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News from the Executive

New Members

It's great to report that we have had a surge in membership. Last year we welcomed Riverina Regional Library and Shire of Deniliquin. This year we welcome: Willoughby City Council, Moreton Bay Regional Library, Narromine Shire Council, City of Rockingham and Albury City.

We also welcome: Dr Gary Saliba and Brian Scantlebury.

Do you know of other potential members?

As we now introduced a personal category, you may know of committed people who may be interested in becoming members. A membership form is included at the end for this purpose. The individual subscription is \$50 per annum and is open to those without institutional support while the organisational subscription remains at \$330 as it has for the last 3 years.

Conference 2010..... & Nominations now open to host the 2012 Conference

This is scheduled for **Mandurah** in Western Australia for September 6 - 8. Both Chair and the CEO have visited Mandurah as part of conference planning. A progress report is included in this issue. Mandurah is part of a wonderfully attractive region. One way of attending the conference is to plan it as part of a more extended stay to explore the area.

Expressions of interests are now being sought to host the 2012 ALCN Conference. Nomination forms have been circulated to members.

Executive Outcomes

Our main endeavour has been the preparation of our **submission** to the Budget considerations forwarded both to the Treasurer and the Minister for Education, Employment, Workplace Relations and Social Inclusion. This document has already been forwarded to you and we welcome your support with this.

The Executive is looking at the difficult task of the **long term sustainability** of the ALCN Inc The Executive has adopted its revised **3 year plan & annual budget**.

ALCN Inc was successful in gaining a **government grant to assist volunteers** in each of the States. For more information contact your Executive member in your State or territory:

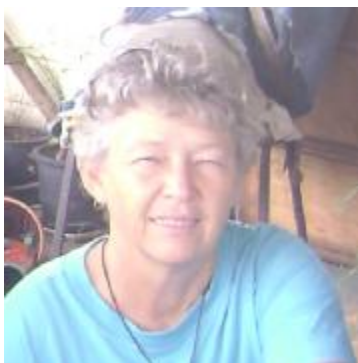
WA – John Hughes: SA – Sue Ross & Steve Fawcett: Vic – Jan Simmons:
NSW – Brett Gleeson: QLD – Kath McLachlan: Canberra – Vanessa Little.

Bendigo Bank National Project: Details have already been forwarded to you. If interested, contact straight away Jan Simmons on (03) 9736-1457.

Feedback invited

As an organisation, we are committed to helping all the practitioners in the field. This newsletter is one form of assistance. Strangely enough we do not get much feedback, either favourably or unfavourably. That may be due to the fact that we are all doing a marvellous job. That is a little hard to believe. More likely you are all hard pressed and can't find the time. But as we want to improve, we need to hear from you.

Meet your Executive Member Kathryn McLachlan



Kathryn McLachlan is a Community Development Worker for a non-government organisation in the small rural town of Stanthorpe in Southern Qld, working to build community capacity through self-empowerment. Her role in this position is to provide education, information and referral in the areas of child and family social well-being, as well as establishing and supporting community networks, project management and community needs analysis. She believes that community engagement is a foundational cornerstone for effective community development and that building capacity is dependant upon a strong communication network and effective inter-personal relationships.

Kath has a degree in Further Education and Training with a number of years experience in the training sector delivering basic computer programs and business modules, as well as conducting training needs analysis for the community services sector. She is currently completing a PhD with the University of Queensland in community engagement. Her thesis is titled: the Dialogue of Engagement: diving deeper into learning, using an action research methodology to examine the principles, processes and practices that facilitate transformational learning and build capacity and resilience.

Kath has been a member of the ALCN executive for the past two years, as a result of her involvement in the Granite Belt Learners' (GBL) group. GBL began in 2001 to promote lifelong learning on the Granite Belt and was instrumental in having Stanthorpe declared a Learning Community in 2005. In 2006 the group embarked on the re-development of the GraniteNet website. GraniteNet is a community owned and managed community portal that is

home to over 80 community groups, organisations and businesses. Check it out www.granitenet.com.au.

