

Quest

→ Balancing life, work and wellbeing



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Adult Learning
Australia Inc.



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Cover Photo: Roger Morris AM

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 Australian international education bodies, coordinates Adult Learners' Week and more.

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ALA also publishes the Australian Journal of Adult Learning three times a year. Many ALA members receive this publication as part of their membership but single or extra copies are available for a minimal cost.

ALA gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. It thanks the many volunteers who submit material to Quest.

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Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Editorial



It seems that 2008 is the year for New Beginnings and here's hoping it is the year when Adult Learning is recognised for the influence it already exudes and the much greater contribution it can make to the productivity of the Australian community.

Already we have a submission with the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer along with many other relevant Ministers (see page 5). We hope Australia will begin the drafting of a Life Long Learning policy, the absence of which has generated scepticism about Australia's commitment to adult learning both here and overseas.

This issue of *Quest* reflects the scope of Adult Learning issues. It's jam packed full of news and information.

The young adult makes a dynamic appearance in this issue. Gillian Stillfried, a young adult who was hired by us for a relief role, but has become so passionate about adult learning we are finding it impossible to cut her off. In this issue she links her field of 'cancer research' to adult learning. It is a timely article (Page 12) as I had made a commitment to the U3A (NSW) that I would pursue the links between learning and longevity both in the workforce and life in general. This is a critical issue on which work will start soon with the Australian Minister for Health and Government.

On the other side of the fence, our eminent stalwart Dr Kaye Bowman has presented us with an excellent occasional paper (Page 16) linking ecosystem thinking to adult learning. As natural resource management is becoming increasingly important in Australia, this thinking is 'cutting edge'.

One of our articles reflects on the sixty plus major recommendations that have been made in respect of ACE and adult learning in general over three inquiries. It is amazing and very disappointing that so little progress has been made on these recommendations. Even though former Minister for Education, Science and Training Brendan Nelson condensed the key recommendations down to five (see page 11) still nothing significant has happened. We all hope the new Government will include these important recommendations as part of their vibrant Social Inclusion policy, known as the second pillar of their election platform.

Nominations for a Social Inclusion Board have already been called. The Government is pushing for the finalisation of the MCEETYA review and committing to making the national apology a thing of action rather than a set of words. We are sure this means better adult education for Indigenous peoples.

There is to be a national 2020 Consultative Forum of one thousand people in April.

We are certain many of our members will be keen to jump on board and embrace these initiatives. If you do become involved please let me know so that we can get the most out of this great opportunity.

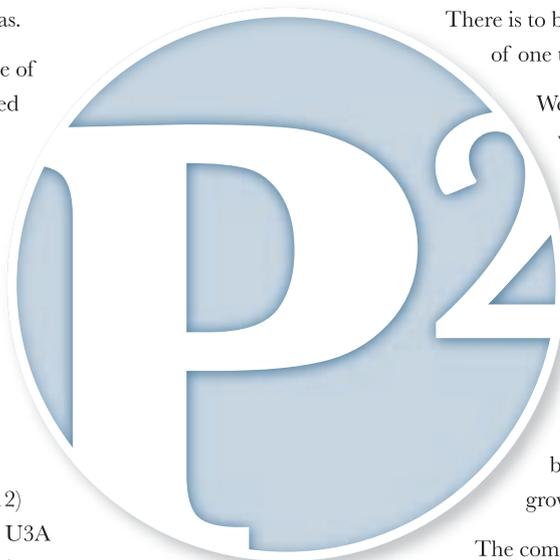
I am pleased to say that our early overtures to Indigenous community representatives have been very favourably received. I will personally be pushing for our involvement in their growth into new arenas for adult learning.

The coming twelve months offer a fantastic opportunity to place adult learning on the front foot and this Association will be concentrating on bringing about satisfactory conclusions. We must all as individuals and organisations seize this opportunity – we must drive this agenda by promoting adult learning to politicians, governments and businesses. We must seek other opportunities such as talkback radio, encouraging other interested parties to join us as new members or simply telling this office about the issues that face you today.

I encourage you to either act on these opportunities or at least contact this office and let us know that the opportunity exists. I firmly believe our capacity lies in our on-the-ground members and those would-be members that are yet to join.

Peter Peterson (P²)

Chief Executive Officer



Briefs

Keep up to date with what is happening in our sector

Visit the Adult Learning Australia Blog

Every relevant press release or news item is posted on the Blog immediately. Keep up to date by visiting the site each day.

Click on ALA Blog at our website - www.ala.asn.au



Clean Up Australia Day

The largest community campaign of its kind in Australia.

In 2007 over one million people are estimated to have participated in the clean up while a Newspoll Survey in February 2007 found that 87% of Australians believe the day plays an important part in protecting the environment.

“They weren’t just removing rubbish, they were helping to reduce Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions as every aluminium can collected and recycled saves 767 grams of CO², which is equivalent to one wheelie bin of greenhouse gas emissions,” Ian Kiernan, The Clean Up Australia Chairman Ian Kiernan said.

Some tips on low-cost promotion

1. Print your web address on T-shirts
2. Create a magnet to put on the back of your car that says “Follow me to ...” with the name of your program or activity
3. Faces are one of the best things to use in advertising... use a real person if possible
4. Leave your brochures at hairdressers and doctors’ surgeries – the brochures get read a lot more than if they are delivered to a home

(Abridged from LERN magazine January 2008)

Buddy Up

Being lonely takes a toll on the body that seems to accelerate with age. A study by University of Chicago researchers showed that loneliness had little effect on the health of college students BUT people aged 50 - 68 with little social contact had higher blood pressure, lower levels of ‘good’ cholesterol and higher levels of the hormone epinephrine. The study adds to the growing evidence linking social isolation to problems dealing with stress, poor sleep, weak immunity and heart disease.



(Source: AARP Bulletin, October 2007)

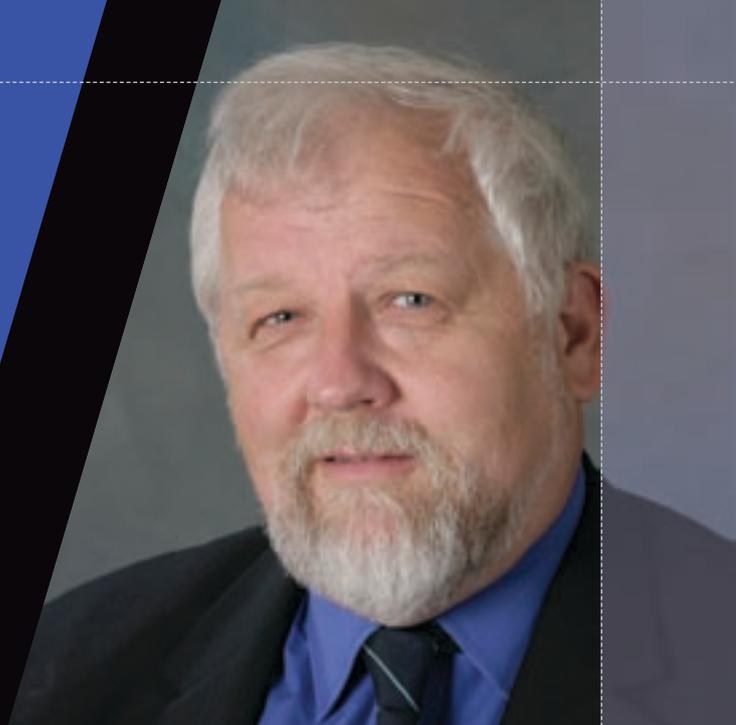
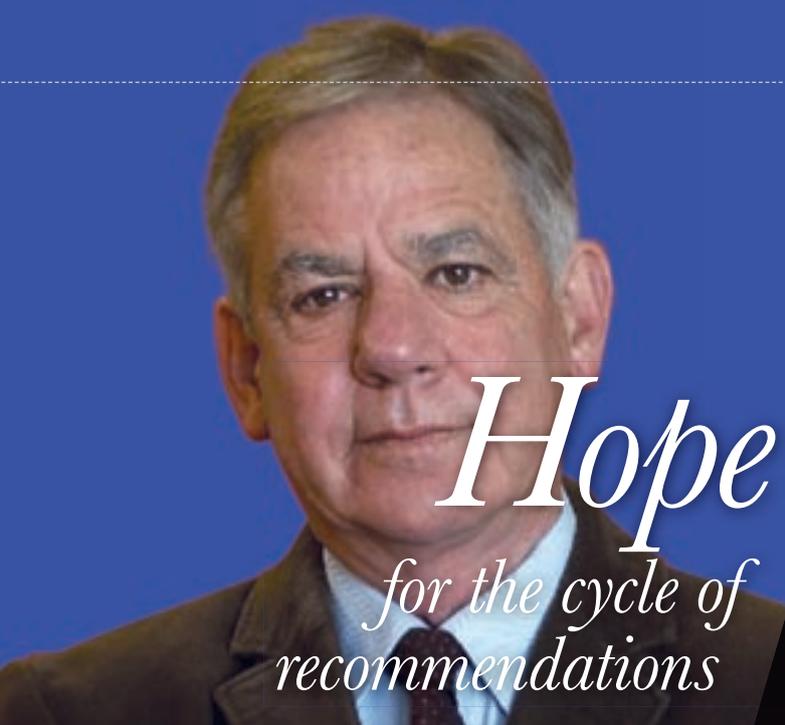
Geek Speak

Some terminology from the techno world:

WEB 2.0 – the second generation of web-based communities, such as social networking sites and wikis.

