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## News from the Executive

### New Members

We welcome our newest members: Riverina Regional Library, Shire of Deniliquin.

### Conference 2010

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.

### Networks

There is great news here! Both Queensland and New South Wales have agreed to form state wide networks. Victoria is looking to reinvigorate itself next year with some events next year.

### Executive Outcomes

#### Advocacy - *gaining support and forming partnerships.*

In the last quarter we made the following representations on your behalf;  
Western Australia

Accompanied by members of the Mandurah City Council, our member organisation in WA, the CEO met with the CEO's of both the State Library of WA and the Local Government Association of WA to explore their support for the concept of learning communities and for the 2010 national conference.

#### Victoria

Jan Simmons and Jim Saleeba met with representatives from the State Library of Victoria.

### Introducing new Individual Membership

*Do you know an individual that would like to join the ALCN?* We have now introduced an individual personal category for members. A membership form is included in this edition. 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.

### International Exchange

The Pascal International invites you to join an Exchange. If you would like to be involved, an expression of interest is included in the email that accompanies this newsletter.

### Can we help?

The ALCN is committed to helping all our practitioners in the field. This newsletter is one form of assistance. If you need some help its possible others in the Network could assist you. Let us know and we will put your request out to members. Sometimes it is amazing the results that come from the collective knowledge of our membership.

*Our very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year*

## Meet your Executive Members

### John Hughes



I have been a professional librarian in London for the last 20 years, with a large focus on lifelong learning and library development. My last role in the London Borough of Lewisham was hugely rewarding building one new shared service library/leisure and medical facility combined and renovating 2 historic libraries, so that they became modern learning centres for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

I was particularly interested in your discussion of public libraries and lifelong learning, as before Lewisham, my roles have involved managing lifelong learning in several public library services in London and building partnerships and accessing funding. Helping to build and mould socially inclusive communities is one of the challenges I have been absorbed in and I am looking forward to working with you to find some answers with the communities we work in.

### Vanessa Little

Vanessa is the Director, ACT Library and Information Service, having been appointed to this position in October 2007.

Prior to this she was the General Manager, Learning Community with Hume City Council in Melbourne. Vanessa was recruited to lead a unique program adopted by Hume to address social and economic disadvantage through libraries and learning.

It was during Vanessa's tenure that Hume City Council developed the Hume Global Learning Centre, a state-of-the-art learning facility which includes the first ever public library in Broadmeadows.

Vanessa has also worked with Council and the community to develop the Hume Global Learning Village, which is a collaboration of over 300 learning providers across the municipality. Members of the Village include libraries, neighbourhood houses, ACE providers, schools, businesses, TAFE and a number of universities.

Previous to this, Vanessa was Senior Policy Advisor to the South Australian Government in relation to Information Technology and internet uptake in the community, health, small business and local government sectors.

Vanessa has qualifications in librarianship and business administration. She was the first woman elected to the National Council of Local Government Managers Australia, which is the professional body representing senior managers in local government. She has also been a board member of Adult Learning Australia.

In the mid 90's, Vanessa was Associate Director of the State Library of South Australia, managing South Australia's Public Libraries Information Network (PLAIN), a unique collaboration of all public libraries in SA.

Outside of her work, Vanessa is a keen Australian Rules Football fan, enthusiastically supporting the Adelaide Crows. Before moving to Melbourne from Adelaide in 2002, she was on the special events committee of the Eagles Football Club, the same club that her grandfather captained many years earlier. While living in Melbourne Vanessa was a National Board member of Riding for the Disabled.



## Australian Learning Communities Conference – Mandurah 2010 -

The dates are set and preparations are underway for the 6<sup>th</sup> biennial Australian Learning Communities Network Conference in Mandurah 2010.

Make a note in your diary, it will be:

### **Monday September 6**

Arrival / Registration/ Drinks Reception

### **Tuesday September 7**

Conference / ALCN Conference Dinner

### **Wednesday September 8**

Conference second day

This is a fantastic opportunity to plan and learn about the sustainable future of learning communities across Australia and the rest of the world. This is particularly, in light of the global financial crisis, challenges to the environment and the growth of the digital world.

