

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 454 366

CE 078 895

AUTHOR Schwencke, Helen
TITLE Adult and Community Education: A Snapshot of the Conditions and Circumstances of Being a Community-Based Adult Community Education (ACE) Provider in South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria from September to December 1997.
INSTITUTION Adult Learning Australia, Inc., Paddington. Queensland Branch.
ISBN ISBN-0-646-37293-9
PUB DATE 1999-00-00
NOTE 115p.; Funding for the project was provided by the Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund. Adult Learning Australia, Inc., formerly Australian Association of Adult and Community Education.
AVAILABLE FROM Adult Learning Australia, Inc., Queensland Branch, P.O. Box 576, Paddington, Queensland, Australia 4064 (\$35 Australian).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative (142) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Education; Adult Programs; *Community Education; Curriculum; Delivery Systems; Developed Nations; Educational Research; Field Trips; Financial Support; Foreign Countries; Job Placement; Job Training; Nonprofit Organizations; Program Administration; Program Development; Program Implementation; Staff Development; *Student Financial Aid
IDENTIFIERS Australia (Australian Capital Territory); Australia (New South Wales); Australia (Queensland); Australia (South Australia); Australia (Victoria); Australia (Western Australia)

ABSTRACT

This report compiles information from a study tour to identify the current status, development, and issues of nonprofit organizations with voluntary boards of management that provide adult and community-based education (ACE) in Australia. An overview of the community-based ACE sector covers organizations in South Australia, Western Australia, Victoria, Australian Capital Territory, and New South Wales. Definitions of, philosophies of, and approaches to community-based education are provided. Examples follow of management structures under which community-based organizations operate. The next section covers organizational issues of a general nature raised as part of the investigation, varying from practical to sociopolitical issues. The following section addresses staffing and human resource management. Next, the use of organizational and management tools is addressed. The next section covers resourcing issues and their impact on ACE providers. Other sections address impacts of vocationalization; program delivery; peak bodies, networks, and other sources of support available to community providers; formal infrastructure and support for ACE in the states; ideas for good practices; recent developments that have had an immediate impact on ACE providers; findings; and recommendations. Appendixes contain 13 references; definition of ACE; list of resources collected; itinerary; study tour description; and interview proformas. (YLB)

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ALA Adult Learning Australia

(Queensland Branch)

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Adult and Community Education :

A Snapshot

of the conditions and circumstances
of being a community-based
Adult Community Education (ACE) Provider

in South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria
from September to December, 1997

by Helen Schwencke

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Acknowledgments

The Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund provided the financial support to make this sector development project possible. Thanks goes to this Fund for selecting and assisting this project.

I would like to thank the following people who assisted in developing this report:

ALA (formerly Australian Association of Adult and Community Education, (AAACE)) Qld Branch members

Ann Lund, Qld, and

The providers, peak bodies, other organisations and government agencies visited and/or interviewed, as listed in the itinerary, who all gave generously of their time, and in particular

ALA (formerly AAACE) (National Office and state branches),

Wendy Shearwood, Learning Centre Link, WA,

Alan Tonkin, Council of Adult Education, Vic,

Rosemary Neal, Community and Neighbourhood House Association, SA,

Robyn Maher, Evening and Community Colleges Association, NSW,

Donna Bain, ACE Council NSW;

Brownyn Clinch and Judy York, Community Adult Education Centres Association, NSW; and

Lesley Holzberger for the Board of Adult Community Education (NSW) for assistance with providing information to this project and assisting in identifying providers and key sector informants;

also Alan Tonkin, Council of Adult Education, Vic; Dea Morgain ANHLC, Vic;

Brownyn Clinch, CAEC Association, NSW; and Robyn Maher, Evening & Community Colleges Association, NSW, for significant feedback regarding the report content;

and Ros Kaiser for meticulous proof reading.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect those of the ALA Qld Branch.

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Adult Learning Australia (formerly Australian Association of Adult and Community Education) Qld Branch, PO Box 576, Paddington, Qld 4064

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication

Schwencke, Helen.

Adult and community education : a snapshot of the conditions and circumstances of being a community-based Adult Community Education (ACE) provider in South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria from September to December, 1997.

ISBN 0 646 37293 9

1. Community education – Australia. 2. Adult education – Australia. I. Adult Learning Australia. Queensland Branch. II. Title

374.8

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Explanation of Terms and Acronyms

AAACE	Australian Association of Adult and Community Education (from November 1998 renamed as Adult Learning Australia)
ACE	Adult (and) Community Education
ACFEB	Adult, Community and Further Education Board in Victoria
ANHLC	Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres
ALA	Adult Learning Australia (formerly AAACE)
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AVETMISS	Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard
BACE	Board of Adult Community Education in New South Wales
Community Management	This refers to the management of a non-profit organisation by a voluntary committee of management
DEETYA	Department of Employment Education Training and Youth Affairs (Federal)
ESL	English as a Second Language
IESIP	Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program, a program funded by DEETYA
ITAB	Industry Training Advisory Board
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Employment Education Training and Youth Affairs
NFROT	National Framework for the Recognition of Training
Non-profit organisations	Refers to companies, incorporated associations, cooperatives and other legal entities that do not provide a return or profit to their directors or management committees. The board or committee of management of these organisations is conducted by volunteers. Any surplus generated is retained within the organisation to foster growth for the organisation and the community it serves.
OTFE	Office of Technical and Further Education in Victoria
Provider	An organisation involved in providing adult and community education and/or vocational education and training

SCH	Student Contact Hours is a measure involving the length of a course and the number of students participating.
STB	State Training Board in Victoria
TAFE	Technical and Further Education Training and Further Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETEC	Vocational Education, Training & Employment Commission in Queensland
VETAB	Vocational Education & Training Accreditation Board, in New South Wales
WEA	Workers Education Association

Introduction

This report is the outcome of a study tour designed to investigate the current status, development, and issues arising for community-based providers of Adult Community Education (often referred to as ACE); that is, adult and community education provided by non-profit organisations with voluntary management committees or boards of management. It was intended to look into the practical aspects of what is involved in establishing and conducting community-based learning, and how such organisations are able to find support. The aim of the project involved compiling information to support and assist the emergence and development of the community-based sector in Queensland.