RSS Feed – “Really Simple Syndication – the family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated content such as blogs and podcasts.

(Source: The Informant, VISI 2008)



Hope for the cycle of recommendations

Deputy Prime Minister Gillard gives hope that the cycle of recommendations will result in action.

In response to the election of the new Government, which has a strong social inclusion policy, ALA has made a submission to the Prime Minister, the Minister for Education and other Members of the Ministry whose portfolios are influenced by the Adult Learning Agenda.

Our initial respondent is the Minister for Education, Julia Gillard who advised in a positive tone that revising the MCEETYA Declaration “will signal high level positioning of the sector and community education, and training providers in particular to build on existing strengths and contribute more effectively to meeting the future education and training needs of Australian adults.”

Another exciting development from the Government is the creation of a Social Inclusion Board. This Board may, in the longer term, address many of the issues we have raised.

As Senator Ursula Stephens, the Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion will be involved with the Committee, we feel confident that the vital issue of adult learning will achieve the higher profile it deserves.

Not surprisingly most members of the Adult Learning community agree that the MCEETYA Declaration has been ineffective to date and are therefore cautious about the current review. ALA's position remains that the Declaration is not sufficient to address the need for an Australian Life Long Learning policy – something we currently lack.

Our submission (whose recommendations are listed below) is the most recent in a long history of recommendations. Hopefully these will now be acted upon.

A history of the recommendations from 1991 to the present follows our recommendations.

Our Recommendations

1. That a working group including ALA, DEEWR, NHT, DHA and others as required be convened to draft an operational plan to implement adult learning initiatives.
2. That a working group be convened between DEEWR, ALA and DFA to prepare for CONFINTEA VI.
3. That urgent consideration be given to the commencement of work on a National Life Long Learning policy with a focus on social inclusion, community health and building bridges to vocational education.
4. That consideration be given to restoring ALA's level of funding to enable ALA to optimise its contribution to adult learning in Australia.
5. That the Treasurer give consideration to listing Adult and Community Education as an Item in the 2008/09 Budget.
6. That a national whole of Government and education stakeholder workshop be convened through the community literacy sector related including ALA and ACAL.

the History Behind the ALA Submission

Recommendations from the 1991 Senate Inquiry “Come in Cinderella”

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends the immediate establishment of a high level Working Party to develop a national policy on adult and community education, drawing upon the findings of this Report, to be launched by mid-1992. The Committee suggests that the Working Party be convened jointly by the Australian Education Council (AEC) and the Conference of Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training (MOVEET).

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that immediate establishment by the Commonwealth of a formal Advisory Committee on Adult and Community Education to assist the Minister in policy formulation and other matters related to the sector. This Advisory Committee should be of the type provided for in Section IV of the *Employment, Education and Training Act, 1988.*, and its membership shall reflect the diversity of the sector. The Advisory Committee shall:

- report to the Minister, via the National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET), on the role of the Commonwealth in adult and community education, in particular concerning the priorities, strategies, targets and resources associated with the provision of adult and community education by both government and community-based agencies;
- formulate a draft Commonwealth policy and contribute to the development of a national policy by the States, Territories and Commonwealth under the auspices of the AEC and MOVEET;
- monitor the implementation of national policy and report to the Minister on the extent, efficiency and equity of its implementation;

- provide advice regarding desirable change to existing Commonwealth structures and policies which would facilitate the implementation of national policy; and
- liaise with other Councils of NBEET to encourage a coordinated, mutually supportive approach to the provision of adult and community education by the schools, TAFE and higher education sectors.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training designate an office within the Department to be responsible for the implementation of Commonwealth policy in adult and community education, and to ensure that adult and community education has a permanent presence within the Commonwealth bureaucracy. The office should have close links with related areas, notable those dealing with vocational education and training, with adult literacy and with migrant education.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that, in the development of a national policy for adult and community education, priority consideration be given to increased funding for the sector.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Department of Employment, Education and Training modify its funding guidelines to provide for both vocational and non-vocational criteria in determining grant allocations for adult and community education.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that State and Commonwealth governments adopt funding practices which facilitate long-term planning in adult and community education by focussing on triennial funding rather than short-term, submission-based funding processes.



Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that whenever government agencies provide a grant to adult and community education providers for the delivery of a particular program that grant shall include, as a matter of course, a component specifically to provide for child care.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends the introduction of State Government funding support for Neighbourhood Houses and Community Learning Centres in those States where it does not yet exist.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that each State and Territory establish a formal consultative mechanism across human services departments at ministerial level or senior officer level to coordinate and monitor policy on adult and community education.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends the development by all States and Territories of a network of regional councils of adult and community education with the intention that as far as practicable decisions which have a direct bearing upon local providers – particularly those relating to the distribution of resources – be devolved to the regional level.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth establish, with support from the States, a National Institute of Research, Innovation and Teaching in Adult and Community Education. The precise structure and functions of the Institute should be determined by the proposed Commonwealth Advisory Committee to the Minister, to reflect the close relationship between research and the practice of adult education. The adult education community should have significant control over the program and activities of the Institute.

The Committee recommends that immediate establishment by the Commonwealth of a formal Advisory Committee on Adult and Community Education to assist the Minister in policy formulation and other matters related to the sector.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth undertake a comprehensive review of the funding and delivery of the basic education of adults. Such a review should consider, amongst other things:

- the extent of publicly-funded entitlements which adults can utilise to meet their basic education needs; such entitlements could range from tax-concessions to vouchers.
- the minimum level of education which all adults can expect to receive at public expense, that is, at no direct cost to themselves, or in the case of employees, to their employer.

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth:

- (a) extend its support for existing projects directed towards the establishment of national schemes for competency standards, recognition of prior learning, credit transfer and related matters; and

- (b) specifically require that such projects take into account the needs of, and recognise the skills formation role of, the adult and community education sector.

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that the Department of Employment, Education and Training commission a report into ways in which a clearinghouse function could be effected in the adult and community education sector. The function should build upon existing networks within the sector to provide for the dissemination nationally of ideas and developments in curriculum, teaching methods and other matters of professional concern to adult educators, and might be a responsibility of the proposed Institute.

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that, in the development of a national policy for adult and community education, consideration be given to the establishment of a professional development fund – along the lines of the Higher Education Staff Development Fund – whereby adult and community educators may receive financial support to enable the upgrading of their professional qualifications or for other training and development purposes.

Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that, as a stimulus to research by practising adult educators, the Commonwealth provide over each of the next five years two Adult Education Research Scholarship Grants comparable to average weekly earnings.

Recommendation 17

The Committee recommends that the Higher Education Council of NBEET establish a standing committee within the Council to monitor and advise on the adult and community education role of the universities, particularly its links with formal award courses, and its contribution to the intellectual and cultural life of the community at large.

Recommendation 18

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth commission a national survey of participation in community-based adult education and its benefits, either as a discrete exercise or through the Australian National University's National Social Science Survey.

Recommendation 19

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth:

- (a) commission a cost-benefit analysis of participation in a representative sample of adult and community education provision (e.g. workplace basic education, rural community adult education, a group of neighbourhood houses); and

- (b) within the context of the exercise, assist the providers involved to design and trial a method of documenting costs and benefits at a local level.

Recommendation 20

The Committee recommends that the Australian Education Council engage a consultant to advise on a mechanism for the collection of standardised national statistics on participation in adult and community education. This mechanism should avoid the imposition upon providers of burdensome record-keeping.

Recommendation 21

The Committee recommends that State and Territory governments establish policies which provide for:

- (a) the free use of school and TAFE buildings by *bona fide* non-profit community adult education organisations; and
- (b) reasonable access by such groups to associated facilities such as libraries, computer rooms, etc.

Recommendation 22

The Committee recommends that State education authorities examine the possibility of the use of regional and rural school bus services by participants in *bona fide* adult and community education activities.

Recommendation 23

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth publish a comprehensive guide detailing the various government support schemes available to the private sector to enhance its training effort.

Recommendation 24

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth support the development of a comprehensive information database of private training providers and courses.

Recommendation 25

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth:

- (a) acknowledge the demand upon the adult and community education sector to meet the needs of adults with disabilities, and its potential in this regard; and
- (b) clarify departmental responsibilities for the education of adults with disabilities and direct resources accordingly.

Recommendation 26

The Committee recommends that State and Territory governments reflect in their policies and planning related to the aged the proven benefits of sustained education activity into the so-called third age.

