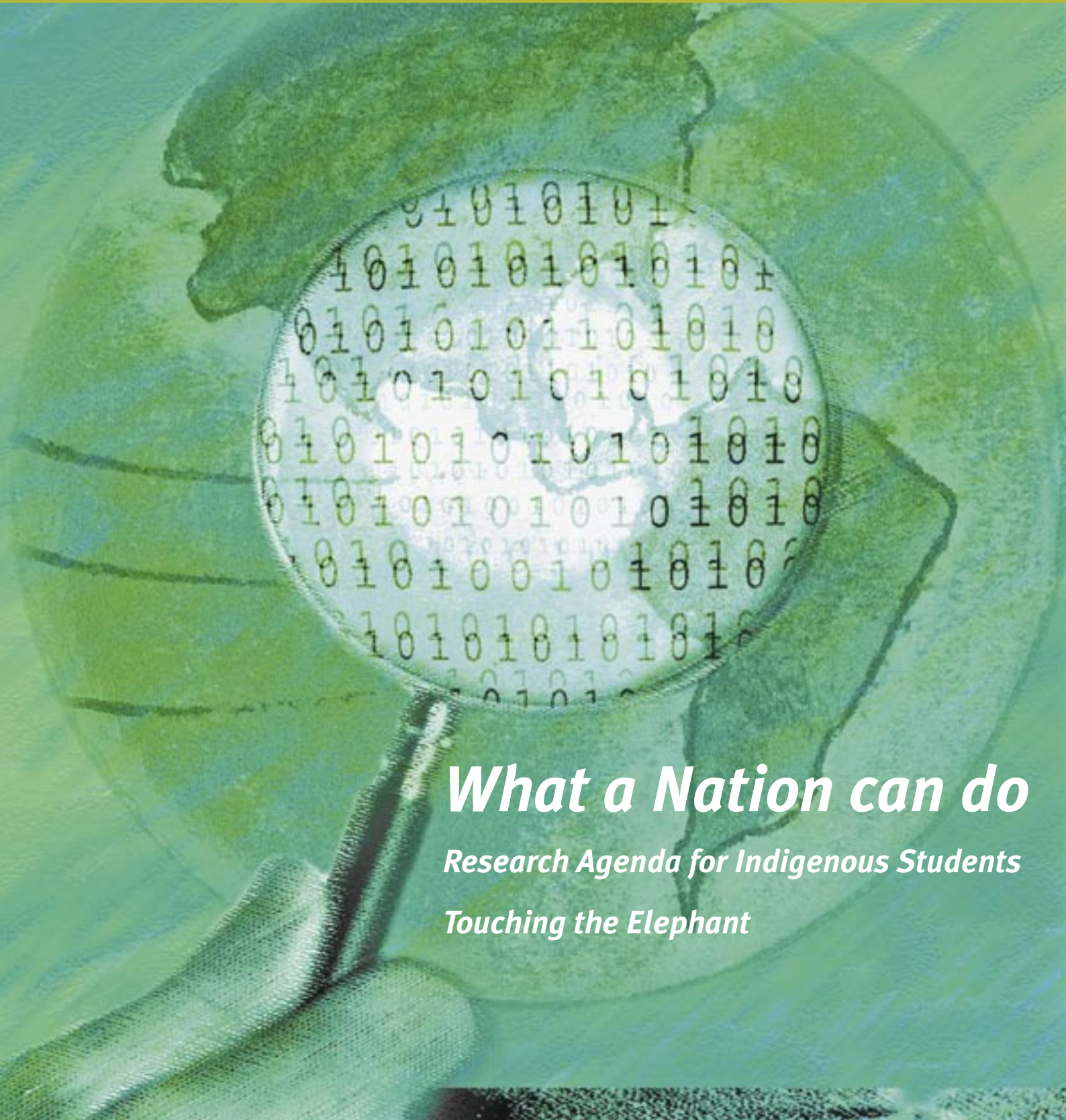


Quest

Issue 6 Spring 2004



Adult Learning
Australia Inc.



What a Nation can do
Research Agenda for Indigenous Students
Touching the Elephant



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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Views expressed in Quest are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of ALA. Written material from Quest may be reproduced, providing its source is acknowledged.

ALA also publishes the Australian Journal of Adult Learning, in April, July and November. ALA members receive this publication, hard copy or electronic as part of their membership. Non-members may subscribe for \$70. Single issues are \$25 plus postage.

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AUSTRALIAN
NATIONAL TRAINING
AUTHORITY

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Welcome to the Spring edition of QUEST

The Australian Council of Adult Literacy (ACAL) recently brought Dr Geoff Bateson from the Birmingham Core Skills Development Partnership to visit Australia. ACAL kindly made time available to ALA for Dr Bateson to visit Canberra to talk about the contribution lifelong learning makes to the regeneration of neighbourhoods. He made two presentations, the first was hosted by DEST and addressed senior departmental officers from a number of Federal Government Departments about the development of Birmingham Core Skills Partnership. The second was to academics and practitioners with an involvement in the learning communities. Participants at this presentation were introduced to a learning city audit tool.

Such is the interest being generated around the learning communities that we are presenting as our main story a paper entitled *What a Nation can do* by Barry Brooks, Acting Director, Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit, Department of Education and Skills in the UK. While this paper provides a national policy perspective to basic skills acquisition, implementation is focused at the regional and local levels.

You will have received a copy of our Awards Nomination Form. Please promote it widely to those you think have made an outstanding contribution to the learning field. The awards this year have been co-sponsored by the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) and the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) with prize money of \$2,000 for each category winner and \$1,000 for each category runner-up. The winner in each category will be flown to Adelaide to receive their prize at the national conference.

This issue also carries a brief profile of the current ALA Board Members.

By the time you receive this issue you will have just experienced Adult Learners' Week and Learn @ Work Day 2004. Our team in the national office, along with a very co-operative, creative and energetic team of state and territory co-ordinators, have collaborated to continue to make this a successful celebration of learning in the community.

As a prelude to the ALA conference we have been fortunate to have Dr Tom Karmel, a keynote speaker, provide a paper on a *New national research agenda for Indigenous students*. This paper reports on some ongoing research that will continue into 2005.

Our special guest in this issue is an old friend of ALA. Senator Ursula Stephens briefly describes her career and outlines some of the experiences that have shaped her values and attitude about lifelong learning.

John Cross, 'international' presenter, and researcher on lifelong learning for ALA, reports on his recent visit to Taiwan. John presented a paper on behalf of ALA at the recent Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) symposium. The context being the development of an APEC statement about lifelong learning. John's presentation can be found on the ALA website www.ala.asn.au. Immediately prior to the preparation of this issue John had taken the position of Executive Officer of Museums Australia. It was with very mixed emotions that we farewelled John, but on an optimistic note, we are already searching for possible points of linkage between our respective organisations.

Supporting Learning Communities development through ICT is a theme that will be on our agenda for a while at ALA. Kim Harrington reports on the June launch of the Caboolture Learning Network and the role of website help.

ALA in partnership with our colleagues in the Australian Learning Communities Network (ALCN) will be undertaking a 'Think Tank' survey, funded by DEST, in four states, focusing on our Learning Communities Catalyst Website to:

- review current satisfaction levels with our existing website,
- identify changes and additional tools that could be developed
- encourage broader sector engagement in Learning Community discussions
- encourage Local Government and business input.

To contribute your opinion, if your not able to attend one of the Think Tanks, call Mary Hannan at the National Office.

Finally, in our Looking Back section, Bob Holderness-Roddam, in an article taken from the Australian Journal of Adult Learning April 2003, mentions the importance of recording our history, suggests where documents should be lodged, gives advice on sourcing information and publication options.

Ron Anderson
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Learning Community Catalyst Website

As the Catalyst continues to develop it is important that it seeks advice from its audience. The Catalyst is soon to turn one year old and to help ALA continue the development of this site it will be conducting a series of activities called the 'Think Tank towards Action' workshops. These Think Tanks will occur in four states in September 2004 and will be facilitated by Kim Harrington and Ron Anderson. Participants will represent a combination of individuals/organisations who are key stakeholders within any Learning Community.

In addition to these activities ALA will conduct an online survey and we do encourage you to visit the website www.lcc.edu.au and take part in this online survey or contact Mary Hannan at m.hannan@ala.asn.au and request that a survey form be forwarded to you.

Australian National Training Authority Ministerial Council (MINCO)

ANTA has endorsed the first of a series of action plans to make the vocational education and training (VET) system work better for Australian businesses, students and apprentices, and communities.

The priorities for action in 2004–2005 are:

- better responses to emerging and future skill needs
- improvements to Training Packages to support teachers and trainers
- better in improving outcomes for learners
- further research on funding VET
- meeting the skill needs of mature age workers
- finding ways that VET can support regional and community development
- increasing training that leads to jobs for Indigenous Australians.