In conducting this investigation of ACE provision the following issues formed the basis for the collection of information:

- management structures involved in setting up and running a community learning facility
- organisational and other issues faced by providers
- operational issues faced by community providers, namely:
 - industrial relations
 - job descriptions and
 - the use of competency standards for ACE Managers
 - professional development
 - issues raised by providers
- funding and resourcing
 - partnerships with other organisations and relationships with funding partners/bodies,
 - philanthropic trusts,
 - access to funds to support particular clients whose group has low participation rates, eg. disability, and
 - operation within funding arrangements
- the range of courses/training programs offered. The range and scope of courses and programs delivered was found to be so broad that any analysis of it proved to be beyond the means of this project. Brochures were collected from every provider visited and a number of others. Analysing the programs is a possible further study.
- method of program delivery and industry placement for participants of vocational programs
- links with other sectors
- the support structures and networks available to community providers
- the formal infrastructure for community-based ACE provision in each state including legislative and policy frameworks.

The tour covered providers in South Australia, Western Australia, Victoria, Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales, and was conducted between late September and early December, 1997.

In all States visited, TAFE has a role in the provision of ACE. This role varies considerably from minimal to being the major provider, as in

Queensland. Given that the role of ALA is to promote lifelong learning in its diverse forms, it is important that this role of TAFE provision of ACE is acknowledged. However, while the provision of adult education in TAFE in Queensland is currently supported, to some extent, by the ACE Network within the TAFE structure, there is currently little support for the emerging community-based sector. Because of the limited resources and time available to the study tour project, the community based sector only is considered in this paper, except where these providers made reference to TAFE during the course of the investigation.

Study Tour Process

Context

ALA (formerly AAACE) Qld Branch has been working for many years to assist with the development and promotion of adult learning opportunities. It had done this by organising conferences and seminars, developing a Community Educator's Training Program, promoting Adult Learners' Week, producing two editions of a directory of community educators, and advocating for the establishment of an advisory structure for Adult and Community Education (ACE), amongst other activities.

With the expected formation of an advisory structure for ACE and the funding made available for community-based provision of vocational education and training, there was an increasing interest in adult and community education. ALA Qld Branch wanted to assist with the development of this interest in the community and to increase the association's knowledge base about developments in a range of Australian states. The Branch submitted a funding application to the Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund to undertake an information gathering project to investigate community-based ACE provision. This project was funded in August 1997. I was engaged as consultant to conduct the research aspects of the project from September to December, 1997.

New South Wales and Victoria were chosen because of the well-developed natures of the ACE sectors, and the substantial infrastructures available in these States. South Australia was chosen because of its relatively recent development of infrastructure, and Western Australia for its lack of formal infrastructure, its widely dispersed population and the work done by the sector's peak organisation. Three organisations in the Australian Capital Territory were also visited.

The perspective I adopted to undertake this investigation is that of seeking information to assist in the establishment of new community based providers and to find out what would be needed to support existing community based providers and a newly emerging sector in Queensland. This has resulted in a ground up perspective, written from the point of view of my understanding of the information obtained from the providers and others interviewed. The social and political context and influences, legislation, government policy and frameworks that impact on and/or support the sector are described in the final sections of this report.

Method

With the aims of the project defined as an information collecting exercise to gain an understanding of the conditions and circumstances of providers in four states, I proceeded to select suitable organisations for the study. Peak bodies and key adult and community education sector informants in South Australia, Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales were approached. I explained the nature of the project and sought contacts for

appropriate organisations to be visited and interviewed in their states. Attending the AAACE National Conference in Adelaide in September, 1997, and the Brainfood Conference in Melbourne in November, 1997, also provided contacts for appropriate organisations which had not been identified by others.

Interview pro formas were developed to gather the required information from providers, peak bodies and government agencies. These pro formas were adapted (slightly) as the study tour progressed. The pro formas provided a guide only to the types of information being sought from interviewees. It was important to also seek out other useful information, strategies and practices which could not have been predicted. Most interviews were of approximately two hours duration.

Organisations visited and/or interviewed

This table summarises the representatives from organisations interviewed as part of this study tour. For a detailed itinerary see Appendix 3

