



QUEST

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Education path opens for young mums

Rebecca Cupitt left her high school in country NSW in year 9 when she was 15. 'I hung out with a crowd who thought it was a waste of time and I was easily influenced by my peers.'

Soon after she moved with her partner to Mildura. But her relationship was troubled and violent. At 17 she was pregnant, alone, and at risk of being homeless.

A local housing support agency found her somewhere to live and referred her to Zoe Support Australia, a not-for-profit, community-based organisation that assists young mums aged 13–25 through pregnancy and parenting and re-engages them in education.

Mildura is ranked the fifth most disadvantaged local government area in Victoria. It has a teenage birth rate that is over twice the Victorian average with 20.1 teenage pregnancies for every 1000 births.

At 17 Rebecca was vulnerable and found social situations awkward. Even the informal setting of a playgroup with other young mums and children was daunting.

'When I went along to the Zoe Support playgroup, I was uncomfortable because I didn't look pregnant and most of them had a child and a purpose for being there.' Gradually she relaxed, made friends and after completing a number of classes including sewing, retail and hospitality Rebecca decided she wanted to finish high school.

'I was very excited at the idea of studying again. But I was worried that since I'd been at school there'd been a lot of changes. I started going to Bridging Literacy and Numeracy at Zoe Support because I needed to catch up, particularly with computers and new technology.'

'Pre-accredited courses like Bridging Literacy and Numeracy bridge the gap for young mums who aren't ready for more formal study and it's a way of building their confidence,' Merinda Robertson, manager of Zoe Support says.

Zoe Support Australia is one of over 300 registered Learn Local providers in Victoria. Learn Local providers offer a range of education and training programs including government-funded pre-accredited learning programs,

'What I want my son Luke to know is that his mum is an example of how you can still make a difference, you can have a good life no matter what happened to you in the past.' Rebecca Cupitt

(Story continues on p. 3)

 ala.asn.au

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*Lifelong and
lifewide learning
for all Australians*

Message from the CEO



ALA continues to be a national voice for the adult community education sector and has for 60 years been committed to lifelong learning as part of a fair and inclusive Australian society.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of Adult Learning Australia (ALA).

The establishment of the Australian Association of Adult Education (now ALA) six decades ago reflected the desire of adult educators around the country working in diverse organisations to form a unified national association that would be a voice for the value of providing adults with the opportunity to learn throughout their lives. And while the adult education landscape is vastly different today, and definitions of adult education have changed, our mission remains the same. ALA continues to be a national voice for the adult community education sector and has for 60 years been committed to lifelong learning as part of a fair and inclusive Australian society.

The first adult education conference in Australia was held in October 1961 in Adelaide with the theme of 'Adult Education—The Nation's Responsibility'. Sixty years on adult education continues to be the nation's responsibility. However, it's important to be clear about what we mean by this. Adult education is built on ideas of democracy and humanism. Its role is to bridge the gap between the privileged and the disadvantaged in society.

Since our inception ALA has looked to national and international colleagues for inspiration and cross-pollination of ideas. We continue these endeavours in the belief that we are part of worldwide movement for the education of all adults.

Throughout this year we will be celebrating some of our history through a special edition of the *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, through social media and through publications and events including a forum towards the end of our anniversary year on the future of adult education in Australia.

A big thanks to all our past and current members, partners and friends as we celebrate this milestone in ALA's history. Special thanks to Professor Barry Golding for his research efforts on our archive, for his work compiling a history of ALA and identifying key aspects of our sixty year story.

There have been some significant shifts in adult education over the last six decades. If there is something we have learned over that time, it is that adult education can offer solutions to some of our most pressing challenges, empowering people to make changes in their lives and participate as active citizens in communities and society at large.

What we see currently unfolding across the globe is that the unexpected is the new norm. The state of democracy and increasing climate and health threats are calling out for a whole of adult education approach and a vision for the future. Right now the economic threat to the sector is very real, with disruption caused by bushfires, COVID-19 and from decreases in government funding.

Sixty years has taught us that adult community education has untapped potential for making significant positive change in health, education, employability and social relationships. Governments and the sector must work together to create a future that realises this potential.