The action plan represents a real commitment by all Australian, state and territory governments to work with industry, training providers and other stakeholders to achieve the long-term goals of Shaping our Future, Australia's national strategy for VET 2004–2010.

The action plan focuses on areas where our governments need to work together to get the best results for Australia. A plan like this is a first for our national training system

and will underpin real action and tangible achievement in building the skills base that our nation needs for internationally competitive enterprises. From now until 2010, we will consider and agree on priority areas for attention based on reports from the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) Board. Copies of the action plan are available on the ANTA website at www.anta.gov.au

National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy

The National Research and Development Centre (NRDC) is a national centre in the UK dedicated to research and development on adult literacy, language and numeracy. It was established as part of Skills for Life, the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills. The Centre aims to improve practice and inform policy through the generation of knowledge, by creating a strong research culture and by developing professional practice.

The website is designed to provide a resource for all those interested in adult literacy, language and numeracy. It provides a first point of call for communicating with NRDC and links to organisations within the consortium. It will build over time to provide access to information on all our activities. These will include research and development programs; reports, findings, newsletters and other publications; online discussion forums; an archive of relevant research; and listings of events of interest to practitioners, policy makers and researchers.

Visit <http://www.nrdc.org.uk/>

(VET and ACE e-News, Issue 14, 13 August 2004)

Dimensions of Adult Learning: adult education and training in a global era

Edited by Griff Foley

This book offers a broad overview of adult learning in the workplace and community. Written by a team of international experts, it introduces the core skills and knowledge which underpin effective practice. It examines adult education policy and research, and highlights the social nature of adult learning. It also examines adult learning in different contexts: on-line learning, problem-based learning, organisational and vocational learning.

ISBN 1 74114 282 2 Published by Allen & Unwin.
AU \$45.00

Visit www.allenandunwin.com

Conference and Awards



BRIDGING CULTURES CONFERENCE

The 44th Annual National Conference at
The Stamford Grand in Glenelg, SA
on 18th–20th November 2004

The conference will examine how we can
bridge cultural differences to build a more harmonious
and productive world.

ADULT LEARNING AUSTRALIA AWARDS

These awards will be presented at the ALA National Conference
dinner to be held Saturday 20 November in Adelaide.

Information available at www.ala.asn.au

A magnifying glass is positioned over a globe, with a grid of binary code (0s and 1s) overlaid on the globe's surface. The background is a textured green and blue.

What a Nation can do

An edited version of the paper given by Barry Brooks

Summary of a presentation given in Canada by Barry Brooks, Acting Director, Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit, Department for Education and Skills, UK

In implementing the Skills for Life Strategy in England it is clear that the Government can't do it all!

What Government can do though is set the agenda, create the framework, develop the infrastructures, remove the barriers and allow the real people to do what they do best, get on and do the **real** job of helping young people and adults to improve their literacy, language and numeracy skills.

The Government regards it as a fundamental human right for every adult to be literate and numerate, all individuals need to have the dignity that these essential skills provide. This is more than an economic argument, it is about social inclusion and ensuring that those most at risk of social exclusion are better able to lead full, active, meaningful and purposeful lives at home, at work, within their communities and families and in society as a whole.

The history of adult basic skills in England before the strategy was not a glorious one – not because good work had not been done – Government interventions can be charted as far back as the 1970s when the Adult Literacy campaign was designed to sweep away the million or so adults with poor levels of literacy. However, this history is littered with short term initiatives, pilots, projects – like some wild west gold rush that comes and goes too quickly – this boom and bust approach raised expectations,

provided pump priming money but never sought sustainability so when the money was spent, the project was over – too often leaving disappointment, confusion and resentment in its wake.

By the late 1990's the issue was being referred to as 'The National Disgrace', in terms of the variation available to learners. What each learner could expect to receive in terms of advice, guidance and learning opportunities did not just depend upon who they were, what skills they lacked but also where they lived or – more frighteningly – who managed and determined local provision.

In March 2001 the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, launched *Skills for Life, the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy*.

To ensure implementation the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit was set up. The Unit, although based in the then Department for Education and Employment was given the remit to work across all government Departments. This is not just an Education, Employment or Skills strategy – it is at the heart of the Government's social policy agenda. The strategy is framed around four interrelated themes or pillars –

1. Boosting the demand for earning and improved skills.
2. Ensuring the capacity to meet this demand through planning and resource management.
3. Raising the standards and the quality of teaching and learning.
4. Increasing learner achievement of nationally recognised qualifications and their continued progression as lifelong learners.

How is this being done? – There is a strategy, a delivery plan for this strategy, and all of the key partners have plans that map in to the delivery plan, and of course this is a key delivery program for Government and as such we report regularly to Ministers and the Prime Minister – this in itself is a wonderful incentive and lever!

The Prime Minister's approach is an interesting one – he believes in 'something for something'. In our case the resource was triggered by a Public Service Agreement (PSA) Target. Our first target was to ensure that 750,000 individuals achieved a qualification in literacy, language or numeracy by 2004.

The Treasury thought this was such a good idea that they have set us a further target of 750,000 by 2007 – making 1.5 million individuals achieving qualifications by 2007. This is 1.5 different people – an individual only counts once. Given the past history of these skills where many providers did not even monitor learner progress let alone consider the possibility of qualifications, this is seen as a very challenging target.

However, the lever and driver for this change has been the resource – over £3 billion pounds of public money has been made available between 2001 and 2007. Of course this level of resource would have been irrelevant if we had not been able to engage learners. The strategy specified key priority groups:

- Unemployed people and those on benefit.
- Prisoners and those supervised in the community.
- Public sector employees.
- Low skilled people in employment.
- Other groups at risk of social exclusion including parents and carers and those living in disadvantaged communities.

In reality though *Skills for Life's* expectations have been so dramatic and the culture change demanded so great I believe we are in a policy area where we are all learners:

- Those seeking to improve their skills.
- Those charged with teaching them.
- Those with responsibility for managing provision and resources.
- Those like me devising the policy.

Such a root and branch reform requires partnership and this is an essential element of our successful progress to date.

Progress is good – we are on track for the 2004 target. The trajectory beyond 2004 becomes a challenging one and one where we remain cautious. It is worthwhile saying here that this aspect of the strategy, the targets, is only relevant to policy makers and practitioners. An individual learner's target is to improve their skills, become more competent and confident and progress. Government targets and policy issues are not and should not be the learner's concern.

I want now to turn to the key reason why we are achieving this progress. I want to look at the learning infrastructure. Every learning provider who receives Government funding through our funding agency, the Learning and Skills Council, must use this infrastructure. This is both the touchstone of consistency and the access to quality. This is so we can be sure that each learner, irrespective of where they begin their journey, has equal access to learning and achievement at the right level and in the right form.

The quality of provision is monitored by our inspectorates which are independent of Government and by the Learning and Skills Council through their contracting process and evaluation with their providers.

This infrastructure has been universally welcomed as it provides teachers with high quality support materials and a framework for teaching and learning. Some teachers have been worried by the national tests, but in most cases the positive response of learners and the increasing use of ICT has helped increase the flexibility of assessment opportunities and has persuaded teachers that the benefits far outweigh the threats.

But how can you raise quality in learning if those delivering the learning are not themselves adequately and appropriately trained? This challenge has been addressed through a new teacher qualifications framework. This framework specifies training and qualifications for those who:

- Support learners (volunteers and mentors).
- Support the learning process (assistants).
- Lead and manage the learning process (teachers).

Why this differentiation? Because we know that how people are described in different contexts differs dramatically. We wanted to eliminate confusion and be absolutely clear what we mean and what roles people have.

continued on next page

What a Nation can do

continued from previous page

New entrants to the teaching profession will now do so at graduate level. Existing teachers have a properly funded in-service training program designed to help them update their skills and if necessary achieve a professional qualification. This year alone we have spent over £14 million on in-service training – in the regions other partners have more than matched this development to improve their local teaching workforce.

In addition from this September 2004 all teachers in further education will have a core module on literacy, language and numeracy in their general teacher programs. This is to ensure that all learners, especially those on vocational programs with literacy, language or numeracy problems, are properly supported both to achieve their vocational goals as well as improve their essential skills.

We are now seeking to embed our work at a regional and local level by working with other Government Agencies who can spot and support adults in need:

- The Department for Work and Pensions – job seekers and those on benefits.
- Those responsible for Children and Family Policy with the Department for Education and Employment – especially in neighbourhood nurseries and Sure Start Units.
- The National Health Service where the new National Health Service University is developing literacy, language and numeracy programs called 'Skilled for Health'.
- The Home Office and Prison and Probation Services to ensure that those in prison or released into the community can improve their skills, gain employment and reduce the likelihood of re-offending.
- The Ministry of Defence – supporting servicemen and women to improve literacy and numeracy skills.