Table 1 – Summary of Organisations visited and/or interviewed

Providers	Peak bodies	Government / ACE Boards	Conferences
South Australia			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taoundi College • Aldindga Community Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community & Neighbourhood House Association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACE Unit • ACE Council member 	AAACE National Conference
Providers cont.: • WEA ^o ; • COPE; • Junction Community Centre; • Youth Care SA Inc; • Jack Young Centre for Seniors			
7	1	2	1
Western Australia			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridgetown Telecentre • Milligan House • Armadale Family Centre • Mundaring Sharing • Loftus Community Centre • WEDO (Women's Economic Development Organisation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Centre Link 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dept of Training, Strategic Services, Strategic Development & Advice Branch • Telecentres Support Unit • Dept of Training Mapping Project consultant (Nexus Strategic Solutions) 	
6	1	3	
Victoria			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaspe College of Adult Education Echuca¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACE Vic • ANHLC • Community House Network³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACFE Board • ACFE Regional Council (Central West) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainfood Conference
Providers cont.: • Merinda Park Community Centre ² ; • BRACE Stawell (formerly Grampians Community Learning Group); • Horsham Learning Centre; • Hopetoun & District Education Centre; • Continuing Education Bendigo; • BRACE ^o ; • Colac ACE ^o ; • Geelong Adult Training & Education (GATE); • Council of Adult Education ^o ; • Narre Neighbours ^o ; • Springvale Neighbourhood House; • Sandybeach Centre; • The Centre ^o ; • Continuing Education Centre (Albury-Wodonga) ^o ; • Warracknabeal Neighbourhood Centre & Learning Centre ⁴			
16	3	2	1

Providers	Peak bodies	Government / ACE Boards	Conferences
Australian Capital Territory			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuggeranong Community Service • Weston Creek Community Assn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Association of Adult and Community Education (AAACE) 		
2	1		
New South Wales			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern Suburbs Evening College ° • Northern Beaches Creative Leisure & Learning • Baraba Learning Association • Language and Literacy Program, WEA Illawarra 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Community Services Association ⁵ • ACE Council • Evening & Community Colleges Assn • Community Adult Education Centres Assn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Adult Community Education • Central West Regional Council • North Coast Regional Council 	
Providers cont.: • Central Coast Community College °; • Wyong Adult and Community Education; • WEA Hunter °; • Orange Community Resource Organisation; • Central West Community College – Orange Office °; • Tamworth Adult Education Centre; • Quirindi Adult & Community Education; • Wallabadah Adult Learning; • Raymond Tce Neighbourhood Centre; • Taree Adult Education; • Alstonville Adult Learning Association; • ACE North Coast °			
16, 12 Multi-ACE and 3 “other providers” and 1 other organisation	4	3	
Totals			
47	9	10	2

° Denotes self-identified large providers.

1. Campaspe College of Adult Education, Echuca, Gwen Smith, was interviewed at the Brainfood Conference
2. Merinda Park Community Centre, Melbourne, Marja Park, was interviewed at the Brainfood Conference
3. While the Community House Network is not directly considered a peak body, there are some support functions provided by this network
4. Warracknabeal Neighbourhood Centre & Learning Centre, Robyn Hewitt, was interviewed by phone and through completion of the interview pro forma
5. Local Community Services Association, Roy Bishop, was interviewed by phone

There was unexpected consequence of the method of selecting organisations to approach for a visit and interview. In Victoria only, two issues arose.

Firstly, in the initial process for identifying potential participants, only a few neighbourhood houses and community centres, or other community organisations were identified. Community and neighbourhood centres are acknowledged as an important part of ACE provision in Victoria. This was remedied by having some interview slots left available prior to my arrival at the Brainfood Conference. A number of these neighbourhood houses and

community centres were identified for inclusion at this Conference. Five community centres and neighbourhood houses were included in the investigation.

Secondly, very few small providers were interviewed. This was due mainly to the lack of availability of staff able to respond at the time the approach was made, or who could make themselves available at the time of my visit.

Broadly speaking the providers visited and/or interviewed fell into a number of categories. These are

- large providers, offering a range of programs, including the WEAs, Evening and Community Colleges, and a number of self-identified large providers in Victoria, some providing a broad range of programs and services, including employment services
- community learning centres, being small to medium size providers,
- community and neighbourhood houses and centres
- an employment services organisation
- community services organisations
- a telecentre

These categories are by no means mutually exclusive, or clearly defined. There is significant overlap between community services organisations and neighbourhood centres, also some overlap between community centres/ neighbourhood houses and community learning centres, and between some neighbourhood houses and large providers.

Analysis of interview information collected

The project was designed to develop a composite picture of how the ACE sectors across four states work. This involved developing an understanding of the organisations within each state's sector, and building a picture of the perspectives held with respect to developments within that sector.

The information gained from each interview, recorded as notes, was incorporated under the appropriate heading for the information. Mostly the information collected and written up is not identified to any particular provider. This was done to protect the identity of individual providers who were often very open and frank about issues facing them, and also because much experience was shared.

The process of writing up the information collected involved seeking new, contradictory, more detailed or nuanced aspects of each topic covered as each interview was processed. No attempt has been made to quantify any data as it was not the intention of the project to be a statistical analysis but rather a qualitative study. Not all providers discussed all the topics. Some had limited time available, others chose not to divulge certain information.

Overview of the community-based ACE sector

All organisations visited as part of the study tour were either non-profit companies, incorporated associations, in one case a cooperative, and in another established under its own Act of Parliament. Other than the commonality of their

- non-profit status,
 - agreement about a range of values and philosophies,
 - emergence to meet a community need, and
 - role as providers of adult education, and of other community services,
- there was a great diversity amongst these organisations.

South Australia

A 1996 ACE sector mapping exercise reported 324 self-identified providers. (Department of Employment, Training and Further Education, Adult Community Education Unit (1996)). The report categorised these providers into 11 different types of organisations. The three largest groups identified were community organisations, community centres / neighbourhood houses, and private, commercial providers. WEA SA is the largest single provider. Community centres and neighbourhood houses, many with a history of providing literacy programs, are often the most recognised part of the sector.

Approximately 100 providers are funded through the Adult Community Education Council (ACE Council). Funding is also provided to support regional coordinators.