Meet new member - Gary Saliba

Gary Saliba is director of Strategic Journeys a management consulting company that assists people in organisations to develop strategies for today and tomorrow.

He works with a range of public and private sector organisations to develop and sustain learning individuals and learning organisations using a range of tools and techniques including systems thinking (considering issues as a whole rather than just the parts) futures studies- scenario planning (understanding what the future could look like), strategy development and values assessment.

Gary's approach is to work with people so that they become more aware of how they make decisions. The use of values assessment, exploring worldviews, beliefs and assumptions is foundational to his work with people to create a learning culture. By awakening to higher levels of awareness, people can participate in more informed decision-making and improved responsiveness and flexibility in an ever increasingly complex environment.

Gary holds a BSc(Hons), PhD and Dip Ed from the University of Sydney. He is a Visiting Fellow at the Crawford School of Economics and Government at the Australian National University and Adjunct Professor at Charles Sturt University.

Gary is currently working on the future of the Kimberly region and assisting in developing learning communities with Aboriginal people throughout the area.



Australian Learning Communities Conference – Mandurah 2010 -

With the draft Australian Curriculum and new Indigenous Opportunities Policy major talking points, along with ongoing debate about skills and education, the Australian Learning Communities Conference 2010 is emerging as the – **must be there** - event of the year.

Add to that the fantastic location of Mandurah on the breathtaking Western Australia coast, and you're guaranteed a welcome and informative break from the daily stresses and strains of the office.

Representatives from the Department for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and Apple Australia will be key speakers. Inspirational library leader Viv Barton from the City of Stirling has also agreed to speak. These and other speakers will be confirmed on our website shortly, so please keep your eyes on www.mandurah.wa.gov.au for the link.

Attendance by the not-for-profit sector is being encouraged, so organisers are discussing the possibility of sponsoring conference spaces. This will ensure a diverse group of participants.

Conference Themes:

Sustainable Communities
Social Inclusion
The Indigenous Community
e-networks

We will shortly be circulating a call for papers.

Conference Fees:

Early Registration Fees
ALCN Member: \$465
Non-member: \$540
Student/ Concession: \$465

Conference Organisation

To get involved or ask a question:

Please contact: John Hughes

at the City of Mandurah:

johns.hughes@mandurah.wa.gov.au

(08) 9550 3711

The format of the Conference will be:

Monday September 6

Arrival & Registration/ Drinks Reception

Arrival and Accommodation: The City of Mandurah has a great relationship with the stunning Sebel Hotel - there will be discount room rates for conference delegates: www.mirvachotels.com/sebel-mandurah . We'll soon be circulating other accommodation, but contact our Visitor's Centre for more information: www.visitmandurah.com .

Drinks reception: overlooking the beautiful Mandjar Bay, with tempting dining offers to become available later.

Tuesday September 7

Conference / ALCN Conference Dinner

The conference will be held at the Mandurah Performing Arts Centre, located on the estuary: www.manpac.com.au. Following feedback from the 2008 conference, there will be plenty of time for you to network with your fellow delegates.

Wednesday September 8

Conference Second Day

We're going to cram a lot into the final morning, so that you have the afternoon to explore Mandurah's waterways or head for Margaret River and the delights of the South West. This is one conference where you will want to bring your partner and make a week of it.....



Getting there on Monday 6 September:

Adelaide – Perth - **\$99** – Jetstar
Sydney – Perth **\$189** – Virgin Blue
Melbourne – Perth **\$179** – Virgin Blue
Perth – Mandurah **\$8.70** – Transperth – every day of the week!

City of Rockingham

Becoming a Learning City.

The City of Rockingham has recently joined the Australian Learning Communities Network as we work towards becoming a Learning City.

The City of Rockingham is a large outer metropolitan local government area covering 261 km², located 47 kms south of Perth in Western Australia.

It boasts a long and pristine coastline as well as semi-rural areas which are rapidly becoming developed. The City which has a population of 97,000 is experiencing rapid growth.