Recommendation 27

The Committee recommends that:

- (a) universities give favourable consideration to requests from third age learning groups for access to lectures, library facilities and so on at a level consistent with equity and resource considerations; and
- (b) local governments and regional offices of human services agencies assist third age learning groups through the provision of basic administrative support for their operations.

Recommendation 28

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth take appropriate steps to allow *bona fide* non-profit community adult education organisations to be granted Sales Tax Exemptions status under item 63A of the first schedule of the *Sales Tax (Exemptions and Classifications) Act 1935*.

Recommendation 29

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review its policy concerning the charging of fees for adult basic education courses in TAFE, in the interests of social justice and a consistent approach to adult basic education across States and Territories.

Recommendation 30

The Committee recommends that State and Territory governments establish a grant-aid scheme for prisoners to meet the costs of fees and materials incurred during further education and training while in prison.



Recommendations from the 1997 Senate Inquiry “Beyond Cinderella”

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth government:

- make an unequivocal commitment to the concept of lifelong learning and the promotion of a learning society; and
- imbue its education policies and associated funding mechanisms with the values and principles of lifelong learning for all Australians.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth government bring together the National ACE policy and National VET Policy to establish an integrated National Adult Community and Vocational Education and Training (NACVET) Policy giving effect to the commitment to lifelong learning.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that, in order to implement, monitor and fund the new NACVET Policy, the Commonwealth government restructure ANTA to establish the National Adult Community and Vocational Education and Training Authority (NACVETA). The membership of the Authority’s Board will be modified to ensure that an adequate ACE perspective is available to the Authority, and the way in which the Authority distributes its funds should reflect its revised charter.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the new NACVET Authority report annually to the Australian Parliament on the achievement of policy outcomes.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth government negotiate with the States and Territories a set of Adult Community and Vocational Education and Training (ACVET) Agreements. These Agreements will require each State and Territory to develop an Adult Community and Vocational Education and Training (ACVET) Profile consistent with the National Policy.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that:

- in order to be eligible for Commonwealth funds, providers be registered as a quality provider with a State or Territory Education and Training Authority;

- registration be based on providers meeting standards of quality set by the relevant industry, professional or educational association;
- three broad categories of provider be registered as follows:
 - Category A.** Specific Industry Education & Training
 - Category B.** Non-specific Industry Education & Training
 - Category C.** General Education & Training

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that a National ACVET Equity Fund be established under the new NACVET Authority to target groups currently under-represented in education and training.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth government

- give priority to the infrastructure and capital requirements of community-based providers of ACE;
- require that State and Territory governments assist community-based ACE providers to meet the costs of becoming registered providers; and
- require that ACE providers have formal representation within the State and Territory ACVET Profile processes.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that, where they have not yet done so, States and Territories report on the delivery by ACE providers of both accredited and non-accredited programs as part of the State and Territory ACVET Profile processes.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the new NACVET Authority review its guidelines for competitive tendering in order (a) to incorporate selection criteria which encourage collaborative tenders, and (b) to require the specification of clear performance indicators in tender documentation.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth government establish a dedicated research program to examine the relationship between intellectual activity and good health, and the ways in which that relationship might be enhanced.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth government:

- commission a report on best practice in (a) the provision of pre-retirement education, and (b) in adult education programs targeting older Australians living in institutional or retirement village settings;
- draw together a coalition of peak senior citizens groups and adult education organisations to advise on matters relating to third age education;
- establish a steering group drawn from relevant Government departments to develop and implement a nationwide promotional campaign on the benefits of participation by older people in adult education.

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth urge State and Territory education authorities to develop guidelines for the accessible and affordable use of public education facilities by bona fide, non-profit ACE providers.

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth adopt 'learning and living in the third age' as its theme for the 1999 International Year of Older People.

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that any follow up to the NBEET study on technological convergence, or any future national studies on education and technology, take into account the ACE sector.

Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that the level of the Commonwealth's ACE Grants Program be significantly increased and managed by the new NACVET Authority.

Recommendation 17

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth seek a formal response to a draft of the revised National ACE Policy from key women's organisations such as the Network of Women in Further Education and from independent assessors with expertise in the analysis of gender issues.

Recommendation 18

The Committee recommends that the new NACVET Authority commission a study of best practice in relation to the delivery of adult education and training to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders by community-based ACE providers.

Recommendation 19

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth seek a formal input into the proposed new NACVET Policy from

- the Commonwealth Office of Disability, from the peak body National Industry Association for Disability Services [formerly ACROD], and from an independent assessor with expertise in disability issues; and

- the Federation of Ethnic Community Councils of Australia, and other relevant organisations concerned with educational opportunities for Australians with a first language other than English.

Recommendation 20

The Committee recommends the re-establishment of the National Staff Development Committee under the new NACVET Authority. Its role should be expanded to address the professional development needs of teachers and administrators working in community-based ACE providers.

Recommendation 21

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth government support a national project to identify and develop standards for teaching and learning in community-based ACE settings in a manner similar to the national ACE Standards for Administrators and Managers.

Recommendation 22

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth government send a ministerial level delegation to the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education in Hamburg comprising relevant officers of Commonwealth agencies, State education authorities and representatives of Australia's ACE sector.

Recommendation 23

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth government:

- undertake a precise analysis and costing of the public education activities of government departments and agencies;
- convene a national workshop of key government departments, information agencies and representatives of the ACE sector to explore public education practice, and the implications for more effective and coordinated delivery of Commonwealth public education programs.

Key issues raised in the 'You Can Too - Adult Learning in Australia' ministerial round table - under the Minister for Education Brendan Nelson

Five key issues emerged as a high priority of those engaged in Adult Learning:

1. A national policy or statement on adult learning was desirable.

2. There needed to be greater recognition of the value of adult learning through less formal means. Many benefits flow from less formal learning in local community centres and adult learning centres.
3. There is a need to communicate and promote adult learning to both prospective adult learners and employers through a public awareness campaign.
4. Coordination arrangements needed to be developed to facilitate linkages between adult learners, employers, training providers and local government.
5. There are marked differences in the needs of rural and regional Australians when contrasted with adult learning opportunities in metropolitan centres.

Conclusions from the 'Community Education and National Reform' – Discussion paper by Ben Bardon

The VET system faces a number of complex challenges as it meets the goals of the National Reform Agenda. It is clear that increased resourcing will be required to meet the increased demand for higher level skills and to provide appropriate training opportunities for unqualified adults.

It is also clear that even with current policy settings the Community Education sector will play an important role in achieving the outcomes of the Reform Agenda.

The key question becomes how will this contribution be positioned and coordinated by governments?

Community Education has a demonstrated VET track record and presents a compelling case for an enhanced role in the new arrangements. In addition to infrastructure that is funded from multiple sources the sector offers:

- A national distribution network of 1200 providers with optimal community coverage, particularly in rural communities
- Reach with segments of the adult population that do not currently use the formal training system
- Increased market competition that provides greater choice for individuals and business
- Value for money

The engagement functions that Community Education can offer are a vital component of VET reform, and one which the sector is optimally placed to perform.

Governments can actively support and position Community Education by adopting the framework outlined in this document and developing a joint Policy on Community Education.

Specific program initiatives can then be designed to achieve the goals of the reform Agenda.



The Importance of Health Education

Dr Gillian Stillfried

The education of individuals and communities about health issues is important to control the spread of disease, aid in the early diagnosis of health issues and so that one can maintain overall good health and wellbeing. Health education should be the responsibility of the individual and the community on a lifelong basis. It should not just be delivered by government and non-government organisations in response to a health crisis.

Since the time of Hippocrates, the 'Father of Medicine', decisions on health have been made based on knowledge and experience. Yet history has only relatively recently seen the responsibility for decision making regarding an individual's health shift solely from the medical or health practitioner to include the individual himself or herself.

Health education is most often utilised by health organisations to inform the population about disease symptoms and to control the spread of disease. Early recognition of the signs and symptoms of disease, followed by a subsequent trip to a medical practitioner can result in early diagnosis, which in turn often leads to increased positive outcomes for the patient. Early recognition of disease symptoms can also lead to a reduction in the spread of communicable diseases. How many of us were hauled out of school or hauled our children out of school when we first noticed the tell-tale spots of the Chicken Pox?

Without realising it, you have probably already been exposed to several health education programs. You see a rash on a child's legs and think, 'Could it be meningococcal?' or you're at an airport or on a plane, hear coughing and the dreaded word 'SARS' leaps to mind. The result of national awareness campaigns about diseases such as these is a population who is able to spot the early signs and symptoms of potentially life-threatening diseases and is armed with knowledge to prevent future health problems. Such national campaigns tend to occur in response to potential disease outbreaks or epidemics but health education encompasses more than this.

Knowledge about the factors affecting one's health and wellbeing empowers individuals and communities to do a number of things:

- i) maintain good health
- ii) recognise the signs of ill-health
- iii) make informed decisions with medical practitioners about the future of their health and
- iv) alleviate concerns and fears about health conditions.

