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Funding for ACE: where is it?

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University of Canberra. It is part of the assessment requirement
for the unit, "Information Retrieval M", a subject for the course,
Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Management.

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10.   Enclosure

- Resource folder as per resource list

- Floppy disk with URLs

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to document the process and present the results of a research project undertaken for the national association known as Adult Learning Australia Inc. The project was part of the assessment for the unit, *Information Retrieval M*, run by the Division of Communication and Education, at the University of Canberra. The client, Adult Learning Australia Inc. is the peak organisation for adult and community education providers and others interested in adult learning. The topic of the research was '*identification of sources about the funding for adult and community education'*.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, ACE (adult and community education) refers to the provision of those general adult education programs and activities which fall outside, but complement, the formal programs and qualification pathways provided by the school, VET (vocational education and training), and higher education sectors. ACE focuses on the provision of learning opportunities at a community level, rather than work-related training. The community education and VET sectors are the largest providers of adult recreational and leisure courses.

My expertise is in the field of human resource development and I chose to research a topic related to this field and I sought a non-for profit organization, Adult Learning Australia Inc (ALA) as my potential client. The national office of ALA is located at Cook in the ACT. My negotiations have been conducted with the Executive Director, Ms Francesca Beddie.

The research request

Adult and community education in Australia is often referred to as the ACE sector and can fall under the broad umbrella of education and more often under the banner of training. Under training, ACE is frequently bundled up with VET – vocational, education and training. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) describes the ACE sector is the most decentralised of the education sectors, and that, it is.

Since the early 1990s there has been an increased focus on lifelong learning. The report *Come in Cinderella: the emergence of adult and community education* was released in 1991. Since then we have developments such as 'Adult Learners Week', an annual celebration of lifelong learning that had its inauguration in 1995. The most recent undertaking is the *Ministerial Declaration on Adult Community Education* that has the endorsement of all state, territory and commonwealth ministers with responsibility for education, employment, training and youth affairs. The Declaration has four goals:

1. Expand and sustain innovative community-based learning models
2. Raise awareness and understanding of the role and importance of adult community education
3. Improve the quality of adult community education learning experiences and outcomes
4. Extend participation in community-based learning

(Source: Department of Education & Training, 2002)

Each of the goals has a number of enabling strategies. Both goals and strategies illustrate the Ministers' undertaking for the future development of adult community education in Australia.

Search Process

I found the research topic both interesting and challenging. I spent some time learning more about the topic and related areas. As the information I required was Australian, I anticipated that many of the on-line tools would not be appropriate for my search. I found the ACE sector to be quite fragmented throughout the states. There seems to be a lack of understanding as to what ACE is and means. This was evidenced by the lack of results, or the irrelevant 'hits' I attained when I used the search string 'funding adult community education'.

What do we mean by adult community education? Phone calls to ANTA and DEST revealed that this is a term that is not readily understood. In both cases I had to provide extra information like – try VET. When I contacted the National Office of DEST, and asked to speak with someone who could assist me with an enquiry regarding 'funding of adult and community education', I was put in contact with Ms Kathryn Gyngell, Director Adult Literacy Policy and Programs. Kathryn confirmed that ACE funding was not a DEST national program and it was the responsibility of the relevant state or territory.

Liz Keyes from ANTA provided me with some funding details via email. Liz advised me that I would not be able to find the information she provided elsewhere.

I chose not to search databases that would provide a lot of overseas, and hence, irrelevant information. My electronic searches produced volumes of 'results'. The challenge was in ascertaining what was relevant to the topic and also what was meaningful. I commenced my searches with a broad, national approach. The federal government organizations I searched for this topic were:

- Department of Education, Science and Training
- Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
- Australian National Training Authority
- National Centre for Vocational Education Research
- Education Network Australia
- Australian Bureau of Statistics

In addition to the national websites, the following state and territory websites were a significant component of the search:

- NSW Department of Education and Training
- NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training
- Victoria: Department of Education and Training
- Victoria: Office of Training and Tertiary Education
- Queensland: Department of Employment and Training
- Education Queensland
- South Australia: Department of Education Training and Employment
- Western Australia: W.A. Department of Training
- The Institute of TAFE Tasmania
- Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority
- ACT Department of Education and Community Services
- ACT Office of Training and Adult Education

My searches moved from national to the individual state and territories. This part of the search proved to be cumbersome and exceedingly time consuming. No two states/territories have the same format for the ACE sector. In some instances the information was easier to find than others. In other cases the information is not available.