We invite you to join with us to continue the ALA story into the future.

Jenny Macaffer, CEO



(story continued from p. 1)

short modular courses designed to create pathways for adults to further education or employment.

'Most of the young mums involved with us haven't finished high school. We have a number of secondary schools here in Mildura and the mums could put their children in our childcare centre and go to a school nearby. But we found that they didn't want to attend a mainstream school. They found it overwhelming to walk through the gates and into a classroom and try to keep up and then go home afterwards and be a mum as well. It was too much. So we identified a gap in the education system,' Merinda says.

And the model is working. 'Sixty two per cent of our young mum clients engage in pre-accredited or accredited courses. Sixteen per cent have completed an accredited certificate while engaged at Zoe Support and gone on to further study or employment. And 35% of our young mums are employed which is up from 9% 18 months ago,' Merinda says.

Tutor Paula Robinson has run Bridging Literacy and Numeracy for the past 3 years and says young women attend class for as long as it's helpful. 'It's very open ended. Some of the girls have very low literacy and numeracy, others use the class as a stepping stone.'

Paula says catering to young women from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities requires a lot of preparation and flexibility.

'I have to have something for everyone to work on. One might be writing an application for part-time work another might be practising long multiplication or learning how

'It has changed my whole view of young mums. The young women at Zoe Support are a very diverse group. We all have different stories and different reasons for being there and listening to those stories is absolutely amazing.'
Rebecca Cupitt

to write an essay. I also work with them on goal setting, coaching them through the process of thinking about where they want to go and what steps they need to take to get there. So developing their skills in thinking, speaking and writing – these are all literacy exercises.'

The most important thing she teaches is the confidence to have a go, Paula says. And the results are incredibly rewarding.

'I see big changes in them. There are the girls who sit there with their hair down over their faces and their arms crossed who are obviously very unsure of themselves and over time you watch them open up, tie their hair back and sit up straight and start offering answers to questions out loud instead of sitting there not saying anything. It's an incredible process and it's because we work to their strengths.'

Since completing her Certificate in General Education for Adults at SuniTAFE, Rebecca has completed a Certificate IV in Community Services/Mental Health and has just finished her first year of a Bachelor in Human Services/Masters of Social Work at Latrobe University.

Rebecca says she's changed enormously as a person and a parent thanks to Zoe Support. 'Returning to study gave me a purpose and I wanted my son to see that maybe I was a young mum but I had taken the opportunity to study and do better for myself. I am very motivated and very ambitious now.'

She takes every opportunity she can to bust myths about young mothers. 'My conversations these days are very political. There are a lot of negative attitudes to young mums out there. You get a lot of stares if you are a teenager with a pregnant belly or pushing a pram. People look at you and think you've dropped out of school, you're not doing anything with your life, you're living off Centrelink. If I feel I'm being judged that way I challenge people on it.'

zoesupport.com.au

Singing for sweet freedom

It's a decade since the Choir of Hard Knocks won our hearts with its uplifting story of how music can turn lives around. The all abilities choir Sweet Freedom Singers are continuing that tradition.



The reality TV show the Choir of Hard Knocks brought a story to our TV screens about the transformative power of music. The show followed the lives and performances of a group of disadvantaged people brought together by their desire to express themselves through music and song.

Every week in Ashgrove, at a classic 1940s neighbourhood bowls club in a quiet backstreet in Brisbane's north west, the Sweet Freedom Singers go through a similar transformation. On Wednesday mornings the wooden floor of the hall echoes with the rousing sounds of the Sweet Freedom Singers.

Some arrive much earlier than the 10.30 start time because they can't wait for the session to begin.

The 27-member choir, aged anywhere from 18 to 65, from all walks of life, with many differently abled, unite in their shared love of singing.

Miranda Woods is a neighbourhood centre worker with Brisbane-based Communitify and behind-the-scenes facilitator of the choir. Sweet Freedom Singers does much more than your usual choir, she says.

Unlike the Choir of Hard Knocks, Sweet Freedom Singers don't do covers. All of their songs are originals, a collaborative effort between musicians and singers who compose and write the lyrics together.