The last point is particularly important as mental health issues become increasingly recognised. For example, although one in five Australians experience a mental health problem each year, there remains a culture of fear about mental health issues. This is largely due to either a lack of understanding or plain misinformation.

State, territory and national bodies are now focussing on mental health as an important area of health promotion but it may be sometime before they can change this culture of apprehension.

Equally with the realisation that Australia is facing an obesity epidemic¹, the importance of health education which is not simply focussed on disease but also on the maintenance of good health, is now being recognised.

We should all systematically engage in health education at both the individual and community level from childhood in order to maintain a satisfactory (or hopefully better!) standard of living and longevity.

Despite the obvious benefits of health education and its ability to increase the general wellbeing of individuals and communities, many barriers to health education still exist. Geographic isolation, cultural and language differences are but a few of these.

The pre-conception that health education is complicated because it incorporates much medical terminology is another. However, this need not necessarily be the case - health education does not need to be in the shape of formally structured information delivered by experts. One example of non-formal health education is the learning circle.

Although a relatively new concept in Australia (with the exception of their use by Indigenous communities), learning circles have been used with great success in other countries such as Sweden who, for over 100 years, have used them to inform and educate their population.

'Learning circles' or 'study circles' by their very nature are dynamic, flexible and inclusive; they are designed to be informative, enjoyable and non-intimidating. The circles allow

“Despite the obvious benefits of health education and its ability to increase the general wellbeing of individuals and communities, many barriers to health education still exist.”

peers to discuss issues at their own pace by drawing on each other’s knowledge through free discussion. While traditionally made up of groups of between five to fifteen people in a face-to-face session, the premise of learning circles can be extended to include remote communities by the use of e-learning platforms and e-forums.

In health education, learning circles have the potential to allow individuals and communities of all socio-economic backgrounds to study health related issues in a relaxed and informal manner at their own pace. Learning circles are one way to empower individuals to take control of their health by increasing their understanding of health issues.

Another benefit of the use of learning circles for health education is that they need not be in response to a national or community health crisis. They are also inexpensive and may be convened in response to requests by an individual or the community. In these cases, a facilitator such as a medical practitioner or health professional, may be invited to inform and guide proceedings.

One such successful learning circle on cervical cancer and the Pap test (Bodies Matter) was run by Adult Learning Australia and the New South Wales Cervical Cancer Screening Program.

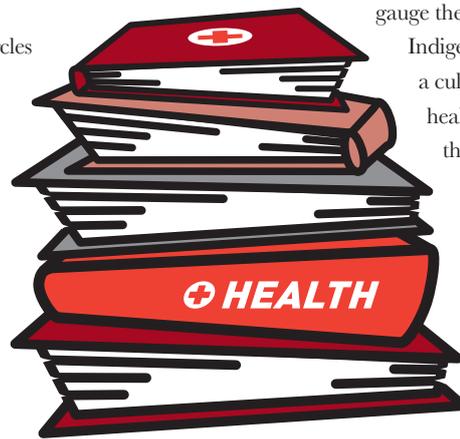
Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable and curable cancers if detected early by a Pap test – up to 90% of the most common form of cervical cancer can be prevented if changes are detected early². Yet 22% of women over the age of 75 have not heard of this test. Furthermore, women who do not speak English

at home are 20% less likely to have heard of the Pap test and are 23% less likely to have had one than women who do speak English at home.

It would seem that national awareness campaigns still leave education gaps; gaps that learning circles can bridge - the Pap test learning circle increased the level of knowledge of cervical screening in 66.5% of participants³.

Learning circles may also be used by health professionals and policy makers to inform decisions on health promotion initiatives based on what communities need and what the community’s current perceptions are. One such focus group was used to gauge the oral health perceptions of rural-dwelling Indigenous Australians. The aim was to develop a culturally appropriate, community-owned oral health promotion initiative. The results indicated that health promotion initiatives may be more successful if the perceptions of the anticipated audience are considered⁴.

Health education is an important part of creating healthy communities. It achieves this by empowering individuals to make informed choices. No form of education should be overlooked in achieving this aim.



For further information on the issues addressed in this article, visit:

HealthInsite

www.healthinsite.gov.au

Mental Health Association

www.mentalhealth.asn.au

Australian Study Circles Association

<http://studycirclesaustralia.blogspot.com/>

¹ Obesity a National Epidemic. Australian Health Ministers’ Conference - Joint Communiqué. 28 November 2003.

² Australian Social Trends, 2000. Australian Bureau of Statistics report no. 4102.0

³ Bodies Matter: The Pap Test Kit, Evaluation Report. NSW Cervical Screening Program.

⁴ Jamieson LM, Parker EJ and Richards L. (2007) Using qualitative methodology to inform an Indigenous-owned oral health promotion initiative in Australia. Health Promot. Int. Dec 3 [Epub ahead of print].

ALA has been fortunate to utilise the services of Gillian since she completed her PhD researching the cell biology of breast cancer progression in late 2007. Her general expertise, knowledge and willingness to take on any task have made her an invaluable member of our small team over the past months.

Who's New at ALA?



...on the Staff

Julia Gane

Julia has extensive experience in many aspects of education and learning. She holds a Bachelor of Education from Canberra University and a Diploma of Education in Literacy from Charles Sturt University.

She taught at schools in the ACT and NSW for over 20 years and during that time introduced Learning Journeys to many schools as well as being a NSW/ACT Regional Coordinator for the Murray-Darling Basin Commission's annual school environmental project 'Special Forever'.

Julia joined the Health Insurance Commission (now Medicare Australia) in 2002 and following a stint as a national Project Coordinator, moved to the Learning and Development section where she developed and delivered leadership and capability development programs.

In 2005 she took on the role of Manager of Corporate Learning Programs incorporating both National Office and State programs. During this time she developed a keen interest in the field of Positive Psychology and developed and delivered introductory programs to over 300 staff.

Julia has also recently been accredited as an administrator of MBTI and as a civil celebrant.

Her understanding of adult learning issues and the networks of adult training providers she has developed will enhance the contribution she is able to make to ALA and she is excited and optimistic about the challenges ahead.

...on the Board

Mark Brophy

Putting into practice the ideas that embrace adult education principles, such as 'lifelong learning', multi-skilling and maintaining one's skills, can sometimes be a challenge in today's demanding working environment; however, often exciting opportunities arise and these principles confirm the decision to test ourselves.

I have previously worked as a TESOL teacher in Australia, Thailand and China. Presently, I am taking a short break from my employment at the Victorian Government Office of Training and Tertiary Education and my ongoing efforts in establishing the Australian Study Circles Association with Adult Learning Australia, and have revisited my TESOL 'trade'. I am currently working on an innovative professional development program for the Incheon Ministry of Education in South Korea.

I've been in South Korea for three months, lecturing in a post graduate pilot program for existing Korean high school teachers of English at the Incheon Lifelong Learning Centre. This particular program is aimed at upskilling the Korean English teacher workforce in the area of TESOL.

According to a United Nations study, South Korea has the most effective education system in the world, with Japan in second place and the USA and Germany near the bottom. The size and scope of courses and programs available at the Lifelong Learning Centre is testament to the South Korean commitment to embedding lifelong learning for its people.

This program has helped me learn about South Korea and maintain my skills and interests in the area of TESOL practice. The teachers themselves are very experienced and very skilled high school teachers of English. Many have been teaching for over ten years. They are all post graduate, several with Master's Degrees and a few with Doctorates – some are actually using study circles in their colleges! Where they lack however, is in grasping and applying underlying TESOL pedagogical principles.

South Korea is one of the world's most technologically and scientifically advanced countries in the world. It is the only country in the world with nationwide 100 Mbit broadband internet access and full HDTV broadcasting. It is the most 'wired' nation world-wide: more than 90 per cent of all homes are connected to high speed broadband internet. It is a global leader in electronics, computers, digital access, semiconductor devices, mobile phones and high tech gadgets. It is the world's fifth largest automobile manufacturer, third largest steel producer and the largest shipbuilder.

The port here in Incheon exports 30,000 Hyundai cars a day to the USA.



“Margaret has over 30 years experience and a very diverse and extensive background in the training and development discipline for adults (and children).”

Margaret Kling

This particular program is an integral component of an enormous South Korean Government initiative in the Incheon area to establish the largest logistics hub in Northeast Asia.

Several Free Economic Zones have been established in Incheon, including the Incheon International Airport, which links 41 countries, 133 cities and is ranked third in the world for cargo delivery. There are infrastructure projects throughout the city, including a massive bridge out to sea, over 12 kilometres long, high enough for container ships to pass under, linking the airport to the downtown area. The construction of the second tallest building in the world will be 151 stories at a height of 610 metres.

A vital aspect of South Korean policy to become a major player in globalisation includes a commitment to ensuring its people increase their English proficiency. This is where the Incheon Ministry of Education pilot program has become an integral component of Federal policy.

Upon my return to Australia, I will continue my efforts in establishing the Australian Study Circle Association and in forwarding all aspects of adult learning through my Board involvement with ALA.