The Treasury has also put over £130 million pounds into Employer Training Pilots designed to reimburse employers for time taken off by employees during work time to enable them to improve vocational and basic skills. We see this as setting the foundations for a National Training Program where work-based learning is the norm, not the exception.

We listen, we respond, we negotiate, we plan and we implement. This is a living, breathing strategy. It is not a straight jacket – it needs to expand and grow, it needs to be owned and sustained by others.

Our aim is irreversible change and we are determined to see it through even though we recognise there is no quick fix after decades of inconsistency. For me this means embedding literacy, language and numeracy in all contexts and settings, in all programs and qualifications. To do this we need to embed our work across all of the Government's education and training policies – our intention is to give all of our work away and disband the Unit eventually.

So in conclusion in considering what a nation can do I leave you with these prerequisites:

- You need leadership from the very top – the Prime Minister and Premier would be good.
- You need to be prepared to challenge and change the culture – this means believing in what you are doing and driving for change.
- You need to work in partnership – involve all key stakeholders from the outset.
- You need to secure quality – look at what is good already then add to it.
- You need from the outset to seek to mainstream and embed – irreversible change needs sustainability and mainstreaming.
- You need resources – not unlimited resources, just sufficient long-term investment. This work is about investing to save. By up-skilling those with the lowest skills you eliminate the skills gap, you move more people out of the cycle of low wage, low security of employment. By helping parents and carers you help the children. This is social and economic policy in action. When it works, as I hope I have demonstrated, it's a win-win for everyone.

Barry Brooks

ACTING DIRECTOR

ADULT BASIC SKILLS STRATEGY UNIT

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adult Learners' Week 2004



The National Launch of Adult Learners' Week (ALW) 2004 was held in the Senate Alcove Room of Parliament House on Tuesday 15 June 2004 from 10:30am to 12 noon.

The launch was well attended by a wide range of guests, including representatives from Australian government departments, U3A and U3A Online, NSW Board of Adult and Community Education and the ACT Department of Training and Adult Education, among others.

Adult Learning Australia (ALA) also welcomed organisations who assisted in shooting the images for the 2004 promotional campaign – these included the National Library of Australia and the Glebe Park Health Club.

The welcoming speech was delivered by Executive Director of ALA, Ron Anderson, who spoke about some of the exciting plans in place for Adult Learners' Week 2004, including a tour by David McConnell, our international guest from Northern Ireland, and Learn @ Work Day on Friday 3 September 2004.

Following Ron's welcome, National President of ALA, Garry Traynor, spoke about ALA's role in promoting adult learning in Australia and his experiences with Adult Learners' Week.

After the official speeches, a preview of the ALW 2004 Television Community Service Announcement (TV CSA) was played and watched with interest. The TV CSA was released in late July 2004 and aired nationally on most of the major capital and regional television networks throughout August 2004. A Radio CSA was also released and aired nationally in conjunction with the TV CSA.

Guests and representatives were then invited to enjoy some light refreshments and move around the room to take a look at a showcase of ALW 2004 promotional materials and merchandise. The array of items on display included



Guests at the launch of Adult Learners' Week 2004

posters, brochures, calendars and other information, all conveying the important message of promoting adult learning in Australia.

Interactive information, in the form of two laptop computers were set up and connected to the internet to give all in attendance the opportunity to access the ALW 2004 and ALA websites.

The ALW 2004 National Launch was a great success judging by the enthusiastic feedback and numerous requests from guests for more information on ALW 2004 and advice on how they could get involved.

Peter Murphy

PROJECT OFFICER

ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK COORDINATOR



New National Research Agenda for Indigenous Students

A new national vocational education and training research strategy aims to achieve practical outcomes to improve training for Indigenous Australians.

By Dr Tom Karmel, Managing Director, National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

Vocational education and training (VET) provides an opportunity for Indigenous people, many of whom have disengaged from school and have limited access to university. The benefits Indigenous people can gain from VET include improved employment outcomes. However, VET has many other beneficial outcomes in terms of individual, community and economic development.

Research and data have shown in recent years that Indigenous peoples' participation in VET is strong. While 2.4% of the total population aged 15 to 64 years are Indigenous, 3.5% of all VET students are Indigenous. Almost one quarter of Indigenous people in Australia between the ages of 15 and 64 years participate in VET each year, consistently higher than the 12.1% participation rate for the whole population. Young Indigenous people are participating at particularly high rates.

However, we know Indigenous people tend to participate in VET at the lower levels of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Encouragingly, recent trends indicate an increase in participation above certificate level III. More than 20% of Indigenous students are enrolled in multi-field courses, such as literacy and numeracy, general education and preparation for employment courses. In recent years this figure has decreased, indicating a move toward courses more likely to result in improved employment and economic outcomes.

Successful outcomes are more likely when support programs for Indigenous students are in place within training organisations and employers. It is also widely accepted that programs and organisations with inclusive, flexible and positive practices designed to meet the needs of Indigenous students achieve higher levels of success.

While the achievements in VET are impressive, clearly more needs to be done to improve outcomes. *Partners in a learning culture*, the national VET strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 2000–2005, was established in June 2000 in an effort to spur VET

providers, policy-makers and practitioners into addressing the disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous training outcomes.

In 2003, the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) commissioned a mid-term review of *Partners in a learning culture*. The review aimed to assess the extent to which the objectives of *Partners in a learning culture* were being achieved by the Commonwealth, states and territories, and individual training providers. A key outcome of the review is this national research strategy.

The research strategy builds on what is currently known about Indigenous Australians' engagement with VET and the extent to which it is helping to achieve the desired outcomes for individuals and communities. It aims to ensure that policy development, decision-making and practice are informed by sound evidence, high quality data and critical evaluation.

Indigenous Australians in vocational education and training: National research strategy for 2003–2006, funded by ANTA and developed by NCVER and the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council of the ANTA Board (AITAC), is designed to contribute to the four objectives of *Partners in a learning culture* over the next three years. These objectives focus on:

- increasing the involvement of Indigenous people in decision-making in the VET sector (across all levels of policy, planning, resourcing and delivery)
- achieving participation of Indigenous people in VET equal to other Australians
- achieving increased, culturally appropriate, and flexible training for Indigenous people
- developing closer links between industry, employment and VET outcomes for Indigenous people.

All activity under the strategy is guided by principles of ethical research involving Indigenous communities (from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies).

Indigenous policy-makers, researchers and individuals have helped shape the focus of the research agenda in a bid to increase the practical value of the research process and products.

The research strategy includes a major survey of Indigenous VET students (see Box) as well as a survey of Indigenous staff in VET. Other projects are examining VET's role in

capacity building for Indigenous governance, and improving education and training pathways for Indigenous Australians.

Another major ongoing project is the systematic review of existing national and international research on appropriate design and delivery of training for Indigenous people.

NCVER is also consulting with AITAC regarding the communication of research results to ensure they are provided in a coordinated, appropriate and useful way. A forum is planned for the second quarter of 2005 at which NCVER will present and discuss the research.

Indigenous Australians in vocational education and training: National research strategy for 2003–2006, by NCVER and AITAC, can be downloaded from the NCVER website at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1503.html>.

To keep up to date with this research as it is released by NCVER subscribe to NCVER News, a fortnightly email newsletter at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/newsevents/news.html>

Dr Tom Karmel

MANAGING DIRECTOR
NCVER

Training:

How is it working for Indigenous students?

A new national survey is underway.

What individual, community and economic benefits do Indigenous people get from training?

What encourages Indigenous Australians to start and stay in training?

A new survey of Indigenous students looks at these questions.

From June to August 2004, a team of interviewers will visit 63 locations across Australia, ranging from major cities to very remote areas, and stretching from Thursday Island in the north to Hobart in the south, and from Tweed Heads in the east to Carnarvon in the west.

About 1000 Indigenous students who did some training in 2003 will be interviewed on their experiences.

Indigenous students will be asked about:

- their reasons for training
- what benefits they get from training (in a broad sense, not just employment)
- how they rate the quality of their training
- what they are doing after training
- their participation in, and perceptions of, Community Development Employment Programs (CDEP).

This is the first time national information like this has been collected on a large scale.



The survey has been developed with help from a special advisory group from Indigenous and other organisations. It is being conducted for the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) by Cultural Perspectives, an organisation with extensive experience in Indigenous research, with interviews being undertaken by I-View, a large data collection company.

Many Indigenous people will gain valuable experience by working on this project as local liaison officers, interviewers, and interpreters/ translators. Those who work as interviewers will receive accreditation to work on other research projects. There will also be an Indigenous Research Fellowship to assist in the analysis, interpretation and communication of survey information.