The main peak body in South Australia is the Community and Neighbourhood House and Centres Association (CANH), which supports this group of providers within the sector with a range of services. Neighbourhood houses have a secondary role in providing ACE, and the bulk of CANH funding works to support the other neighbourhood house functions, through a coordinator and three regional officers (all part-time). There was little identifiable support for the sector outside of this association, other than that which is provided by the Regional Coordinators who are funded through the ACE Council. The Community Employers' Association was cited as being available to support management committees on a fee for service basis.

The ACE Council provided a grant of \$10,000 for Secretariat support for CANH, ALA (SA) and the SA Council of Adult Literacy. This funded a phone contact, membership service and provides basic administration support. This support ended in 1998.

ALA appears to play a strong role in advocacy for the sector, but does not have a role providing direct membership services to the sector.

Western Australia

Beyond Cinderella (p. 99) reports 80 community neighbourhood houses and learning centres. The Adult Learners' Week mailing lists for 1997 contained 171 providers, though this is a mixture of types of adult education providers. ACE activity, mainly in the form of literacy and general adult education programs and courses, is self-funded and heavily supported by volunteer tutors. Little accredited vocational education is delivered in the neighbourhood house/community learning centre parts of the sector.

An ACE Advisory Committee was established by the Department of Training to progress national and state policy issues in ACE. A mapping exercise has recently been completed.

The peak body for Community, Neighbourhood and Learning Centres is Learning Centre Link. This organisation provides membership services and support both for the provision of adult community education and for the community development and other associated activities of the member organisations. Learning Centre Link is funded by the Department of Training and by the Department of Family and Children's Services.

Telecentres form a part of adult learning provision for a geographically dispersed population, though they are not primarily ACE providers. Many are direct providers of external studies courses and satellite courses, however, their role also includes adult and community education through providing access, short courses and mentoring in the use of information and communication technology. Each telecentre is community owned and managed and is an incorporated body. They were set up to assist the local community's education, training, communications, information and enterprise needs, enabling communities to bring back services which have been withdrawn from rural areas. Telecentres are linked via satellite and internet throughout Western Australia. These Telecentres are supported by the Telecentres Support Unit within the Department of Commerce.

ALA is well regarded by the State's Department of Training and has a positive relationship with the Government Minister. It also plays a role in lobbying and advocacy.

Victoria

The term adult community education (ACE) is reserved by legislation to refer only to community-based, non-profit providers of adult and community education in Victoria (Adult, Community and Further Education Act 1991, s.3).

The sector, as recognised by the Adult, Community and Further Education Board, comprises about 650 funded community-based, non-profit organisations, consisting mainly of dedicated adult education providers and neighbourhood houses and community centres. Some other community-based organisations and education providers are also funded. A number of the providers are large, the largest being the Council of Adult Education,

which has been established under its own legislation since 1947. There are also large providers in a number of regional centres and outer-lying areas of Melbourne. Recently one large provider went into receivership and there have been some mergers.

Funding is available through the Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board, and is dispersed through Regional Councils. Other sources of funding are available through the tendering process from the Office of Technical and Further Education (OTFE). Providers fall into two categories with respect to accreditation. All funded providers are registered with the ACFE Board. All are funded on the basis of a formula involving student contact hours delivered. Some, mostly larger providers have also obtained private provider status through the State Training Board and are therefore eligible to tender for general training funding available through OTFE and the State Training Profile. Any registered ACFE Board provider can also access OTFE funding for a more limited range of courses, eg. basic education and English as a Second Language.

The ACFE Board requires that funded organisations have a clause in their constitutions that the provision of ACE is one of their primary roles. Between 50% and 60% of neighbourhood houses are registered with the Board, however it is estimated that 98% offer ACE programs.

The sector is currently supported by two main peak bodies. ACE (Vic) is an employer (that is, management committee and board) peak body working with ACE providers and the Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres (ANHLC). Further support is available to neighbourhood house and community learning centres through regional Neighbourhood House Networks, funded through the Department of Human Services. Historically the Council of Adult Education played a significant role in supporting the sector through a range of services including a bulletin board, AEON (Adult Education Online)

ALA does not play a significant role in Victoria. Providers are more usually members of the other peak bodies which provide direct support.

Australian Capital Territory

The Advisory Council on Adult and Community Education was established in February 1997 and released the ACT Policy on Adult and Community Education in July. The Council has developed a Strategic Plan for 1997-99, and has offered funding for a range of programs.

New South Wales

In NSW the scope of the adult and community education sector is defined as community owned and managed non-profit organisations, privately owned commercial organisations, government agencies, and charities (Board of Adult and Community Education (BACE) (1994). The role of the Board, p. 1). However, the BACE

“delivers its policy by cooperating with non-profit community owned and managed organisations ... whose primary role is to provide adult and community education”.

This consists of approximately 88 funded providers. About 71 providers are known as Multi-ACE providers and registered to deliver VET; the remainder are “Other Providers” who receive some funding to assist with non-accredited courses and programs. These funded providers comprise:

- eighteen metropolitan and six rural Evening & Community Colleges, and
- three WEAs, all of which are large providers, and
- Community Adult Education Centres which are substantially rural and regional providers, which range in size, but are mainly smaller operations with a staffing of one part-time staff member to four or five staff members.

The sector in NSW has three main peak bodies, the Evening & Community Colleges Association, the WEA Association and the Community Adult Education Centres Association. These three bodies have collectively formed an ACE Council in an effort to develop a whole of sector advocacy and lobbying body, and to represent the sector. The ACE Council organises an annual conference for the whole sector, and is involved projects such as the Quality Strategy.

