

**Subject: ACAL eNews Feb 2008.2**

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**From:** ACAL <info@acal.edu.au>

**To:** ACAL <info@acal.edu.au>

## **ACAL eNews**

### **February 2008**

**ACAL eNews** is the electronic newsletter of the Australian Council of Adult Literacy (ACAL) and is distributed free to people interested in adult literacy and numeracy. See below for subscription details.

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#### **1. Literacy Live: Adult Literacy in the 21st Century – New literacy skills and new clients.**

**Monday 3rd March 8:00pm-9:00pm (AEST) in the Literacy Live Room at <http://www.acal.edu.au/litlive.htm>**

Our presenter, Steve Goldberg, has been the Coordinator of the Reading Writing Hotline since 2000 and has, in that role, overseen 40,000 enquiries. Steve has some special insights into where the new demand for literacy teaching may come from.

Some callers to the Reading & Writing Hotline are telling Steve and his team that they need help, not with basic literacy but with the skills to deal with all the new, complex digital environments and technologies they encounter in every aspect of their lives. "I feel overwhelmed by all the new technology around and inadequately prepared to take on new roles" callers often report. Many of these callers are older Australians, who have not been able to find suitable IT training courses or have enrolled in "beginner" courses and have discovered that the teacher expects them to have some pre-existing knowledge including the language of computers.

These people have a different educational profile from the traditional adult literacy student. They did not leave school with poor literacy and have had a lifetime of

success in employment and social environments. They are finding themselves newly disenfranchised by the rate of change and complexity of new digital technologies. Steve's question is "Should we start thinking about how we define our literacy service so that initiating people into the discourses of digital technologies becomes another of the primary roles of the adult literacy teacher?"

Come and join in a lively debate in the Literacy Live Room on Monday 3 March from 8:00pm - 9:00pm (AEST) about the future of adult literacy and listen to Steve's insider stories from the Hotline.

### **Getting into the room**

**RSVP by Feb 27** to <[mailto:acal@edu.au.au?](mailto:acal@edu.au.au?subject=Pls put me the Lit Live list for Mar 3)

[subject=Pls put me the Lit Live list for Mar 3](mailto:acal@edu.au.au?subject=Pls put me the Lit Live list for Mar 3) >and we'll send you the password

**Techno** – see <http://www.acal.edu.au> then 'Literacy Live then the right hand side bar for a PDF version

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### **2. ACAL has a new email address**

ACAL has changed the hosting and arrangements for it's web site.

As a result we now have an email address with our domain [info@acal.edu.au](mailto:info@acal.edu.au)

Please change your address book now.

The site is gradually being overhauled to reflect changes to our operations with sections on Literacy Live for instance.

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### **3. Free web hosting**

Our web site is hosted by <http://www.webhostsaustralia.com.au/> then 'Free Hosting'. This is available to not-for-profit groups and includes a generous amount of space and the full package of support available for commercial sites. Our admin person, Don, has been using them for many years and continues to recommend people to them.

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### **4. ACAL membership fees are now due**

Invoices will be sent to people shortly. Fees are unchanged at \$44.00 for an individual membership, or \$ 66.00 for an organisation (all costs incl GST).

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### **5. What's the story? The results of the Adult Literacy and Life Skills (ALLS) Survey Forum**

This successful forum was held on Tuesday Jan 29 at the CAE and was a joint event sponsored by ABS, ACAL, CAE and VALBEC. The 36 people who attended heard from Dave Tout who gave an overview of the survey and the numeracy, problem solving and health literacy sections that were introduced in the 2006 survey. Chris Duncan, Director, National Centre for Education and Training Statistics, ABS spoke in more detail about the process and outcomes of the survey in relation to other countries who participated. Pramod Adhikari, Senior Research Analyst National Centre for Education and Training Statistics, ABS explained more of the statistical detail with comparisons to the results from 1996.

