

Dear Members

I'm delighted to report that Adult Learners' Week 2003 was bigger and better than ever. According to our ACNielsen polling more than 29 percent of Australians became aware of ALW through the media, an increase of some three percent on last year. And we had a record of over 600 events posted on the national calendar. Thank you to all those who took part.

Elections

We have received eleven nominations for the nine positions to be filled on the new Board of Adult Learning Australia. Voting papers are about to be dispatched. Voting closes on 30 October. See www.ala.asn.au/about/voting.pdf for details on voting within the new structure.

ALA award

Nominations for the ALA national award for an inspirational contribution to learning close on 22 October. Please take the time to consider a nomination. This year the award carries with it \$1000 to assist the winner continue their learning. If, however, there is little interest in this type of recognition, we will consider alternative ways to use this money in the future. See www.ala.asn.au/pages/awards.html for award details and a nomination form.

New ministry

On the weekend of his daughter's wedding, the Prime Minister formed a new ministry, to be sworn in on 7 October. For details see www.pm.gov.au/news/media_releases/media_Release495.html.

CONFINTEA V mid-term review

I attended the mid-term review of CONFINTEA V at which around 300 delegates discussed the importance of adult learning in achieving sustainable development. There were many very impressive individuals at the conference, every one of whom is committed to adult education. They all agreed, however, that there is an urgent need for the converted to start talking to the non-converted, a message that was captured in the conference's call to action and accountability which will be presented to the UNESCO General Conference this month. For more about the conference go to www.unesco.org/education/uie.

Equity and the AQTF

ANTA is looking for case studies of the successful integration of access and equity principles in training delivery, assessment and management. The case studies will be used to develop three products:

- (1) a guide for registered training organisations (RTOs) and auditors on how RTOs can meet their equity obligations under the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF);
- (2) a set of resources on providing training for Indigenous people under the AQTF; and
- (3) a set of resources on providing training for people with a disability under the AQTF.

Rachel Robertson at Nexus Strategic Solutions is undertaking the research and has asked ALA whether members would be interested in taking part by completing the questionnaires, one on equity and one for RTOs. The questionnaires are available at www.ala.asn.au/docs/2003-10-nexus.html. Please complete and submit these to rachelr@iinet.net.au by 24 October.

NCVER breakfast briefings on equity in vocational education and training

Building equity into the core business of Australia's vocational education and training (VET) system is a key component of the *National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2004-2010*.

Over breakfast, NCVER will present important findings from the latest research on equity in VET. The briefings will:

- report on the key issues facing various equity groups, including new and emerging groups, in the VET sector
- discuss frameworks and models to achieve a more inclusive VET system.

City	Date	Presenter
Hobart	Wed 19 Nov	Mr Mark Cully
Canberra	Thu 20 Nov	Mr Mark Cully
Melbourne	Fri 21 Nov	Dr Kaye Bowman
Brisbane	Tue 25 Nov	Dr Tom Karmel
Sydney	Wed 26 Nov	Dr Tom Karmel
Adelaide	Thu 27 Nov	Ms Sandra Pattison
Perth	Fri 28 Nov	Dr Kaye Bowman

This event is aimed at policy makers, program developers, and equity specialists.

For further information and to register, go to www.ncver.edu.au/news/conf/equity.htm.

Generic skills

NCVER has brought out two 'At a glance' publications on generic skills. *Defining generic skills: At a glance* explains why there is such an interest in generic skills, often called employability skills, and describes how they have been defined and addressed in educational programs in Australia. It also compares the different definitions and interpretations of generic skills in various overseas countries.

Fostering generic skills in VET programs and workplaces: At a glance focuses on research into describing, teaching, learning, assessing, recognising, and certifying generic skills, and includes the views of a

variety of groups. www.ncver.edu.au/cgi-bin/srchCat.pl?list=1361+1393&action=show

Assessing generic skills in a selection of training packages is the focus of another recent NCVER report. Based on case studies, it examines how these skills are understood by trainers and learners. The report contains a comprehensive literature review of assessment of generic skills. www.ncver.edu.au/cgi-bin/srchCat.pl?list=1351&action=show

OECD publications on training

Supply of training increases with firm size, but demand for courses by employees does not. One often overlooked reason for this is time, or rather, the lack of it. www.oecdobserver.org/story.php/aid/127/aid/1075

The employment prospects of women, and older and unskilled workers would improve with training: this key employment policy message is borne out by the pattern of participation in workplace training. Older workers and women simply receive less of it. www.oecdobserver.org/story.php/aid/127/aid/1074

Congratulations RMIT

RMIT University will provide ten free places next year to refugees on temporary protection visas. The university is the first in Victoria to introduce the free full time places, after it recognised the high demand for education among temporary visa holders.

www.rmit.edu.au/browse/Media%2FNews%2FMedia%20Releases?SIMID=c1zies81gx0w&STATUS=A

Featured website - Health Literacy Month

October 2003 is Health Literacy Month, an annual grassroots campaign to encourage and promote the need for understandable health information, and to raise the awareness of health literacy around the world. Visit the website (www.healthliteracymonth.com) for information on how individuals, organisations and communities can participate; to see the variety of health literacy events taking place across the globe; and to learn more about health literacy through useful factsheets, articles and other resources.