The main results of this study will be available in the first half of 2005 with some preliminary data available in late 2004. As well as being published in reports, findings will be provided to local communities.

For more information about the survey email Mel Butler at surveys_req@ncver.edu.au

Making a difference

Sydney Community College student honoured for making a difference

Sydney Community College student, Martin Keller, was a national finalist in the 'Best Work for the Dole Participant' category at the 2003 Work for the Dole Achievement Awards. Martin was nominated for his contribution to the Sydney Community College photography project '100 Faces of the Inner West', which documented cultural diversity in the inner west and was exhibited at the NSW Parliament House in August 2003.

The Awards, which were held in the Great Hall of Parliament House on the 23rd of June 2004, received 411 nominations. Work for the Dole projects are designed to respond to community needs and the awards were intended to acknowledge participants, supervisors and projects that have made a difference. Martin was one of six National Finalists who received a recognition award on the night.

Martin used training credits, given to the Work For The Dole Participants, to complete his Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment and is currently teaching 'Beginners



Mal Brough, Minister for Employment Services with Martin Keller

Guitar' with the Sydney Community College. Martin also recently landed a second job, working casually for a local firm installing audiovisual equipment for conferences and other events.

Frank Storey, Faculty Manager at the Sydney Community College, nominated Martin for his award. Frank believed that Martin was "the centre of this Work For the Dole project in every respect, technically, logistically and creatively. He acted as a mentor and a role model to other participants with fewer skills or less experience".

Frank Storey

SYDNEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
frank.storey@scc.nsw.edu.au



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Reclaiming Our National Identity

The New Zealand National Adult and Community Education Conference – 21st to 23rd May 2004

In May, I attended as the representative of ALA the National Conference of the Adult and Community Education Aotearoa (ACEA). The conference was wonderful on a number of counts.

Its location – The venue for the Conference was the Great Lake Conference Centre in Taupo on the shore of Lake Taupo, a very beautiful part of the country.

Its purpose – The purpose of the conference was to celebrate the Association's thirty years of activity in the ACE sector, to update participants on present issues, and to chart where the sector is heading into the future.

Its intercultural nature – On the first afternoon of the Conference, participants entered the tribal boundaries of the Ngata Tuwharetoa (the local Maori) at the Rauhoto Marae. We were welcomed to the Conference on Maori land. This was a very powerful and moving cultural event, which concluded its formal aspects with the hariru, a handshake and a hongu (pressing of noses). Later, there was a detailed presentation by Tuwharetoa Trust Board on the history of the local Maori. The afternoon concluded with dinner in the whare kai.

Its keynote speakers – There was a series of very fine presentations by number of different speakers:

- Carol Aronueva, a researcher from the UNESCO Institute of Education in Hamburg
- The Rt Hon Marion Hobbs MP, the Associate Minister of Education with Special Responsibility for Adult Education and Community Learning
- Marilyn Kohlhase and Pauline Winter of the Pasifika Education Centre, Auckland
- Ann Clarke, General Manager, and Judy Altinkaya, Chief Advisor – ACE, from the New Zealand Tertiary Education Commission.

A very diverse group of participants – There were more than 160 registrations from all over New Zealand and from all aspects of adult and community education provision.

Social Events – On the first evening a special event was used to launch the conference, a very innovating and enjoyable introduction to mass drumming. Soon, the

participants were learning and laughing together. On the second evening a conference dinner with a 1970s theme (the ACEA was formed in 1974) was a great success – great food, great company, great music and great fun.

Workshop Sessions – These included

- Exploring open space technology
- Learning through ecological action
- New directions for ACE in Schools
- What community education means for Pasifika
- How to know what courses your community needs?
- Quality assurance and adult and community education
- Does Adult Learners' Week celebrate all adult learning?
- Research in non-formal education: Women speaking for themselves.

While it would be presumptuous and patently unwise of a visitor to comment on the issues discussed and decisions taken by our New Zealand colleagues at their national conference, I must remark on just how uncannily familiar were many of the issues discussed and themes that emerged. For example:

- The needs of adult learners, especially those whose initial educational experiences have been less than optimal
- Building relations between and among providers, employers, governments, and the community
- Valuing and rewarding adult learning especially informal learning
- Assisting adult transitions
- Promoting learning in the workplace
- Ensuring greater and easier access
- Involving communities and enhancing community cohesion.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who made possible my visit to New Zealand, who facilitated my participation in a most enjoyable and educational experience, and who showed unfailing courtesy and kindness to their guest. I look forward to welcoming the New Zealand visitors to our Conference in Adelaide in November.

Roger Morris

SECRETARY, ADULT LEARNING AUSTRALIA

International

Touching the Elephant: Lifelong Learning and APEC

Recently an Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) symposium was held in Taipei to develop an APEC statement about lifelong learning. Australia was represented at this symposium by Anne Baly from the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) and John Cross, (former) Research Manager, ALA. This is John's report.

In her talk Dr Jennifer Stine, Executive Director MIT Professional Education Programs, introduced the image of blindfolded people touching an elephant. A phenomenon such as lifelong learning is so big that many people can be touching different parts of the same beast at the same time, each having a different conception of what the beast is, and each unaware of the others who are also touching it.

The image of the elephant was a valuable metaphor as, over the two days, the topic of lifelong learning was talked about from many different professional and cultural perspectives.

Putting the Elephant in its place

In some APEC economies, lifelong learning is considered so central to economic wellbeing that support for it is enshrined in law.

Dr Mu-lin Lu, Deputy Minister, ROC Ministry of Education, Taiwan, opened the conference by talking about recent legislation in Taiwan to ensure that all levels of government implement and regiment learning opportunities for all employees, and involve the media in presenting lifelong learning programs for the wider community. This legislation has been motivated by an examination of the key challenges facing Taiwan in the 21st century, including the needs to boost competitiveness, to create opportunities for personal development, and to ensure the wellbeing of all citizens.

Mrs Yukiko Sawano, Principle Researcher, Department of Lifelong Learning, National Institute for Educational Policy Research of Japan, talked about recent efforts in Japan to amend the Fundamental Law on Education to respond to contemporary social and economic changes.



The Confucius Temple, Taipei. Confucius temples, can be found all over China. Also known as Confucian schools, the temples have traditionally served as centers for Confucian study and education in general.

The amendments seek to include a recognition of lifelong learning in Educational law, endeavouring to create a society in which (in the words of the Central Council for Education, 2003) 'every citizen will be able to freely choose learning opportunities and learn anytime, anywhere, and where the attainment of such learning will be evaluated properly'.

Turning the Elephant round

A theme that emerged during the symposium centred around the differences between, and relative merits of, the Eastern and Western approaches to lifelong learning.

Dr Heng Neng Law, from Malaysia, talked about the importance of lifelong learning in Eastern philosophy. He suggested that many contemporary Western conceptions serve to limit the potential of lifelong learning. He suggested that, in the contemporary Western formulation, learning is seen primarily as a panacea, a solution for immediate problems, without an eye to achieving or creating lasting social change.

Dr Law explained that the principle that 'knowledge is life' has a long and noble place in traditional Asian culture. Buddha renounced his princely status to go on a pursuit of learning. In Confucian thought developing the 'whole' person is seen as underpinning the strength of society as a whole.

Dr Law did acknowledge, however, that the East Asian obsession with elite universities, coupled with the phenomena of exam fever and cram schools, could not be considered 'best practice'.

Continuing this theme, Dr Jan Walls, Director of the David Lam Centre for International Communication, Simon Fraser University, Canada, talked about the long tradition in East Asia of examinations and of memorising the classics as a way of securing well paying jobs. In this conception of learning, the ability to problem solve or innovate has not been well recognised. He argued that while there remains a place for memorising key information, information is only of value when it is put into context; only then does it become knowledge. In turn, only when knowledge is placed into context does it become wisdom. An educational system that values memorisation without the opportunity to develop an appreciation of context is selling itself short.

Another traditional Asian belief that is somewhat at odds with contemporary Western views emerged in the questions and comments that followed my presentation. In my talk I had argued that while a competency-based training system may serve some parts of the community well, people for whom formal vocational qualifications are not relevant, such as people who are retired, are not well served by a lifelong policy structured primarily around formal vocational education.

I am used to hearing the counter-argument in Australia that vocational outcomes are the only goals upon which public money should legitimately be spent, and this was expressed by some at the APEC symposium. But what I seldom hear in contemporary Australian discussion, but which was clearly hovering in the minds of many at the symposium, was the idea that the older members of the community do not need to learn because their role is to teach. It was pointed out that, after a period of learning, Buddha devoted the remainder of his earthly life to teaching.

Both sides of the Elephant

Another key theme of the symposium was how to connect formal systems and non-formal learning activity together.