Where I could, I send emails to addresses obtained from the websites, seeking clarification of ACE funding details. In some cases I received responses and others I did not receive any acknowledgement. In searching state and territory websites I found that they generally had a department dedicated and responsible for education and in some cases they also had a department for training. Also, there is obviously a stronger emphasis on adult community education in the states of Victoria and NSW. Victoria has the *Adult Community and Further Education Board* and NSW has the *NSW Board of Adult and Community Education*. Both boards have their own websites and these are listed in the resource section of this paper.

I discovered the national 'home' page for the Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres Inc. The page provided contact telephone numbers and email addresses for each state and territory. *Neighbourhood Houses* are known by many different names, including 'Learning Centres'. They are local organisations that provide social, educational and recreational activities for their communities in a welcoming supportive environment. The site contained addresses and contact details for each state and territory.

The funding for the ACE programs/courses delivered by the Neighbourhood Houses/Learning Centres varies for each state and territory. In Victoria the Adult Community & Further Education Board (ACFE) of Victoria mainly funds them. Or, they are funded on a fee for service basis. They may obtain other sorts of funding for their courses from the Victorian Department of Health, or from the federal Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. Local government also supports some houses and learning centers. This is an overview of the Victorian experience, provided by email from Ms Merial Clark, Executive Officer, ANHLC, and it illustrates the complexity of ACE funding in that state. However, not all Neighbourhood Houses are as adequately resourced as those in Victoria. Most other state 'houses' cannot afford to maintain a website and have funds to staff their premises for minimal hours per week. Furthermore, WA is not listed on the ANHLC national link.

Results

I searched all the other listed websites and attained a small amount of information from ABS statistics. My overall results of searching were varying and scattered. The key sources of funding for adult community education are:

National funding

ANTA	Funds allocated specifically for the ACE Sector & research	Most of this funding is linked to Adult Learners Week – see email from Liz Keyes
DEST	Funds are allocated for Adult Literacy programs	More details available from their website. http://www.dest.gov.au/ty/litnet/resources.htm

As stated earlier, funding procedures vary in each state and territory. Most funding is available via application for grant funding. Applications are on an annual basis. This means that learning providers are only funded for one year at a time and have to apply for subsequent funding. For the states and territories, my search identified the following funding sources:

NSW	Board of Adult and Community Education	http://www.bace.nsw.gov.au/
VIC	Office of Training and Tertiary Education (DE&T Victoria)	http://www.acfe.vic.gov.au/index.htm
QLD	Queensland Government, Department of Employment and Training	http://www.training.qld.gov.au
SA	Government of South Australia, Department of Education, Training and Employment	http://www.training.sa.gov.au
WA	Department of Training, Government of Western Australia	http://www.training.wa.gov.au
TAS	The Institute of TAFE Tasmania	http://wwwnew.tafe.tas.edu.au
NT	Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority	http://www.nt.gov.au/nteta

ACT	Office of Training and Adult Education	http://www.decs.act.gov.au

The preceding provides an overview of ACE funding sources. It is much more complex. There are a number of government agencies that are players in this field. These include federal departments such Centrelink, Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, and Foreign Affairs. These agencies may support and/or sponsor adult literacy programs.

Then again, this process may be repeated at state/territory levels where additional layers of complexity are added to the conundrum. In particular, the state health departments play a more prominent role than their counterpart at federal level.

Evaluation of search tools

Most of the information collected for this project was from government websites. The complexity of the searches for each website varied. Generally, Australian federal and state government websites are well set out and most have a 'search' facility. The websites can, however, take up time delving through the layers of data to find the relevant information. Once I had established that if the information were available, it would most probably be contained in the respective 'annual report'. My searches were then fast tracked to those sources. Annual reports can be found under various guises including, publications, resources, reports & statistics, and annual report. Most of the annual reports are available in PDF files and require that the system has a copy of *Adobe's Acrobat Reader* in order to read the files. Some annual reporats are extensive documents but it is possible to print only the required pages. It is also possible to obtain printed copies of the document.

Some of the state and territory departments also listed information about funding of the ACE sector. This information was mostly in the form of conditions for applications for grants. In many cases the 'application forms' and 'conditions' are available for downloading. This information confirmed that there were processes in place for ACE funding but did not assist me with the amounts of funding that is made available each year; nevertheless, at least this meant that I could establish the source of ACE funding.

My contacts made by phone and personal contact were very useful as I was able to communicate my requirements and attain immediate feedback. In particular, it was the two-way communication and understanding that made the phone interaction particularly useful and intellectually stimulating. I gained a greater sense of understanding of the current and historic issues about the funding and program delivery of the ACE sector.

