

Quest

→ Balancing life, work and wellbeing



Building Capital in the Community

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Adult Learning
Australia Inc.



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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 education, advises and lobbies government; promotes policy development; represents Australia on international education bodies, co-ordinates Adult Learners' Week; and more.

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Editorial



**Welcome to the Autumn Edition of Quest.
Another year is rapidly disappearing and I'm
not sure if the speed with which time goes is
a function of age, business or both.**

Just as we have done in our previous editions, this one includes some stories about our immediate past history, to inform about ALA's 45th Annual Conference and the 10th Adult Learners' Week (ALW) Anniversary celebrations.

Importantly, this edition continues the tradition of including contemporary feature articles. We carry a summary of research recently completed by Associate Professor Barry Golding on 'Men's Sheds' and another by Tracey Murphy, Assistant Director, of the Adult Literacy Policy and Programmes Section of DEST, on the very successful 'STEPS Programme' run through TAFE NSW Riverina Institute.

I hope you find these two articles informative and thought provoking. The challenge in finding funding for Men's Sheds, is to do it in a way that maintains the integrity of their role and purpose as learning environments.

Likewise the article about 'The STEPS Programme' raises some interesting policy issues around the skills, knowledge and attitudes required for social capacity building. Not the least of these being who and how, measures the financial and non-financial outcomes from important projects like this one, along with the challenges of identifying the benefits that can flow from a relationship model as opposed to a service model approach.

The use of radio to reach out to those who don't have all the options available to them for engaging in learning in their community has prompted ALA to explore learning opportunities through radio.

Most of you will be aware that Tony Ryan (ALA Visiting Media Fellow) has through his program 'Take Time' (www.pbafm.org.au) many engaging adult learning stories. There is an audio file of an interview Tony did with Alan Tuckett. Access to 'Take Time' is through a link via the ALA website. Another interview Tony did was with Barry Golding and covers research on his work with Men's Sheds. Also in this edition, there is a story about Radio Print Handicapped (RPH) Australian Radio networks, which adds another dimension to the initiative Tony is taking with adult learning using the medium of radio.

We also draw your attention to the NCVER Literacy Breakfast coming up around the country in May.

This edition also reports on the 'E-learning Creative Community Partnership Project' for 2005, another project successfully managed by ALA. The ALA team is now working feverishly to identify the recipients for the 2006 funding.

ALA as part of its ALW initiative recently acquired the national number 1300 I Learn (453276), which will be supported by a call centre. This year is the first year of operation and we look forward to it growing like the Reading Writing Hotline which has received over 100,000 calls since its inception in 1994. If you would like to know more about the hotline see the article by Tracey Murphy.

ALA will keep you informed about 1300 I Learn developments through our websites and this publication.

By the time you read this, you will also have received the first edition of our e-newsletter for 2006 called 'The Current.' This newsletter will be prepared regularly to keep you updated on the latest news from ALA and will also be available on the website.

In the meantime...

Read and enjoy!

Briefs



'Behind the News' is back

ABC TV's iconic children's current affairs program is back on television. The series airs on ABC TV at 10am on Tuesdays and is repeated at 10.30am on Wednesdays. Also from the makers of 'Behind the News' comes a new DVD entitled 'How the News is Made', a new thirty-minute program designed for students in the middle years of schooling that takes a behind-the-scenes look at the world of television news.

Suggestions Sought for Parenting Website

The Raising Children Network is an Australian Government funded website which has grown out of research into what parents and practitioners want and need (from the national Parenting Information Project). Suggestions are invited in order to create the best possible resource for Australian parents, professionals and others caring for children.

When completed, this non-profit website will be populated with a complete range of in-depth information and tools for the full diversity of Australians caring for children aged 0 to 8 years old. For further information visit <http://raisingchildren.net.au/>.

What a difference a generation makes...

Social trends from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicate life for people in their twenties in 2001 has changed since 1976.

Twentysomethings in 2001 were more likely to be living with their parents than in 1976. The chances of twentysomethings having their own family with children is half what it used to be.

However, twentysomethings were almost twice as likely to be studying and to have gained a non-school qualification. Labour force participation has increased from 75% to 81% over this period, with this increase being driven by increased participation for women (up from 57% in 1976 to 75%) and a slight decrease for men (92% to 87%).

National Sorry Day – Journey of Healing 26 May 2006

The first National Sorry Day was held on 26 May 1998 – one year after tabling of the report, 'Bringing them Home' which was the result of an inquiry into the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families. One of the recommendations of the report was that a National Sorry Day should be declared. The Day offers the community



national
families
Week
14-20 May 2006

'National Families Week'

Take time for t l c – talking, listening and connecting.

Each year, tens of thousands of people and hundreds of organisations celebrate 'National Families Week' – Australia's annual celebration of the vital role of families. This year, special emphasis on families with young people 12 to 18 years is highlighted. For further information visit www.familiesaustralia.org.au.

the opportunity to participate and be involved in activities to acknowledge the impact of the policies of forcible removal on Australia's indigenous populations. For further information visit www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/sorry/.

'I am not for sale': Simply Sharing Week 14 May – 21 May 2006

'I am not for sale' is an education and fundraising program run by forceten during Simply Sharing Week to help end the trafficking of women and children in Asia. Forceten provides a free education kit with activities, information and fundraising ideas. Suitable for all age groups. For further information visit <http://www.forceten.org.au>.

Low ENTRY scores behind 'unmet demand' for university places

The main reason unsuccessful applicants to university miss out on a place is their lower level of academic performance, a new study released recently by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has found.

The report focused on a group of young Australians who applied to attend university but were not offered a place.

These applicants are commonly referred to as indicating 'unmet demand' for university study. The study included almost 8,000 young people who were in Year 9 in 1998. Most completed Year 12 in 2001.

Although they missed out on going to university, about 45 per cent were engaged in some other form of education or training two years after completing Year 12. Dr Ainley, ACER's Deputy CEO said, "These relatively high levels of participation in other forms of education and training suggest that credit transfer arrangements may enable a number to enter university at a later stage of their lives, if their interests are still in that direction."

Tech-savvy Students Having an Impact in the Classroom

A new survey of high school and post-secondary instructors has found that students who excel in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) are driving change in classroom instruction.

The survey says this emerging group of youth by their self-directed, long-term, extensive experiences with technology influence what and how teachers teach, have positively affected the way instructors learn about and use technology, and are generally helpful towards their classmates.

ALA 45th Annual National Conference 2005

Learners @ Work: new directions and connections: ACE as a catalyst

Peter Murphy, ALA Communications Manager, Conference Logistics (2005)

The “meeting place” for last year’s Adult Learning Australia’s (ALA) 45th Annual National Conference was in our nation’s capital Canberra. The conference was held 24 – 26 November including an arrivals reception, two full days of keynote speeches and workshops; and a gala awards dinner.

Over 120 keynote speakers, presenters, local and interstate delegates and international guests from the USA, United Kingdom, New Zealand and Switzerland gathered at Rydges Capital Hill in the picturesque suburb of Forrest to explore and share their ideas and innovations relative to the area of adult learning in the workplace. Keynote speakers and presenters delivered papers and concepts covering diverse areas of workplace learning including economics, government policy, access and equity, personal development outcomes and models for provision in e-learning.

The conference sought to draw together the views of an expert team of international and Australian thinkers and practitioners from different disciplines and professional fields around the world of work.

The conference theme Learners@Work acknowledged the workplace as being one of the two most significant places in which adult learning occurs. The other is the home.

In addition to our ALA member delegates and international guests we also welcomed special guests:

- from the Federal Government, Senator Ursula Stephens (Senator for New South Wales);

- from the Department of Education, Science and Training, (DEST), Ms Robyn Priddle;
- from the USA, Dr Marcie Boucouvalas (Professor of Adult Learning & Human Resource Development at National Capital Region, Virginia Tech University);
- from the UK, Dr Veronica McGivney (former Principal Research Officer, The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education - NIACE);
- from Switzerland, Dr André Schläfli (Director of the Swiss Federation for Adult Learning); and
- Conference co-chairs, Associate Professor Barry Golding and Dr John McIntyre.

Notably it was a conference that attracted a breadth and scope of international and local expertise that impressed and inspired delegates. Overall feedback indicated that the 2005 ALA National Conference was not only a success but also the most informative of recent years.

Arrivals and Registrations

Registrants and special guests were treated to a stylish cocktail reception on the Thursday evening before the conference held in the Atrium and Wellington Room. Delegates were given an insight and taste of what they were to expect over the following two days.

