



Catch a Tiger by the Tail

I am writing this at the beginning of the week the national conference begins in Hobart. Many, many thanks to Jan Dunsby for all her efforts in ensuring that all those who are able to attend have a great time.

You will have recently received a discussion paper about the composition of the national executive. I'd like to stress that the paper is intended to prompt discussion and debate and inform future decisions. It does not represent a fait accompli. For those unable to attend the Hobart conference, at which there will be a session devoted to the paper, please contact the executive (www.ala.asn.au/about/exec.htm) to convey your views.

The ABC

I am a member of the ABC Advisory Council (www.abc.net.au/corp/nac), which meets three times a year to discuss and channel community views about the ABC to the Board. The Council met in Orange in early July and held consultations with the community on a number of issues. Thank you to Cecily Butcher, President of the Orange U3A and Debbie Best from the Lithgow Learning City committee, for coming along. In our session, well-attended by senior ABC managers, we discussed the importance of local news. From ALA's point of view, I think we were successful in getting the message across to the ABC that they need to be more proactive in marketing their community services.

I am keen to engage the ABC more on the question of lifelong learning, to which it has a commitment but few resources, particularly at this time when the digital television debate is being revisited. I'd love to hear from members with views on multichannelling and interactive TV.

Countdown to Adult Learners' Week!

It is less than a month to ALW. To see all that is happening during the Week visit www.adultlearnersweek.org/list.html (if you haven't entered details of the ALW activities onto the official online calendar you should do so now! Its free and easy to do.).

We still have ALW promotional material available so if you are running short, or if you have discovered new places around town for the posters and flyers, contact Jenny Jankowski on 02 6251 9887 or by email at jjankowski@ala.asn.au, to order additional stock.

We are starting to get interest from the media in Adult Learners' Week and adult learning generally. If you have any great stories about innovative adult learning programs or fascinating students that you think might interest the media, let John Cross, the National Coordinator, know (Tel: 02 6251 9887 or email j.cross@ala.asn.au)

Finally, the Community Service Announcements promoting the Week will soon start appearing on TV and on radio. If you see or hear an ALW ad, it would help us if you could send details of when

and on what channel it was broadcast to.
j.cross@ala.asn.au

Website of the month

AccessArt (www.accessart.org.uk) is the website of the Arts Education Exchange in the UK, an organisation borne from the need for a central and engaging source of information relating to arts education issues. As well as being a meeting place for teachers, educators and artists to share ideas, AccessArt provides access to interactive educational activities for home-users and learners across all levels and ages.

A standout feature of the website is its evolving series of 'online workshops' - these unique workshops condense and articulate events, ideas or workshops that take place in museum and gallery education programs or schools. Rather than presenting them in a text-based format, these workshops are created with the user's visual online experience in mind, aiming to make the most of the Internet's possibilities.

AccessArt is to be recommended for its visually stimulating, informative content and innovative use of the web as a learning tool.

Lifelong Learning Credits

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Jenny Macklin, made a speech to the Business Council of Australia on 11 July 2002. In it she floated the idea of lifelong learning accounts. Here is part of what she had to say:

...It is in the area of education that the greatest damage can be done to our future, because it is our education system that

strengthens and invigorates us as individuals and as a nation.

Post compulsory education needs to be built into our expectations -whether it be TAFE, university or other settings, including workplaces. Unless we get higher levels of participation not only will it be a water of individual talent the country will be held back. ...

That is why Labor is undertaking policy research work on how we can create a lifelong learning system that l... gives people the opportunities to mix and match their learning and retraining throughout their lives.

For the rest of the speech see www.alp.org.au. My letter in response has been posted on the website (www.ala.asn.au/macklin_letter.pdf)

Higher Education Review

Dr Nelson has launched another of the discussion papers in the higher education review. This one goes to the heart of the matter--money--and should provoke more public debate. That said, the earlier paper which dealt with the quality of teaching is of particular relevance to ALA and perhaps deserves a response about adult learning principles and how they can be employed in universities, both in terms of professional development and innovative teaching methods. The link to the papers is: www.dest.gov.au/crossroads/pubs.htm

Francesca Beddie
Executive Director, Adult Learning Australia