Many neighbourhood houses and community centres offer some adult education programs. The Local Community Services Association, which is the peak body for the Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres has an interest in ACE. However, with a few exceptions for those funded under the “Other Provider” category, these organisations are not described as being part of the ACE sector, and are unable to gain access to funding to offer more programs.

Adult learning has also been promoted through other organisations and movements. The former Creative Leisure Movement, an umbrella organisation which lost its funding, has recently disbanded as an corporate body. This movement had associated centres which have been offering a wide range of learning opportunities to all age groups since 1924. Individual centres have become incorporated, and some are funded through the “Other Provider” funding.

Given that the amount of funding available is considered limited in NSW, tensions have arisen between the different types of providers about the formulas for calculating funding levels. These tensions played out between the peak bodies are not conducive to an ACE sector gaining greater recognition. Precious energy is given to intra-sector issues, rather than directed at gaining greater support.

The differences between the sectors in the various states is marked. This is especially so with respect to the inclusion of neighbourhood and community centres in other states, but not generally in New South Wales.

In writing this report some consideration is given to a broader range of organisations than that are funded as part of the sector.

ALA plays a very limited role in NSW, some providers were barely aware of its existence. The main recognition of ALA was through Adult Learners Week.

Queensland

Over 500 community-based providers are currently identified by mailing lists that have been compiled.

Since May 1997 Vocational Education and Training (VET) funding has been available for any community-based, non-profit organisation. Should this funding continue, the identity of a newly emerging sector will develop from

- groups involved in the Community Literacy Grants Program,
- re-invented Skillshares and organisations involved in employment services programs,
- those neighbourhood house and community centres who are offering programs and move into VET,
- other non-profit organisations such as clubs and sporting bodies, and
- community services who take on a training role.

This will create a sector that is very different from its counterparts in other states.

Currently in Queensland there are no peak associations offering membership and support services for adult and community education. The Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres have recently formed a peak association, the Community Centres and Family Support Network. It has only recently incorporated and is developing its roles. Currently it offers no membership services with respect to the provision of ACE by these houses and centres. Some re-invented SkillShares and employment services access the services of Jobs Australia (formerly the National SkillShare Association)

Given the diverse origins of a community-based sector in Queensland, there will be significant issues in developing a coherent identity for the sector. This will have many ramifications in terms of lobbying and advocacy for support and funding of the sector, and ACE provision as a whole. It will also have ramifications for the profile of the sector within government, and the support the sector receives from government.

ALA (formerly AAACE) Queensland Branch has been an active organisation with a lobbying and developmental function. The association has been active in lobbying for the formation of a formal advisory structure for ACE.

Definitions, philosophies of and approaches to community based education

Definitions

There is no clear agreed definition of adult and community education or adult community education (ACE) throughout Australia. As noted in the overview, in Victoria, the term Adult Community Education (ACE) is limited to provision by organisations with voluntary committees or boards of management. This is not the case elsewhere as noted in the description adopted by the Ministerial Council on Employment Education Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in 1997 (see Appendix 1). Various attempts have been made to summarize the descriptions of ACE as outlined in the National ACE Policy. In one of these summaries Schofield (1996, p. v) writes that there are “three fundamental propositions about ACE...

- ACE is a provider
- ACE providers are community-based providers [as] distinct from public providers and private providers
- The ACE sector is a network of community-based ACE providers.”

While this may be true for the sectors in New South Wales and Victoria, it may be questioned in other states.

In this report community-based provision, and community-based ACE providers refers to one manner of managing ACE provision; that is, it refers to those organisations which are non-profit and have voluntary management committees or boards. They may be incorporated in a variety of ways. In Queensland these would be seen as one sub-set of ACE providers.

Values and philosophies

According to the National ACE Policy (MCEETYA, 1997), ACE is described as learner-centred, responsive to community, diverse, varied and flexible. This reflects both the philosophies and approaches taken to adult and community education.

The sector grew from a movement with values that incorporated respect, dignity, individuality and diversity, equality, social justice and social change. Other frequently repeated values that were used to describe the framework from which many providers operate included being:

- community driven, that is, people acting as a community in order to get a need met, rather than acting as individuals, ie. community action
- able to take an holistic approach
- able to meet client’s needs and directly focus on clients/ centre users needs, and
- able to provide or try to provide opportunities in areas where services have been withdrawn, or where needs are not yet clearly articulated, were described as important aspects of being an ACE provider.

A core value of ACE is the contribution it makes through the spirit of workers and participants. People provide the success of community learning organisations, through their passion and their teamwork. Providers in the sector have a level of enthusiasm and energy that has often dried up in more institutional providers. This energy and enthusiasm is reflected in the constant breaking of new ground.

As a type of provision, the social infrastructure which developed, the networking and the development of friendships were themes suggested by providers and others. "Adult and community education connects people around learning in ways that strengthen the social fabric because they strengthen individuals and group's capacity in civic, life, the workforce, generating income and personal relationships" (Helen Macrae, pers. comm).

Approaches

There were a range of approaches to ACE provision. Some providers were modeled on a small business concept with a focus on customer service. Some of these demonstrated entrepreneurial and expansionist approaches. For some providers community development was seen as extremely important, whereas for others the focus on training and education of individuals was more important, as this was seen to lead to empowerment within a community.

Community ownership is believed by some to be a core value of the sector. However, with some larger providers the question arises as to whether the provider is the size the community can own or whether it has taken on a life of its own. Once a provider takes on a life of its own, it can be challenging to keep its base in the community. On the other hand, the community base of some providers, and a possible lack of, or inability to find resources, can result in organisations with little ability to develop and grow.