Margaret Kling

Margaret is Managing Director of Carson Australasia Pty Ltd, a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) in the centre of Brisbane city. Carson Australasia delivers the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104) and the Diploma of Business plus several other non-accredited business and IT related courses. Margaret is the principal trainer for the Certificate IV and business courses.

Margaret has over 30 years experience and a very diverse and extensive background in the training and development discipline for adults (and children). Her experience includes roles such as Lead Lecturer, Tutor, Training Coordinator, Supervisor IT Help Desk, Senior Accounts Manager, TAFE Teacher, Music Teacher (primary school and private piano), Squad trainer (swimming) and many more!

Since 2004 Margaret has been an adjunct lecturer with Central Queensland University (Brisbane International Campus) I

ecturing in a range of Human Resource Management, Applied Business Statistics and Operations Management subjects to both undergraduate and post-graduate students. Margaret has also tutored for Griffith University in Statistics. She has designed, written and delivered training programs for both government and private organisations, TAFE colleges and Universities in a variety of fields including IT, Call Centre operation, Emotional Intelligence, Leadership and Legal Administration.

Prior to managing Carson Australasia, Margaret's career included management, leadership and development roles and she has owned and operated several businesses including a Newsagency, IT Software Company and Training Consultancy. Her qualifications include a Bachelor of Science (Psychology), a Master of Training and Development (workplace training), both the Diploma and Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and Front Line Management qualifications. Margaret also has a Diploma in Corporate Governance and was recognised as an Accredited Practitioner in Adult Training and Development with the Australian Institute of Training & Development (AITD) in June 2007. In November Margaret was appointed as a divisional council member for the AITD (Qld/NT chapter) as Professional Development Coordinator. Margaret has published several articles in Adult Learning and recently published with AITD journal (December issue) on the Skill Sets devised for the TAA04 Training Package. Margaret often presents papers and workshops for other VET organisations across Australia as an advisor for the Certificate in Training and Assessment plus other topics such as; Presentation Skills, Training and Development and Adult Learning.

Margaret has also consulted as a workplace trainer and assessor for many organisations throughout Queensland in accredited courses such as; Business Administration, Business Development, Frontline Management and Business Management. She has written and delivered customised courses for many organisations such as Queensland Police, Queensland Disability Services and Queensland Health.

Margaret is currently studying toward her PhD researching adult learning, adult development and memory and is hoping to contribute greatly to the existing research data in Adult Learning.

Achieving *inclusive adult education and training practice*

Dr Kaye Bowman

This occasional paper is based on an opening keynote presented at the 2007 Inclusive e-Learning National Showcase in Melbourne on 4 December 2007 as part of the Australian Flexible Learning Framework and is being published as an occasional paper by ALA.

The powerpoint presentation is available from www.flexiblelearning.net.au or www.kayebowman@bigpond.com.

Recently, I incorporated the findings of recent research reports into a useable client engagement operational framework which would display inclusive adult education and training practice.

Initially I discussed the concept – ‘Inclusive adult education and training practice’. The term “inclusive” is often used to reflect the desire of achieving an individual- client-centred approach to adult education and training.

I used an environmental ecosystem as a metaphor for the ecosystem perspective as this encourages providers to think about their role in the larger education and training system and the wider local community.

The ecosystem concept focuses on the functioning of interdependent groupings of things reliant on each other. One example of this is that in a pond if one process is faulty the entire ecosystem (both above and below the pond) suffers, until the necessary ecological adjustments are made.

In an operational framework for inclusive adult learning practice I suggest seven interdependent grouping of labels or “dimensions” be included. These seven dimensions are generic forms of the findings of Miller (2005) and variously focus on the emotional, social, educational, technical, managerial, stakeholder relations and financial aspects of client engagement in learning.

The term “inclusive” has become popular to reflect the desired, individual client-centred approach to adult education and training, as previously stated.

“Diversity management” is another popular term, currently preferred to the traditional term of equity.

The equity group approach has its strengths, and its limitations. It assumes uniformity within the group although often this is not the case. People with a disability for example are clearly not a uniform group. Different types of disability - visual, hearing, physical and intellectual - will all affect the type of learning support required.

To manage client diversity is to be capable of responding to everyone’s and any one adult’s learning needs. It is to be inclusive. However, we need to be sure that the diversity management or inclusive approach does not take away from the idea of disadvantage. Those people who most need to be included are those people who most require extra support because they are often so disadvantaged in relation to learning.

By inclusive practice I mean, as one TAFE teacher put to researchers Figgis et al (2007):

It’s when the people who need to be included don’t notice it. Whatever way you do it.

Taking an ecological perspective is useful in identifying all of the key interdependent factors that must be considered if individuals are to be successfully engaged in adult education and training. It is not a new perspective to view the adult vocational education and training sector. A Skills Ecosystem demonstration project was nationally funded and managed by New South Wales. It is my understanding that this has informed the Australian Government’s Regional Skills Shortages Strategies program.

The Skills Ecosystem project aimed to move participants beyond traditional narrow training supply approaches. Participants were encouraged to develop desirable “skills” or “workforce” ecosystems by looking at the relationships between business performance and skills, knowledge and ways of working and positioning training interventions alongside interventions in employment relations, the design and organisation of work (Windsor, 2006 and Buchanan, 2006).

I also gained inspiration from Figgis et al (2007) who found and used the metaphorical use of the language of ecology a practical tool to stimulate insightful thinking among TAFE personnel as to the factors that aid successful equity initiatives, and effectively join bottom up with top down organisational initiatives.

It seemed novel to apply the ecological perspective to the individual client so I integrated the seven interrelated factors or dimensions that would need to be considered and ticked off in relation to every learner.

It did seem that if all seven dimensions were not covered, you would be less likely to achieve good outcomes, particularly for those who required extra support because they were already disadvantaged in relation to learning.

In relation to the seven dimensions, Miller undertook a systematic review of all research available on Indigenous Australians in adult education. It was a highly scientific exercise and out of it were identified the major recurring seven factors. From these, Miller concluded education and training programs for Indigenous Australians must be 'centred' to be effective.

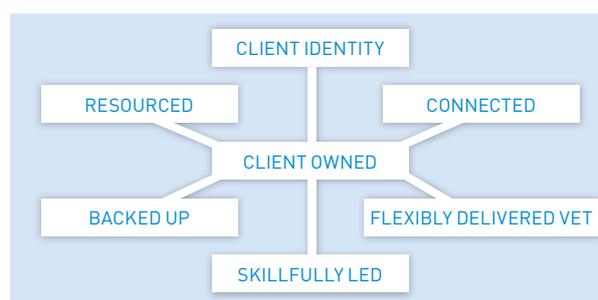
Miller identifies seven factors which I have labeled with generic, monosyllabic and hopefully terms to make them memorable. They are:

- Community involvement and ownership
– CLIENT OWNED
- Indigenous identities, cultures, knowledge and values
– CLIENT IDENTITY
- Working in true partnerships – CONNECTED
- Flexibility in program design, content – ADAPTABLE
- Quality staff and committed advocacy
– SKILFULLY LED
- Extensive student support services – BACKED-UP
- Appropriate funding that allows for sustainability
– RESOURCED

The seven factors have been tested and found workable, both as a framework for reporting all other Indigenous VET research (see O'Callaghan, 2005) and as an evaluation framework for specific projects. The Ithaca Group (Professor Rod McDonald et al) tested them to evaluate a pilot Indigenous VET - learning engagement program and found them valuable.

Examination of other "equity in education" research shows the same or very similar success identifiers are often in evidence, perhaps with different labels, but which are essentially the same on further examination.

A client engagement operational framework to achieve inclusive adult education and training practice.



What follows is a brief overview of each element.

1. Client-owned

The central factor in achieving positive learning outcomes is that the learning is client owned. The individual client must be engaged and involved in the learning process.

Forcing adults to learn rarely, if ever, works. Adults need to be motivated; their learning must be in accord with their aspirations and needs. Learning must be relevant with benefits that are clear.

This may mean that some learners must first be (re)-engaged in informal learning. It may be advisable to respond to the learner's first articulated need. A request such as "I want to learn the email to keep in touch with family"- before encouraging the undertaking of more structured learning, be it either of a non formal unaccredited nature or an accredited, formal learning with qualifications related outcomes.

2. Client identity

Miller, 2004 found that the aspirations and personal outcomes of adult Indigenous Australians are most critical in their approach to education and training.

She mentions enhanced self-confidence and self-esteem, improved communication skills and feelings of being respected by others within the community as being important to students. She refers to these outcomes as the enabling factors that allow individuals to achieve even more, and other positive, outcomes.

Psycho-social outcomes - confidence, self-esteem, and the aspiration to engage in learning – are also seen as necessary stepping stones towards confident participation in adult learning. This common and recurring theme is also seen in wider “equity in education” research literature (Bowman, 2007).

This does not mean that more, and higher, levels of learning do not further develop an adult’s concept of self. It is to say that the building of (self) identity capital is a critical milestone outcome for those in the process of re-engaging with learning.