**Are learning communities sustainable as geographic entities or is the world too rich in ideas and synergies to limit ourselves in this way?**

The conference will take place in the delightful resort City of Mandurah located on the Peel Inlet in Western Australia. Seventy four kilometres south of Perth, Mandurah is ideally located for easy access to Perth Airport and glorious South West Australia.

The venue is the fabulous Mandurah Performing Arts Theatre with a scenic view over Mandjar Bay.



This setting means that the Conference Dinner promises to be a special evening. Added to this is a variety of accommodation to suit every budget, from world class suites overlooking the bay and town to more affordable options throughout the city.

The City itself will make a marvellous venue for the conference and also serves as a gateway to South West Australia. The Yalgorup National Park, with Lake Clifton at its heart, is likely to be installed as a world heritage site in the near future, so come and discover the microbial thrombolites, one of the earliest forms of life on Earth, dating from 350 to 650 million years ago.



From there it is a short trip to the delights of Margaret River and the wineries and galleries of the south west. Hire a car and fill your senses with this beautiful country.

The conference program promises to be a stimulating debate in a wonderful setting with the possibilities of a long weekend to follow. Return flights to Perth from the Eastern States are starting from \$378, so get the dates in your diary:

**ALCN National Conference: Mandurah 2010  
September 6 to 8**

We'll see you there!

## Learning Communities Catalyst



**Australian  
Learning  
Communities  
Network Inc**

Have you seen the new, updated version of our website? This website is yours and we would love you to use it. You can read articles from around the world about learning communities, add events, find out the latest news about learning communities in Australia, and even download back issues of Ripples. Check out the great new website at [www.lcc.edu.au](http://www.lcc.edu.au)

## Social Entrepreneurship

Below is listed the main characteristics of social entrepreneurship which is considered a new global phenomenon, the policy objectives behind social entrepreneurship programmes and their impact on long-term policy decisions, including in the cultural sector. It seems to fit with the concept and ideals of the Learning Community.

The main characteristics of social entrepreneurship, outlined in diverse theoretical resources, are:

- Explicitly formulated mission to create and sustain social value and to benefit the communities;
- High degree of economic risk and autonomy in activities related to producing goods and/or selling services;
- Pursuit of new opportunities and exploration of hidden resources to serve that mission;
- Quest for sustainable models, based on well elaborated feasibility study;
- Ongoing engagement in innovation, adaptation and learning;
- Decision-making power not based on capital ownership;
- Participatory and collaborative nature involving various stakeholders;
- Limited distribution of profit and minimum amount of paid work;
- Change opportunities lying in the hands of every individual.

READ the full article on our website Learning Community Catalyst

## NSW- ACT forms Learning Communities Network

The primary outcome of the Learning Communities Forum held in Newcastle on 21 August was the enthusiastic endorsement of the exploration of the formation of a Learning Communities Network in NSW & ACT.

On 16 November a group of six met in Sydney to discuss the formation of the NSW Network. The meeting was chaired by Janice Biggin (ACT Library & Information Service) and included Debbie Best (Manager Library Services Parramatta), Claire Campbell (Manager Library Services Wagga Wagga), Michael Conallin (Manager, Corporate

Development, Deniliquin Council), Brett Gleeson (ALCN Secretary/Treasurer & Executive Officer, Hunter Community College) and Rod Smith (Training & Development Officer, Gwydir Shire Council).

The group undertook a critical appraisal of the 'pros and cons' of establishing a Learning Communities Network in NSW & ACT. It was noted that most other States had some form of network.

The advantages of establishing a NSW & ACT Network included the opportunity for sharing learning, providing a 'critical mass' to advance the learning communities movement, creating awareness and credibility of learning community initiatives, and providing a vehicle for advocating for communities and regions.