This is important data to be used to influence government to develop and implement policy to address the literacy and numeracy levels of a large proportion of the Australian population. For more information and to download a summary of findings

[http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4228.0Main%20Features22006%20\(Reissue\)?](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4228.0Main%20Features22006%20(Reissue)?)

[http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4228.0Main%20Features22006%20\(Reissue\)?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4228.0&issue=2006%20\(Reissue\)&num=&view=](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4228.0Main%20Features22006%20(Reissue)?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4228.0&issue=2006%20(Reissue)&num=&view=)

[http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4228.0Main%20Features22006%20\(Reissue\)?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4228.0&issue=2006%20\(Reissue\)&num=&view=](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4228.0Main%20Features22006%20(Reissue)?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4228.0&issue=2006%20(Reissue)&num=&view=)

Or go to <http://www.abs.gov.au> and type 4228.0 in the ABS search field.

Check the ACAL website <http://www.acal.edu.au/> and Literacy Link for more information

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## 6. International status of our work

Sue Shore reports from South Australia on time for reflection at the UNESCO Regional Conference in Support of Global Literacy, New Delhi in November 2007. I am always curious about reports which claim 'international' status and so their relevance to my work in Adelaide, Australia. One session at the above conference reported on a 2005 study *International Benchmarks in Adult Literacy*. Some might feel this report is reaching its use-by date or not relevant to Australian settings. However I suggest the benchmarks offer provocative entry points to discussions about Australian LLN provision. For example "Literacy is a continuous process ... there are no magic lines to cross from illiteracy into literacy". No real arguments there. On the other hand one benchmark suggests facilitators should be paid the equivalent of the minimum wage of a primary school teacher for all hours worked (including time for training, preparation and follow-up) and that there should be a ratio of at least one facilitator to 30 learners. I was left wondering if we are we underestimating what can be achieved with groups here in Australia, or falling behind in wages and training? In the context of the 67 programs reviewed across 35 countries it was proposed that Governments dedicate at least 3% of their national education sector budgets to adult literacy programmes. A full copy of the report (900KB PDF) can be found at:

<http://www.campaignforeducation.org/resources/Nov2005/1.%20Writing%20Wrongs%20Literacy%20Benchmarks%20Report.pdf>

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## 7. Hats or cardigans?

Being a southerner, I can't work out whether I'll need a sun hat or a woolly cardigan when I go to the ACAL Conference - Surfing Outside the Flags at the Gold Coast in October. Any opinions?

2nd - 4th October 2008 at the Gold Coast

Details <http://www.qcal.org.au/>

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## 8. VALBEC Conference - Friday, May 16, 2008

### VALBEC turns 30 ...

Despite the ebb and flow of government funding, policy shifts and curriculum change, VALBEC and the adult literacy and numeracy fields it represents, continues to support large numbers of learners on their education pathways. 'Still glides the stream' is a motif for endurance that typifies the spirit, commitment and passion of VALBEC in its 30th year and provides the theme for the annual conference to be held on May 16, 2008 in Melbourne and celebratory dinner on Thursday evening, May 15. More <http://www.valbec.org.au>

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## 9. Literacy Link in your mail box soon

Literacy Link is ACAL's quarterly print newsletter with entirely different material to ACAL eNews – and it's free and is being printed 'as we speak'. To obtain your copy send your postal address to ACAL at [acal@pacific.net.au](mailto:acal@pacific.net.au). Recent back copies can be downloaded from <http://www.acal.edu.au> then 'publications'

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## 10. Unsubscribe

If you no longer wish to receive ACAL eNews, send us an email with <[mailto:info@acal.edu.au?subject=Pls\\_Unsubscribe\\_me\\_from\\_ACAL\\_eNews](mailto:info@acal.edu.au?subject=Pls_Unsubscribe_me_from_ACAL_eNews)> or send an email to [info@acal.edu.au](mailto:info@acal.edu.au) with 'Unsubscribe ACAL eNews' in the subject line. It would help if you could also identify what state you're from as you may be on a state list.

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## 11. Contact ACAL

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