Sweet Freedom Singers are led by songwriters and performers Brian Procopis and David Crane who, passionate

'It's not just about coming along to sing, it's about encouraging people to express their identity, communicating through music, telling stories through music. And what better way to do that than to sing your own songs?' Miranda Woods, neighbourhood centre worker, Communitify

about writing original music and songs, engage everyone in the songwriting process. Together they write songs with and about members of the choir.

'When they're writing a song about someone in the group Brian and David will ask, "What will we write about?" Everyone knows each other so well that other people are likely to pipe up. "I know that he loves the Broncos because he's always wearing a Broncos footy jumper" so they use context and clues and work that information into the songs.'

Many of their songs explore aspects of their own lives. 'One song is called 'I Love My Life' which challenges notions about people's lives lacking because they are living with disability. Another song is about some of the challenges of living with a disability and dealing with other people's negative perceptions.'

And it's a joy to watch when the choir sings a song that's been written specifically about one person Miranda says.

Accommodating a wide range of abilities means coming up with different strategies so everyone feels included. 'David and Brian always find a way for people to participate. Emily is one of the non-verbal members who participates in a different way to the singing members. David and Brian have a great box of tricks – harmonicas, maracas, and hand-held instruments that are designed to be easy to hold.'

Communitify took over the choir, which had been going for 8 years, when it lost its funding two years ago.

'It was a great program with a very good retention rate and everyone involved was devastated at the thought of it not continuing. One of the volunteers involved mentioned it to Karen our CEO who said, as she always does, "We'll deal with it". So Communitify took over responsibility for the choir and I put my hand up to facilitate it,' Miranda says.

'Before they came to us Sweet Freedom Singers were led by a choir conductor who organised the choir in a more traditional way, teaching harmony-singing with members



International research shows that community choirs improve the health and wellbeing of participants and are an antidote to loneliness and social isolation.

organised by their vocal range. Since that time, we have evolved into a different model. Brian and David lead the singing and the supporting musicians on keyboard, bongos, guitar and drums. They like to think of the whole choir as one big band.

‘It’s such a popular program that no one drops out,’ Miranda says. ‘There’s usually someone new every week so we always have a welcome song for a new face where people sing the ‘Say My Name’ song and go round and introduce themselves and everyone has to sing their name back. It’s a great way to learn names.’

But the session is demanding. ‘It’s two full hours of singing. It takes lots of practice to learn new songs and rehearse old ones. The choir has close to 40 songs in total. Everyone learns all the songs.’

‘Someone always wants to sing their song. But they have to learn to share and take turns and practise patience.’

‘It’s not for everyone. It is three hours where you have to be willing to participate, to sit down, to be quiet when others are singing, and to take turns. But if someone’s really keen, we make it work.’

‘The learning goes both ways. People of different abilities are teaching us about the variety and flexibility of communicating and skills like tolerance and compassion. Everyone’s always learning that’s for sure.’

‘The NDIS has made access easier so people with NDIS packages can participate in more community activities. Our choir membership doubled because people could come along with a support worker.’ Miranda Woods, neighbourhood centre worker, Communityfy

Sweet Freedom Singers perform at community events, nursing homes and last year performed with 1000 other choir members as part of the Queensland Music Festival.

Kylie Deane is 39 and has been with Sweet Freedom Singers for eight years.

‘We have people with autism, Downs Syndrome, homeless people and people who are disadvantaged who are part of Sweet Freedom Singers.’

‘What I like about the choir is the singing and learning the words. My favourite thing about the choir is making friends, helping one another to learn the words and practising the songs. I also like having lunch together afterwards.’

‘I always feel excited when I arrive but tired when it’s over. There’s lots to learn and do.’

‘I’ve changed since I started. I’m more confident and happier. I notice that other people have changed too. They are friendlier and happier than when they started.’

‘I have my own song. It’s about how five years ago I moved out from living with my mum and into my own house. My song is called Kylie’s Kastle.’

communityfy.org.au



Last year Sweet Freedom Singers performed with 1000 other choir members as part of the Queensland Music Festival.

Learning on the job

The WA government is trying to stem the flow of young people away from rural and regional towns by offering local learning opportunities that give them the skills to stay and work in their communities.