Ms Eun Soon Baik, Director of the Education Credit Bank System in Korea, explained how the credit bank, a recognition of non-formal learning program, works in Korea to help ease the pressure on universities and to recognise the value of non-formal learning as an alternative and equally valid activity. The system allows workplace skills and learning gained in community learning environments to count towards a formal degree.

While there are still some problems with the system – ensuring that a student's work is their own is a key issue – the system has proven an effective gateway to the learning pathway. In theory, qualifications obtained through the credit bank system have the same legal standing as

those obtained through the university system. In practice, however, university degrees gained in the traditional way still attract greater status and so lead to better jobs. Many people obtaining credit bank qualifications continue their studies at formal institutions.

Dr Erlinda C. Pefianco, Director, SEAMEO Regional Centre for Education Innovation and Technology, University of the Philippines, talked about the Alternative Learning System in her country.

Lifelong learning is enshrined in the Constitution of the Philippines 1987:

The State shall encourage non-formal, informal and indigenous learning systems, as well as self-learning, independent, and out-of-school study programs particularly those that respond to community needs. (section 2: Article XIV)

The subsequent Governance of Basic Education ACT of 2001 focused attention on basic education and carried a commitment to 'include alternative learning systems for out-of-school youth and adults.'

The Non-Formal Education Accreditation and Equivalency System is a cornerstone of the Philippine education system for, 'in a society that puts a premium on the school diploma', it provides a second chance opportunity. This is especially important for those who, due to poverty, family responsibility or social exclusion, have been unable to participate in the formal educational system. Basic

continued on next page



Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall, Taipei. This building contains exhibits about Chiang Kai-Shek as well as community arts spaces and classrooms. The Hall is also the venue for a program of adult study circles.

International

Touching the Elephant: Lifelong Learning and APEC



APEC Lifelong learning symposium panel

continued from previous page

literacy programs, night schools for adults, NGOs and ethnic communities programs all fall within the Philippine alternative learning system.

Dr Ted Shir-Tau Tsai, Director, Graduate Institute of International Workforce Education and Development, National Taiwan Normal University talked about facilitating lifelong learning through the Integrated Community Development (ICD) program.

The ICD program was introduced in Taiwan in 1994 and is a process that seeks to empower the community, facilitate lifelong learning within the community, create a civil society and build a better environment. In fulfilling the lifelong learning task, the ICD has created study groups, actively engaged the resources of local libraries and museums, opened schools to the adult public and delivered learning materials to the wider community through print and broadcast media. The role of government in this process has been to build the infrastructure and provide resources.

The private sector has been engaged to provide funding and provide expertise for community groups. As a result of the ICD initiative, there has been an increase in participation in learning by women, increased opportunities for learning in rural areas and an increase in awareness of lifelong learning across the community.

Touching the Elephant

The Australian learning community would, I think, benefit from constant dialogue with colleagues in Asia. We have a lot to learn, especially about the ways in which non-formal learning can be connected to formal systems. We can be inspired too by the way in which lifelong learning has been placed at the centre of many societies: Thailand, the Philippines, Taiwan and Japan each have lifelong learning enshrined in legislation and, in some cases in their constitutions.

I think we could benefit from a study of Asian values, particular those that emphasise the creation of the 'whole person'. I was impressed by the recognition, expressed by many of the Asian speakers, of cultural awareness as being a core learning activity, important for every member of society.

But I do not think we should accept everything Asian as being desirable. While we may have limited the potential of learning in our society by conceiving of it primarily as a strategy for solving immediate problems, the Eastern tradition of memorisation and exams seems equally unproductive in the long term. The idea that elder members of the community should stop learning and start teaching is also of limited value in a world in which rapid change and rampant individualism means that, like it or not, everyone has to keep learning just so that they can keep up with the world around them.

While recognition of non-formal learning is to be encouraged – and is something we need to do better here in Australia – such systems must not just be ways of helping people gain a 'piece of paper' more quickly or more easily, nor must they simply be a strategy for taking pressure off the formal education system. A population that has skills, knowledge and wisdom is the goal here. While many people may be keen to obtain a certificate in the belief, rightly or wrongly, that a certificate will guarantee financial reward, lifelong learning policy must be formulated foremost around learning and not just the documentation of skills. Recognising non-formal learning must be formulated as a strategy for offering learners the opportunity to choose venues and modes that will best enable and enhance their knowledge and skills development, not as a way of relieving pressure on formal systems, although this may be one of the outcomes.

Finally, but most importantly, policy around lifelong learning can never be considered 'best practice' if it loses sight of the people perched on top the elephant, the learners.

At the APEC symposium, there was no real discussion about the ways in which learning exchanges can be most effectively facilitated. Matters of methodology were left unspoken as if the actual process of learning was unimportant or irrelevant to the issue of lifelong learning policy development. The voice of the learner was absent too, as it so often is from such meetings. Without the voice of the learner, definitions of 'quality' or of 'usefulness' becomes conceived only in administrative terms, and the real value of learning to real lives is lost.

John Cross

(FORMER) RESEARCH MANAGER
ADULT LEARNING AUSTRALIA



Ballroom dancing lessons and Tai Chi under the eaves of the Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall, Taipei.

Weblinks

John Cross' APEC presentation can be found on the ALA website: www.ala.asn.au

Taiwan Higher Education White Paper

http://www.high.edu.tw/white_paper/indexe.htm

Japan's Department of Education:

<http://www.mext.go.jp/english/index.htm>

Korea's Credit Bank System <http://www.unescobkk.org/ips/ebooks/documents/INFE/p92-105.pdf>

APEC: <http://www.apecsec.org.sg/apec.html>



NIACE feature publication

Adult learning, citizenship and community voices

Exploring community-based practice

Edited by Pam Coare and Rennie Johnston

ISBN 1 86201 160 5, 2003, 248 pages

This topical book examines the connections between theory and practice in citizenship learning. Focusing on the experiences and views of a range of citizens, many on the margins of society, the contributors explore the significance and impact of particular forms of educational policies and provision in peoples' lives and the role adult learning can play in the development of citizens.

Available from NIACE. Visit <http://www.ala.asn.au> and follow the link to the NIACE publications page.

ALA: In Quest of Learning

Senator Ursula Stephens

Senator Ursula Stephens is a NSW Labor Senator, elected in November 2001. Before embarking on her parliamentary career, she worked in school and adult education, as a senior public servant and has owned her own business. Ursula believes that life long learning is an underpinning principle of policy development. She is a strong advocate for the work of Adult Learning Australia.



1. What is the single most important lesson your parents ever taught you?

We grew up in a large family, but my parents instilled in us all the value of sharing what we had. That's the lesson I hope my children have learnt from me: that no matter how little you have, it can always be shared.

2. What were your best and worst experiences from school? Were you a good student? – Why/why not?

I remember with great pleasure the stimulating discussion in my senior English lessons. I went to school in Grafton, and I often think back on those classes – the Clarence River twinkling in the sun outside our window while inside Sr Maryanne probed and countered, encouraged and questioned – all the while developing our critical thinking skills.

On the downside, I remember my frustration as I struggled with simultaneous equations, and couldn't understand what I was doing wrong. This went on for MONTHS, until I discovered that what I thought were big crosses were in fact big Rs – the maths teacher's idiosyncratic way of indicating the answer was Right!! So I suppose my teachers would have said I was a good student: I was conscientious, I didn't ask awkward questions, I didn't cause too much trouble. But I would have been a better student if I had the confidence to speak up, and ask for help when I needed it.

3. What did you always want to be? – Did you achieve this? Why/why not?

I loved reading and always assumed I'd be a writer. It took me some time to realise I was too pragmatic, too down to

earth to be able to produce the flights of fancy I loved to lose myself in. But writing has remained an important part of my life, and I've always seen it as a way of empowering learners. As a teacher of young children I encouraged them to express their creativity, and with adult learners, too, I've found that writing not only helps them to develop their literacy skills, it is also a way for them to discover more about themselves. And I've just completed my PhD thesis, a fairly significant writing achievement, even if it's a long way from the Miles Franklin Award Winner I'd once dreamed of producing!

4. What was your first job and what did you learn from it?

I had a part-time job in a café from the time I was about 15, until I left school. It wasn't a difficult job, but I learnt very soon that I wouldn't be satisfied working in a job that didn't allow me to think critically and take some responsibility.

5. Complete this sentence: 'The most valuable thing I've learned this year is...'

That until now I've tended to put things off until the time was right. I have had two good friends die suddenly this year which has made me realise how important it is to make the most of your days, and not to fill them with things that give you little pleasure. So, from here on in its "Seize the day" for me!

