

# WAALC AGM 2014

## Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL) Report

The Australian Council of Adult Literacy (ACAL) is the peak organisation for adult literacy and numeracy in Australia. WAALC is one of six state literacy councils affiliated with ACAL. We pay a small affiliation fee annually on a per member basis. See <http://www.acal.edu.au/> for further information about ACAL activities.

Western Australia has two WAALC members on the ACAL executive this year: Margaret McHugh and Audrey McAlindon.

### **Lobbying/Liaison**

#### Letter to Minister Macfarlane

The President wrote to the Minister in June to reinforce the importance of providing on-going funding for adult literacy and numeracy programs including the Adult LLN Practitioner Scholarship scheme. The letter advocated for embedded LLN officers in workplaces, continuation of funding for the *Reading Writing Hotline*, a focus on family literacy programs and more emphasis on pre-service training for teachers in the adult sector in tertiary institution education faculties. The Minister's response was received on 18 July and referred to the Governments \$1.4 billion Skills for Education and Employment Program. There were no specific commitments nor any interest indication in finding out more about the issues raised by ACAL.

#### Letter to Australian Council of Dean of Education

ACAL letter to the ACDE asked the Deans making two requests:

1. Expressing the ACDE's voice of support to the Commonwealth Government to maintain the Adult LLN Practitioner Scholarship schemes that have enabled many practitioners in recent years to obtain a qualification, including from universities, to work in our field; and
2. Including adult literacy and numeracy teacher education programs in the suite of teacher education programs to continue to attract Commonwealth Supported Places in higher education institutions. The adult education workforce has increasingly become a casualised workforce, and a full-fee paying regime would not attract new teachers into the field.

The response invites ACAL to provide advice in how best to approach the Minister(s).

### Representation

The ACAL President attended a number of meetings to receive information and/or provide advice from ACAL including:

- Department of Industry – post budget VET reform and Industry Skills Fund
- C20 Summit – civil societies
- AiG – funding from Industry Skills Fund
- National Foundation Skills Strategy Project Group – Research to identify and qualify professional practice.

### Reading Writing Hotline Reference Group Meeting

A meeting was held on 17 December 2013 (the first for a year). There has been no firm commitment of on-going funding.

### Industry Skills Fund

ACAL has received an invitation to make a submission to the Discussion Paper and requests feedback from its stakeholders by 22 August. The Industry Skills Fund is worth \$476m. It may be possible to retain workplace activity similar to WELL (which no longer exists) though this fund.

## **Professional Development**

### Professional Profiles

ACAL has prepared a set of statements to define the skills, knowledge and practice of accomplished teachers of literacy and of numeracy to adults. These draft profiles are available for comment and feedback and will be workshopped at the forthcoming National Conference. This work by ACAL will contribute to the national research on practitioner standards being undertaken under the NFSS project.

### Webinar

The *Building Strength with Numeracy* webinar, presented by Beth Marr and hosted jointly by VALBEC and ACAL was held on 30 July 2014, was attended by almost 100 participants. The evaluation was positive, indicating that participants thought others would benefit from access. The usual problems with technology were noted.

### 2014 National Conference

The 2014 conference will be held in the Gold Coast and is hosted by the Queensland Council for Adult Literacy on 2 – 4 October. The title is: 'Literacy: a learning spiral for life'. The Keynotes speakers are:

- Professor Stephen Reder Professor of Applied Linguistics at Portland State University
- Professor Trevor Gale Professor of Education Policy and Social Justice, Deakin University
- Professor Diana Coben, PhD Director of the National Centre of Literacy and Numeracy for Adults, University of Waikato, New Zealand

### 2015 National Conference

ACAL is considering a proposal from WAALC and WATESOL to hold a joint ACAL/ACTA national conference in Perth in 2015.

### ACAL eNews

Exec is committed to issuing a regular newsletter and this follows each ACAL Exec meeting (approximately every 6 weeks.) WAALC committee members are asked to contribute copy. This can focus on WA events or achievements, or give accounts of initiatives in teaching and learning.

**Margaret McHugh**  
**Audrey McAlindon**

WAALC representatives on ACAL executive  
August 2014