ALA National President Garry Traynor opened proceedings and invited our local indigenous elders to come forward and address the reception. As is the tradition, with Canberra being situated on Ngunnawal land attendees were greeted by Ngunnawal Elders Don and Ruth Bell. Ruth delivered a stirring and inspiring introduction to the conference whilst wishing delegates



Conference dinner guests in the foyer of the National Museum of Australia.

well on their adult learning journey. Ross MacDiarmid, CEO Australian Capital Tourism Corporation also welcomed our guests and delegates to Canberra.

A feature of the opening reception was the inauguration of the Draft Canberra Declaration on Adult Learning launched by Federal Senator Ursula Stephens.

Plenary and workshops

Conference organisers were pleased to engage two inspirational leaders in our adult learning community. Associate Professor Barry Golding and Dr John McIntyre facilitated plenary sessions and provided relevant commentary throughout the conference.

Barry Golding previously a Senior Lecturer is now an Associate Professor in the School of Education at the University of Ballarat. He has extensive education and research experience in school, TAFE, ACE and university sectors spanning 25 years.

His research has increasingly gravitated towards issues associated with how adults connect to learning, in all its diverse, informal and community-based forms in smaller and remoter Australian towns, most recently associated with men's sheds in Australia.

Barry is on the Executive of the Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association and an ALA Visiting Research Fellow.

John McIntyre is an independent researcher and consultant in the field of adult education. He is also a Visiting Research Fellow for ALA.

Throughout the conference plenary and workshop sessions delegates were presented with local and international views on the conference main and sub-themes. The keynote speakers and presenters were numerous and their expertise vast. Information

and biographies of keynote speakers is available at http://www.ala.asn.au/conf/2005/natconf_keynote.htm.

Over 30 different workshops were on offer at the conference. Information about workshop papers and presentations is also now available on the ALA website at http://www.ala.asn.au/conf/2005/natconf2005_papers.htm.

ALA Annual General Meeting

Three new ALA National Board Members were confirmed at the ALA Annual General Meeting held on Friday 25th November 2005. Appointed to the Board were:

- Kathleen Broderick
Department of Environment Western Australia
School of Earth and Geographical Sciences UWA
- Greg Peart
State Manager, Adult Education Tasmania
- Elizabeth Keyes
Consultant (QLD).

Conference BBQ and Dinner

The Conference BBQ was held in the Wellington Room.

There was a change from a traditional smoking grill, replaced by white linen covered tables, candles and outdoor fairy lighting creating a different kind of ambience which at first glimpe enchanted attendees as they entered the room. An abundance of traditional BBQ fare followed convincing diners that this was certainly a 'steak and sausages' kind of night; with an added touch of class.

The final opinion - slightly odd for a BBQ; but the food was fantastic.



Back Row (left to right) Tony Ryan (Producer, Take Time), Ron Anderson (Executive Director, ALA), Dr Roger Morris (Board Member, ALA) and Dr André Schläfli (Director, Swiss Federation for Adult Learning). Front Row (left to right) Tracey Murphy (DEST), Dr Marcie Boucouzalas (Professor, Virginia Tech University), Garry Traynor (President, ALA), Robyn Priddle (DEST) and Dr Veronica McGivney (Principal Research Officer, NIACE). Photo: Randall Photography.



Back Row (left to right) Tracey Beer (representing Moving Forward Project Team), Garry Traynor (President, ALA), Bob LeFebvre (representing Erindale College), Tania Wooley (representing CARHDS) and Victoria Sadler.

Front Row (left to right) Christine Johnson (representing Challenger TAFEWA), Robyn Priddle (DEST), Felicity Peters (representing West Coast TAFE) and Fin McShane (representing TAFE Tasmania).

The Conference and Awards Dinner on Saturday night held at the National Museum of Australia capped off what most would agree was a memorable ALA National Conference. Set in the palatial foyer of the museum, delegates soaked up the Logies-like atmosphere and were treated to breathtaking 180 degree waterfront views of the Acton Peninsula.

Master of Ceremonies, Mr Tony Ryan welcomed everyone to what was to be a fun filled night of fine cuisine, celebration and dancing. The night was also captured on the central big screen filled with grabs of delegates and guests in relaxed mode, delighted awards winners and revelling dancers moving to the rhythmic tunes of the night's entertainers Touché.

Although there were calls early in the evening for guests to take advantage of a shuttle bus service to take them back to their accommodation most opted to stay around and dance the evening away. The company and entertainment was great.

ALA National Awards 2005

A key feature and highlight of the ALA Conference Dinner was the National Awards for 2005. Numerous nominations from around the country were considered by a National selection panel; and applications were considered to be of the highest quality in the history of the awards.

The Awards are offered in recognition of outstanding service, contribution and provision to adult education and learning; work in program development, implementation and evaluation; in research, teaching, training, administration, or some combination of these.

The National Awards last year were built upon a collaborative partnership between DEST and ALA to recognise outstanding achievement in the Australian Adult Learning Community.

The categories for the ALA National Awards 2005 were:

- ❑ Australian Adult Educator of the Year
- ❑ Australian Adult Education Provider of the Year
- ❑ Australian Adult Education Program of the Year
- ❑ Australian Indigenous Community Provider of the Year.

Ms Robyn Priddle (DEST) and Mr Garry Traynor (ALA) presented winners and runners-up with a crystal glass trophy marking their achievement. They also received a 12 month subscription to *Quest* which is ALA's quarterly magazine containing information on the latest news and innovations in our adult learning communities.

Winners of the ALA National Awards 2005 were:

- ❑ Felicity Peters
West Coast TAFE
Australian Adult Educator of the Year
- ❑ Moving Forward Project Team
Western Australian Department of Justice and TAFEWA Swan
Australian Adult Education Program of the Year
- ❑ Centre for Adult Education
Challenger TAFEWA
Australian Adult Education Provider of the Year
- ❑ Central Australian Remote Health Development Services (CARHDS)
Australian Indigenous Community Provider of the Year.



Left to right Garry Traynor (President, ALA), Tania Wooley (representing CARHDS) and Robyn Priddle (DEST).



Keynote Speaker Dr André Schläfli. (Director, Swiss Federation for Adult Learning).



"Is this the way we set up for a line dance?"

Runners-up of the ALA National Awards 2005 were:

- Victoria Saddler
Australian Adult Educator of the Year
- Community Education Program
Erindale College
Australian Adult Education Program of the Year
- Community Education Program
Erindale College
Australian Adult Education Provider of the Year
- Aboriginal Training Programs
Institute of TAFE Tasmania
Australian Indigenous Community Provider of the Year.

A note of thanks

Of course without the dedication and commitment of staff members, organising committee members and critical friends the ALA National Conference and Awards would not be the successes they were in 2005.

On behalf of Adult Learning Australia I would like to acknowledge the following organisations, committees and individuals in appreciation of their efforts and support in the lead up to and during the ALA National Conference:

- The Department of Education, Science and Training for providing major sponsorship for the Conference
- The ACT Department of Education (Training and Education Section) for also providing sponsorship

- ALA National Staff who donated their personal time to ensure administrative and logistical aspects of the conference were delivered in a professional and timely manner
- The ALA Conference Organising Committee for donating their professional and personal time in identifying and sourcing the numerous roles and functions required for effective planning, direction and implementation
- Barry Golding and John McIntyre both of whom donated their professional and personal time to co-chair the Conference in addition to presenting workshops
- Mr Tony Ryan (Presenter, Take Time) for donating his professional and personal time to facilitate the recording of keynote addresses in addition to presenting a workshop; and for his eloquently played role as Master of Ceremonies for the ALA National Conference Dinner and Awards
- The Communications and Media Department, Canberra Institute of Technology for providing technical support and video facilities.

Adult Learning Australia looks forward to welcoming delegates to its 46th Annual National Conference 2006 in Melbourne. The conference will be held 23 – 25 November at the IBIS Hotel, Therry Street, Melbourne City. The theme for the Conference will be 'Social Capital: Learning for Living' (learning in communities). Additional information will be regularly updated on www.ala.asn.au.

Best wishes for a successful year.



The City of Tea Tree Gully's Holden Hill Community Centre's Indigenous Mural Project

The Holden Hill Community Centre, located in the north eastern region of Adelaide has recently completed a beautiful Indigenous mural thanks to a community arts project.

The mural spans the entire foyer of the Centre and features numerous images including a goanna, turtle, kangaroo, possum and fruit bat. It also includes grapevines and artichoke thistles, which links with the region's history.

"I really wanted a mural at the Centre which highlighted the importance of the contribution and participation of Indigenous people to our community," City of Tea Tree Gully's Neighbourhood Development Officer and project initiator Maggie L'Estrange said.

"The mural really promotes acceptance, cultural identification and says 'welcome' to Indigenous communities. It also links with the City's new Indigenous Home and Community Care program, which caters to the needs of Aboriginal people aged 45 years and over."