Management structure under which community-based organisations operate

Each ACE provider has arisen to meet the needs of different communities and circumstances. This has resulted in very diverse organisational and management structures. Some examples include:

Tauondi College in South Australia, from its opening in 1973, originally operated under an auspice, with a management committee comprising both aboriginal and non-aboriginal people. After 11 years it became an incorporated association. It is now managed by Aboriginal community members only, except for the Chair of the South Australian Aboriginal and Training Advisory Committee or their delegate, who comprise a Council. There are six community positions, two from country areas, the rest from anywhere, plus one student and one staff position. The Director is the Executive Officer of the Council.

Mundaring Sharing Learning Centre in Western Australia was established in 1978 and is a wholly voluntary community learning organisation, only creche staff are employed on a casual basis. It has a management committee comprising the Principal Coordinator, Treasurer, Secretary, Programme Coordinator and Creche Coordinator. Other roles in the organisation which are also defined include the Enrolments registrar, Librarian, Learning Centre Link representative, Purchasing Officer, Grants Officer, Statistics Officer, Centre Beautifier, Magazine editor (three produced per year) and the following coordinators: Domestic workgroup, Gardening workgroup, Publicity, Social workgroup and Fundraising. The Centre is run on a day-to-day basis by five voluntary coordinators. All courses are conducted by voluntary tutors. The association contributed to the purchase of the current building which the Shire purchased, and leases the building from the Shire.

BRACE in Ballarat, Victoria has been operating for 25 years. Its current management structure is non-profit company, with a Board comprising 10 members. These substantially comprise local small business people and people with a background in other educational fields, such as the TAFE and University sector. The Executive Director is a Board member. In 1996 it undertook a major restructure of its service provision to "ensure that BRACE would emerge as a viable, proactive, accountable professional community business (Annual report 1996)". The new structure involves three departments: Education and Training, Business Development Unit and Employment Services. BRACE offers programs over a large region, and recently took over the Grampians Community Learning Group's program and that of some other smaller providers in the region.

Narre Neighbours in Victoria is an incorporated association which was set up in 1981 when the local council advertised a part-time position of coordinator. The management committee comprises five executive members, 11 ordinary members, and up to four co-opted members. Committee members have two year terms, with half the committee retiring

every year and eligible for re-election. Unlike many large providers, committee members have an integral role in the management of the organisation. At management meetings each area manager provides a report in consultation with the designated committee member for that area. That is, each functional area has a committee member as representative for that area. These are rotated periodically to allow management committee members to gain experience of the whole organisation. Management committee members are resourced through an accredited professional development course of 50 hours duration, receiving an organisational manual, and developing a direct relationship with a specific area of operation.

Springvale Neighbourhood House in Melbourne commenced operation in 1984. A feature of its management structure is that the committee substantially comprises representatives of user groups. This house is in a low socio-economic area, and has a diverse community. Many user groups of the centre are from various cultural backgrounds. The focus of the house is as a referral and resource base for 40 self-help groups and using a community development model.

The Continuing Education Centre (CEC) in Wodonga was set up in 1973 and is managed by a Board. Recent changes have led to a restructuring and the committee eliminated most of its operational sub-committees in favour of a more strategic and focussed approach for the sub-committees. Another feature of this organisation's management policies is that it has an "Affiliated Centre" policy

"which is designed to support adult community education in other settings; partner with other groups to extend adult education provision; and support provision in surrounding communities" (CEC Annual report 1996, p. 5).

This allows a number of affiliated centres to enter agreement to access the CEC's payroll system, have their staff employed by the CEC and reduces their necessity to be separate legal entities. The policy is set up such that the centres making use of this arrangement are autonomous in other aspects. They report to their own committees and are responsible to their own communities for the provision of programs.

Barraba Community Learning Association in New South Wales is a rural provider in the north west of New South Wales, which has been operating for 17 years. It has a committee of management drawn from the four communities in which its services are delivered. These are Barraba, Bundarra, Narrabri and Inverell. The organisation uses a decentralised model of coordination with a part-time Executive Officer and four part-time coordinators who are employed to deliver programs in their communities. These coordinators work from home, and are provided with a phone/fax/answering machine, filing cabinet and photocopier, and the offer of a separate phone line. The wide geographical distribution of the communities served can raise difficulties in drawing management meetings together. Strategies such as daytime meetings and car pooling are used to minimise cost and reduce the impact of long distance night driving.

Central West Community College in New South Wales is the largest rural provider having 13 centres through which its community program is delivered to around 30 different locations. Its nine member Board, which includes two staff members, are targeted for their specific skills, such as legal, human resource, financial and commercial skills. The college's operational framework revolves around teams in the three main areas of Organisational support, Specialist support and Program areas. Of these the Program area comprises Equity, Community and Business Programs; Employment Services; and Industry Programs. Within the Equity, Community and Business Program area, a diversity of programs are offered including the non-accredited programs delivered to 30 locations. The centres organising these programs are managed by 13 part-time community program managers. The other two areas of Organisational support and Specialist support provide a wide range of programs and services, including traineeships, youth services, environmental education, tenancy advice, literacy and numeracy. In total this organisation employs a full-time equivalent of 45 people, and 450 casual teachers and trainers per year.

In New South Wales and Victoria many, especially larger, providers, have other centres, sometimes called "outposts" in New South Wales. These centres or outposts are operated in a variety of ways, providing programs in a local area not covered by an independent provider. Some providers manage these outposts centrally, others decentralise the operations to ensure a strong local identity.