**6. What new skills do you hope to acquire and how?
What unfulfilled ambition have you yet to conquer?**

I'd love to learn another language: spend some time in Italy, completely immersing myself in the language and culture.

One of my ambitions is to represent Australia in the Masters Games. As a child I enjoyed all team sports and particularly loved the competitive buzz in the swim club. I still swim, so that's a goal I achieve if I really put my mind to it.

7. What is one talent people might be surprised to know you have?

I play a mean tin whistle – and I once supported myself by working as a folk singer in a café, literally singing for my supper.

8. What piece of information would you most like to pass on to the next generation?

Keep an open mind! Life is full of opportunities and surprises you could never have predicted. In my wildest dreams I would not have imagined myself becoming so actively involved in politics!

Don't limit your choices too soon: when I think about all the changes I've seen in my lifetime I can only begin to imagine the opportunities facing young people today – it's very exciting.

Solving the skills puzzle

Forging better links between demand and supply for skills is the goal of a new research project from the NSW Department of Education and Training.

The ANTA-funded 'Skillecosystem' project puts skills in the context of environmental factors such as markets, technology and the changing nature of work. In particular, the project is focusing on industry and regional clusters of skills and the relationship between vocational education and training providers and employers.

Providing skills is no longer enough, according to Leslie Loble, the deputy director-general of the strategic planning and regulation division in the NSW Department of Education and Training.

"This whole project rests on the recognition that skills, jobs, employment and competitiveness for firms is a far more complex matter than traditionally was the case," she said. "It's accepted wisdom that the economy has undergone major structural change in recent years, and when it comes to skills, the old rules do not apply. The bottom line of this project is that skills operate in an interdependent ecosystem. We have to look more closely

at what determines the demand for, and use of skills, not just their supply."

Three demonstration projects, each focusing on a different skillecosystem, will test the role of VET providers in responding to skill needs:

- Private water company United Water will build links with local TAFE and researchers to better understand its skill needs and training requirements.
- Racing NSW will tackle its skill shortages by working with registered training organisations to make faster connections with job seekers and provide casual workers with more meaningful careers.
- Swinburne University of Technology will collaborate with Co-operative Research Centres to link skill requirements with commercialising new products and processes.

Progress reports from the demonstration projects will be available on www.skillecosystem.net later this year.

Contact Paul Williams

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Learning Communities

Learning Communities Catalyst Workshop

Adult Learning Australia facilitated nine participatory workshops across three States which provided an opportunity for members of communities to learn about the features of the Learning Communities Catalyst and how this website can support their learning community. The following is a report from one of the communities visited.

Learning Community Catalyst website – How can it help?

Firstly. Why would anyone head to Caboolture on a 'cold Brissy morning' to talk about a website dedicated to providing free learning resources to support Learning Communities?

The answer. Caboolture is the latest community in South East Queensland to make the important steps towards moving toward a Learning Community with the June launch of the Caboolture Learning Network. Caboolture Learning Network has been 'rebirthed' from an earlier Lifelong Learning project, and is taking small but confident steps towards building its network. The group currently includes Caboolture Shire Council, Queensland University of Technology (Caboolture Campus) and a range of Community groups. The emerging Network were

keen to be our hosts as it provided a great opportunity to promote its work; to learn from others and to explore the website for tools for immediate application.

Question – Can a website help support a Learning Community?

That was the question on people's minds as they arrived at the recently opened Caboolture Community Learning Centre to participate in the latest Australian Learning Community Network (ALCN) networking event, with guest speaker Mary Hannan from Adult Learning Australia (ALA).

The commonality that brought this diverse group of 22+ organisations and individuals together was:

- A commitment and passion to support their local community;
- An understanding and commitment of the necessity to 'work together' with agencies, government, groups and individuals to achieve outcomes to a range of issues and opportunities; and
- An understanding that access to, and engagement in, a range of learning activities and processes is essential for the survival and growth of any community.

Yes... a room of people with a commitment to the principles of a Learning Community!

In organising this collaborative event, ALA and ALCN had identified that discussing the website purely as 'a product' would be of limited value to anyone. Hence the identification of a broader set of objectives were identified as:

1. To interact and share experiences with others in understanding the value of learning and what steps are required that 'turns this into' a Learning Community.
2. To share some of the stories behind the emergence of Learning Communities in Australia, but importantly, those beginning to emerge in Queensland.
3. To review the Website and discuss its value to users.

The answer?

Yes! Participants warmly endorsed the usefulness of the website as a tool to help time and resource poor practitioners (often volunteers) work towards building





Participants at the Learning Communities Catalyst workshop at the Caboolture Community Learning Centre

a platform for developing a Learning Community.

Participants reinforced however, that networking and direct contact with others working in the field was the essential 'glue' required to bring about action and sustain motivation, improve skills and reduce burnout and 'isolation'.

Some of the key successes from this short but energy charged workshop included:

- New contacts made and a greater understanding of how further connections can be implemented locally;
- A commitment by the newly established Caboolture Learning Network to continue to meet monthly with those participants present at the workshop to support others exploring the Learning Communities framework;
- Discussion using local case studies on the range of motivations bringing people and communities together;
- Support for the ongoing development and marketing of the Website with a particular request for a strong emphasis on case studies and tools;
- Discussion on the types of resources and tools that would be useful additions to the site including templates for: marketing, learning festivals, sponsorship guides, press releases, research requests, committee composition and functions and analysis on sector engagement;
- An interest from two communities to create an online presence.

Where to from here?

ALCN's network of practitioners continues to expand with our three newest members: Stanthorpe & Granite Belt Learning Community, Bundaberg Learning Community Region and Learning Network Australia; all based in Queensland. This is a reflection of the 70+ interested organisations/individuals in being informed and participating in Networking events in South East Queensland alone.

ALCN's third biannual conference in Newcastle 14–16 September 2004, provides a further opportunity to meet with the website partners (ANTA, ALA, ALCN and EdNA). Come and have a say into shaping the Learning Community Catalyst into a website that will provide an invaluable service to communities and individuals across Australia.

I welcome all comments and encourage you to check out the websites for details on how to hook into a relevant, practical and motivating 'Be Shaken – Learning for Change' conference.

www.alcnconference.com.au

www.lcc.edu.au

Kim Harrington MIMC

HARRINGTON PROJECTS

QLD EXECUTIVE MEMBER, AUSTRALIAN LEARNING COMMUNITIES NETWORK

ALA Board Members 2004

Brief profiles of the current ALA Board Members appear below. Three members, Vaughan Croucher, Rachel Fry and Jim Nicholls will be retiring at the Annual General Meeting in November. The retiring Board members are eligible to stand again.

Deirdre Baker



I have been a member of ALA since 1986. Over the last 12 months I have enjoyed working on the National Board. Recently I was nominated as ALA's representative on the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education forum. I have had long standing involvement with

the adult community learning sector in Queensland. I am actively involved with local Queensland community learning groups, and believe that forming synergies across groups achieves maximum advocacy and benefit. I facilitate the ALA e-newsletter in Queensland, and aim to encourage e-conversations via this network. My paid work in community engagement, and my voluntary work in adult community learning, come together as a passion that fulfils me both professionally and personally. I will continue to provide ALA members with leadership strength, linking my knowledge of strategic issues to grass roots community activity.

Rita Bennink (ALA Vice-President)



Working in both Adult Community Education (ACE) and TAFE roles over the last 15 years I have always been interested in creating learning environments that encourage and support learners. Over the last six years my focus has been on the use of technology to enhance and increase access

to learning opportunities, particularly for those who might otherwise not be able to engage in formal learning. Since

early 2003, on behalf of Adult Learning Australia, I have represented the Adult Community Education sector on the Flexible Learning Advisory Group. My vision for Adult Learning Australia is a vibrant organisation that effectively advocates for increasing learning opportunities for all Australians and supports members in their important work on the ground and as advocates in their own right.

Vaughan Croucher (ALA Treasurer)



Vaughan has been an ALA member since 1991, and is a member of ALA National Board. He was committee secretary of the then ACT Branch of ALA from 1991–2003. He is currently the Dean of Learning Services at Canberra Institute of Technology. He has

taught in primary, secondary and tertiary education and has management experience in finance and business development. His adult education experience includes adult literacy, communication, disability support and online learning. He has a strong interest in developing learning communities and is a member of the Australian Learning Communities Network.

Rachel Fry



Rachel has worked in the adult community education field for 12 years. Her current position includes Manager – Adult Community Education for BRACE as well as Executive Officer for the Ballarat: A Learning City initiative. She is also a member of the Victorian

Learning Towns Network as well as the Australian Learning Towns Network. She has been a member of the ALA Board for the past four years. Her specific interest lies in the development of learning communities and the positive impact this can have on the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of a community.

