

Dear Members

You will see an advertisement next weekend in the Australian for the position of general manager of Adult Learning Australia. That is the position I currently hold but will be vacating in April, after two challenging and rewarding years in the job. (Details will also be posted on the ALA website for those of you who may be interested in applying. Please also note the vacancy for web and information manager.)

I have made the decision to return to freelance consultancy in order to reduce the amount of time I spend on the road, away from the 20 acres my partner and I bought last year and which I rarely see. I believe this is a good time to bring in a new person to manage the national office. Adult Learning Australia has been through a great deal of change in the last two years. We have a new mission statement, a new constitution, a new membership structure, a new office, a new research arm, a communications manager and a new magazine. It is time now to consolidate all these achievements to ensure that the association does not get swamped by change and is in a strong position to pursue its mission of advancing a learning society.

You Can Too

You Can Too is the consultation paper on adult learning issued by the Department of Education, Science and Training last November. Formal written submissions are due on 5 March. Adult Learning Australia will be putting in a submission. We would like it to take account of as many members' views as possible, so please send us your response. (You

received a copy of the paper—with Quest—in December.) We will also keep you posted about the timetable for public meetings DEST will be holding around the country to hear views on adult learning. These will probably begin at the end of February and go through until April. This is a great opportunity—don't miss it!

See Barrie Brennan's comments on the document at www.ala.asn.au/members.

The contact point in DEST is 02 6240 7048 or Peter.Peterson@dest.gov.au.

ANTA consultations

ANTA is conducting a series of consultations on action plans for the 2004-2010 national strategy and on training packages. You are strongly encouraged to give them your views and can do so through their website www.anta.gov.au/dapStrategy.asp or via Adult Learning Australia or, in the case of learning communities, on the Learning Communities Catalyst website. See www.lcc.edu.au/lcc/page184.html and www.lcc.edu.au/lcc/page186.html. The ACE-VET intersection is a complex place and one which, I believe, ANTA is keen to explore. They will do so much better if they know what VET looks like from the ACE perspective.

Jim Nicholls, an ALA Board member has presented his views on training packages (see www.ala.asn.au/members). We have posted the paper to stimulate further discussion and encourage you to become involved in the consultation process.

Leader of the Opposition

Mark Latham has replied to my letter of congratulations on his election as leader of the opposition saying that 'adult education will be one of our major themes'. In his Australia Day address he spoke about the parenting role and parenting education. The ensuing debate has raised many important questions about the role of adult learning, social control and community responsibility. Here is an opportunity for adult educators to get your pens out and tell the ALP what you can do, what should be done and how. You can channel your ideas through us or write direct.

The parenting role and parenting education is also a topic to be explored at an upcoming forum on gender issues in family learning at the University of Technology, Sydney. See www.cpe.uts.edu.au/forums/gender.html for details.

Learning for Health

This year ALA's main research activity is focusing on the connections between adult learning and health. A key project will profile several case studies in which overt links between the adult learning and health fields currently exist. To assist in this work we are seeking contact details and/or other information about adult learning providers, program or projects that have any of the following characteristics:

- Actively promote the health benefits of their learning programs;
- Actively evaluate the health outcomes of their learning programs;
- Present some of their adult learning activities in healthcare settings (for example hospitals, community health centres etc);
- Have formal linkages with local health services for client referrals (hospitals, healthcare centres, GPs etc); or

- Have worked with GPs or hospital staff to provide advice on effective adult learning strategies within health environments

Please send any information you have to John Cross, Research Manager, at j.cross@ala.asn.au or by phone 02 6274 9505.

Online access centres/online support

The Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts is involved in following up on two key elements of the Regional Telecommunications Inquiry (www.dcita.gov.au/Article/0,,0_1-2_3-4_115317,00.html). It is investigating how to maintain the viability of online access centres and how to provide support for IT training and support services in rural and remote areas of Australia. There are possible opportunities for adult and community education providers here. We will be talking to DCITA next week. If you'd like to tell us your experience, good or bad, with Networking the Nation, on-line access centres, the maintenance of IT equipment or meeting the needs for IT training in your community, please email m.hannan@ala.asn.au.

World Summit on the Information Society (WIS)

For those interested in the results of the first part of the WSIS and its implications for communities, both in Australia and beyond, a first point of contact is: www.govonline.gov.au/projects/access/Connecting_Communities/wsis.htm

Research proposals: Adult Literacy

Research Program

NCVER is seeking to commission research through the Adult Literacy Research Program relating to information and communication technology (ICT) and its implications for adult literacy in the Australian vocational education and training (VET)

system. An information kit and application form for proposals can be obtained from NCVER's website or by contacting Nhi Nguyen on 08 8230 8451 or e-mail Nhi.Nguyen@ncver.edu.au. Proposals must be received by 5pm (CDST) on Friday 13 February 2004. www.ncver.edu.au/tenders_jan04a1.htm

NCVER publication

'The agile organisation: Case studies of the impact of flexible delivery on human resource practices in TAFE' by Phoebe Palmieri uses four case studies to examine how human resource practices of TAFE institutes have changed to accommodate flexible delivery and the changing roles of staff. It reveals that a whole of organisation customer-service philosophy is a useful basis for flexible delivery and the trend is towards team-based approaches. The detailed findings in this report mirror those in the report 'The impact of flexible delivery on human resource practices: Survey of TAFE managers'. www.ncver.edu.au/cgi-bin/srchCat.pl?list=1426&action=show

Website of the month

Endeavour Web (www.endeavour-web.org) is a Sydney-based site designed by and for senior citizens using the principle of older people learning and helping each other through exploration and exchange of ideas. Like the many other seniors-oriented websites, it reflects the common inclination for both learning about the technology, and demonstrating its application as a tool for further learning, interaction and discovery. As well as computing tutorials and hints, the site provides a wide selection of links on other issues of interest to seniors and offers various channels for users link up with like-minded people.

Francesca Beddie
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Adult Learning Australia