Beginning in August 2005, 10 volunteers worked on the project for two months with Rayleen Snow and Susan Halls from *Marra Dreaming Indigenous Arts Inc*, a community arts project based in Salisbury.

"Susan and Rayleen worked with the volunteers to create and develop designs," Maggie said.

"They have helped the volunteers to paint the various designs and images and shared skills in a variety of painting styles."

"Many of the volunteers did not have art experience, but everyone was keen to have a go and Susan and Rayleen made it

a fun experience for them. Other volunteers had extensive art experience and the project gave them an opportunity to utilise their skills again."

The project was initiated by the Holden Hill Community Centre Committee of Council and was supported by Council's Reconciliation Advisory Committee.

The Launch was held on a lovely summer's evening, Wednesday 22nd February and celebrated with around 60 people including the Mayor of the City of Tea Tree Gully Mrs Lesley Purdom AM, JP, who co-launched the Mural with the Reverend Sid Graham, a local Kaurna Elder.

Also in attendance were State Members of Parliament, Ms Frances Bedford, Member for Florey and Ms Robyn Geraghty, Member for Torrens. Council Elected Members in attendance included Cr Peter Leue, the Chairman of the Reconciliation Advisory Committee and Cr Graeme Denholm.

Who we serve:

Whilst the City of Tea Tree Gully has a population of around 100,000 people, the Holden Hill Community Centre primarily serves around 10,000 local residents, although evaluations reveal that many of our participants and user groups come from much further a field.

"I really wanted a mural at the Centre which highlighted the importance of the contribution and participation of Indigenous people to our community."

Top Left: Invited guests attending the launch. From left: Cr Peter Leue, Cr Graeme Denholm, Susie Richardson, Robyn Geraghty MP, Rayleen Snow, Rev Sid Graham, Mary Gully, Frances Bedford MP, Shalandra Argent, Susan Halls and Mrs Lesley Purdom AM, JP.

Right: Rev Sid Graham and Mayor Lesley Purdom AM, JP launching the Indigenous mural project in the city of Tea Tree Gully (Holden Hill Community Centre), Adelaide.

Photos courtesy of the City of Tea Tree Gully.



Peter Murphy, Communications Manager from Adult Learning Australia and Tony Ryan from Adelaide Radio station PBA FM were also able to join in this wonderful community event.

All artists and volunteers who were involved with the project enjoyed the celebration and presentations, highlighting their fantastic work. Local residents joined in the celebrations and enjoyed the atmosphere that the Mural evokes when walking into the Centre.

Overview of Centre

Mission and vision:

- To respond to those experiencing the greatest levels of disadvantage.
- To increase people's capacity to participate in their community.

Nationalities include many Middle Eastern and Asian communities and an increasing number of Indigenous Australians.

Many of the groups meeting at the Centre are for people with disabilities, with a variety of recreational and social programs for the broader community.

Future Programs and community activities

- Op shop open days throughout the year.
- Annual Spring Fair, to be held on 21st October 2006.

Adult Literacy National Project - Innovative Project The STEPS Programme Tafe NSW Riverina Institute

Tracey Murphy, Assistant Director, Adult Literacy Policy and Programmes Section, Department of Education, Science and Training

The Adult Literacy National Project, administered by DEST provides funds for a number of strategic initiatives in the field of adult literacy. DEST recently received the final report of an Innovative Project conducted by TAFE NSW Riverina Institute, entitled 'The STEPS Programme'.

The STEPS programme began when representatives from TAFE NSW Riverina Institute, Wagga Wagga Campus, Department of Community Services, Wagga Wagga City Council, Koorringal Public School and the Regional Office of the Department of Education and Training met to develop innovative ways to provide community capacity-building and literacy connections for indigenous and non-indigenous families, who have very limited contacts in their community due to limited literacy skills, and who have primary-school or pre-school aged children with learning disadvantages.

The STEPS programme has generated transformational change among isolated people in the Koorringal community who were struggling to cope with their own lives and to support and nurture their children. The success of the programme ranges from significant growth in literacy and numeracy skills to the more complex inter-relation of skills, knowledge and attitudes required for social capacity building reflected in the aims of the programme.

While the Steering Committee did not have the capacity to evaluate a dollar 'return on investment' for this programme, we do believe that it has made significant savings to support costs for these people as well as generating employment opportunities for people who absolutely lacked this potential at the beginning of the programme. Three examples give some idea of the scale of these cost savings.

- The child of a client who had been removed from the client's care by the Department of Community Services (DoCS) was returned after the client was able to demonstrate that she had learnt the skills and knowledge to provide proper care. An unofficial estimate of the cost of DoCS care per child in these circumstances is between \$9 000 and \$14 000 per year;

- In a second case three children from one family were assessed as needing one on one or small group learning support. As a consequence of their mother developing the skills needed to support their learning at home they have remained in mainstream classes where they are functioning well;
- A third client moved from social isolation to full employment preparing meals for a pre-school due to the support she received from the STEPS programme. Her employer has provided additional training that has given her certification in menu planning and safe food handling.

The following characteristics of the STEPS programme contributed significantly to its success:

Interagency approach

The associated agencies operated as multidisciplinary facilitators within a learning support 'team'. They shared their experience and knowledge of the characteristics of the target group, had a long-term commitment to the project, and communicated openly to achieve programme outcomes.

The interagency approach also provided a referral base to contact socially isolated families and involve them in the programme. The usual promotional strategies were not an effective means of communicating. A personal, sensitive approach was much more effective. Collaboration between agencies also gave clients access to a range of resources and services through a single connection point. This saved families having to obtain services themselves from multiple service providers. While it was anticipated that this would be a benefit of the STEPS approach, it was only realised through the operation of the project how important a factor this is in making contact with socially isolated families and helping to develop social capital.

The third important aspect of the interagency relationship is that client learning and skill development were often blocked by issues in the clients' lives that they were unable to deal with effectively. Learning and literacy learning was often unable to begin until these problems were overcome – usually with the assistance of programme partners.

The project team believes that the reason the multi-agency approach worked is that STEPS is a relationship model rather than a service model. The project builds support flexibly around families rather than providing particular kinds of support from independent agencies to particular kinds of families. Inherent



in this is recognition that rather than measuring outcomes by participation or support provided they need to be measured in terms of the conversion of this support to changes in the lives of client families.

Integration also means that the support provided by individual agencies is maintained and made more effective by the coordinated support of others. For instance where literacy is a limiting factor in accessing agency support or where poor diet or health practice at home are limiting the capacity of children to participate at school. Coordinated solutions to these problems have an accelerator effect on the results achieved by the intervention of each agency.

Learning is integral to transformational change

To avoid dependency, teaching and learning need to be an integral part of the programme. The strong development of knowledge, skills and attitudes amongst the STEPS participants and the application of these skills to their lives outside the teaching situation was the real measure of success.

Given that, it was also critical to the programme's success that teaching took place in the participants' space and was directly related to their immediate and longer term needs. This required a great deal of flexibility and sensitivity in the delivery of the programme. We found that in-home support was often critical to providing contact between playgroup sessions and to allow modelling of skills relating directly to the participant's everyday life.

This 'mobile' approach to literacy mentoring meant that each access point provided relevant, 'student' centred, authentic and complex learning activities. Learning was to be focused on 'real world issues' that had immediate relevance and interest for individuals and communities. There was also more opportunity for therapeutic support which contributed to breaking the cycles of isolation, low self esteem and depression.

The playgroup as one focus of the programme provided another learning space for parents as a learning environment which was not seen by them as a classroom. The focus on children allowed family issues to be addressed without participants feeling threatened or blamed. At the same time it began to promote social contact and a common bond with others dealing with the same issues in an open and productive way.

Making and maintaining connections with families

Other programmes designed to support disadvantaged families through parental support have experienced difficulties in connecting with the people that the programme is intended to support. Experience in the STEPS programme showed that the initial "promotional" approaches were ineffective. Even when contact was made through referral it was important to proceed in a careful, respectful manner.

Previous programmes have also experienced high attrition rates. People in this group often experience disruption and disorganisation in their lives. During the STEPS programme this included hospitalisation, custody issues, lack of family organisation and harmony, work commitments, lack of transport, phone disconnections and many others. The teaching and learning and support programmes need to be flexible enough to take these issues into account.

It is also important that members of the Steering Committee and other programme providers are knowledgeable and committed to the support of people in a local community. We believe that this model can be readily transferable to other locations as long as the model was contextualised for the specific location and community. While a similar programme could be established in other areas of Wagga Wagga, we also strongly believe that the Koorringal STEPS programme could not be extended to these areas without losing its critical relationship to individual clients and the Koorringal community.