Karen Ireland



I have a passion for life long learning and believe learning is the basis for healthy communities. My expertise lies in environmental education and learning circles. I am currently employed by the Department of Environment to develop and implement strategic environmental education. I am

the Vice-President of the WA sub-group. I have supported government agencies with a range of learning circle packages and forwarding adult community learning. I have taken a lead role in organising a major Adult Learners' Week event, Dance Fever 2003 and 2004. Last year was a huge success, 450 adults celebrated learning through dance.

Dorothy Lucardie



Dorothy is currently the Chief Executive Officer at the Central Australian Remote Health Development Services in Alice Springs. Her organisation provides in service education and training to staff and Boards in the primary health care services across Central Australia with a particular focus on Aboriginal

Health Workers. Dorothy has been a member of ALA since 1985 and has worked primarily in adult and community education but also in the TAFE and University sector over the past 20 years. She has been on the Board of ALA for seven years, serving as Vice-President, President and Immediate Past-President.

Roger Morris (ALA Secretary)



Roger has been an elected member of the Board of Adult Learning Australia continuously since 1987, has served a two-year term as the National President and, for much of the balance of his time on the Board, has been the National Secretary. Roger, a trained teacher, has worked in higher education for

more than 30 years. He is an Associate Professor in adult education at the University of Technology, Sydney, where

his teaching responsibilities are largely in the area of the social, historical and philosophical foundations of adult education. His passion is the history of Australian adult education, particularly the story of workers' education. Roger firmly believes that ALA must continue to serve the professional development needs and desires of its individual practitioner members at the same time as it fulfils its important and multiple obligations to other more community based and institutional stakeholders in the adult education and learning process.

Jim Nicholls



Jim is Principal of ACE – North Coast based in Lismore NSW – one of 66 Community Colleges in NSW. He manages general ACE programs, literacy programs, youth programs, commercial training and Indigenous programs. He also teaches in the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. These

involvements have led to professional interests in adult learning theory, innovation and ACE policy at the local, state and national levels. He is currently building support for a national Training Package for Generic Skills which can join the industry aspects of Training Packages with their undeveloped pre-vocational and community aspects.

Garry Traynor (ALA President)



Garry has been a leader in the NSW Adult and Community Education sector for over 18 years. He is currently Principal of Sydney Community College. Garry is in his second term as President of ALA and marks as achievements the introduction of a new Constitution for ALA that among

other things, helped to focus ALA's direction. Garry has a strong interest in Marketing Adult Education, Leadership in Not-For-Profits and education in the Volunteer Sector.

Looking Back

Recording our history

An edited version of an article by Bob Holderness-Roddam published in the *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, April 2003.

The author sets out to encourage adult educators to help with recording adult education history. He suggests that they should ensure that documents relating to their (and others') work should be collected up and deposited in a safe place. He also suggests possible sources of information for people setting out to write up adult education history, and a range of options for publication.

This article is a plea for grassroots adult educators to make sure that their activities are recorded. George Orwell once wrote an article, 'Why I write' (Orwell, 1946:25). He suggested there are four reasons why people write. These are:

- sheer egoism – desire to seem clever, to be talked about, to be remembered after death, etc.
- aesthetic enthusiasm – perception of beauty in the external world
- historical impulse – desire to see things as they are, to find out true facts and store them up for the use of posterity
- political purpose (using the word 'political' in the widest possible sense) – desire to push the world in a certain direction, to alter other people's idea of the kind of society that they should strive after.

These impulses vary from person to person and 'war against one another' (within individuals). I suggest that most of these reasons are pertinent to adult educators. It is particularly important to record the facts and store them up for posterity. Some of us also write for political purposes – and for our egos, too.

Examples of adult education history include autobiographies, such as those by Colin Badger and Kenneth Brooks (Badger, 1982 and Brooks, 1987). These are valuable resources, even if they are coloured by the perceptions of their authors – but who said history was objective! There are also journal articles, such as those published in the *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* – refer to the 'Blast from the Past' section of the November 2000 issue.

Unfortunately there is a tendency for adult education history to be recorded by high profile people and/or about high profile events. This means that many interesting adult education activities are not recorded for posterity. Why? Possibly those involved do not consider the event worth recording, or they lack the resources – such as time – to do so.

Saving documents

At the very least, relevant documents should be collected together and lodged with an appropriate organisation. This is important, as many people simply do not realise the importance of documents. Whilst researching the Connexions history for the accompanying article in the November 2003 edition of the *Journal*, I sought copies of relevant documents from the ABC's Hobart offices. They were unable to find any. Presumably they had been disposed of by one of the many 'new brooms' which had arrived in the ten years since Connexions ceased to be broadcast. A suitable repository would be a State or university archives office. It would also be a good idea to circulate a list of documents to other organisations, such as Adult Learning Australia (ALA), so that they know where to locate them for future research.

Sources

Whilst this article is really aimed at the practitioner, in order to persuade him/her to save and place relevant documents in a safe location, I'd also like to encourage others to research aspects of their local adult education history. Such projects are well worthwhile, as it is important for new recruits to adult education to be aware of the wide range of our history – local and national! Examples of local adult history projects include this author's Tasmanian material (Holderness-Roddam, 1992, 1999a, 1999b and 2001).

Original sources for adult education research may be found in archives. For example, the Archives Office of Tasmania holds all the submissions to, minutes of and draft report by the 1945 Morris Board of Inquiry which resulted (eventually) in the establishment of the Tasmanian Adult Education Board in 1948. The University of Tasmania's archives hold the records of the Tasmanian Branch of the Workers' Educational Association.

Local museums can be a valuable source of material, including photographs. The author was able to confirm the site of the Franklin (Tasmania) Mechanics Institute when he found a photograph on the wall of the Huon Apple Museum. Pure serendipity! Libraries may hold the few surviving copies of once common publications.

New Members

The author was able to find the complete set of *Ad Editor*, a course promotional guide and magazine published by the Tasmanian Adult Education Board in the late 1960s in the *Tasmanian Collection* of the State Library of Tasmania. He was able to use this series to source material for his earlier articles in this Journal, namely, 'A Tasmanian time capsule' (1999a) and 'Kenneth Brooks in Ethiopia' (1999b).

Of course, another invaluable source of information is those who were involved in an organisation or event. The author based much of his information on the accompanying *Connexions* article on an interview with Jane Stapleton, one of the program producers.

Publication options

- Commercial publication: *Who was Badger?* (Badger, 1984) and *An affirming flame* (Brooks, 1987)
- Journal articles: this journal is obviously one which adult educators should consider
- Limited publication, using photocopiers. Use a quality, acid-free paper to ensure the long-term survival of the document. Of course, the value of such publication methods depends upon where they are placed. This author suggests as a minimum the National Library, Adult Learning Australia Library, Cunningham Library of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) for the *Australian Education Index* database (AEI), State library in the State of publication, university library and other relevant specialist libraries.
- Compact disks (CD) allow text, photographs, motion picture and music to be stored. Copies may be located as for the limited print publications mentioned above.
- The Internet is becoming increasingly popular for publishing material. Perhaps Adult Learning Australia could develop a specialist adult education history page.

Bob Holderness-Roddam

Email: bobhroddam@trump.net.au

Individual

Eva Barboza
HAYMARKET NSW 1240

Helen Bound
SANDY BAY TAS 7006

Merryl Dooley
COLLINGWOOD VIC 3066

Stanley Haruna
ACCRA GHANA

Dorothy Hoy
BIRCHGROVE NSW 2041

Frederick Jacobs
WIRLININGA NSW 2640

Debbie Littlehales
KIAMA NSW 2533

Robert Madigan
GLENORCHY TAS 7010

Julia Philips
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Michelle Rath
GLENGOWRIE SA 5044

Andrew Sanderson
BATHURST NSW 2795

Stephen Ward
WOODRIDGE QLD 4114

Organisations

Hume City Council
DALLAS VIC 3047

Junction Community Centre
ROSEWATER SA 5013

The Livingstone Academy
MOONAH TAS 7009

On the Ground

Bright Adult Education “Words on Wheels” Adult Literacy Project



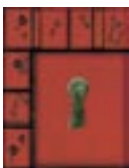
Words on Wheels (WOW) is now into its second year. With over 70 adults and young people who have been given assistance since its inception, WOW is well established in providing literacy assistance in the rural community of the Alpine Shire.

WOW offers free assistance to young people undertaking VCAL, English as a Second Language students, and one-on-one assistance for many adults.

WOW works in conjunction with the newly established Alpine Education Group, and GOMACFE Region’s new Literacy Network.

For further information contact Project Co-ordinator Louisa Vale on wordsow@yahoo.com.au

U3A Network-Victoria Inc.



This has been a very busy year for the Network, with a series of workshops organised for members.

