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National Office changes and a thank-you.

This is my first *Current* as the new Executive Director and I would like to begin it by thanking Francesca for extending to me both her precious time and insights to assist in a smooth transition. The roles and responsibilities of the national office are many and varied and it was most helpful to have such a hand-over. I'm sure, on behalf of our members, and those many groups and individuals associated with ALA, we all wish Francesca well in her new endeavours..

While we are on the theme of position changes, I would like to extend congratulations to John Shugg on his new leadership role with Community Colleges NSW and also to Mark Russell who has taken up John's former position as Executive Officer at Adult & Community Education (Victoria) Inc. Best wishes to you both in your new roles.

ALA's new Executive Director.

Briefly, my background is one of involvement at many levels of education and vocational training ranging from primary teaching in western Sydney, including the special education area, working with adolescents at Westmead Hospital School to vocational curriculum research in NSW TAFE.

I have also managed the challenges of being the former principal of a large growing community college in metropolitan north-west Sydney (Macquarie Community College). I was also the general manager of Western Sydney ITeC, a SkillShare funded project, providing labour market training primarily in computer maintenance and repair, basic electronics and applications software, along with a range of youth, mature workers and job search programs.

I hope that my background in the field will resonate with many of you. I understand the difficulties of making a government funded not-for-profit project work, the enormous energy expended by dedicated staff, the vagaries of funding sources and the burnout and disillusionment that can occur.

We have a very talented team here in Canberra, and yes, they are like the rest of us in the sector, overworked and under resourced, but nevertheless, exceptionally committed.

Learning/business opportunity.

One theme of *Current* has been to highlight activities or projects that ALA considers worthy of your attention.



These may be initiatives taking place in one part of the country that others may benefit from knowing about or are just great achievements by you, our members, that need to be celebrated.

One such initiative that has come to my attention is a project getting under-way in South- East Queensland in August at the Gondwana Centre, an ecological adult learning centre. The program is called "Sustainable Urban Development: - Understanding the Puzzle and Putting the Pieces to Work". At least one of the presenters, Dr Ian Lowe, would be known to those of you who are regular 'Late Night Live' listeners. His support for ecological sustainability and expertise in this field is outstanding.

My purpose in drawing this to your attention is two-fold:

- Firstly, for those of you driving projects which require the injection of ideas for new community based programs, the field of sustainable urban development may be an area to work on as a fundable project, particularly within a learning communities context, but also within its own right.
- Secondly, if you go to the Gondwana web site at www.gondwanacentre.org.au you may notice as I did that it appears to be a nice place for a blended experience of work and relaxation.

The latest National Industry Skills Report from ANTA

Services for people and business and innovation - that's the theme for job growth in the coming decade, according to the latest research.

Research for the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) says the major areas where jobs will grow are

in tourism, retail and recreational services; community and health services, particularly aged care, and business and innovation.

Facts and figures about Australia's changing economy, workforce, and skill needs are contained in the 2004 National Industry Skills Report, now available at www.anta.gov.au

The report, produced annually, is part of ANTA's planning process to ensure business and industry have access to a highly skilled Australian workforce.

Anti-Poverty Week 2004

Julian Disney, Chair of the National Facilitating Group, has written to ALA advising that the anti-Poverty Week campaign begins in Australia on Sunday 17th October.

The main aims of the week are to:

- Strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship around the world and within Australia; and
- encourage research, discussion and action to address these problems, including action by individuals, communities, organisations and governments.

All of us in the field have been touched at some time by the effects of poverty, albeit the children we teach, their parents or those adults seeking to get back into the workforce as a result of some form of adversity.

If you want to know more the website is at www.antipovertyweek.org.au.



The ATO

The Australian Tax Office has recently launched the Business Portal "... which aims to improve the revenue experience for businesses as well as individuals". I'm sure you will agree, with that sort of offer it is important that I draw it to the attention of members.

The portal can be used to:

- lodge an activity statement and view previously lodged activity statements
- view business account information
- view and update business registration details
- request transfers and refunds of credit amounts, and
- send the ATO a message on a selected topic and receive a response.

A kit is available and further information can be obtained from www.ato.gov.au/onlineservices where you can also register for an ATO digital certificate.

Final *you can too* consultation.

The last of the DEST *you can too* consultations was held at the National Museum on Thursday 13th May from 10:30-1:30. Representatives from the national office attended.

Outstanding university teachers.

The Commonwealth Government is offering awards for outstanding teachers again for the 8th year. These

awards carry scholarships for enhancing teaching and career development of up to \$40,000.

For further information go to www.autc.gov.au/.

Research Directory

ALA is developing a comprehensive database of Australian experts/researchers working in areas impacting upon adult learning. Contact John Cross, ALA's Research Manager for the registration form if you are interested in being on this directory: j.cross@ala.asn.au

Website of the Month

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) is an independent Commonwealth Government statutory authority devoted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies. It is Australia's premier institution for information about the cultures and lifestyles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

AIATSIS research staff conduct high-quality research and also administer research grants for projects. Their award-winning in-house publisher, Aboriginal Studies Press, publishes an extensive array of books, cassettes and CDs, films and videos, reports, and the Institute's journal, Australian Aboriginal Studies. Their Library holds the world's most extensive collections of printed, audio, and visual materials on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander topics. These materials are used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, researchers, museums, galleries, and many others, including the general public.



Learn more about AIATSIS and it's activities at
www.aiatsis.gov.au.

ALA, Adult Learners' Week and Learning Communities
Catalyst websites

Stephen Christie our Web Manager is working very diligently to try and bring these sites up to date. You will notice if you go to the Staff section of the ALA site new images of the national office team. This is the first step in a long list of things that Stephen is working on to get these sites current again. Once we have the information, links etc up to date we will give some thought to a 'make-over' of the ALA site. It has been cutting edge, but the presentation and access of websites has moved on, and so should we.

You can view these works in progress at:

www.ala.asn.au

www.adultlearnersweek.org

www.lcc.edu.au.

Ron Anderson
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