Changes in the culture of support agencies

As the project evolved, associated agencies needed to respond to the families by modifying their organisational 'culture'.

For example Koorringal Public School recognised that they need to include an understanding of the interaction of these families in their community to work effectively with their children. A similar process needs to take place in libraries, health agencies, DoCS, TAFE and funding bodies.

All agencies came to recognise that their clients are dealing with circumstances such as social organisation and economic practices that they, for one reason or another, are not able to effectively control. A useful starting question may be "How can these families show us a better way of providing our services and achieving our corporate objectives?"

Funding bodies also need to recognise that their increasing emphasis on establishing programme value in terms of “return on investment” requires access to data that will be difficult for programme managers to find. If this trend is to continue then funding bodies will need to take responsibility for providing the base data which would allow such calculations to be made. While the STEPS Steering Committee believes, on the basis of the sketchy information it has, that the programme is very cost effective, they do not have the information they would need to demonstrate this conclusively.

Funding bodies may also need to recognise that their requirement for programmes to become self funding or find alternative funding after two or three years may not in fact be a reasonable requirement for programmes that require teaching/learning and inter-agency approaches for their effectiveness or where the targeted clients are socially isolated or unskilled. Such programmes are unlikely to generate their own funds, attract funding from individual agencies or be able to significantly reduce personnel costs for the level of expertise required. We strongly suggest that this and similar programmes be able to support a case for continued funding based on a rigorous analysis of the overall community savings that the programme generates.

Why TAFE?

STEPS recognises that the family is the unit of support and that the key issue in socially isolated families is that parents have limited skills to form meaningful contact with their communities. The key strategy is personalised learning. For this to happen support often needs to be provided to assist clients overcome physical blocks (eg transport), social blocks (isolation, poor parenting skills) and health issues (nutrition, depression, disease).

TAFE has the expertise that can directly provide for the learning needs of each client while providing connections to support agencies. Because of this participants in the STEPS programme were able to learn the skills to first of all access the support they need and then go beyond that towards social connection and nurturing the development of their children.

TAFE NSW Riverina Institute Wagga Wagga campus has many community agency partnerships established as part of their provision of vocational education and training programmes across the campus. Senior managers are involved with local and regional government funding and advisory agencies – important for ‘speaking up’ about programmes to meet community needs.

TAFE infrastructure and resources support the STEPS programme in a variety of ways from library services to marketing. Electronic communication systems facilitate easy communication between the Coordinator/teachers and agency representatives. This can be very important for obtaining information for a participant, or to meet an immediate need. Importantly TAFE procedures were used by the coordinator to provide a wide range of operational support for

the programme including OH&S, work placement, indemnity for excursion travel and host employers, flexible enrolment in courses and programmes leading to certification and local agencies that offer community and pre-employment courses.

The fact that TAFE systems can be used flexibly is critical in a programme that is dealing with people who would not normally become involved in a support programme, who can require support at irregular times, within their homes for a wide variety of reasons. Unless a referral occurs, other agencies rely on a client making the first move. STEPS presumes there may not be a first move and look for ways to comfortably connect with a family through the needs of the child.

Peer support (at the Community Supported Playgroup and the Adult based Learning) is encouraged. Observing the client, and their child/ren, in a range of learning environments, including their family environment, increases the opportunity for the Coordinator/teacher to look for ‘teachable’ moments meaning that development of client skills can occur quickly.

Funding

Those establishing similar programmes should aim to have the project funded for more than one year. It takes considerable time to effectively connect and develop a rapport with these clients and, initially, changes are small and slow. See also the comments about funding under ‘Changes in the culture of support agencies’.

Identifying Partners

It is important that the partners involved in this programme have, between them, the expertise needed to support individuals in the target community group. For instance the Koorringal Public School Principal had extensive experience in this area of Wagga Wagga and personal contacts with many influential people in the Aboriginal community in Koorringal. The representatives of DoCs also understood the background of the programme’s clients. Wagga Wagga City Council was able to provide important information that helped the programme make initial contact with many potential clients.

Different organisations can share common concerns that, by working together will enable them to strengthen their influence. Collaborative partnerships can also infuse effort with new perspectives or approaches, expanding expertise and improving community support. Representatives of one agency often know more about the circumstances of particular clients and are able to assist other agencies work more effectively with them.

For further information contact Tracey on (02) 6240 9120 or email: tracey.murphy@dest.go.au. The full report on the STEPS programme is available at <http://www.dest.gov.au/literacynet/resources1.htm#Community>.

Reading the newspaper while driving the car...I'd like to see that!!



The Radio Print Handicapped (RPH) Australian radio reading network is where you go to see it... or rather, listen to the newspaper being read to you! The fifteen RPH services across Australia all read newspapers and magazines to air every day for those who are not able to access normal printed material. We are committed to reducing the information gap experienced by Australians with a print disability.

RPH is not just for people with vision impairment but also those who may have trouble holding the newspaper or turning the pages. People with literacy difficulties who can understand but not read English or people with some disability such as stroke, Parkinson's, MS which prohibits them from holding a newspaper or book. Even busy people who don't have time to read the newspaper paper each day can tune in their car radio or at work to hear the latest news stories. We just don't read the headline stories but the main body of the paper is also covered.

You don't have to have a literacy problem – you can still listen to your local RPH station. Almost half of our listeners can read easily but still find our programmes interesting. There's a good chance that you have a friend, neighbour or relative who does have difficulty reading though. Why not "bring words to their life" and tune them in to their local RPH radio reading service.

National, state and local newspapers, magazines like *Women's Weekly*, *New Idea*, *The Bulletin* and lots more are broadcast for

people's enjoyment all day every day. Serialised book readings go to air each day and many of our audience find it just like the radio serials from yesteryear!

Many adult learning classes and English as a second language classes find the radio a useful learning tool. They are able to turn to the page in that day's paper and follow the presenter as the article is read out in full. This reinforces the sound of the word with the printed word.

The RPH Australian network of radio reading services cover the following areas:

Capitals:

Adelaide	1197 AM	Melbourne	1179 AM
Brisbane	1296 AM	Perth	990 AM
Canberra	1125 AM	Sydney	1224 AM
Hobart	864 AM		

Regionals:

Albury	101.7 FM	Mildura	107.5 FM
Bendigo	88.7 FM	Shepparton	100.1 FM
Geelong	99.5 FM	Warragul	93.5 FM
Launceston	106.9 FM	Warrnambool	94.5 FM

For more information and station contact details you can find us at www.rph.org.au or call 03 9864 9666.

Adult Literacy and Breakfast

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) recently published a report entitled, 'Using partnerships to build literacy and numeracy capability in communities'. The research was undertaken by Rosie Wickert and Jenny McGuirk from University of Technology Sydney.

This report seeks to identify examples and principles of the successful integration of learning about adult literacy into Australian community and workplace settings.

This fresh and critical approach leads the authors to draw a number of new and important findings about valuing and embedding a range of literacies into community and workplace activities rather than teaching literacy in isolation.

It acknowledges that literacy and numeracy are fundamental to the growth of skills and networks, especially for communities who feel left behind and socially excluded.

Copies of 'Using partnerships to build literacy and numeracy capability in communities' can be downloaded, free of charge, from <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1607.html>.

Additionally, NCVER is hosting breakfast briefings focused on adult literacy in May 2006 around the country. To register your interest to receive information about this series of briefings, please email events@ncver.edu.au or visit www.ncver.edu.au.



E-learning Creative Community Partnerships Project 2005

A journey to success for eight community projects

Mary Hannan, ALA National Project Manager, E-learning Creative Community Partnerships Project

A project funded by the Australian Flexible Learning Framework and managed by Adult Learning Australia.

The two primary objectives of the 2005 'E-learning Creative Community Partnerships Project' were:

- To embed e-learning in existing community based and regional development initiatives
- To foster strong partnerships between RTOs, community based organisations, business and government to use e-learning to increase participation of targeted client groups in formal education

In order to maximise the potential for e-learning to be embedded in existing regional development initiatives, the project selection criteria clearly outlined the need for solid

community-based partnerships as essential to its success. At the final debriefing session all community leaders commented on how vital these partnerships were in supporting them in either promoting to or gaining access to their nominated target groups.

Preliminary data provided by all eight projects indicates that in excess of 800 students participated in a formal education program which involved a significant e-learning component. Given the nature of the target groups, and the fact that all eight projects worked with learners in regional or remote Australia – this is a significant achievement.

Strategies to ensure participation and embed e-learning varied from project to project. The following examples will illustrate how the synergies in working together has indeed led to results much greater than the sum of their individual organisations' capabilities.

