

Thank you to all people who cast their vote for the new Board. 135 formal ballot papers were received. The results will be announced at the Annual General Meeting to be held in conjunction with the conference (www.ala.asn.au/conf). See you there!

Your Future, Your Choice: Flexible Learning Futures

The ALA executive was well-represented at Networking 2003, with Rita Bennink involved in everything, Dorothy Lucardie networking madly and Vaughan Croucher analysing vigorously. See flexiblelearning.net.au/nw2003 for conference papers and also an article in the next edition of *Quest*.

Over the next six weeks consultations will be held around Australia to discuss the future of flexible learning and what it can mean for business, people and communities. A discussion paper has just been released and will be used as a basis for the consultations. I have prepared a short commentary on *Your Future, Your Choice: Flexible Learning Futures* (available as a PDF at flexiblelearning.net.au) to stimulate discussion within the ACE sector about future directions for flexible learning. The commentary is available in the members' area of the ALA website (www.ala.asn.au/members).

A series of teleconferences will be held during November specifically for people working or volunteering in the ACE sector. The results of the consultations will be used to inform planning for flexible learning in 2004 and beyond.

Initial teleconferences are scheduled on Tuesday 18 November at 2.30pm EST and Thursday 20 November at 12 noon EST. Other dates will also be offered depending on demand. Information on these and how

to register will be available at www.lcc.edu.au/page140.html or alternatively email info@ala.asn.au or telephone 08 8207 8488 and ask for Rita.

NSW Department of Education and Training (DET)

The Department has developed a revised proposal for its restructure which responds to issues raised in more than 5,000 submissions received during consultation on the original proposal released in June. In the proposed new model, support for Adult and Community Education (ACE), Adult Migrant English Services (AMES) and the National Art School will be provided through one of four portfolios. ACE and AMES will report to a new Director of Community and Migrant Education. See www.det.nsw.gov.au/special/revised/proposal2.html ALA's submission is at www.ala.asn.au/docs/nsw_det.pdf

Changes in education in Victoria

The Victorian government is in the process of cutting around 300 positions from the head office of the Department of Education and Training. In this paper, David Hayward of Swinburne University of Technology looks at why the cuts are being made and whether they are justified. He notes they will force a more narrow focus on school education which may be of concern to the ACE sector. Read the full text of 'An unnecessary act?' (PDF file) at www.apo.org.au/linkboard/items/00893.shtml

Do members in Victoria have comments or concerns about this development? If so, please contact ALA, f.beddie@ala.asn.au.

Job Vacancy: Programs Manager/ Deputy CEO

The Continuing Education Centre in Albury Wodonga is seeking an experienced programs manager/deputy CEO. The position includes responsibility for all aspects of fee-for-service and Victorian and NSW government funded adult education provision, from submission writing and program development, to monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

Applicants must have:

- Relevant qualifications and experience in adult and community education
- Understanding of and commitment to the principles of adult learning
- Experience in accessing and management of grant funds
- Experience in managing staff teams including business planning and financial performance
- Excellent interpersonal written and verbal communication skills including promotional activities.

A salary package for this position is offered. An information package must be obtained before applying. Phone 02 6043 8200. Applications close Friday 21 November 2003.

15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (15CCEM)

Commonwealth Education Ministers met recently in Edinburgh. Their discussions focused on six areas, including achieving universal primary education, tackling gender disparities in education and mitigating the effects of HIV/AIDS on education systems. While there was some attention paid to adult education this seems to have been primarily concerned with the developing world.

See

www.thecommonwealth.org/communiqués/ccemRelease.pdf

That said let us hope that the warnings from the keynote speaker, Amartya Sen, resonated with reminded Ministers. Sen stated that 'if we continue to leave vast sections of the people of the world outside the orbit of education, we make the world not only less just, but also less secure.' He concluded that, 'Basic education is not just an arrangement for training to develop skills (important as that is), it is also a recognition of the nature of the world, with its diversity and richness, and an appreciation of the importance of freedom and reasoning as well as friendship. The need for that understanding – that vision – has never been stronger.' For the full speech, see www.education.guardian.co.uk/schools/story/0,550,1072739,00.html.

How small business learnt about goods and services tax: Lessons for vocational education and training

Stephen Billett, Lisa Ehrich, Bernie Hemon-Tinning

This is a new report from NCVET which identifies opportunities for Australia's vocational education and training (VET) system to work collaboratively with local associations, organisations and networks to meet the educational needs of small business. It confirms small business operators learn via informal and local networks, and want training that directly addresses their specific needs.

The report is based on a study that examined the processes small business undertook to implement the goods and services tax (GST) and the associated business activity statement (BAS). See www.ncver.edu.au/cgi-bin/srchCat.pl?list=1378&action=show.

Income Distribution: Inequality is growing

Recently released ABS data on the distribution of income indicate that while real disposable incomes have increased, income inequality has also increased since 1994-95, particularly between 1996-97 and 1999-

2000. See an analysis of the data by the Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales in the paper Examining recent changes in income distribution in Australia (PDF file)
www.apo.org.au/linkboard/items/00908.shtml.

Learning and Training for Work in the Knowledge Society

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has written a report on learning and training which highlights the shift from teacher-centred education and training towards learning by the individual and the increasingly informal nature of much learning. It goes on to argue that recognition and certification of informally acquired skills and knowledge are becoming central to policies that endeavour to enhance individuals' motivation to learn, improve their access to further learning opportunities, and reward them for qualifications gained. Thus it concludes that ensuring all people have access to learning and training opportunities, during their entire life cycle, therefore becomes the a pillar of human resources development and training policies and programs. The report also discusses the fact that lifelong learning has become a key subject in dialogue among social partners, and between them and governments. See
www.logos-net.net/ilo/150_base/en/report/rep_toc.htm

Website of the month

Developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS), the Indigenous Portal (www.indigenous.gov.au) is a Commonwealth Government customer-focused site for and about Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. It provides access to Indigenous services and information about communities and organisations; culture and heritage; education and employment; families, society and social problems; government and business; and health, housing and welfare.

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