Management, organisational and other issues faced by providers

This section covers organisational issues of a general nature raised as part of the investigation. Specific issues with respect to funding, vocational education and training, staffing and program management are raised in other sections.

The issues faced by providers varied from practical issues, governance and community management through to socio-political issues and included:

- skills base of the organisation
- accountability requirements
- locational circumstances of the provider
- the nature of the relationship between government and the community sector

Most of the issues had an element of funding and resourcing.

Governance of organisations and community management

There was a considerable degree of variation in the role of committees and boards of management. At one end of the spectrum there are a number of voluntary management committees whose role is completely hands on. The management committee is the provider itself. At the other end of the spectrum the committee or board has a governance and policy role, and has very little involvement in day-to-day operations. There are many variations in between as the examples in the previous section demonstrate.

A number of other governance arrangements were noted, including:

- One organisation reported writing the founding members into the constitution to give continuity of leadership. Others organised their constitutions to allow for continuity with two and three year terms, and having half or one-third of the committee being due for re-election each year, and
- A number of community centres who are supported by their local council reported that Council representatives are members of their management committees.

The sector across Australia provides a great diversity of models for setting up, organising and managing community based providers. In order to be successful the model chosen or developed needs to be appropriate to local community needs. Several providers recommended the importance of building slowly and solidly on strengths, and ensuring that projects and developments should be undertaken only if they fitted with the organisation's philosophy.

Community management and the organisation's skills base

Community management poses issues for most organisations. At one end of the spectrum committees of management are often carefully selected by mainly larger providers, especially with a view to the ability to make sense of human resource management. Some providers target high profile community members, and look for strong, knowledgeable people. It was stated that, as the employer in most ACE providers, committees need to establish impeccable employment practices and have a clear understanding of their accountability.

At the other end of the spectrum, the need to recruit management from the local community is important to instill a sense of ownership. This was reported especially to be the case for community and neighbourhood centres and houses, and smaller providers with a community development focus. When this is well organised, participation can be a very rewarding and skill enhancing activity.

Three problems were raised with respect to local recruitment. These were:

- that the skills base of newly recruited committee members is limited, and this needs resourcing;
- resource constraints mean that day-to-day operations consume all the time available in small organisations with limited staffing and in cases where management committees comprise centre users, the people on the committee may not have the necessary skill or experience to become involved at the level of planning and evaluation;
- the skills or knowledge base necessary for the committee to understand its roles and responsibilities as employers may not be available. Tensions can then arise as to who in fact manages the organisation and the centre.

Another challenge reported was the ability to attract members who were prepared to take on portfolio areas such as fundraising and publicity. With the levels of accountability now required of committee members, and a large number of people are reducing their voluntary commitment, there is often pressure on smaller organisations to get management positions filled.

Management subcommittees were in place in some providers in order to distribute the workload. To enable such structures to work well providers reported having established terms of reference for each subcommittee, along with committee position descriptions. This ensured that participants were clear about the portfolio and roles.

The organisational skill base of small providers is also affected in other ways by the limited resources these organisations have at their disposal. This often results in a high volunteer input by staff and volunteers, which often leads to burnout and resignations. New staff are then employed but without an information base of other longer term staff being available to them to draw on, and lessons learned previously have to be relearned. This results in an organisational cycle that does not allow for the building up of experience.

Accountability requirements

With changing government policies, and an increased use of tendering, and growing accountability and financial reporting requirements, maintaining and securing funding and the responsibility and accountability for small grants by management committees can be problematic. This is especially so where there is a lack of management skills in committees.

For some providers, especially those funded through sources at different levels of government, or through different government departments, accountability and reporting requirements are considered onerous and expensive. Each government department involved has its own reporting, performance and other requirements.

With funding structures and formulas and accountability changing almost annually with changes in government policy associated with economic rationalism, a provider reported that the constant change is like learning to dance while they pull the carpet from under you. In a number of cases the feeling of a lack of autonomy, and the sense of being pressured, were almost palpable.

In States with developed infrastructure for ACE provision there are greater accountability requirements of providers. With this increasing accountability, it becomes more difficult to maintain community responsiveness. As staff become more and more involved in satisfying government accountability requirements, less time is available for developing programs and responding to students/ program participants.

Locational issues

Location and access to facilities were raised as important issues. The impact of this was experienced by a number of, especially, smaller providers.

In rural and remote areas the availability of tutors is very limited. This diminishes a provider's ability to offer a broad program, especially in small communities.

Climate has a marked impact especially on rural and remote providers. At times of low income the resources are not available for people to participate in structured learning programs. Also people's ability to pay the true costs of courses is an issue. The impact of this was being increased with the shift to funding outcomes through purchasing of student contact hours increasingly for vocational courses only, rather than funding a community to organise and manage its own adult learning.

Location and position can be an important factor for how a provider is perceived in the community. This can be especially critical for small organisations that are co-located with others. One case involved a small provider that offered non-accredited courses and was co-located with a

Senior Citizen's Centre. It was a challenge to change the perception of the local community to understand that the courses were open to everyone.

Access to affordable facilities for various courses such as community cooking facilities, woodworking, music studios can limit the range of programs offered, even if requested by the community. These are often very expensive, and can price non-accredited courses out of the market.

Resourcing accredited training, with its need for access to venues of a certain standard can have a significant impact on an organisation. The courses are also longer, and therefore tie up venues for longer, reducing the flexibility of available training spaces for organisations.

The nature of the relationship between Government and the community sector

Relationships between the government and community sector have been undergoing major changes in recent years. Specific aspects regarding funding issues are dealt with separately. Also the Training Reform Agenda has been having a specific impact on the ACE sector, as described in other sections. This section deals with a range of miscellaneous issues regarding the nature of the relationship not covered in other sections.