The Alexandrina Community E-learning project worked with a community largely unfamiliar with e-learning which dictated an

approach based on taster sessions, the development of a Moodle site and mentoring support for teachers to set up e-learning experiences for their students. For this project the significance of their achievements lie in the “cross generational support, client engagement and increased willingness to take things on and have a go – a ‘can do capacity’ which leads to greater confidence, satisfaction, support and connection”.

Given the nature of the target groups, and the fact that all eight projects worked with learners in regional or remote Australia – this is a significant achievement.

significance was their methodology of empowering individuals and communities through a study circle approach, an informal reflective process that supports formal learning.

The Peel Regional project’s objective was to target local skills shortages and to provide vocational training and education options from within the local communities to help support this. The most significant outcome for this project was its work in extending client knowledge of the benefits of e-learning.

Similarly the Bundaberg project worked with a very elusive target group – young mothers who were isolated and disengaged from education. Their project has had significant outcomes in expanding clients’ knowledge of e-learning. They reported particular success with toolboxes.

The most significant outcome for the Barkly Arts Creative Community project lies in the fact that the community (Indigenous) has taken ownership of the project. They have



Some of the Creative Community Partnerships E-learning team, (2005): Back (L-R) Stuart Jones, Ros Macpherson, Catriona Atkins, John Tucker, Rosemary Stanton, Sandra Hansen. Front (L-R) Glenda McPherson, Catherine Curry and Shirley Smith.



Tennant Creek Training Centre – creating e-learning options and connections for participants in the wider community.

The Men’s North East E-learning Precinct project based their strategy on research which indicates that for their target group (men over 45) the learning would need to be nominated by and taken to the target group – i.e. delivered outside a formal classroom setting. This was a significant and successful strategy for them in embedding e-learning in their community and an excellent example of how partnerships were vital in achieving this.

The Central West Community College (CWCC) project and the Leongatha Education Precinct (LEP) project both presented with very strong established partnerships and business models. Between them they were responsible for the bulk of the delivery (in excess of 600 participants, with a significant percentage studying accredited courses).

Another project which built on strong established partnerships was the Tasmanian Communities Online project, which worked with regional online access centres. Of particular

successfully blended e-learning into their arts activities. As a remote community in Tennant Creek, e-learning options have connected them with a much wider community.

Looking ahead

Funding opportunities have once again been made available for up to six community partnerships in 2006. Through the Australian Flexible Learning Framework’s E-learning Creative Communities Partnerships Project, successful groups will receive up to AUD40,000 in addition to further support and guidance for their initiatives. It is anticipated communities selected will be diverse in their range of target groups and project aims.

For more information contact the project management team: Mary Hannan (02) 6274 9508, email: m.hannan@ala.asn.au or Josie Rose 0409 198 123, email: j.rose@ala.asn.au.

For more information about the Framework visit www.flexiblelearning.net.au.

Shedding light on new spACEs for older men in Australia

Associate Professor Barry Golding, University of Ballarat, Visiting Research Fellow, ALA



SOUTHERN COMMUNITY PROJECT GROUP INC.
THE SHED PROJECT
COMMUNITY WORKSHOP
Phone 81864188
WORKING WITH AND FOR THE COMMUNITY

Sheds accessible to men in community contexts are a recent, wholly Australian phenomenon worthy of serious and critical examination – for reasons that go well beyond learning. They have sprung up in a wide variety of places in the past decade and continue to grow – to the point that there are now around 150 community-based sheds for men open or soon to open mainly in southern Australian states. They come out of a wide range of organisational types including health, aged care, church, Vietnam Veterans, Aboriginal, hospital and adult and community education. While diverse in their origins and contexts, what my research demonstrates is that they can and do provide

a valuable and critically important place for a wide range of older men, where they feel at home and learn informally by doing in practical, group situations with other men.

Surveys of participants in 22 men's sheds in Victoria (in advance of the survey results from 24 sheds in the national NCVER five state study, due by end of 2006) confirm that men particularly enjoy the flexibility, the informality, the lack of compulsion, the chance to mentor others as well as the opportunity to take an active part in running the shed. In the process they are actively and generously contributing to the community through what they produce. Sheds are reaching men who are typically not on conventional 'adult education' radar: half are aged over 65 years, one quarter have a disability, seven out of ten are retired and three quarters are on a pension. Two thirds either have a trade background or no formal education post-school. Importantly, half of the men involved belong to no other community organisation.



'The Shed' in the western Sydney suburb of Emu Park. The 'drop in' model shed provides services to around 200 men a month, many of whom are Aboriginal. It forms part of the service provided by the Holy Family Centre in a joint project with the University of Western Sydney.

The majority of participants have experienced significant recent, often multiple crises. Within the past five years, one half of men have experienced a health crisis; four out of ten have retired; one third had separated from partners and one third had experienced an inability to obtain paid work. And yet importantly, sheds are not places where men should necessarily be 'serviced' through 'programs' or to be taught from a deficit health or education model. While some men get access to valued services and many are encouraged by partners or families to come, men come to sheds primarily to share and develop existing strengths, often based on a lifetime of diverse and interesting work mainly with other men.

In order to begin to understand community-based men's sheds and why they should be primarily for men, it's important to remember that older Australians - who make up an increasing proportion of the total population - typically left school very early. Many worked and learned 'hands on' for decades with minimal formal education, mainly with other men. Older men therefore tend to be particularly vulnerable if totally and suddenly displaced - for whatever reason - from the paid workforce, from the company of other men, from situations where they can contribute to communities and from places where they can actively make and fix things, including in aged care centres. For all of these reasons, involvement in a number of community-based volunteer organisations including sporting clubs, fire services and men's sheds - particularly in rural communities and at neighbourhood level, become important potential lifelines for many older men.

There is a prevailing false assumption in national education and training policy that people over 65 years are a 'cost' to the community, are not interested in learning and will simply become a burden on the health and welfare system. However learning for older people, particularly informal learning in volunteer community-based settings becomes critical for individual, social, family and economic wellbeing. Contrary to the stereotype, older men invariably have a keen desire to learn: the key is to find somewhere men feel at home to do so. My research into men's learning in rural towns shows that older men, particularly those with limited and often negative experiences associated with formal 'education' at school, want learning provided in less formal, less structured, practical group settings, locally and on-site through organisations they know and feel comfortable within. Older men generally learn best

by doing and through practice in familiar situations, through organisations and people they know and trust rather than via abstracted learning 'about' something in simulated situations.

Government policies for men over 45 assume that the significant proportion of older men not in the workforce can be brought back to work by re-skilling through education and training. However interviews with older men who are not in the workforce confirm that their exit from paid work is typically not for one irrational reason, but for a combination of good and rational reasons not just to do with qualifications or skills and not easy to define or pigeonhole as simple 'unemployment' or 'retirement'.

It is sometimes because there was no appropriate or properly remunerated work available in the area or because they were discriminated against on the basis of their age in the workplace. For many, their work was affecting their health or relationships. Others were not happy, connected to or satisfied enough with their lives or their paid work to continue in the paid workforce. Many older men felt disconnected and debilitated as a consequence of work - from their partner, family or community; others needed a change in direction, interest or lifestyle. For others, their family or partner may have needed care or support. For all of these reasons, doing any form of learning, to return to the workforce or not, requires a degree of commitment and engagement that may not be available from a conventional adult learning organisation.

Though controversial, it is possible to argue that participation in Australian adult education has, for decades, tended to be organised by structures of privilege that have sometimes denied older men's difference, diversity and opportunities to learn, particularly with other men in voluntary communities of practice. At a policy, management and provider level there is evidence of growing recognition of a need to acknowledge a history of deliberate bias towards women in adult education, and to find innovative and more equitable ways of engaging men, including older men. On average older men have been in paid work for many more years than women and have significantly less time to enjoy their retirement. They are also likely to die seven years earlier despite reaching retirement age five years later.

My research into men's learning shows that in general, older men generally don't feel like they belong in places and spaces

dedicated only to learning, welfare or health, even when it is the only space and even when it's probably in their interests to be there. Older men appear to flourish in learning situations where the emphasis is on hands-on, practical and/or outside activity and where program formality is minimal and where they can develop trusting friendships with other men. Like all older adults, older men have a primary need for social contact as well as meaningful and challenging activity, in order to maintain the sense of identity they may have found through previous work and family roles. What is often missing for men as they age and retire are the networks and friendships that women are generally better at building and maintaining.

Aside from funding formal learning, there is a strong case for governments to support and fund creative ways to engage older men in the community, winning their trust and listening to them in order to increase their quality of engagement in the wider community. For many older men with limited and often negative experiences of formal education, to engage in organised or formal learning is completely outside their cultural frame of reference. There is a range of significant risks associated with a return to learning for such men. These include psychological risks (of possible failure or ridicule), social risks (of acting contrary to family or cultural norms) and financial risks (endangering welfare benefits or getting into debt), particularly where there are no guaranteed (employment or fiscal) returns from learning.