To build identity capital the client needs learning programs and environments that reflect their cultures and values. To give a few, albeit simplistic, examples:

- Indigenous Australians value “both ways” learning, ie cross cultural approaches.
- People with a Disability value a positive cap-ability/ can-do ability approach.
- Older people have rich life and work experiences which they want acknowledged and built on in a learning program.
- Younger adults, as digital natives, would need to be taken into account.

It must be remembered that some adults may require several years of ‘study’ to develop positive attitudes about themselves as learners or move up the learning continuum. It may be a slow process to move from being engaged in learning and achieving self identity capital building (or the ‘soft’, psychosocial outcomes and related generic skills) to undertaking more directed learning for work and/or community outcomes purposes, and thus achieving positive health and wellbeing outcomes (Bowman, 2007).

3. Connected

Strong connections between training providers and community, industry and government organizations remain a critical aspect in achieving successful client engagement in learning and sustainable outcomes that are beyond the life of the initial learning program.

Developing partnerships with stakeholders is one way of making contact with specific client markets and ensuring education delivery programs are provided in the most effective and appropriate way for all involved parties. Partnerships often are transforming. They produce ‘hybrids’ with neither side operating as it had previously.

“True” partnerships are based on respect and trust, agreed goals and collective action.

One interesting finding (Figgis et al, 2007) is that community-initiated equity developments stimulated more changes within TAFE institutes than did government pilot programs.

It is also interesting that relationships ecosystem mapping of organisation connections in the community is a useful exercise (Golding, 2002).

4. Adaptable

Flexible course design, content and delivery are required as a central focus for adult learning providers. Many positive changes have been occurring in this area.

The use of e-learning as a part of this is a more recent phenomenon. It would appear that is not yet fully embedded into practice but it is clear that technology is enabling more flexible, personal and social learning. New technologies are enabling learning ‘anywhere/anytime’ to be a realistic objective while, through technology, more individualised approaches to learning are being progressed.

Equally the social connection opportunities technology affords allows for learner learning circles to be formed – on line “in person” hence peer learning enhances the generation of new knowledge, and learning outcomes.

5. Skilfully led

There is clear evidence that program effectiveness is directly affected by the commitment, expertise, understanding and sensitivity of teachers, tutors, support staff and administrators.

Five common ingredients of successful learning practitioners have been identified and discussed by the Ithaca group (2005). They are knowledgeable, adaptive, connected, supportive and tenacious.

Management is an issue. Managers need to support the efforts of their frontline teachers. The ‘client focused, equity inclusive’ approach needs to permeate the entire organisations to ensure enduring success (Figgis et al, 2007).

6. Backed up

Appropriate support services must be in place to support the learner’s progression, completion and achievement of desired post-completion outcomes. This is particularly important in relation to disadvantaged learners as it is here that extra effort will most often be required.

Three types of support need to be present:

- Educational support – research concludes that educational support services, such as tutoring and literacy support, are essential for ‘at risk’ learners to start and stay in training with positive outcomes. Hence a ‘practitioner team’ approach might be required.

- Personal support - students need access to social and cultural support or pastoral care. Partnerships with various human services organisations can provide this access.
- Economic support - students need financial support to enable the undertaking of a learning program. They benefit from employment advocacy services and connections with employment agencies and individual enterprises if they are to achieve desirable job outcomes.

Many learners have these factors “covered” as part of their life circumstances but, for equity clients in particular, these supports are often missing and so need to be incorporated as part of the learning experience through partnering with the required service agencies. Here too individuals must become adept at boundary-crossing - connecting with many groups within and beyond the education training enterprise.

One example of where this works is the National Disability Coordination Officers Programme which connect adults into education and training, and provides social and economic support services through developing true partnerships.

7. Resourced

More than seed funding is needed to achieve inclusiveness although to date this has been the most common approach to involving those who are disadvantaged in learning yet many equity programs remain at this stage. They fail to thrive, indeed grow, because current funding methods place too much emphasis on starting initiatives and little, or none, on developing and scaling-up those that show promise.

Funding mechanisms must be re-examined to stimulate innovative equity practice (Figgis et al 2007).

One commonly raised issue is the lack of adequate funds to fully support disadvantaged learners although it appears some positive weighting of funding formulas in relation to equity clients is now more common.

In conclusion, the ecological model is an appropriate comparison with adult learning organisations as the latter must be strategic partners in all aspects of local social and economic development.

An effective adult learning ecosystem is one in which the learning matches each individual’s interests, strengths and needs. The learning must contain the right level of challenge, be provided flexibly and exhibit the necessary support and encouragement determined by socio-economic circumstances.

An effective adult learning ecosystem involves a collaborative partnership model with the wider community.

“Funding mechanisms must be re-examined to stimulate innovative equity practice.”

Hopefully this model is a practical step forward in assisting adult educators to work effectively with all clients. I would like to think I have left you with a practical tool, a useable client engagement operational framework, to achieve inclusive adult education and training practice.

There does remain a need for more Australians to realise their potential by entering the workforce, enhancing their work skills and/or staying engaged with the workforce.

Just remember: ecosystems are organic, they change over time. Even badly damaged or destroyed ones can be restored; equally, new ones may be created instead.

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Wise move



WEST AUSTRALIAN TELECENTRES

Bringing information, technology and training to rural communities.

Over 100 community owned and managed Telecentres have been established statewide to deliver much needed access to services, training, education and up to date communication facilities for rural and isolated communities. Boyup Brook Telecentre is one of a number of Telecentre's focusing on Adult Learning as a key component of their service delivery.

Isolation in country towns can have a significant impact on available learning opportunities. This is where a local Telecentre can help. For over 12 years the Boyup Brook Telecentre has been leading the way in innovative learning programs for adult learners. A tailor made *Learning for Life Program* initially provided 20 lifestyle and business courses for participants. The courses on offer were a direct response to the needs of the local community.

A wide variety of courses were offered enabling adult learners to not only actively participate but increase their employment opportunities. This program also demonstrated a long standing relationship with the local farming community. A series of training courses have assisted in preparing adult learners for the challenges of the future.

Courses such as the *Bushfire Awareness Training for Women* were a direct response to the local community's needs as there had been a reduction in the volunteer base and number of males available due to off farm work. The training prepared women for the ever present dangers of bushfires which are a real threat to the area in the dry months.

The Boyup Brook Telecentre also acknowledged a change in the local farming community as public liability and OH&S issues had recently highlighted the importance of knowing the correct procedures for equipment and machinery. By offering *Backhoe and Front End Loader Operator Training* many adult learners now have additional employment opportunities on a seasonal basis. Local businesses also used the course to train forklift operators in the general fundamentals of loader operation.

The interest from local business in the Learning for Life Program showed real potential for the longevity of the program and how beneficial it would prove for the community.

Since the implementation of the GST and changes in tax many businesses required increased book keeping and accounting. This change was noticed and a partnership was formed with a local accounting business to assist their clients to undertake a MYOB computer training course. The MYOB and Quickbooks Accounting Training showed clients how to produce BAS statements and improve their tax records. The benefits speak for themselves as the firm noted they received fewer queries in relation to accounting software and there was a quicker turn around of client returns.

Partnerships have also been established with a number of organizations to facilitate training. These include very successful training incentive voucher programs with the Warren Blackwood Business Enterprise Centre (BEC) and training partnerships with the South West Regional College of TAFE and Farm Bis who all contribute to training included in the Learning for Life Program.

A major issue that the Telecentre felt needed to be addressed was the increasing dependence on technology and the challenges faced without the appropriate assistance and help. This issue was addressed through the numerous IT courses available through the Telecentre and Boyup Brook Computer Club, which evolved from the successful Tele-Seniors program run in 2001. The digital camera course offered was so popular that at one point in time there were three courses running. This shows the genuine level of interest in the community.

Manager Lynda Coote is proud of her committed team and optimistic about the future of the Learning for Life Program. "The Boyup Brook Telecentre is at the forefront of the delivery of community education programs within our region. We are committed to working with the community and providing courses and training which are relevant and interesting".

The Telecentre provides a hub for the Boyup Brook community and continually strives to make and enhance strong ties with people and business. The Telecentre employ local staff and Ms Coote sees this as a way of giving back to a community that has supported them and made the Boyup Brook Telecentre one of the most successful of its kind. "We are proud to employ our staff from the local community and even offer traineeships as part of our long term community support strategy".

Adult Learning within Boyup Brook is alive and well and continues to grow as the Telecentre encourages and supports the local community to meet their educational and training needs.



Abuse of Elderly People It's not OK

**Marilyn Crabtree, Chief Executive Officer
Aged Rights Advocacy Service, South Australia**

Transcript of broadcast in Learning Works on Monday 4 February 2008

TONY RYAN

Welcome to Learning Works – I'm Tony Ryan. In recent times, there has been a growing community awareness of the problems in our society around the physical and even sexual abuse of children. But there is another group of people around Australia who experience abuse – and it's often not spoken about at all.