Tia Lindridge has had to move around to complete her education. Her hometown high school in the small town of York in the West Australian wheatbelt only went to year 10. To finish high school, she moved in with her grandmother in Narrogin 130 kilometres away.

After she graduated with year 12 and a Certificate II in Hospitality and Kitchen Operations Tia moved back home to York to live with her dad and his family. That was three years ago and she's been looking for work ever since.

A lot of young people Tia's age leave rural and regional towns to find work in larger towns and cities.

'Most of the kids I went to school with moved away', Tia says.

But leaving wasn't an option for her. 'I want to be with my family. It's my home.'

The past three years have been a tough time.

'School wasn't the easiest friend-wise. I was a quiet, shy kid and it stuck with me.

'I didn't go out much. I was very shy. I tried to develop some hobbies. I'm very family orientated so I helped dad raise my siblings but I didn't have enough stimulation. There's not a lot here. I used to get very anxious walking around the streets.'

In 2019, the WA government funded 51 Community Resource Centres (CRCs) and local government authorities in regional areas across the state to offer traineeships so young people could train and work in their communities instead of having to move away to further their careers.

'I used to be anxious and nervous but now I want to be a role model to my siblings and I want to be an Indigenous leader if people need help. I love to be out there and helping people.'
Tia Lindridge

Tia heard about the traineeship at York Community Resource Centre through the mother of a friend. She started her traineeship there in July 2019.

Her first day on the job was hard. 'I was very shy and timid and I wasn't used to being out in a social environment. I was really nervous answering the phones. But everyone was very supportive and by the end of the day I was very excited about my new job and starting to fit in and building up my speaking skills.'

Seven months since she started Tia is a different person. 'I've come out of my shell now and I can talk all day long.'

The Centre provides a range of support and services to the town and the community including public internet, video conferencing, secretarial and design services, as well as Centrelink access.

The CRC also offers courses in digital and computer literacy, first aid, and help with job applications and resumes. Local agriculture groups use the space for training and meetings and the Indigenous health services runs a monthly diabetes clinic from the Centre.

A typical day at work for Tia is a day of constant social interaction and problem solving. 'I deal with customers who come in with photocopying, printing and laminating jobs. I also book appointments for people to have one on one meetings with the co-ordinator or other staff, as well as helping people with design or layout jobs, or who are having trouble using their phones. We do a lot of that. We have a lot of elderly people in York and we really look after them. I deal with a lot of older people in my job here.

'Every day is different. I always find a way to help whoever has come in the door.'

Tia is studying for a Certificate III in Business, working her way through TAFE materials and meeting once a month with her lecturer.



Arresting population decline in small rural communities is a challenge as young people leave for education and jobs in regional centres and cities.

'We go through it together. It's really good because what I'm learning about is so relevant to my job. It's been great to learn how to use Excel, how to organise schedules and diaries and use booking forms to hire out rooms and things like that.'

'When it comes to training on the job, I've learned how to write professional emails, communicate with customers, answer phones properly, use machines like laminators printers and faxes, as well as safe food handling for catering for events.'

York has a population of around 3600 and around 20% of the community are Indigenous. Helping organise events that bring the community together has also been part of Tia's role.

'I was surprised when I started working here by the range of community events that the CRC organises. One of the highlights was the movies in the park. We hosted this free event and showed the new Lion King movie with popcorn and drinks in the park. We had local musician Chris Giffs playing and lawn games for the kids. It was a great turn out, it really brought the community together and a lot of the people came along for it and that was so great to see.'



CRC staff Kayla Ware, Robyn Garratt, Tia Lindridge.

'The most memorable day so far was when we hosted York's first ever NAIDOC celebration at York Town Hall. We had West Coast Eagles legends Phil Narkle and James Grabski and you could get your photo taken with the premiership cup and we had a giant community canvas that people could sign. We had dancers and music and poetry and didgeridoo playing and story time. We had a local elder who made kangaroo stew and damper and it was great to share the taste of my culture's food. We came up with the idea here at the CRC. I feel like it was really good to bring everyone together and good to have the Indigenous community coming in.'

'The CRC really brings people together. I feel like we're the backbone of York.'