Men's sheds research provides evidence that some older men benefit from engagement in places and spaces where they can be socially engaged with other men with similar needs. It supports the need for a more overt recognition of the social construction of gender in learning, health, disability and aged care services and a tolerance and acceptance of a range of different theories and practices of both femininity and masculinity if such services are truly committed to gender equity.

The key to engaging older men is to find one of the many places and spaces where older men can feel comfortable to join other men, particularly by building on their often extensive skills and experience, by regularly doing, meeting, getting connected, making friends and giving back to their communities. Because men construct much of their meaning and identity through their involvement in current or former work (including voluntary work), retirement, involuntary loss of paid work and social isolation can and does place a huge strain on older men's social lives, their health, relationships and wellbeing. In the absence of paid work, informal leisure activities and voluntary involvement are important sources

of older men's identity, friendships and of their capacity to learn informally.

Rather than being the answer, men's sheds in community contexts are one of many answers which acknowledge the strengths and experiences of older people in Australia. They appear to work for older men because of the quality of engagement and the informal possibilities the spaces create rather than because of what 'programs' older men can access there. Older men who participate in men's sheds are highly engaged in a space that is low on formality but high in terms of the quality of men's engagement. The intensity of that engagement is not dissimilar to that experienced by many women in community and neighbourhood house type settings, where adult education has traditionally taken place in Australia.

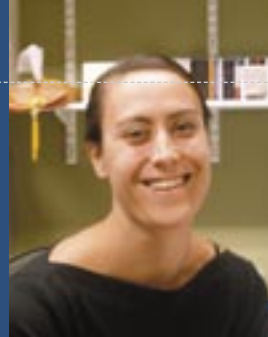
Men's sheds in community contexts, if carefully planned and managed can include and support men experiencing issues associated with retirement, health, social isolation, ageing and significant change. That careful planning has to include health and safety and someone in charge of the shed at all times, despite the apparent informality. It also requires recognition and some level of commitment by a range of government departments that men's sheds will require some funding, typically from a range of sources because of the wide range of demonstrable benefits. They provide a safe, mutually supportive and inclusive environment where learning and health are fostered informally, without subverting the other main social motivation for coming to the shed.

It would be possible for some adult education providers to incorporate men's sheds as part of the fabric of their provision specifically for older and isolated men. Whether auspiced by the provider or another community-based service provider, it is critical that men are involved in the creation and management of the shed. As with other successful organisations, dollars alone don't make a successful men's shed. There is a wide range of community-based service providers that currently auspice men's sheds in community contexts. A small number of men's sheds have been creatively linked in several States with considerable effect to school programs where opportunities exist for former skilled tradesmen to share their skills with young people in practical community settings. While the effort to set up and maintain such arrangements is large, the inter-generational spin offs can be very high.

There is the potential as with all research findings, of possible misinterpretation and misapplication. Though men's sheds type programs can and do produce health, wellbeing, community and learning benefits informally, they need to be nurtured without formally foregrounding the informal benefits to the

► continued on page 26

In Quest of Learning



Nicola Reeves is an expert on digital distribution and new media platforms for ABC Asia Pacific and manages the station's education services. Nicola has 10 years experience in the entertainment industry and ran a digital agency in London for four years, consulting and developing strategy for clients such as Universal Music, SEGA, Sony, Williams F1, the BBC and Citroen. Previously Nicola has held marketing positions at Universal Music, Miller Freeman publishing and MTV.

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

Good old fashioned manners and respect are the two most important things you can show each day.

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

My best school experience would have to be making life long friends who have a better understanding of how I have become the person I am today than anyone else in the world. My worst, on the other hand, would have to be the time I was dressed as a teddy bear for a school concert. I fainted in the costume, fell, split my head open and spent the rest of the evening in hospital – I think my performance stole the show!

Yes, I think I was a good student. Although, probably only because we had such small classes, meaning there was nowhere to hide. Plus, the teachers weren't afraid to get the cane out in those days!

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

I seem to faintly remember always wanting to be in the Famous Five or at least some kind of detective. There was a girl in the Famous Five, named George, who was a bit of a tomboy and I thought she was just the greatest when I was six! Suffice to say, there is not much call for detectives in rural South Wales where I grew up!

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

My first job was a college placement with a menswear designer in London. This experience taught me two things:

- firstly, to achieve your dream, you have to work extremely hard; it will not be handed to you on a silver platter
- secondly, travel while you are young.

The Production Manager taught me this as he rued the fact that he had not done so and instead become caught up in mortgages, work, kids, etc. Subsequently, as soon as I graduated I found myself on a flight to Australia.

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

If you don't make the most of chances when they arise, they won't come knocking again.

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

I would like to make the time to study Japanese properly and learn to speak the language fluently. ABC Asia Pacific is doing more and more business in Japan and it would be wonderful to have the skills to communicate effectively with the locals.

A huge ambition of mine is to complete a long distance car race, such as the Paris-Dakar Rally. I think I have watched Cannonball Run too many times!

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

I used to show jump competitively.

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

Watching it on television is not the same as achieving it in real life.

Thank you for participating!

Adult Learners' Week (ALW) *10th Anniversary*

Over 4.5 million Australians tuned into Adult Learners' Week (ALW) in 2005 according to the AC Nielson Omnibus Survey (November 2005). Successful television, radio and print campaigns saw hundreds of thousands more Australians (than 2004) alerted to the national campaign promoting lifelong learning in communities and workplaces.

*Peter Murphy, ALW National Coordinator,
ALA Communications Manager*

To mark the 10th Anniversary the Executive Team at ALA invited Dr Alan Tuckett OBE to Australia as part of the celebrations. Dr Tuckett was instrumental in introducing ALW to our part of the world in 1995 so we were honoured that he accepted our invitation. Dr Tuckett is the Director of the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education in the UK (England and Wales) which is the peak body equivalent to our own national peak body ALA.

ALW continues to grow beyond its 10 years with over 930 events across Australia recorded in 2005 on the official online calendar. This represents an increase of events of over 30% compared to 2004. ALW recorded online events have almost doubled since 2001.

Last year, ALW was celebrated with a diverse variety of activities, events and award ceremonies across the nation. "A pathway to adult learning in your community and workplace" was introduced as the theme of ALW 2005 and "sharing between the generations" was still embraced by numerous organisers of ALW events and the general media.

Each state and territory have their own stories to tell about ALW 2005. Some of these stories are featured below, giving an insight into the wonderful diversity and range of activities celebrated during the week.

ALW Awards in Tasmania

Aboriginal Training Programs (ATP) Burnie student Geraldine Wigg was the 2005 winner of the Tasmanian state award of Aboriginal Adult Learner of the Year, an award that recognises the learner's contribution to their community as well as their achievements as an adult learner.

Aboriginal Training Programs, Institute of TAFE Tasmania (state-wide) was the runner up in the ALA 2005 national awards in the category, Australian Indigenous Community Provider of the Year.



Pictured with Ron Anderson (Adult Learning Australia) (back) at the Tasmanian state Adult Learners' Week awards in Hobart on 1 September 2005 are staff and students of Aboriginal Training Programs, Institute of TAFE Tasmania (Burnie): front (L-R): Jane Shepherd, Kathleen Brown, Michelle Purdy; back (L-R): Dylan Purdy, Amanda Radford.

ATP employ a state coordinator and four Aboriginal Vocational Education and Training (VET) officers to coordinate the provision of general education and VET for the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. As well as providing support to learners involved in Aboriginal-specific literacy and numeracy programs, ATP also respond to Aboriginal community education and training needs that differ annually and by region.

In 2004 the ATP (Burnie) Foundation Course won the State Library of Tasmania Community Organisation Award for Services to Adult Literacy.

Northern Territory Indigenous learners join the celebrations

Numbulwar

Adult Learners' Week celebrations at Numbulwar were postponed from Friday 9th to Friday 23rd September because of clashes with other community activities.

Singers and bambu players from Wungubal (public cultural dancing) started up the afternoon's entertainment at midday and performed in the sand at the front of the Numbulwar main school building. The younger children and some of the adults kicked off the dancing. As the music began to fill the air people from around the school grounds gathered to watch the spectacle.

Announcements from school council chairperson Dilimbi Nundhiribala on the loudspeaker encouraged more dancers to participate and further announcements attracted other community



The community that dances together ...



Four generations of women from Tiijikala went on the bush foods trip. The young women worked hard digging for maku (witchetty grub).

members working in other parts of the community. They downed their tools to join in the celebrations. Within minutes just about the entire community was dancing with or watching other adult and children performers.