In South Australia, as in most Australian states, steps are being taken to raise community awareness of the extent of the abuse of elderly people, and to develop community education strategies.

Our Learning Works commentary this week is presented by the Chief Executive Officer of the Aged Rights Advocacy Service in South Australia, Marilyn Crabtree.

MARILYN CRABTREE

In South Australia recently there have been a number of exciting developments in relation to the prevention of abuse of older people. This is an area of great interest to me as CEO of the Aged Rights Advocacy Service. We work for the rights of older people in the community and in residential care.

Our Abuse Prevention Program has been running for 10 years and hears many stories of older people being abused by adult children, grand children, other family members or friends, with the most reported abusers being adult sons and daughters.

So what is elder abuse? The abuse can take many forms including physical and verbal threats, financial or psychological abuse and neglect. It can be very subtle or extreme.

Financial abuse is the most commonly reported and this is often accompanied by psychological abuse. For example a gentleman said his son had his Power of Attorney and was taking extra money from his bank account. Whenever he asked his son about his account, the son became very angry and told him not to interfere.

Another scenario is where the son or daughter tells their parent to sign the cheque or they will not be allowed to see their grandchildren. And where an older person lends money to their

family they do this on the basis of trust and often do not put anything in writing, which can be a problem down the track when the relationship sours.

They may find possessions are disappearing or they are being pressured to change their will or to make a Power of Attorney. The one common denominator is that the result is detrimental to the older person.

We receive over 2500 requests each year for information or advocacy support about rights, with 800 of those about vulnerable older people being abused by family or friends. This is what I would like to concentrate on today, as abuse is now acknowledged as a growing issue that can affect up to 5% of people over the age of 65.

The South Australian State Government has recently released its plan for the prevention of abuse of older people. It incorporates a number of strategies including raising awareness so that people know what abuse looks like, and know the safeguards they can put in place to minimise their risk of abuse. It also includes strengthening support systems which are very important for people who want to stop the abuse that is happening to them.

The strong message from this plan and those who work in this area is that older people are entitled to quality of life, and to continue to make decisions and be in control of their own lives. Some older people may not have the capacity to make their wishes known and special interventions are required to protect their interests such as the Public Advocate. Zero tolerance of abuse must be our goal. We must all speak out against the exploitation of vulnerable older people.

Our agency has been selected to implement the initial stages of the State Government plan in the next six months and we will work hard to start the process of raising awareness across South Australia.

I would like to share some of the things we have learned. Abuse does affect both men and women. It can happen to anyone regardless of their level of education, across all economic backgrounds rich and poor, and all ethnic groups. It flourishes in secrecy so one of the best things people can do is to tell someone; people think family business is private business but we all have a right to be safe. We need to recognise that abuse is a serious matter, and sometimes it is a criminal offence.



“They may find possessions are disappearing or they are being pressured to change their will or to make a Power of Attorney.”

It can be very hard to speak up because people don't want to admit there is a problem or are ashamed it's happening to them, and think no-one will believe them. They may be worried about retaliation or have tried to do something before but it did not work. What people tell us is that they do not want to get their family member into trouble but they do want the abuse to stop.

One of the major reasons is they do not know their rights or that assistance is available. We have many examples where older people have got control over their affairs again and have been able to retain their relationship with their family. So the message is speak up. Abuse is not ok and we should not tolerate it in our society.

TONY RYAN

Our Learning Works commentary this week was prepared and presented by Marilyn Crabtree, Chief Executive Officer of the Aged Rights Advocacy Service Inc in South Australia. Listeners can contact the Aged Rights Advocacy Service on Adelaide on 08 8232 5377. Website is www.sa.agedrights.asn.au For Learning Works at PBA FM in Adelaide, I'm Tony Ryan.

Online Resources

Transcript of Marilyn Crabtree's commentary
www.learningworksradio.com/factsheets/factsheet_2008_02_04elderlyabuse.pdf

Audiofile (mp3) of Marilyn Crabtree's commentary
www.learningworksradio.com



**Marilyn Crabtree, Chief Executive Officer
Aged Rights Advocacy Service, South Australia**



**Tony Ryan, Presenter
Learning Works Radio, PBA FM**





An AM for Roger

Dr Roger Morris, the long-time National Secretary of Adult Learning Australia, has been appointed as a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia for services to the adult, continuing and community education sector through practitioner development, research and professional leadership

Dr Roger Morris was, until he retired from paid work in 2005, an Associate Professor in Adult Education at the University of Technology, Sydney. Over the more than thirty years that he worked in higher education he filled a number of significant academic administrative roles including: Director of External and Continuing Education; Academic Planning Officer; Director, Academic Planning and Services; Assistant Dean; Faculty Coordinator of Research and Alternate Dean. Additionally, he was Acting Head of Department, Head of School and Dean on a number of occasions.

In recent years, Roger's teaching responsibilities were largely in the area of the social and historical foundations of adult education. His major research interest is in the history of Australian adult education: especially in relation to workers' education and the role of mechanics' institutes and schools of arts. He also maintains an interest in comparative and international adult education and in the continuing professional development of adult educators. Roger retains an ongoing relationship with the University as an Honorary Associate.

Roger has been an elected Member of the National Board of Adult Learning Australia (ALA) since 1987. He was the President of the Association 1996-1998 and for most of the balance of his time on the Board he has been the National Secretary. As part of his leadership role in ALA, Roger has been:

- A delegate representing the International Council of Adult Education (ICAE) at the 32nd World Assembly of the World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP) Melbourne August 1988
- A member of the official Australian delegation invited to Germany by the DVV (German Adult Education Association) to participate in the Public Day of Adult Education and to study the provision of adult education across the reunified Germany, November 1991
- A delegate to, and invited speaker at, the Second General Assembly of the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education Darwin December 1996

- An invited member of the Selection Committee for the C O Houle Award for Outstanding Work in the Literature of Adult Education 1996
- Chair of the National Australian Advisory Committee for Adult Learners' Week 1996-7
- A delegate to the Fifth UNESCO World Conference on Adult Education Hamburg Germany 1997
- The Australian representative at the World Congress of the International Council of Adult Education Ochos Rios Jamaica September 2001
- A member of the NSW Advisory Committee for Adult Learners' Week (ALW) and member of the selection panel for the ALW Awards every year from 1995 to the present

He has been a Member of the Board of Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts since the early 1990s; a Vice President since the late 1990s; and is currently the President. He is also the President of the NSW Association of Mechanics Institutes and Schools Of Arts (AMISA). He has been a Member of the Council of the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), Sydney and he is the President of the Council of the Sydney Community College. Active in a range of other community-based organisations, his current positions include: Board member and Vice President, NSW Council on the Ageing (COTA-NSW) and Member, Board of Governors, Meals on Wheels, NSW.

Roger was a Member of the NSW TAFE Accreditation Council, nominated by the NSW Vice-Chancellors Committee, from the foundation of Council in 1993 until his retirement in 2005.

An active member of the NSW Teachers' Federation since 1962, Roger has been honoured for his service to his union on a number of occasions: Life Member, Canterbury-Bankstown Teachers' Association, 1974; Life Member, the Lecturers' Association, 1993; and Life Member, NSW Teachers' Federation, 1995. Following the transfer of coverage for university teachers from the Lecturers' Association (NSWTF) to the National Tertiary Education Union, Roger has held elected positions within his new union. On his retirement he was admitted to Life Membership of the NTEU by resolution of the union's Federal Council, October 2005.

In October 2006, at a ceremony held in Bamberg Germany, Roger was inducted into the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame. He is the first Australian to be so honoured.

Psychology of choosing TAFE is a winner for Karyn

Studying for a diploma at TAFE has given a first-year psychology honours student university credits, industry experience, saved her money and given her confidence to pursue her dream.

Karyn Wilkie, from Toowoomba, said after gaining a Diploma of Community Services through Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE last year, she received nine credits for the 24-unit Bachelor of Science (Psychology) at the University of Southern Queensland (USC).

“When you consider that’s one-third of your degree that doesn’t attract HECS (Higher Education Contribution Scheme), it’s a significant saving,” Miss Wilkie said.

“I have told many of my fellow students they should go to TAFE because of the industry experience you get through the community services course,” she said.

“Through the training, we considered practical aspects of counselling, case management welfare and the community development dimensions of working with clients of all ages — great preparation for real-life situations.”

When Miss Wilkie began the two year, full-time TAFE course in 2003, she said she wanted a career that would raise her skills to attract quality jobs but didn’t expect to become so engaged and end up a straight-A student.

“When I actively looked at TAFE for training possibilities, I knew that my body couldn’t stand up to the hard manual work I had been doing in the past and looking at what the Community Services area offered, I began to think I could help people who had been through hard times similar to myself,” she said.

“There was a time when I personally did it tough and having walked the walk, I think helps me relate to people and empathise with their challenges.

“There are a lot of people out there who are just one person away from getting on the right path and if I can help even just one person, that’s enough.”