Conclusion

Most of the information was retrieved from the Internet via reputable websites, specifically federal and state government agencies. Information was also attained from telephone calls and email requests to government bodies, universities, and community organizations. Time and resources allocated to this project made it impossible to continue the search.

The ACE sector is an important and growing sector of the population. While there is some discussion about it, the federal government only pays lip service to the sector, and therefore ACE receives very little support in the way or funds or resources compared to other education sectors. (Australia does not rank that well with other OECD countries on education expenditure). Most of it depends on state/territory support and community based organizations. There is much ambiguity about ACE. As a current postgraduate, mature age, student at the University of Canberra I found that not one of my fellow students, all mature age over 40 years of age, had ever heard of ACE. Also, there are those who assume that ACE is only about adult literacy which is a program that overwhelmingly applies to migrants.

We know that Australia's population is aging. The ACE sector is recognized as being predominantly for the older members of the community, we need therefore to seriously consider the future of adult community education in this country. Furthermore, there are other societal issues around ACE; such as why adult males have a disproportionately low participation rate in adult community education programs and courses.

 While 'lifelong learning' appears to be part of the popular jargon, it does not hold true in the real world. It should have been easier to meet the request for this research topic. Further, there are the hidden costs, what this research could not measure; that is, the amount of voluntary resources that make the ACE sector work. Such resources as the people who deliver education and training courses/programs free of charge, those who reduce their rates – treat it as pro bono, and those who provide other learning resources to community and learning centres. Another example is that of the University of the Third Age – U3A, these appear to be

dependent totally on the abilities, creativity and resource capacity of the current players. Do they have a future?

Finally, a country that does not invest in education is a country that does not invest in a future.

Life is a journey of learning. When we cease to learn, we cease to live.

List of Resources

The following resources will be provided in hardcopy and also on a floppy disk.

Emails

Clark, Merial 2002, email, 24 October, <anhlc@anhlc.asn.au>

Gelade, Sue 2002, email, 15 October, <sgelade@pobox.une.edu.au>

Keyes, Liz 2002, email, 17 October, <KeyesL@anta.ov.au>

Mitchell, Gaynor 2002, email, 17October, <Information@training.wa.gov.au>

McDerby, Vivienne 2002, email, 14 November, <vivienne.mcderby@act.gov.au>

Tapp, Susan 2002, email, 22 October, <susan.tapp@tafe.tas.edu.au>

West, Pauline 2002, email, 4 November, <pauline@pcug.org.au>

Websites:

The Adult & Community Education Council NSW Inc. 2002, Community Colleges, Sydney, viewed 20 October 2002, < http://www.acensw.com.au>

Association of Neighbourhood Houses & Learning Centres Inc. 2002, Association of Neighbourhood Houses & Learning Centres Inc. National Link, <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~natlink/>

Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australia Now: Education and Training: Adult and community education 2000*, viewed 23 September 2002, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/w2.6.1?OpenView>

Australian Capital Territory Department of Education, Youth & Family Services 2002, *ACT Department of Education, Youth & Family Services ACE Funding Application Form 2002*, Canberra, viewed 24 October 2002, <http://www.decs.act.gov.au>

Department of Education, Science and Training ACE publications, Department of Education, Science and Training, Canberra, viewed 24 September 2002, <http://www.dest.gov.au/search/Search.asp?q1=ace&submit1=Search&sE=1&sT=1>

Department of Education, Science and Training, Canberra, viewed 2 October 2002, *DEST, funding adult community publications*, Canberra, viewed 20 October 2002,

<http://www.dest.gov.au/search/Search.asp?q1=funding+and+adult+and+community&submit1=Search&sE=1&sT=1>

Department of Education Tasmania 2002, Department of Education, *Non Government Adult and Community Education Grants Program*, Hobart, viewed 24 October 2002, <http://www.education.tas.gov.au/equitystandards/ace/ACEgrants.htm>

Department of Training, Government of Western Australia 2002, *Department of Training Annual Report 2000-2001*, Perth, viewed 24 October 2002, <http://www.training.wa.gov.au/resources/content-publications-categories.asp>

Department of Training, Government of Western Australia 2002, *Strategy for Adult Community Education: Learning for life*, Perth, viewed 24 October 2002, <http://www.training.wa.gov.au/content-search.asp>

Government of South Australia, Department of Education, Training and Employment 2002, *Vocational Education, Employment and Training Board Annual Report 2001*, Adelaide, viewed 27 October 2002, <http://www.training.sa.gov.au/OVETmin/files/links/VEET_2001_Annual_Report.pdf>