After the Wungubal, festivities continued with speeches and presentations to all the adult learners. Group by group, they proudly accepted their awards. Awards winners were involved in different learning activities throughout the community. Nearly 80 recipients came up to collect their special mug from the organising team. After the official ceremonies the Numbulwar community shared a delicious BBQ prepared by staff from the school.

Tiijikala community celebrates ALW

Waltja Tjutanku Palyapayi Aboriginal Corporation received some funding from Northern Territory's Department of Employment, Education and Training to celebrate ALW with members of the Tiijikala community.

Waltja's Reconnect program combined with the Tiijikala Women's Centre encouraging young women and the older women of the community to share life skills. They travelled out to the bush together and the older women taught the younger people about traditional bush foods and ways of living in the old days.

"We went digging for witchetty grubs and filled up lots of bags and containers with fat, healthy grubs. We cooked up kangaroo tails and had a lovely bush feast!"

Edie Sommerfield and Yangi Yangi told stories about their childhoods living in the desert and living off the land. It was a great way to learn about culture and the history of families in the area.

"We had a wonderful day out bush."

Later on the young women learnt how to download their photos onto the computers at Tiijikala Women's Centre. Their stories and photos will go toward Tiijikala community's Gunya tourism project.

The organisers wish to thank the young women of Tiijikala for taking great photos, to Linda and Susan from the Women's Centre for all their work, and to the four generations of women and children from Tiijikala who learnt a lot and had a wonderful day.

Western Australia's continuing commitment

ALW 2005 was a great success in Western Australia with many events and activities taking place across the state – from Esperance in the South to Kununurra in the North and many small regional communities in between. Communities came together and celebrated adult education with a sharing of knowledge and ideas through the presentation of an incredible range of activities.

There were a total of 119 events posted on the ALW online calendar, some of which fell outside the official week of events. The diverse array of activities were numerous and included such offerings as: creative classes and exhibitions, workshops for parents and pregnant women, computing and technology, bird watching,



Barry Whelan winner in the teacher category at Queensland's ALW awards 2005 pictured with Karen Struthers (MP) Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations and Minister for Sport.



Anna Koorey, Paul Bennett, Linda Drake, Rowan Cox and Ben Grushka (ALESCO) at the 2005 NSW ALW awards ceremony.



Dr Alan Tuckett OBE pictured at the Harrison Room, MCG. Photo courtesy of ACFE Division (Victoria).

dancing, wine tasting, walking tours, public speaking activities and a celebration of Russian piano music.

ALW 2005 saw a continued strengthening of partnerships formed during 2004 with community organisations and networks, Telecentres, libraries and TAFEWA colleges all working to promote the event. Generic promotional materials were distributed to participating organisations providing a consistent and important message across the state.

The ALW Committee 2005 was committed to involving regional areas in decision making processes and included a mixture of both metropolitan and regional representatives on the organising committee.

ALW extends its reach across Queensland

Last year in Queensland a total of 180 events were registered on the ALW official online calendar, which saw adults across the state, especially in remote and regional areas, attend events that encouraged their participation in continuous or lifelong learning.

Forty-five grants were distributed throughout Queensland to various community groups to host events which outlined many themes. Queensland's 2005 ALW launch and awards ceremony were held at the Brisbane Powerhouse Museum on Wednesday 31 August to honour the 2005 adult learning award winners.

Barry Whelan was winner and Carole Keates was 'highly commended' in the teacher category at Queensland's ALW awards ceremony 2005. They are both pictured with Karen Struthers (MP) Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations and Minister for Sport.

Up-skilling supported in the ACT

Adult and Community Education (ACE) and lifelong learning complements the formal ACT education system as it enables many people: older citizens, young professionals, those wishing to change careers, newcomers to the ACT, people with special needs and those

who want to participate in a more formal education process to pursue their dreams.

The winners of the 10th annual ACT awards celebrated the diversity of adult education in the Canberra community with the Outstanding Program award being awarded to Erindale College Community Education Program. In 2005, the College ran over 90 classes for adults each term in areas ranging from 'Ballroom and New Vogue dancing' to refresher and up-skilling vocational courses and 2006 will see it run even more as it includes new programs covering issues such as 'Understanding Loss & Grief.'

At the National Awards, this College, together with another ACT award winner, Victoria Saddler (Outstanding Teacher/Tutor) were announced runners up in their respective categories, thus highlighting the excellence and depth of ACE programs in the ACT.

South Australia produces award winning banner

The Avon Art and Craft Guild located in regional South Australia were runner's up in the ALW 2005 National Banner Competition. Jill Stewart the centre coordinator and her team worked on the entry for the National Banner Competition. The Banner was displayed at the Avon Art and Craft Centre and Jo Mulvaney ALW State Coordinator and Leonie Miller ACE Project Officer presented Jill and her team with a runner's up certificate on 6 September 2005. Jo Mulvaney spoke to the group about the ALW 2005 Campaign and its impact on regional areas.

The Avon Art and Craft Guild were also successful in winning an ALW 2005 Grant which enabled the Guild to host an Open Day, 'The Pathway to Adult Learning in the Community and Workplace' on 6 September 2005.

The Open Day was very successful and attracted lots of interest from the local community and was attended by the local MP Mr Steven Griffiths – Goyder Districts. A local community group from Burra travelled by bus to attend the Open Day and participated in workshops and displays demonstrating that learning can be fun.



Carol Keates, (right) 'highly commended' in the teacher category, at Queensland's ALW 2005 awards ceremony with Karen Struthers (MP), Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations and Minister for Sport.



National Banner Awards Runner-Up Entry - Avon Art and Craft Guild, regional South Australia.

Trainees from MAST program laminated ALW posters which were used as place mats for the three course lunch served at the Open Day.

The Avon Art and Craft Open Day was a great success and a tribute to the success rural communities are making to Adult Learners' Week. Congratulations to Jill and her volunteers.

NSW applauds adult learners

One of the highlights is the presentation of the annual NSW ALW Awards. The purpose of the awards is to recognise and celebrate the large variety of contributions to adult learning made by learners and adult learning practitioners.

In 2005, three awards were presented: Outstanding Learner, Outstanding Tutor and Innovation in Learning. The winner of each award received \$1,000 contributing towards their continuing education and training.

Outstanding Learner - Paul Bennett

Paul suffers from Erbs Palsy, a very difficult disability as it leaves those afflicted with the use of only one arm, numbness to the leg, speech problems and involuntary limb spasms.

He joined the State Emergency Service, (SES) after a devastating storm wiped out an entire street in Port Stephens, where he lives. Paul has used study in IT at Tomaree Community College to move through the ranks of the SES to become Team Leader for Stores and Maintenance, Logistics and Operations.

Though he can no longer drive, Paul has worked as a volunteer for Meals on Wheels and the Recycling Centre. With no self-pity and a motto that nothing is too hard to conquer if you want to learn, Paul has achieved much due to his own efforts and ability. He has truly been an inspiration to the able-bodied students in his classes.

Outstanding Tutor - Anna Koorey

Anna has been using Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) for over 10 years to teach English to migrants from a wide range

of cultural backgrounds. Her commitment to CALL has been demonstrated by her ongoing up-skilling in terms of additional training and qualifications, and active participation in professional conferences both nationally and internationally.

Anna joined the NSW Adult Migrant English Service in 1988. Since that time she has taught a range of programs but it is her initiative in piloting e-learning in the Educational Computer Rooms, and introducing blended learning at Burwood and Bankstown AMES Centres, that this award particularly recognises.

Innovation in Learning - ALESCO Learning Centre

The ALESCO Learning Centre, under the auspices of WEA Hunter, is a registered and accredited non-government school for young people aged 15 years and over.

To our knowledge, it is the only alternative education option within a community-based adult learning environment in Australia.

One of its key features is that it is not a 'time out' program and has no focus on reintegration into conventional schooling.

Students are engaged in an environment where they see others of all ages and abilities continuing their education. Through this, they come to understand finishing school does not have to mean finishing the learning journey. Every year, 55-65% of students graduate.

International pioneer of ALW visits Australia

The Executive Team at ALA invited Dr Alan Tuckett OBE to be its International Guest Speaker for ALW 2005 as recognition of his high profile and expertise in the field of lifelong learning and his commitment to adult and community education internationally.

Dr Tuckett has been the Director of National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE, UK) since 1988 and was our special guest at several ceremonies and workshops during the 10th Anniversary celebrations.

He is a visiting professor in the Centre for Labour Market Studies and the Institute for Lifelong Learning at the University of Leicester,



Getting involved - Canberrans celebrating ALW 2005.

and Special Professor in Continuing Education at the University of Nottingham. He held a similar role in 1993 at the University of Warwick.