We also believed that a network would help its members to provide solutions at Local, Regional and State levels and create opportunities to support and learn from each other. The capacity for pursuing funding opportunities would be possible by a state wide network rather than individual members.

Most of all, the Network would promote learning and learning communities across the State and make a difference to our individual communities.

Being a well grounded bunch, we were realistic in what could be achieved in the immediate future given that as a fledgling Network we would have minimal resources at our disposal. We considered the amount of time and effort required to form and sustain a Network, the need to find ongoing resources to fund its activities and grow the membership and the risk of relying on a small number of busy people who hold other positions.

Being optimists and enthusiastic supporters of learning communities, we decided that the 'Pros' outweighed the 'Cons' and there were compelling reasons to form a NSW & ACT Learning Communities Network.

The group agreed to meet in March 2010 to develop a framework for the Network. We will consider how to attract and service members, support emerging learning communities, and raise the awareness of learning communities across NSW and the ACT.

The group considers that local government is a critical partner in the development of the Network and its members. The Network will be seeking opportunities to promote Learning communities at the NSW Shires' Association Conference in July and the LGSA Conference in October. We have also agreed to hold another NSW/ACT Learning Communities Network Forum (similar to the Newcastle Forum) in November 2010.

If you would like to know more about the NSW & ACT Network contact

Janice Biggin [Janice.biggin@act.gov.au](mailto:Janice.biggin@act.gov.au)

Debbie Best [dbest@parracity.nsw.gov.au](mailto:dbest@parracity.nsw.gov.au) 0

Brett Gleeson [b.gleeson@hcc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:b.gleeson@hcc.nsw.edu.au)

## QUEENSLAND forms LEARNING COMMUNITIES NETWORK



**Photo: left to right**

Gayle Kirkwood Chair Learning NQ Inc

Andrew Vann Vice Chairman Learning NQ Inc

Kath McLachlan ALCN

Barbara Pearson Member of Learning Communities Leadership Group

Members of the leadership group of Learning NQ Inc recently met with Kath McLachlan from the Australian Learning Communities Network (ALCN) to discuss the establishment of a Queensland chapter of the ALCN. This was a very productive meeting where participants refined the terms of reference of the QLCN and decided on actions for the next twelve months. The primary function of the QLCN is to build and strengthen learning community networks in Queensland. This involves fostering a culture of lifelong learning through a variety of means including information sharing, research, workshops and public presentations.

The group outlined a plan of action for the coming year which includes advocating for state coordination of learning; identifying other learning communities and learning organisations in the state and what space they

occupy and making contact with those that are like-minded. The group will meet again in early 2010.

The group would welcome other learning community groups in Queensland participating in the next meeting. So if you would like to join the QLCN please contact Judith Jensen [judith.jensen@townsville.qld.gov.au](mailto:judith.jensen@townsville.qld.gov.au) or Kath McLachlan [cdskath@halenet.com.au](mailto:cdskath@halenet.com.au).

## Lifelong Learning & Economic Development in Shire of Melton by Peter Blunden: Lifelong Learning & Social Development Melton Shire Council

The Shire of Melton's current Community Learning Plan (2008 to 2010) is nearing completion and we are beginning to dream our next plan.

To achieve our goals this year four clear developmental projects are being implemented:

- Inclusive Melton
- Eco. Development and Lifelong Learning
- Mapping and Linking Learning
- The Melton Project.

The principle that has guided our work has been the belief that cooperation and partnership between local government, private, voluntary and the education and training sectors is assisting us to achieve the twin goals of sustainable economic development and social inclusiveness. (Learning City Network (1998) *Learning Communities: a guide to assessing practice and progress*, Department for Education and Employment: London)

The main focus of this project is to increase the number of apprentices and trainees employed, supporting learning in the work place, and encouraging employers to employ locally. The strategy has been implemented in three parts. The *first part* was a workshop held with our Community Learning Board members and key stakeholders, the *second* a half day forum with all organisations that interface with business and industry and the *third* a business breakfast with over fifty businesses attending.



