

## **Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL) report to WAALC AGM 2010**

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: Cheryl Wiltshire as WAALC's elected ACAL representative and Margaret McHugh in the position of Past President.

As we no longer have our journal Literacy Link to publish in-depth information about issues affecting the adult literacy field, here is a snapshot of the issues for ACAL during 2010.

### **Consultation National English and Mathematics curriculum**

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) released the draft senior secondary Australian Curriculum for English, mathematics, science and history (at [www.australiancurriculum.edu.au](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au)) for public consultation from 14 May through to 30 July 2010. ACAL will have one representative at forums about the English and Maths courses in the third week of July.

Teachers and other stakeholders in the broader education community are able to review the curriculum materials and provide targeted feedback through an online survey. This will include the options of annotating the work, posing questions and providing written comments.

### **Conferences**

WAALC hosted the 2009 ACAL conference in Fremantle from 1-3 October 2009 with the theme "From Strength to Strength".

ACAL is now taking registrations for the Hands on... Hands up... which will be at Charles Darwin University from Darwin 9,10,11 September 2010.

### **LLNP contracts**

There was feedback from NSW members that there will be a major shift in provision due to the new contracts with some large TAFE Institutes in Sydney not receiving a contract for the first time ever.

### **ACTU Equal Pay Case 2010**

The ACTU, on behalf of unions, has applied to increase the award rates of pay for employees of Not For Profit organisations using the Equal Pay Remuneration Principle in the Fair Work Australia legislation, and held an Equal Pay National Day of Action to support this claim and to secure government funding for any pay increases realised.

A landmark equal pay case is underway to secure equal pay for women that work in the social and community services sector. These workers look after the homeless, the

disabled, children at risk, the elderly and other vulnerable people in our society. Yet they are among the lowest paid workers in Australia, largely because their work has been historically viewed as “women’s work”. The case will be the first to test the new equal pay provisions of the Fair Work Act and unions hope it will help establish an equal pay standard for other industries.

### **Incorporating LLN in Community Services Training Package**

Following scoping research, the Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council (CS&HISC) is undertaking national consultation forums and an online survey to obtain industry feedback on draft additions and changes to the Community Services Training Package (CHC08) to incorporate LLN competency. The draft changes are intended to assist volunteer tutors who provide adult LLN support, and workers in community services who work with clients with low LLN skills.

LLN Industry Consultation Forum Date: WA, Perth - Tuesday 27 July 2010

- Worker Qualification Framework (9:30am - 12pm)
- Volunteer Qualification Framework (12:30pm - 4pm)

### **2010 Budget announcements**

Australian Government announced an injection of \$120 million into foundation skills in the 2010 budget. Budget items included:

- A National Foundation Skills Outreach and Leadership Project (which includes, among other things, a National Strategy)
- \$67m for the Language Literacy and Numeracy Program
- \$15.7m for the Workplace English Language and Literacy Program
- \$13.1m for new community based foundation skills places (which are essentially an expansion and extension over four years of the Foundation Skills Taster Course Pilot Program)
- An extension of the Adult LLN Practitioner Scholarships Program

### **AiG Report**

The Australian Industries Group have received funding from DEEWR to conduct a research project to gather details from employers about the precise nature and extent of literacy and numeracy issues in the workplace.

A report has been released regarding the first phase. The second phase involves trialing solutions directly with companies.

### **Skills Australia**

Skills Australia released a paper in March 2010, ‘Australian Workforce Futures: A National Workforce Development Strategy’ making recommendations for a fundamental overhaul in the way the nation approaches and supports workforce development—at a national, industry and enterprise level.

The paper argues for strong support for LLN, recommends the development of a national adult language, literacy and numeracy strategy, and expansion of the national programs. However, it recommends increased funding for LLN – but solely through LLNP and WELL programs and doesn’t seem to address the issue of lower level quals

that many of the submissions raised.

<http://www.skillsaustralia.gov.au/publications.shtml>

## **Productivity Commission: Research into Education and Training Workforce**

The Productivity Commission is currently undertaking a research study to examine issues impacting on the workforces in the early childhood development, schooling and vocational education and training sectors. In relation to the VET workforce, the Productivity Commission is considering both the VET workforce as a whole, including trainers and assessors in enterprises, adult community education and community organisations, and the TAFE workforce as a subset, and provide advice on:

- Factors affecting the current and future demand for the VET workforce, and the required mix of skills and knowledge (including training pathways and the provision of 'second chance' education and training such as for migrant and Indigenous students).
- The current and future supply of the VET workforce
- The structure of the workforce and its consequent efficiency and effectiveness.

<http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/study/education-workforce/terms-of-reference>

## **NVEAC Blueprint**

The National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC) has been established to provide high level advice to the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE) to guide equity reform in the national training system. They are currently consulting on “Equal Futures: Achieving Potential through VET – Blueprint for change 2011-2016”. Foundation skills is a strong focus of the blueprint.

**Cheryl Wiltshire**

WAALC representative on ACAL executive

July 2010