He sits on the Government's Skills Alliance along with ministers, the head of employers' and trade union organisations and the key delivery agencies, and is a member of the statutory Adult Learning Committee of the Learning and Skills Council. He is a member of the Council and Strategy Committee of the Open University and of the Council of City and Guilds. He also advises the BBC on adult learning and is past President of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

Dr Tuckett travelled extensively across Australia attending launches, dinners and awards ceremonies including a memorable presentation at one of Victoria's Sporting Meccas, the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). Held in the prestigious Harrison Room, Dr Tuckett's presentation on 'Life-wide Learning and the Economy' captured the attention of all in the room including *The Age's* (Melbourne) education writer Margaret Cook.

He also promoted international policy on lifelong learning on ALA's behalf including meetings with The Hon Gary Hardgrave MP and other key adult learning stakeholders. His invaluable support for ALW 2005 contributed to its success and attaining its place as one of the leading ALW campaigns in the world.

Looking forward to 2006

The successes of the 10th Anniversary ALW campaign in 2005 was testimony to advances in timelier planning and strategy implementation arising from recommendations made at the

planning workshop in Adelaide, November 2004; and the dedication and tireless work of all ALW State and Territory Coordinators.

A similar workshop was held in Canberra, November 2005 and discussions took place on how to further streamline the administrative aspects of the campaign. At this stage we have increased our lead time for the 2006 campaign by three months with the National Communications and Media Strategy in place and steering committees in each State and Territory already mobilised.

The fresh look ALW 2006 'National Sign-Up' campaign will feature new promotional and print materials, an interactive national website with more downloadable information and improved access and service with the introduction of the new national number 1300 I Learn.

On behalf of ALA, I wish to extend our sincerest thanks to the thousands of Australians who played a part in ALW 2005 events and celebrations.

We look forward to your ongoing support and participation in the future.

For the latest news, updates and information please visit our website at www.adultlearnersweek.org or phone 1300 I Learn.

The National Analysis of ALW 2005 is available on the national website and can be downloaded by following the link below:

http://www.adultlearnersweek.org/about/ALW%202005%20Overview_draft_.pdf

Best wishes for a successful and rewarding ALW 2006.

Peter Murphy

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Shedding light on new spACEs for older men in Australia

point that they lose and turn off the participants. If men's sheds were formally re-badged as men's learning or health programs for men - without men's active involvement and control, they would probably cease to attract men or deliver the desired and diverse outcomes.

Notes

Copies of the Golding and Harvey (2006) Victorian survey and the Golding (2006) report referred to in the paper are available from the Adult Community and Further Education

Web site. A comprehensive list of most community-based men's sheds in Australia (approximately 50 in both SA and Victoria, 10 each in Tasmania and WA and 25 in NSW and a small number in Queensland) is available from the author on request b.golding@ballarat.edu.au. Updates to the list are invited. The NCVER-funded national research in progress, Men's sheds: older men's learning spaces and programs in Australia is by Golding, Brown, Foley, Harvey and Gleeson is due for completion late in 2006.

Reading and Writing Hotline

The Adult Literacy National Project, administered by the Department of Education, Science and Training, (DEST) provides funds for a number of strategic initiatives in the field of adult literacy. One of these initiatives is the **Reading Writing Hotline** which provides information to several hundred callers each week on literacy and general education courses available to them in their area. It also maintains an accurate database of programs throughout the country and is in regular contact with State and Territory officials and providers.

Recent revisions to the collection database have meant additional capacity has been added to the Hotline to respond to requests for statistics about demographic profiles and patterns of need. DEST will be providing additional funding to the Hotline so that trend data on provision for specific areas, target groups, industries etc. can be provided as required. It is planned to produce a set of data sheets and analysis to be provided to Industry Skills Councils, State and Territory representatives and other key stakeholders.

Since its inception in 1994 the Hotline has received well over 100,000 calls and currently there are 1,216 providers on its

database. The Hotline collects detailed demographic data on its callers. In the most recent reporting period:

- 93% of callers were referred to a literacy tuition provider;
- 70% of callers have never before sought help for their literacy problems;
- 48% of callers are employed; and
- 62% of callers are men.

The Hotline also provides assistance to community agencies such as the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service (CRS), Job Network providers, WorkCover and Legal Aid seeking help for their clients.

Tracey Murphy

Assistant Director

Adult Literacy Policy and Programmes Section

For further information contact Tracey on (02) 6240 9120 or email: tracey.murphy@dest.go.au.

ALA New Members

Individual New Members

Patrick Stanton

Boondall QLD 4034

Barbara Clay

Croydon VIC 3136

Cynthia DePina

Fraser ACT 2615

Robert Townsend

Gunbower VIC 3566

Organisations

The Meeting Place

Community Centre

South Fremantle WA 6162

Contact: Samantha Richardson-Newton

City Corporate Consultants

Salisbury SA 5108

Contact: Tony Moore

Central TAFE

Perth WA 6059

Contact: Sue Thompson

Calendar

United Nations Literacy Decade 2003–2012

24-30 April 2006

Global Campaign for Education Action Week – Every Child Needs a Teacher

The theme for this week in 2006 is Every Child Needs a Teacher. The aim of this year's action is to raise awareness of the reality that over 100 million children and 860 million illiterate adults miss out on an education in large part due to a lack of quality teachers.

For further information visit www.campaignforeducation.org/.

29 April 2006

Beginning Teachers' Conference

Spirit of Learning 2006 is a residential conference for beginning and establishing teachers. The focus for workshops will include: how children learn, practical ideas for classroom management, thinking and learning styles, catering for diversity and engaging students through ICTs. The conference will be held at the Carlton Crest, Brisbane.

For further information visit www.beta.asn.au/deliver/content.asp?pid=989.

2 May 2006

Preventing Burn-Out: Strengthening Your Passion for Teaching

At one time or another we all face the daunting question, "Do I have that passion for teaching?" At these times, when we no longer feel the satisfaction in our day to day professional work, when we've lost touch with our passion and dreams, we feel that we're either in the process of losing or have lost that fire we call passion in our professional lives. Dr Louis Schmier has had that experience. He will help you recognize the often "quiet" signals and show you how to interpret these signals. Then, he'll offer strategies to help you see how you can make minor adjustments or major changes to revive your passion and give your teaching renewed meaning and purpose. This in an online seminar.

For further information visit www.innovativeeducators.org/.

12-13 May 2006

Autumn Music Educators Seminar at St Johns Southgate

A unique professional development opportunity for music educators with a selection of inspiring and practical sessions geared towards developing skills and confidence. Key presenters are Celia Christmass (WA) and Andrew Pennay (QLD). This two-day seminar will feature sessions for classroom teachers at primary and secondary levels, aural training classes, conducting, choral performances, music advocacy, technology and elective classes. The seminar will be held at St John's Southgate, Melbourne.

For further information visit www.kodaly.org.au/eventframes.htm.

24-26 May 2006

5th International Conference on Drugs and Young People (ICDYP)

The 5th ICDYP is the only drug conference in the world to focus exclusively on young people and address the use of all drugs, alcohol and tobacco, prescription drugs and illegal drugs. Nationally and internationally, drug use and the harms associated with its use continue to be a major concern. The theme for the 5th ICDYP is the culture and context of young peoples' drug use across various settings. This includes: bars, clubs, workplaces, schools, public spaces, juvenile justice settings and sports settings. The conference will be held at AJC Convention Centre, Randwick, Sydney.

For further information visit <http://www.adf.org.au/browse.asp?ContainerID=5dyp>.

25-27 May 2006

Australian College of Educators 2006 National Conference

The theme for this conference is: Teachers shaping futures, futures shaping teachers. The conference will highlight issues that impinge on teaching as a profession in the global 21st century world bringing multidisciplinary perspectives to the concepts of professional learning and professionalism across all sectors and levels of education. The conference will be held at the Holiday Inn, Adelaide.

For further information visit http://www.beccoswebengine.org/servlet/Web?s=157573&p=CON_ACE06.

29 May-3 June 2006

Voices on the Coast 2006

A Youth Literature Festival which brings some of Australia's finest writers and performers together for young people. There will be workshops, author talks, book launches, meet-the-author, storytelling, poetry and performances. The festival will be located at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland.

For further information visit www.immanuel.qld.edu.au/voices/.

4-6 October 2006

Sharing Wisdom for our Future: Environmental Education in Action – Bunbury – Western Australia

Come and join fellow participants at the Australian Association for Environmental Education's (AAEE), international conference for an inspirational journey in the heart of Western Australia's ecological hotspot. The conference mission is to provide a rich, inclusive conference which weaves together a wide range of perspectives, methods and approaches for a sustainable future.

For further information visit www.aaceconf2006.org/.