Miss Wilkie said her time at TAFE re-introduced her to study, updated researching techniques and computer skills and boosted her ability to handle university workloads and deadlines.

“At the end of full-time training at TAFE and USQ my confidence levels are high and I know I have the ability to put my skills to good use in a community setting,” she said.

“I have the support of my wonderful daughters Kaitlyn and Jennifer and I am a grandmother to add to my portfolio of life skills.”



Karyn Wilkie is excited about the pathways a TAFE Diploma in Community Services has offered.

Having grown up at Tara, west of Dalby, Miss Wilkie has a good idea of the challenges geography has on many young people as well as those that arise from starting a family at a young age.

“While I was always interested in helping people and even did work experience with the Department of Family Services while I was at school, life kind of took over and I found myself needing to re-enter the workforce in my 30s,” she said.

“I knew that over the time since I’d left school I’d have to re-train and actively sought out TAFE courses with a community focus but I didn’t really consider becoming a psychologist then.

“TAFE gave me the confidence to pursue my dream.”

Understanding Money Pays Off

Getting the most from the Understanding Money Website



Understanding how money works is a lifelong skill.

Whether people are starting work, buying a new home, having kids, receiving a windfall or retiring, everyone needs to make decisions about money. The Understanding Money website www.understandingmoney.gov.au (see homepage below) contains easy to understand information to help people make better financial decisions at all stages of life.

As adult learning providers, you are in a great position to design learning to support effective financial decision making. The Understanding Money website has excellent ideas, resources and links that support educators in developing the financial literacy skills of everyone from primary school through to adult learners and those in or planning retirement.

The website features educators and trainers pages that explore resources and information for educators and trainers of all levels. It also contains articles and financial tools that are attractive to anyone wishing to increase their personal financial literacy skills.

Educators and Trainers Pages

- provide a list of quality teaching resources which are classified according to education level;
- provide information regarding professional development support;
- provide links to the education frameworks and guides for preparing courses and programmes;
- provide information on planning programmes for the workplace;
- showcase case studies of programmes that other people have run;
- provide links to programmes for Indigenous Australians; and
- offer the opportunity to join the Educators and Trainers Network.

Articles

- Put yourself in charge. This section allows the user to access articles on information relating to important topics such as saving, budgeting, controlling debt, investing and superannuation;
- Life happens! This section covers important financial situations that affect people at different times of their lives; and
- In the Spotlight. These articles provide easy to read information for consumers on topics that are in the news. Two recent examples are “Reverse Mortgages” and “Switching Home Loans”.

Financial Tools

- Budget Planner – By recording income and expenses on this downloadable planning tool users can see exactly where their money goes and what changes they need to make.
- Financial Health Check - This quick questionnaire has been designed to assist people to better understand their spending and saving habits. It asks a series of questions related to everyday money situations ranging from credit card debt, unexpected bills and car loans. Responses are scored out of 100. At the end of the survey, a link is provided to advice that may help people improve their financial situation.

The Financial Literacy Foundation’s contact for the Adult and Community Education sector is:

Robyn Quarmby, Financial Literacy Foundation
Phone: **02 6263 3621** | Facsimile: **02 6273 5465**
Email: robyn.quarmby@treasury.gov.au

Should you require any information, don’t hesitate to make contact.

AUSTCOVER joins with ALA

AUSTCOVER has unveiled an exclusive and comprehensive package of insurance benefits for members of Adult Learning Australia.

The package will provide ALA members and their families with discounted rates of insurance for those essential things – the family home, car and travel insurance. Also available in this specialised insurance package will be commercial insurance as well as income protection and superannuation.

ALA members will be able to access valuable financial advice as an essential part of this package of services.

The AUSTCOVER financial advisory service will complement the ‘Money 101’ service which Adult Learning Australia currently offers.



ALA New Members & Subscribers

Organisational Members

Appcon Pty Ltd
DOUBLE BAY NSW 2028

Department for Families & Communities
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Eastwood Community Centre
EASTWOOD SA 5063

George Street Neighbourhood Centre Association Inc.
STH MACKAY QLD 4740

Highlands Support Services Inc.
BALLARAT VIC 3353

Kerang Learning Centre
KERANG VIC 3579

Keysborough Learning Centre
KEYSBOROUGH VIC 3173

Mirrimbeena Aboriginal Education Group Inc.
ECHUCA VIC 3564

Nungalinya College
CASUARINA NT 0810

Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education
RESERVOIR VIC 3073

Randwick City Library Service
MAROUBRA NSW 2035

Renmark Paringa Community Centre
RENMARK SA 5341

Rio Tinto (Pilbara Iron)
DAMPIER WA 6713

TAFE NSW Riverina Institute – STEPS
WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

Tasmania Fire Service
HOBART TAS 7000

The Radiance Dance Project
NARRABUNDAH ACT 2604

Training & Tertiary Education
TUGGERANONG ACT 2901

West Stirling Neighbourhood House
DOUBLEVIEW WA 6029

Willson Training Centre
NEW TOWN TAS 7008

Winchelsea Community House
WINCHELSEA VIC 3241

Woodend Neighbourhood Centre
WOODEND VIC 3442

Individual Members

Angela Read
EAGLE FARM DC QLD 4009

Bob Le Febvre
FISHER ACT 2611

Catherine McGowan
INDIGO VALLEY VIC 3688

Debbie Jeanes
COROMANDEL VALLEY SA 5051

Dianne Meehan
GOLD COAST MC QLD 9726

Dr Mark Brophy
WILLIAMSTOWN VIC 3016

Elizabeth White
ALEXANDRIA NSW 2015

Helen Foley
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Katherine Lloyd
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Larissa Dann
DUFFY ACT 2611

Melissa Beeston-Nicholls
PANORAMA SA 5041

Melissa Gotting
TRINITY GARDENS SA 5068

Natalie Cassone
RUSE NSW 2560

Pokua Asomani
BEACONSFIELD WA 6162

Shirley Smith
FINNISS SA 5255

Shirley Verrall
BELGIAN GARDENS QLD 4810

Online Subscriber Members

Alyena Mohummadally
SUNSHINE VIC 3020

Queen's University
BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND

Prenax Inc.
NEW YORK, USA

Professional Members

Patricia Deering
SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC 3205

Calendar

United Nations Literacy Decade 2003–2012

United Nations Decade for
Sustainable Development 2005–2014
International Year of Languages 2008

COMING EVENTS

2 March 2008

Clean-Up Australia Day

Go to www.cleanup.com.au for details.

7 – 19 March 2008

*The Learning City: a Vehicle for Community
Transformation Jamaica Pegasus Hotel*

Kingston, Jamaica

Contact jacae@cwjamaica.com for information.

11 – 12 March

U3A Network – NSW Annual Conference - Warilla

6 – 13 April 2008

50 Years of NSW Seniors Week

Go to <http://www.nswseniorsweek.com.au> for details.

13 – 15 April 2008

*Imagination, Inspiration, Innovation, National Conference
of the Australian College of Educators*

Go to www.austcolled.com.au for details.

21 – 27 April 2008

Global Campaign for Education Action Week

Go to www.campaignforeducation.org for information.

May (or possibly October) 2008

Regional Conference preceding CONFINTEA

Asia-Pacific – South Korea

12 – 18 May 2008

National Volunteer Week 2008

“Volunteers change the world”

15 – 16 May 2008

2008 ACEVic Conference – “Building Communities”

Melbourne

16 – 19 June 2008

5th International Lifelong Learning Conference

Rydges Capricorn Resort, Yeppoon

4 – 6 July 2008

*ACE Aotearoa 2008 Manukau – Colour Our Language
– Encouraging and Celebrating the Diversity of ACE*

Auckland

9 – 11 July 2008

17th National Vocational Education and Training Research Conference (No Frills)

University of Tasmania Newham Campus, Launceston, TAS

13 – 17 July 2008

Access to Learning for Development:

The Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning,
London

27 – 28 August 2008

10th Australian Computer Conference for Seniors

Contact ascca@seniorcomputing.org for details.

1 – 8 September 2008

ADULT LEARNERS’ WEEK

4 – 6 September 2008

*BAICE Annual Conference 2008 – Internationalism in
Education: Culture, Context and Difference*

University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland

2 – 4 October 2008

ACAL Conference: Surfing Outside the Flags

Crown Plaza, Surfers Paradise

26 – 28 October 2008

*Connecting Faces, Places and Spaces Australian Learning
Communities Network (ALCN) National Conference*

Hyatt Hotel, Adelaide

30 October – 1 November 2008

ALA National Conference – Fremantle, WA

11 – 14 November 2008

AAACE 2008 Conference – Denver, Colorado

31 March – 2 April 2009

2009 World Conference for Sustainable Development

– “Moving into the Second Half of the UN Decade”

Bonn Germany

May 2009

CONFINTEA VI – Brazil

ALA Conference 2008

Remember Cairns 2007, this year we're off to Fremantle!

Hear more about the major theme

SOCIAL INCLUSION

By entering these dates and places in your diary

30 October – 1 November 2008

Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle WA