Two Writing Workshops with Hazel Edwards (sponsored by DHS)

- Two Course Co-ordinators Workshops
- Workshop for U3As in Retirement Villages
- Treasurers Workshop
- Strategic Planning Workshop

Next year we will be celebrating 20 years of lifelong learning in Australia, and several events are planned for 2005.

- ‘Not Strictly Ballroom’ – 17th March, in the Melbourne Town Hall, this will feature some of the many and varied U3A dance groups.
- Two-day Conference – “Challenges & Opportunities – What’s Next for U3As?”
- 1st and 2nd June at the Cato Conference Centre, Elizabeth Street, Melbourne.
- Birthday lunch at The Windsor – 7th September

We hope to have a repeat of the Writing Workshops, and also introduce leaders to the idea of Chair Aerobics for their programs.

Judy Hall

U3A NETWORK, VICTORIA
u3anet@vicnet.net.au

News from the Seniors Quality Use of Medicines Program



COTA National Seniors (CNS) in partnership with the National Prescribing Service (NPS) is currently rolling out the Seniors Quality Use of Medicines Peer Education program across Australia. Working in postcodes CNS is seeking to involve older Australians in community sessions which focus on highlighting the ‘Active Partner’ skills which seniors have developed over their lifetime.

Trained peer educators work with their peers in interactive consumer sessions to identify how senior’s ‘Active Partner’ skills can assist them to achieve the best use of their medicines, and enjoy/achieve a better quality of life.

Medicines referred to throughout the program include those obtained from health professionals such as doctors, pharmacists, dentists, nurses, and alternative practitioners such as homeopaths, naturopaths or herbalists. Also included are medicines seniors choose themselves from pharmacies and health food shops such as vitamin supplements, or herbal and natural remedies, together with those purchased from supermarkets such as some painkillers and antacids.

Further peer educator training programs are scheduled for later this year, and community sessions involving a wide range of seniors groups are being held throughout 2004–2005. Feedback from seniors who have attended sessions has indicated that many are engaging with the messages and are intending to become more ‘Active Partners’ in their medicine choice and management.

Gwen Gilbert

COTA NATIONAL SENIORS (03) 9820 2655 OR
cota@cota.org.au

Adult Learning Australia Activities



Many of you will have been involved in Adult Learners’ Week and other learning activities. Why not let other members know what you have been involved in!

Send us a brief account of your activity, approximately 150 – 200 words, and we will include it in the next issue of Quest (space permitting).

Margaret Bates

m.bates@ala.asn.au

Advertising rates for Quest and the Australian Journal of Adult Learning

All adverts are full colour. All artwork must be supplied on disk as either a TIF-300dpi at actual size, EPS-CMYK vector at actual size with all text either as outlines or with all fonts supplied, as a PDF-distilled for 'Press' with ALL fonts embedded (please call GREY Worldwide Canberra on 02 6124 5470 for more information), or as a QuarkXPress file with ALL fonts AND attached graphics.

Printed Advertisements –

Australian Journal of Adult Learning

The journal is an A5 book issued three times per year.

Internal pages are printed in black only.

\$250	1/2 page
\$412	full page

Printed Advertisements—Quest

The newsletter is a quarterly A4 publication printed in colour.

\$160	1/8 page
\$345	1/4 page
\$500	1/2 page
\$745	3/4 page
\$990	full page
Inserts up to 8 grams	\$185
8 to 20 grams	\$247
More than 20 grams	\$305

Rates for regular advertisers can be negotiated.

Deadlines

The Australian Journal of Adult Learning is published in April, July and November. Please contact the office for advertising deadlines.

Deadlines for inclusion in Quest

	PRINTED ADS	INSERTS
Autumn	2 February	23 February
Winter	3 May	24 May
Spring	2 August	23 August
Summer	1 November	22 November

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All ALA members receive Quest and a monthly e-newsletter. They also have access to the Australian Journal of Adult Learning and a national network of adult educators.

Send your application to ALA, GPO Box 260, Canberra City, ACT, 2601.

Membership Fees

Organisation – all voting, newsletter, conference discount

Annual Income	ONE YEAR	TWO YEARS
	Fee	Fee
Below \$50,000 – one vote, *journal discount	\$70.00	\$126.00
\$51,001–\$100,000 – two votes, one journal copy	\$150.00	\$270.00
More than \$100,000 – two votes, one journal copy	\$300.00	\$540.00

Individuals – all voting, newsletter, *journal discount, conference discount

Annual Income	ONE YEAR	TWO YEARS
	\$70.00	\$126.00
\$50,001–\$75,000	\$90.00	\$168.00
More than \$75,001	\$110.00	\$200.00
Life member	Nil	

* The Australian Journal of Adult Learning is available to all members online.

If not provided in your membership category, hard copy is available at a discount if requested.

Professional member (MALA)# voting, newsletter, journal, conference discount

# Relevant qualification and/or two years experience in a relevant field necessary	ONE YEAR	TWO YEARS
	\$198.00	\$365.00

Subscribers – non voting

Honorary members	Nil	
On-line subscribers – no publications sent	\$30.00	\$54.00
Quest, four editions in hard copy (h-c) a year	\$64.00	\$110.00
Australian Journal of Adult Learning, three (h-c) editions a year	\$70.00	\$125.00

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Tick to receive a receipt

Calendar

United Nations Literacy Decade 2003–2012

21–24 September 2004

Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) 2004 Biennial Conference

The overall theme for the 2004 Conference is Challenging Ideas. Each day will focus on one of three sub-themes: Challenging Culture and Tradition; Challenging Leadership and Management and Meeting the Smart Service Challenge.

For more information visit

<http://conferences.alia.org.au/alia2004>

26 September 2004

U3A Sunshine Coast Conference

Discover Your Horizons. Three days of international and national speakers, expounding on topics connected with technology, travel and the arts.

For further information visit

<http://www.conferenceu3asc.com/>

5–8 October 2004

18th IDP Australian International Education Conference: The path to cultural understanding and development

This conference, to be held in the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour, Sydney, will bring together those working in higher, secondary and vocational education, government and non-government agencies, the corporate sector, multilateral funding agencies and others, to consider international education and development issues. These issues include international student mobility, teaching and learning, virtual education, equity and access to name a few.

For more information visit

<http://www.idp.com/conference> or email conference@idp.com

17–20 October 2004

Quality – The Key to Organisational Prosperity

The National Quality Conference is to be held in Adelaide. The program has an exciting mix of speakers from the public and private sectors and a range of industries and topics. The latest information can be found on

<http://www.qualcon.com.au/press/bulletin03.pdf>

8 November 2004

NET*Working Online Conference

This online conference will have a continued focus on professional development, with individual state and territory-based learning opportunities. It will incorporate the themes of inclusion and participation across the country, and highlight technological innovation in the vocational education and training sector. The conference will also celebrate the achievements of the Framework and communicate the ongoing direction of flexible training delivery in Australia.

For further information see

www.flexiblelearning.net.au/nw2004/

17 November 2004

VETnetwork Australia 2004 National Biennial Conference Stand and Deliver: delivery strategies for vocational learning.

Delegates can expect a conference program with a significant focus on the practical delivery of broad vocational learning and education, with a simplified and thematic format customised to stakeholder needs.

Further information is available at <http://www.vetnetwork.org.au/conferences/conf2004/index.html>

18–20 November 2004

Bridging Cultures

The 2004 ALA National Conference, to be held at the Stamford Grand Hotel in Glenelg SA, will include Indigenous and migrant issues, the nature of different workplace cultures and intergenerational learning. Keynote speakers will include Mark Bagshaw, IBM; Tom Karmel, NCVER; Joy de Leo, Division of Multicultural Affairs, SA Department of Premier and Cabinet and Christine Loveday, Australian Refugee Association.

Visit our website www.ala.asn.au for further information.

28 November–2 December 2004

International Educational Research Conference

Doing the Public Good: Positioning Education. This conference in Melbourne will provide a forum for education researchers to reassess what it means to do education research in contemporary times and the implications for their positioning

Information is available on <http://www.aare.edu.au/conf2004/index.htm> or email aare@aare.edu.au

30 November–3 December 2004

ICCE 2004: International Conference on Computers in Education

Hosted by RMIT University, Melbourne, Victoria, the theme for this conference is Acquiring and Constructing Knowledge Through Human-Computer Interaction: Creating New Visions for the Future of Learning.

Visit the conference website for further information

<http://www.icce2004.com> or email icce2004@rmit.edu.au

6 December 2004

12th Annual International Conference on Post-Compulsory Education and Training

Doing – Thinking – Activity – Learning. This conference will explore the inter-relationships between concepts such as being, thinking, history, culture and learning. It will also investigate ways of improving related practice and policy in post-compulsory education and training.

For further information email r.roebuck@griffith.edu.au