In the way of formal education, Rockingham has a university campus, a Tertiary and Further Education campus, 24 primary schools and 5 high schools (public and private). Our 3 major libraries provide a better beginnings program and children's story time, and the city is involved in the Early years Group, facilitating early years assessment and programs. The City also funds the University Chair in Education, thereby facilitating research into the learning needs, challenges and opportunities within our community. Others are involved in University of the third Age and such like programs. However, the City wide efforts have been provided in relative isolation of each other, so we have decided to harness the energy and expertise of all parties in one direction.

Consequently Council has formed the Rockingham Education and Training Advisory Committee, with key community stakeholders, to help create a strategy that would see us develop into a learning city.

The group is made up of City of Rockingham staff from the community capacity building and economic development teams, TAFE and University staff and students, as well as industry representatives. The passion and experience in the group for education and learning is sure to see us be successful in our aims. We have a diverse group, who all bring a great deal of knowledge about their speciality areas to the table.

As a group we are hoping to increase the numbers of students attending school in the area as statistics show this to be a priority within our City. We also hope to create a

culture shift within the City. We want to inspire and empower people to become active learners over their lifetime, and provide a community where learning is valued.

At this stage we are in the process of mapping the educational opportunities and pathways that already exist within the City. We are hoping that this will then help us to see where the gaps lie, and what our priority areas are. From this a strategy can then start to emerge, and partnerships and programs developed.

We have spent considerable time researching other Learning Cities in Australia, and have been encouraged by the success we have seen. The Australian Learning Communities Network has helped us to find some direction, and to start taking the steps towards becoming a Learning City.

We look forward to having more contact with other Learning Cities as we move forward, and would love to hear from people with any tips and advice. As the executive assistant for the committee please feel free to contact me at sally.lewis@rockingham.wa.gov.au should you have any queries or wish to discuss matters of common interest.



Members of the Rockingham Education & Training Advisory Group: from left - Gay Thornton, Jillian Obiri-Boateng & Sally Lewis.

Learning Communities Catalyst



Australian
Learning
Communities
Network Inc

This website is yours and we would love you to use it. Check out this website at www.lcc.edu.au

News from NSW- ACT

The NSW/ACT Learning Communities Network met at the State Library on Friday 26 March with representatives from the Snowy River, Gwydir and Deniliquin Councils, and the Riverina, Willoughby and Parramatta Library Services present. The focus of the meeting was how to promote the learning community concept to other Councils, the State Government and peak bodies, such as LGSA.

Even though it is late notice, we are trying to get some time during the Shires Association of NSW Annual Conference in May for Gwydir Shire Council Mayor, John Coulton, to speak on learning communities. John is a passionate advocate for learning communities and will make the most of this opportunity to promote to Councillors and Council staff. We also are planning a meeting with Bruce Miller, President of the Shires Association, and Genia McCaffery, President of the LGA, to promote learning communities as a positive move forward for local government. Deniliquin are planning a learning communities forum for later in 2010 and there is a learning communities session in the NSW Public Libraries Conference in Albury in July.

As Network members have so far to come for meetings, we have created a blog to facilitate communication and information sharing. The blog includes links to relevant sites and a calendar for members to post their learning events on. All Network members have author rights on the blog.

Though this was only our 2nd meeting, all those who attended the meeting felt it was well worth the time and cost to meet. Many thanks to Megan Perry (Manager, Community Learning Services at the State Library), who organised the venue and provided a very informative presentation on the variety and depth of State Library resources available online. To finish a very successful meeting, Megan then took us on a very entertaining tour of the State Library's Celebrating the Mitchell Library Centenary exhibition that was brought to life by Megan's stories, knowledge and enthusiasm. A fitting 'learning opportunity' to end our meeting.

