



## Adult Learners' Week: only 3 weeks to go!

ALW is less than one month away! That's why we are featuring [www.adultlearnersweek.org](http://www.adultlearnersweek.org) as the site of the month. We are very pleased with the look of this year's campaign and hope it will encourage much discussion about literacy. The first of a series of media releases was sent out last Thursday (see

[www.adultlearnersweek.org/news/030807.html](http://www.adultlearnersweek.org/news/030807.html)). It focused on the Great Literacy Debate. The idea behind this is to stimulate attention to the problems of adult literacy in Australia. While quantity is not everything the more discussions we have during the week on the subject, and the more these are reported in the media, the greater the chances of stimulating actions. So please consider getting involved. See [www.adultlearnersweek.org/events/greatdebate.html](http://www.adultlearnersweek.org/events/greatdebate.html) for tips about how to stage a debate on literacy. We also hope that the kit we've assembled to help stage a Learn @ Work event will encourage you to do something on Learn @ Work Day on Friday 5 September. See especially the Learn @ Work screensaver at [www.adultlearnersweek.org/providers/downloads/screensaver.exe](http://www.adultlearnersweek.org/providers/downloads/screensaver.exe) (right click and save as) which we hope every ALA member will download onto their own computer. Do also spread the word!

For those of you who would like to delve into the detail behind the 45 percent figure we are quoting of Australian adults without adequate literacy skills to deal in a modern economy, the place to go is [www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/887AE32D628DC922CA2568A900139365?Open](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/887AE32D628DC922CA2568A900139365?Open)

This is the report on the last ABS survey into adult literacy, conducted in 1996. Yes, it is time for another!

## ALA's national award for an inspirational contribution to learning

This year we are instituting a new award process. The idea is that we will link in with the current process of State ALW awards but also give those who may not have considered themselves eligible for one of these awards another opportunity to nominate for the ALA award. Applications are welcomed from individuals, providers and tutors and will be open until 22 October 2003. For further details see

[www.adultlearnersweek.org/events/awards.html](http://www.adultlearnersweek.org/events/awards.html), where nomination forms will soon be available. The winner will receive a cash prize of \$1,000 to be used for further learning or professional development.

## The national office is officially open!

The Current is late, for which I apologise. One of the reasons for this was our preoccupation last week with the official opening of the ALA office. Margo Couldrey, Director of Client Relationships in ANTA—and a great champion of lifelong learning—did the honours. She made a great speech which clearly identified ACE as an important part in the continuum of adult learning and which clearly explained to the 30 or so assembled guests the nature of ALA's relationship

with ANTA. Watch out for the next edition of *Quest* (scheduled for the end of September) for pictures of the event.

### Letters to the editor

Mention of *Quest* reminds me to remind you that letters to the editor of *Quest* are welcome. These need to be submitted by 27 August for publication in the Spring edition and should be limited to 250 words.

### And ALA is reaffirmed a national organisation

As you will all know from the President's message, the vote on the new constitution was a resounding yes. We are now working through the implications of the changes. In the next couple of weeks you'll be receiving nomination forms for the new nine-person Board, all to be directly elected by the membership. So start considering whether you'd like to run. If you have questions about the process please contact Margaret Bates ([m.bates@ala.asn.au](mailto:m.bates@ala.asn.au))

During the executive's visit to Brisbane, we held a workshop on the Australian Flexible Learning Framework. A report on the event was published in Flexinews. See [www.flexiblelearning.net.au](http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au).

### NSW restructuring

The NSW Department of Education and Training is considering a restructure of the department. A discussion paper canvassing the options was issued with the tantalising title of '*Lifelong Learning - The Future of Public Education in NSW*'. Unfortunately, the document does not live up to its name and is particularly disappointing when it comes to ACE—which appears to be under serious threat, with a proposal to abolish its

separate identity in the bureaucracy and to subsume it into a training division. You can read ALA's response to the paper at [www.ala.asn.au/docs/nsw\\_det.pdf](http://www.ala.asn.au/docs/nsw_det.pdf).

### Forum on the role of Governors

Later this month ALA will be hosting a forum on the role of Governors in both the current and any future system of government in Australia. The forum will be dedicated to Richard McGarvie, former Governor of Victoria and distinguished lawyer, who died on 24 May 2003. It also responds to Mr McGarvie's wish that there be better informed debate in Australia about the way we are governed. The online discussion will take place in the civics/democracy discussion group at [www.ala.asn.au/interests/phorum/index.html?forumid=88723](http://www.ala.asn.au/interests/phorum/index.html?forumid=88723). If you would like to subscribe to the discussion list, enter your name and email address at [www.ala.asn.au/interests/subscribe.html](http://www.ala.asn.au/interests/subscribe.html) and select 'Democracy'. Participants are asked to read the background paper to be posted later this week and then to offer their comments during the forum which will run from 1-12 September 2003.

### Equity in higher education

The release in late July of the National Report on Australia's Higher Education Sector 2001 has put the spotlight on equity in higher education. The report identified a decline in the proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds studying medicine, veterinary science, dentistry and law, apparently dating from the increase in fees for these courses seven years ago. It was also reported that the report did not show the full story about others who have been deterred from tertiary study, including older people, because of rising costs. If you are interested in this issue please get in touch with ALA so that your views can be

included in any submission we make to the Senate enquiry. You may also be interested to visit EdNA Online which has posted a new hot topic: Equity in Equity in Higher Education: [www.edna.edu.au/edna/go/pid/1132](http://www.edna.edu.au/edna/go/pid/1132).

See also the ALP's recent policy announcements on higher education: [www.alp.org.au/media/0703/20005143.html](http://www.alp.org.au/media/0703/20005143.html)

### Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships 2003

These awards recognise excellence and innovation in partnerships between Australian business and community groups. Why not consider whether you have a partnership worthy of nomination? See [www.partnerships.gov.au](http://www.partnerships.gov.au) or call 1800 102 014. Nominations close on 22 August.

### Skilling Australia Forum 10-12 September on the Gold Coast

The Skilling Australia Forum 2003 has as its theme 'Repositioning Vocational Education and Training' (VET). It will provide a platform for members of industry, training providers and government to develop strategies and recommendations to elevate VET's reputation within the Australian community. Guest speakers will include:

Phillip Adams, ABC Radio National  
Phil Ruthven, Executive Chairman IBIS  
Phillip Bullock, CEO IBM Australia  
Wesley Moxey, CEO Riviera  
Sandra Yates, Chair Saatchi & Saatchi

To register, email [info@skillingaustralia.com](mailto:info@skillingaustralia.com) or visit [www.skillingaustralia.com](http://www.skillingaustralia.com).

### Training packages: the learning journey to date

[www.avetra.org.au/2003%20conference%20pages/refereed/PA%20055%20Down.doc](http://www.avetra.org.au/2003%20conference%20pages/refereed/PA%20055%20Down.doc)

This paper reports on an evaluation of the qualitative impact of the introduction of Training Packages on vocational education and training clients. The research involved collecting the views of over 200 vocational education and training practitioners, bureaucrats, industry personnel and students from all Australian States and Territories.

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