'I've learned a lot about myself since I started working here. It's great to be part of a team. I like a challenge and love to learn new things.'

Tia is the third trainee who has completed a traineeship at York CRC in the past three years. Robyn Garratt, coordinator of the CRC says it's a great way for young people to get training on the job and be paid for it at the same time. And the payoffs are clear.

'The benefits are amazing. We are a busy centre and so it's fantastic being able to have an extra person on board. Tia gets training so she's more likely to find work locally once her traineeship is over. Local businesses benefit because they have access to highly trained staff and we benefit from her skills and extra hands on deck.'

yorkcrc.net.au

Photo: **Hay** by **Mattingbn** CC BY-SA 3.0

'This job has helped me to be independent. With the money I earn I've got my own little apartment now and I'm really happy. I feel like there are so many opportunities out there for me. I've found really good things working here.'
Tia Lindridge

Happy birthday to us

The Australian Association of Adult Education (AAAE) was founded at a meeting in Hobart, Tasmania, in 1960 and subsequently renamed itself Adult Learning Australia. This year marks Adult Learning Australia's 60th anniversary and our Board members share their reflections on this milestone.



Catherine Dunn

Lots to admire

Congratulations, ALA, on your 60th birthday! Since you and I first met 20 years ago, we have worked together in various ways: on joint projects, national committees and through the ALA Board. I have always been highly impressed by your enthusiasm, dedication, informed stance and diligence in promoting adult community education. You've made a major contribution supporting the sector as a whole, from advocating for recognition and investment from government, providing development for educators, and building awareness across the community, while always keeping the spotlight on learners. I have also admired how you have weathered the tough times, showing resilience and determination to fly the flag for ACE and lifelong learning. Your mission is so valuable and worthy, I want to see you succeed and prosper for decades to come. Congratulations to ALA, and all the crew past and present, who have brought you to this milestone. Three cheers for ALA!



Donna Rooney

Waving the flag

My first encounter with ALA was in the late 1990s. At that time there were state branches, and I attended my first NSW Branch meeting at the University of Technology Sydney. While state branches no longer exist (and Roger Morris doesn't bake cakes for ALA meetings anymore) some things remain familiar: NSW Community Colleges (while fewer in number), Neighbourhood Centres and other not for profits remain committed to adult community education. I continue to be encouraged by the way this diverse and fragmented sector continues to work together creatively through challenging times under the unifying umbrella of ALA. Happy 60th ALA!



Robbie Lloyd

Person-centred learning

Recently I attended the 50th anniversary of Currambena School in the inner north shore of Sydney at Lane Cove. I had taught there for three years in the mid to late seventies, in one of Australia's first alternative or child-centred schools. Today the school is still thriving. Likewise, adult education in Australia has gone from strength to strength with the help of Adult Learning Australia and its allies in adult community education. We desperately need ALA to grow and thrive. Replacing the chronically ill schooling model, that still besets young people and their parents, with a model that respects the learner as the core of the experience. And honours them above the curriculum, the test or exam, the timetable and the certificate awarded at the end of it all. Hear, hear ALA! Go on showing the world that the principles of adult learning are needed for adults of all ages and stages of their lives. If we can get the adults in parliament to undertake some new learning, perhaps they will see how they need to allocate a whole lot more to the budget for this sector, and thus empower adult community education to help Australia get out of its rut.



Sue Howard

Reaching a milestone

Having a milestone birthday is always a great event to celebrate. It's especially so for an organisation like Adult Learning Australia. The organisation's name has had a few iterations over the years but has maintained the same core focus on supporting its members and adult learners who are taking on community learning of all types. Over the years, the organisation has successfully weathered a range of policy changes at both federal and state levels and come out with flying colours and a more consolidated approach. Happy birthday ALA.



Ros Bauer

All types of learning

ALA's vision of learning as life-wide and life deep appeals to my own philosophy and belief that social practice learning is equally as important as formal learning. What I most enjoy about being a board member is the opportunity to influence and comment on policy that has a direct impact on the lives of learners across the lifespan. ALA is unique in that it has a history of representing the application of learning of all Australians, regardless of the context. ALA has no intention of retiring, as the robustness and need for the sector continues to be just as important into the future as it has been over the past six decades.