NSW & ACT Network contact:

Janice Biggin Janice.biggin@act.gov.au

Debbie Best dbest@parracity.nsw.gov.au

Brett Gleeson b.gleeson@hcc.nsw.edu.au

Ghosts from the Past

by Elaine Henry -CEO The Smith Family

Today, 43.5% of working age Australians have literacy skills below the minimum level COAG considers is required to meet the complex demands of work and life in modern economies (the figure is even higher for numeracy at 49.8%). The people with the lowest basic skills are those in disadvantaged areas, where three out of five Australians of working age have poor literacy skills and two-thirds poor numeracy. We have now usurped the US as the most obese nation in the world, and the mental health of our youth has deteriorated to such an extent that suicide has become the single greatest cause of death for those under 35. These statistics would be a serious worry in a developing country, but in a rich country such as Australia, they are alarming.

Most, if not all, of the challenges Australia now faces have their roots in poor educational experiences and the breakdown of first, the extended, and then the nuclear family units. To right past wrongs, we need to invest in a new approach to education that recognises the multitude of skills that kids need to thrive in a modern society, and the relationships they need to support them in their learning across the life course, from birth right through to lifelong learning. As Stephen Heppell, a leading innovator and thinker around education from the UK said: "In history, what our grandparents did with medicine transformed the world. We now have the opportunity to do the same thing with education, if we are brave enough to do it."

Just over a decade ago, The Smith Family underwent a comprehensive organisational transformation to ensure those we were supporting would not be left behind in the new knowledge era. International evidence and the families with whom we were working had made it clear that a very different, preventive approach would be required, moving from a welfare-oriented model to that of a social enterprise, focused on unlocking opportunities for kids and parents using education as the key. Over the course of seven years, we developed a suite of literacy programs known as Learning for Life, to provide disadvantaged children and their families with the opportunities to develop the skills and capacities they needed to succeed, using

evidence of best practice from across the nation and overseas.

These skills include comprehension literacy (traditional reading and writing) but also emotional, health, financial and digital literacies – even an understanding of how to respect and embrace cultural differences in an ethnically diverse society through what we call intercultural literacy.

Today, more than 65,000 individuals participate in these programs from birth all the way through primary, secondary and tertiary education and **into lifelong learning** (*our emphasis*). And, most importantly, they are connected to a cascade of relationships with significant others from the broader community, who contribute their time, talent or dollars as sponsors, donors, mentors and volunteers that take them across the line to a better future.

Inside the classroom, things are also changing, with federal and state governments now beginning to explore new models of schooling that reflect the importance of connecting and leveraging the skills of stakeholders across the community **to support a continuum of learning beyond the school gates** (*our emphasis*). The issue of education is also now firmly on the policy agenda and uppermost in the public mind, with the considerable numbers that logged onto the recent launch of the My School website clearly demonstrating the unprecedented level of interest Australians now have in the future of education in their country, and the many divergent views around the kind of change that is required to move us forward. As US President Barack Obama affirmed last year: ‘Education and innovation will be the currency of the 21st century’.



The above article is reproduced with the kind permission of Elaine Henry, CEO, The Smith Family. In our early days, the Smith Family was a great supporter of our work and you will find that their great programs are a great resource for learning communities

ACT gets new smart library

The Canberra community received an early Christmas present on 17 December 2009 – a new library.

In May 2009, the ACT Government allocated funding in the budget to create a new library in Canberra’s inner south: \$890,000 in capital construction funding for the 2009-2010 financial year, and \$3.29 million in operational funding over four years. A commitment was made to open the library before Christmas the same year. This deadline was met, with the library completed in six months, a period of time which must be close to a record.

Kingston Library, the ACT Public Library’s ninth branch, is located in a shopfront in a popular local shopping precinct. Nearby cafes, restaurants and shops all contribute to passing traffic and encourage linked trips to the library.

Designed by BVN Architecture, and constructed by Capezio & Co, the library features:

- RFID, including self check out and a smart chute for returns,
- Wireless internet access,
- Public Internet PCs,
- An XBOX 360,
- Playaway digital audio books, and
- Two large LCD screens with rotating library information.



The inclusion of RFID ensures Kingston Library is in keeping with the technology installed at other ACT Public Library branches in 2009. Kingston is however, the first of the libraries to install a smart chute. The smart chute provides increased security by recognising the RFID tag on library items, and unlocking the chute for those items to be returned.