Photo: Business Breakfast workshop at Melton

Information has been gathered from the three forums and this is being analysed and collated into a report to the Community Learning Board. Recommendations made will guide action in 2010 and some will be incorporated into our next Community Learning Plan that will include a number of projects that we will progress immediately and some over the life of the next Community Learning Plan. An immediate outcome has been the contacts and means to quickly promote the Commonwealth Government's Apprentice Kickstart initiative.

[peterrb@melton.vic.gov.au](mailto:peterrb@melton.vic.gov.au)

[www.melton.vic.gov.au](http://www.melton.vic.gov.au)

## **Child Friendly Cities by Jo Patten Learning Cities Facilitator – Frankston City Council**



Frankston City Council recently hosted visits from Prof. Karen Malone, Professor of Social Sciences in the Faculty of Education at University of Wollongong. She is also Asia-Pacific Director of the global UNESCO-MOST Growing up in Cities (GUIC) project that focuses on children and youth researching their quality of life, and Chair of the Child Friendly Asia-Pacific network.

Karen's research about the importance of Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) for children's development has led her to become

an advocate for Child Friendly Cities. LOtC has been shown to improve many aspects of learning and development, including physical fitness, motor skill development, confidence, self-esteem, social competence and environmental responsibility. However, parent's fears about safety and school concerns about managing 'risk' are greatly limiting children's exploration of the world beyond backyards and the school ground. This denial of opportunities to develop the skills and resilience needed to be able to safely manage complex environments may have long-term implications for children's future development, health and well-being.

Australia has a culture of fear and insecurity about children getting themselves to school and roaming and playing. In her presentations Karen contrasted this with the Japanese culture, where children, including the youngest at primary school, get themselves to and from school. Many use public transport, and most play outdoors in the streets and parks after school. There is no adult supervision as we think of it here. Rather, it is the civic responsibility of all adults to keep an eye out for the safety and wellbeing of the children.

When Australian children are asked what they want to do with their time (as opposed to asking parents how their kids should be spending their time), much of it is taken up with unstructured play outdoors in the natural environment, and spending time with their families. The concept of a Child Friendly City is a step towards realising a vision of a people friendly city, in which "safe and supportive environments nurture children of all ages with opportunities for recreation, learning, social interaction, psychological development and cultural expression and promote the highest quality of life for its young citizens".

Karen presented her vision to Council staff, to participants of the TravelSmart project in Langwarrin, and to principals, teachers and community workers over breakfast. All of these audiences found her presentations to be very thought provoking and inspiring. Karen has planted the seed with many passionate advocates for Frankston City to become a Child Friendly City in the future.

**Next contributions to Ripples**  
Send to [learning@yarraranges.vic.gov.au](mailto:learning@yarraranges.vic.gov.au)  
by March 19 2010

## Australian Learning Communities Network – Membership Application

I wish to join as an (please tick)

Institutional/organisation/Company member

Personal member (see over)

<b>Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other</b>		<b>Surname</b>	
<b>First Name(s)</b>			
<b>Position:</b>			
<b>Name of Organisation / Company/ institution:</b>			
<b>Address</b>			
<b>Post Code:</b>			
<b><u>Contact Numbers:</u></b>			
<b>Office Telephone:</b>			
<b>Fax No:</b>			
<b>Mobile:</b>			
<b>Email Address:</b>			
<b>The name of another contact if you are not available</b>			
<b>Please return completed form to:</b>			
email: <a href="mailto:alcn@tpg.com.au">alcn@tpg.com.au</a> or post to:			
<b>Australian Learning Communities Network Inc</b> <b>PO Box 664, Albury NSW 2640</b> <b>phone: 02 6021 5690; Fax: 02 6021 0616</b>			
<b>Membership fee on application</b>			
<b>On receipt of the completed form, you will be issued with an invoice to pay.</b>			
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			
I acknowledge that my membership details are a correct reflection of my personal situation ( <b>only applicable to Personal Membership</b> )			
Name .....Signature .....			