Annette Foley

A great contribution

Congratulations to ALA on its 60th anniversary. The contributions of ALA over these past 60 years to the adult education sector in all of its iterations and through all of the policy agendas and priorities, is significant. I see myself as privileged to sit as a new board member and to contribute to the next phase of ALA's work. The 60th anniversary gives us an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on the important work of ALA over 60 years and to look ahead to the next phase. We are now in a new era, with different priorities, pressures and challenges in the adult education arena. Australia, like other countries, faces environmental challenges, rural and regional challenges, greater diversity in the population, an ageing society and challenges for some young people negotiating education and training. In all of these areas, ALA has advocated for lifelong and life-wide learning to support and assist individuals and communities. There is certainly no prospect for retirement for ALA because its work to influence policy, provide advocacy and work alongside communities as we move into the next decade continues. Happy Birthday ALA!

Photo: [Adi Goldstein](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Tips for using Instagram

More educational organisations and community groups are turning to the visual storytelling platform Instagram to connect with current and future learners.



Here's some tips on using Instagram:

1 Spot the difference

On Facebook you can share links, provide information, message and play games. Instagram is strictly focussed on telling stories with photos and videos using your smartphone.

2 Engagement rules

People engage up to 10 times more with posts on Instagram than they do on Facebook. Changes to Facebook that prioritise posts shared by friends and family in newsfeeds have made it harder for organisations to reach audiences.

3 Attract a different audience

While Facebook growth has slowed the number of Instagram users has been steadily climbing year on year. Of the 9 million monthly users in Australia, the biggest group are people aged 25 to 34 and over half of users are women.

4 Entertain and inspire

Think about who your ideal audience is and tell stories that connect. Choose visuals that show something about your people, the work you do and the difference it makes to your learners and community.

5 Build relationships and trust

Be social. Like, comment, reply, and respond to direct messages and seek out other users to develop relationships with. How often you post is up to you but be consistent and aim for quality posts over quantity.

Get creative and share content that is useful, relevant and entertaining for the people you want to connect with. Try some of these ideas: post a how-to video, share tips, go behind-the-scenes, record an interview, post a before and after scenario. Have fun.

6 Be social

Form friendships with like-minded organisations. Build their following at the same time as you do your own by commenting on their posts and giving shout outs. Familiarise yourself with Instagram etiquette. Use search to find accounts and topics to follow.

7 Take it to the classroom

Instagram offers lots of opportunities for activities around adult literacy, language learning and communication. Adult learners can develop skills in digital storytelling, understanding metaphor, composing captions and creative self-expression as well as documenting field trips and developing social networks out of class.

8 Think video

There's a growing appetite for video on Instagram. Share videos to show people at work, record an interview with someone you've helped or publicise an upcoming event. Do users a favour and add captions using one of the free tools that enable you to do this.

9 Get happy with hashtags

You can follow hashtags rather than people on Instagram which means you'll get posts in your home feed from other people with the same interests. Use targeted hashtags to connect with like-minded people on a specific topic and increase your visibility with the people and organisations you want to reach.

10 Set up a business account

Instagram's activity icon lists all the recent likes and comments you've received on your posts. Having a business account gives you extra functionality. You have access to analytics so you can keep track of how your posts are performing and a contact button enables users to get in touch with you.

Photo: **Cristiano Firmani** on **Unsplash**

ACE news from around Australia

ACE update



In **WA**, Linkwest is looking forward to Neighbourhood Centre Week 2020 which begins on May 8. Western Australian Centres have always enthusiastically participated in this celebration of the network of 1000+ Centres around Australia. With the emergence of COVID-19, the 2020 theme for Neighbourhood Centre Week—Loneliness: the solution is community—is particularly apt, as Western Australian Centres embrace practical and creative ways to keep their community connected in a time where social distance is being recommended. To find out more about the week, visit: neighbourhoodhouseweek.com