LCD screens are being used instead of traditional noticeboards which have a tendency to become untidy. The attention-grabbing screens require minimal space, and promote library services and programs, as well as community information. Mounting one of the screens in the front window of the library also enables the community to access this information when the library is closed.

Discussions are also underway in the hope of adding a bicycle rack and a dog hitching post, for those people who want to ride to the library or call in while walking their dog.

During the first week of operation, a lot of people commented that they were visiting the library for the first time in many years, and there were a number of people who returned on successive days to continue borrowing. On the first Saturday of business, a community day celebration was held with story time, face painting, giveaways, and a roving musician all contributing to the atmosphere of excitement:

We love our funky new smart library and would love you to visit and check it out for yourself.

Note: A selection of photos of the new library can be seen on the ACT Public Library's Flickr photo stream

www.flickr.com/photos/librariesact

ALCN seeking Federal support for Learning Communities

Australian Learning Communities Network (ALCN Inc) sees libraries at the forefront of learning communities; Libraries are more in line with ALCN Inc in that they see learning with a broad brush across the community rather than simply institutionally based education, important as that is.

The difficulty is that generally they are under resourced to really develop community wide activities. Particularly, ALCN Inc would really like learning community coordinators based in local government in, say, community development department or within the Library itself.

ALCN Inc recognises that for the most part libraries are part of the local government structure and for this reason the emphasis of the submission is towards local government.

It therefore proposes that the Federal Government fund a round of seeding

establishment grants for a reasonable period to local government to develop or enhance lifelong learning communities, based on a commitment from Local government to their continuation of the work after the conclusion of the funding allocations.

The full submission has already been forwarded out to you but another copy can be sought from CEO Mr Jim Saleeba at alcn@tpg.com.au

By itself the proposal is unlikely to get anywhere unless it can gain widespread support. There are just so many other competing organisations. We are trying to gain support from wherever we can.

We would certainly appreciate if you could find ways to register support to the Fed. Govt., to local members, to State Libraries and to the State Associations of Local Government.

Social Enterprise in Vic. Learning Com. Network

Social enterprises are social mission driven organisations which apply market-based strategies to achieve a social purpose. The movement includes both non-profits that use business models to pursue their mission and for-profits whose primary purposes are social. Their aim – to accomplish targets that are social and or environmental as well as financial – is often referred to as the triple bottom line. Many commercial businesses would consider themselves to have social objectives, but social enterprises are distinctive because their social or environmental purpose remains central to their operation.

The VLCN is offering 2 sessions on Social Enterprise.

On Thursday May 6th - 7.30pm with Peter Cox from the Bendigo Recycling Enterprise.

In June Neil Smith will run a whole day workshop. Neil was a co writer for the Brotherhood of St Laurence publication on Social Enterprise

For more information contact Jan Simmons (VLCN Chairperson)

jsimmons@morrison.org.au

(03) 9736 1457

Next contributions to Ripples

Send to learning@yarraranges.vic.gov.au by **June 25 2010**

Australian Learning Communities Network – Membership Application

I wish to join as an (please tick)

Institutional/organisation/Company member

Personal member (see over)

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other		Surname	
First Name(s)			
Position:			
Name of Organisation / Company/ institution:			
Address			
Post Code:			
<u>Contact Numbers:</u>			
Office Telephone:			
Fax No:			
Mobile:			
Email Address:			
The name of another contact if you are not available			
<p>Please return completed form to: email: alcn@tpg.com.au or post to: Australian Learning Communities Network Inc PO Box 664, Albury NSW 2640 phone: 02 6021 5690; Fax: 02 6021 0616</p> <p>Membership fee on application On receipt of the completed form, you will be issued with an invoice to pay.</p>			
<p>For the purpose of networking, I consent to the details of our membership being distributed to other members of ALCN Inc and on the Learning Communities Catalyst website and understand that this consent is for the purpose outlined above and can be revoked at any time</p> <p>I acknowledge that my membership details are a correct reflection of my personal situation (only applicable to Personal Membership)</p> <p>NameSignature</p>			