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs 2002, *Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs links*, Canberra, viewed 30 September 2002, <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/mceetya/links.htm>

NSW Department of Education and Training, *Department of Education and Training Annual Report 2001*, Sydney, viewed 16 October 2002, <http://www.det.nsw.edu.au/reports_stats/annual_reports/report2001.htm>

NSW Board of Adult and Community Education 2002, *NSW ACE Enrolment Statistics 2001*, Sydney, viewed 14 October 2002, < http://www.bace.nsw.gov.au/stats/index.htm>

NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training 2002, *Board of Vocational Education and Training Annual Report 2000-2001*, Appendix 3, Sydney, viewed 16 October, <http://www.bvet.nsw.gov.au/publicat/bv01pu1.htm>

Office of Training and Tertiary Education (DE&T Victoria) 2002, *ACE Capital Funding Program, Adult Community & Further Education*, Melbourne, viewed 15 October 2002, < http://www.acfe.vic.gov.au>

Office of Training and Tertiary Education (DE&T Victoria) 2002, *ACE Providers Adult and Community Education*, Melbourne, viewed 10 November 2002, <http://www.otfe.vic.gov.au/provider/aceprov.htm>

Office of Training and Tertiary Education (DE&T Victoria) 2002, *Adult, Community and Further Education Board Annual Report 2000-01*, Melbourne, viewed 10 November 2002, < http://www.acfe.vic.gov.au/publications/index.htm>

Office of Training and Tertiary Education (DE&T Victoria) 2002, *Adult, Community and Further Education Board Annual Report 2000-01*, Melbourne, viewed 10 November 2002, < http://www.acfe.vic.gov.au/publications/index.htm>

Office of Training and Tertiary Education (DE&T Victoria) 2002, *ACE Capital Funding Program*, Melbourne, viewed 10 November 2002, <http://www.acfe.vic.gov.au/publications/Capital_FP/index.htm>

Queensland Government, Department of Employment and Training 2002, *Funding for community organizations, Department of Employment and Training*, Brisbane, viewed 24 October 2002, <http://www.training.qld.gov.au/funding/community/index.htm?community>

Queensland Government, Department of Employment and Training 2002, *What funding is available, Department of Employment and Training*, Brisbane, viewed 24 October 2002, <http://www.training.qld.gov.au/funding/funding.htmhttp://www.det.qld.gov.au>

Queensland Government Department of Employment and Training, Brisbane 2002, *Vocational Educational Training Youth Output Report 2000-2001,* viewed 16 October 2002, <http://www.det.qld.gov.au/publications/annual_report/vocational.pdf>

Queensland Government Department of Employment and Training, Brisbane 2002, *Report on adult community education in Queensland 2000,* viewed 23 October 2002, <http://www.training.qld.gov.au/reports/potential/potential.pdf>

Northern Territory Government, Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority 2002, *Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority Annual Report 2000-2001*, Darwin, viewed 24 October 2002, <http://www.nt.gov.au/nteta/about/annualreport.htm>

TAFE Tasmania 2002, The Institute of TAFE Tasmania, Hobart, viewed, 25 October 2002, <http://wwwnew.tafe.tas.edu.au/>

Holding of items

All resource items are available online and all URLs have been included in the resource list section. Additional information such as telephone, facsimile numbers and email addresses are available on the relevant websites.

Printed copies of annual reports and publications may be procured by contacting the respective agency.

A floppy disk is provided for ease of access for online resources.

References:

Department of Education & Training, Melbourne 2002, *Ministerial Declaration on Adult Community Education*,
ISBN: 07594 0287 6
Available online: www.curriculum.edu.au/mceetya

Gelade S, Harris R, & Mason, D 2001 *Accounting for change: Adult and community education organisations and the GST*, Canberra, Adult Learning Australia
ISBN: 0 949 145 31 9

Lane, Nancy D, 1996 *Techniques for Student Research*, 2nd ed, Melbourne: Addison Wesley Longman Australia

Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, 1991, *Come in Cinderella: the emergence of adult and community education*, Parliament of the Commonwealth, Canberra
ISBN: 1) 0642169535

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Association of Neighbourhood Houses & Learning Centres Inc. 2002, Association of Neighbourhood Houses & Learning Centres Inc., < http://www.anhlc.asn.au/>

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs 2002, Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra, viewed 30 September 2002, <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/mceetya/index.htm>

National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd 2002, National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd, Leabrook SA, viewed 2 October 2002, <http://www.ncver.edu.au/>