In **VIC**, ACEVic is continuing to grow in membership and offers a range of support and professional development to Learn Local organisations – not-for-profit providers of education and training in community settings. The quarterly Executive Exchange sessions are proving a popular event for Learn Local managers and leaders to network and engage in professional development. At the most recent event the Manager of Health Promotions Maya Ravis from VicHealth shared current health promotion principles and practice and highlighted ways in which the ACE sector can partner with VicHealth. ACEVic is also planning their annual conference on July 30 and 31st, with a theme of the impact of adult and community education for individuals and communities. acevic.org.au

In **VIC**, Minister for Training and Skills and Higher Education Gayle Tierney launched the 2020 Learn Local Awards at Joan Kirner House, Williamstown Community and Education

Centre on February 11. Attendees included Ms Maria Peters, Chairperson, Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board, ACFE Board and Regional Council members, Department of Education and Training staff and representatives from a range of Victorian peak bodies and Learn Local organisations. The Awards acknowledge outstanding learners and the practitioners who support them, as well as the contribution the Learn Local education and training network makes to the Victorian community. Awards participants have the chance to share in \$70,000. Nominations close at midnight on Monday, 29 June.

In **SA**, Community Centre SA (CCSA) is running a campaign to reverse recent Adult Community Education (ACE) funding cuts. In 2019 the State Government cut \$1 million from the ACE Budget, representing one third of the annual funding to ACE programs in 39 community centres and other ACE providers. Additionally, ACE funding to CCSA was cut by 34%. This funding previously represented 63% of the organisation's core funding. These cuts may result in the termination of many ACE programmes and jeopardise the continuation of some centres. Additionally, a decline in the number of ACE participants in pathway programs to take up employment can be expected. The campaign runs from Friday 13 March to Friday 24 April and calls for immediate action and the reinstatement of funding that supports a core function of the sector. communitycentressa.asn.au/capacitybuilding/ace-funding-cuts

In **TAS**, TasTAFE (a member of the 26TEN, a network of organisations and individuals working to improve adult literacy and numeracy) is offering their Tutor Adult Literacy



Learn Local Awards launch at Williamstown Community Education Centre.

Minister for Training and Skills and Higher Education Gayle Tierney (centre) with Lynne Hewet, WCEC Education Coordinator (left) and Mark Brophy WCEC manager (right).



ACE update (cont.)

Learners course online and free for Tasmanians. The 10-week course is delivered flexibly with online learning and will increase the pool of adult literacy tutors in workplaces and communities able to assist others to develop reading, writing and maths skills.

In **NSW**, CCA has welcomed the general terms of reference for the state government's VET review. CCA has also released statements on sustainability and climate change and has encouraged its members to embrace environmentally sustainable strategies. It has also released a discussion paper on the role that Australian adult and community education providers can play in sustaining Australian democracy and supporting civil society. cca.edu.au

Nationally, ALA's webinar based professional development program has kicked off with strong interest from adult educators around Australia. Adult Learning Australia and ACEVic have been successful in a joint application to design and deliver a professional development program for Learn Local literacy and numeracy practitioners. The program will be delivered across Victoria as part of the Victorian State Government's strategy to increase capability in the sector.

ALA continues to advocate for the sector, most recently in preparing a Pre-Budget Submission which makes 12 key recommendations to the Commonwealth Government. The submission argues the case for a Lifelong Learning Policy and the need for a National Adult Literacy Strategy that prioritises language, literacy and numeracy in various contexts, including the workplace.

ALA continues to represent adult and community education as a member of the Commonwealth's VET Stakeholder Panel, and as a member of the Reading Writing Hotline steering committee.

This year marks ALA's 60th anniversary and plans are underway to launch a brief history that celebrates ALA's role as the oldest and only truly national peak body for adult education in Australia and a special issue of the *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* towards the end of the year. In the meantime, ALA is sharing snippets from its archives and reflections on the anniversary through social media using the hashtag #ALA60.

ALA currently has three Board vacancies and nominations for Board positions close on March 27 and results of the elections and new Board members will be announced at the AGM on 8 May.



Photo: **Pink Lake** by **WMO** CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

You can find previous issues of Quest and individual stories for sharing on our website. ala.asn.au/stories

QUEST

Quest is the national magazine for adult and community education. It is published four times a year by Adult Learning Australia.

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2020 ALA Executive and Board

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