Community providers, especially in the States where infrastructure is less well developed, have been autonomous for many years. This has created a comfort zone. However, in order to be able to obtain funding under the current national training frameworks, with the emphasis on vocational outcomes, this autonomy is being seen as threatened.

The need to operate within the VET system and develop quality systems imposes requirements on providers for which there may or may not be adequate support. This places extra pressure on providers seeking to meet their community's needs through the funding arrangements which are available.

Funding systems that were based on grant submissions generated a climate of consultation and collaboration. This relationship with funding bodies is becoming more formal under tendering arrangements.

With the move to implement competition policy and the purchaser/provider split, larger organisations are being favoured. This is having an impact on the viability of smaller community agencies.

The dependence of many ACE Providers on a single or small range of government funding sources is a cause for some concern. If policy changes occur, these funding sources may be discontinued, and many providers would have to close up almost immediately. The potential consequences of such policy changes was demonstrated when Labour Market program funding ceased at short notice.

Staffing and human resource management

The ACE providers visited ranged from organisations whose programs were managed solely by volunteers to providers comprising around 45 full-time equivalent staff, and 450 tutors, with very few volunteers other than the management committee or Board. These organisations are necessarily very diverse with respect to staff and management practices.

Industrial relations

The industrial relations situation across all states visited is highly complex, and varied from provider to provider. This account can only give an indication of the situation.

Awards

Workers at Community Centres in South Australia, Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales reported the various State SACS (Social & Community Services) Awards as covering staff. Childcare workers in Victoria, where the service was attached to community centres, were covered by the Children's Services Award.

An employment services provider in Western Australia reported that the Employment Officers' Award covered workers in their organisation. While other employment services providers and some ACE providers offering programs in this area in Victoria and New South Wales, reported the CETSS Award (Community Employment Training Support Services) as covering their workers.

In Victoria the Council of Adult Education initiated the development of awards for workers in the sector. Workers at some providers were reported as covered by the Federal PACCT (Professional Administration Clerical Computer Technical) Award, and paid at TAFE rates except where otherwise negotiated. Other workers at these centres were covered by the Clerical and Administration Assistants' Award. Eighty percent of neighbourhood house coordinators were covered by the Federal SACS Award. No award in Victoria covers tutors or teachers in ACE.

In New South Wales there is significant movement towards award coverage and industrial regulation. The Evening and Community College Principals are covered by a Principals' award. The ACE Council developed a model Certified Agreement for use by providers. More than fifty percent of providers in NSW have certified agreements covering tutors. Negotiation of an ACE tutors award involving the employer representative, the ACE Council of NSW and two unions, the NSW Teachers Federation and the NSW Independent Education Union is underway. Some providers were considering other options to both the teaching award and certified

agreements. One provider was considering the Higher Education Award for clerical staff (it was co-located with a TAFE and University campus).

It was suggested that for some providers, especially those with small numbers of staff, a limited economic base and limited funding, employing workers under awards and the need to meet payments and conditions, for example, all forms of leave, needs to be carefully planned.

Employment arrangements for administration and management personnel

Contracts of employment across all States were frequently tied to funding cycles, or were renewed/ reassessed on an annual basis. A number of providers in Victoria reported that all staff were contracted for various terms. The length of the term varied with the project, with senior management frequently on longer-term contracts.

In South Australia, while some staff were reported as not being tied to an award, some providers had aligned administration wages to the Administration Services Officers' Award. Changes in the working conditions and wages of the workers reflected the changes in these awards. In one case, where staff wages and conditions were not directly tied to an award, a conditions of employment document was in place.

In New South Wales a provider uses the state-based Clerks' Award as a guide, and monitors the TAFE Award for its administration and management staff.

Certified Agreements and Australian Workplace Agreements

The ACE Council in New South Wales had convened a working party and developed a model Certified Agreement. This agreement is with each provider to be negotiated with the staff, primarily tutors.

In New South Wales one provider established a federally registered Australian Workplace Agreement through a consultative process with its administrative staff. This agreement required each individual in the workplace to agree or not. It covers 45 full-time and part-time staff members, some of whom are ongoing and others who are on fixed term contracts. It doesn't cover casual staff. This was considered to be a very expensive and time consuming process and is likely to be reconfigured, at the end of its 12 month lifespan, to a Certified Agreement. A second Certified Agreement is being considered for casual and sessional staff, such as the tutors, trainers, teachers and other ancillary staff.

Employment arrangements for tutors, teacher and trainers and childcare workers

Across the four states, tutors, and in many cases educators and trainers, are mostly either as casual staff or contractors of service. Only one provider reported employing all tutors as permanent part-time staff. Where tutors,

teachers and trainers are employed as contractors, the terms of the contract varied considerably, some on a course by course basis, others on a term by term basis, some for delivery of a specific program.

Where tutors are not volunteers, a small number of providers reported that they are paid at a standard rate, most others that the rate varied within their organisation. One provider reported that the rates paid to tutors was a totally private and confidential matter and this was never discussed openly.

The rates varied significantly from provider to provider, and in most cases, with the types of courses and programs offered. Accredited programs attracted higher rates in most cases, but not in some situations. One provider had the policy of paying credit and non-accredited courses at the same rate as a way of making sure that one type of provision did not have a higher status than another.

In Western Australia an arrangement reported was that some tutors barter in place of being paid. At another centre, tutors are mainly voluntary, but some are paid an honorarium of \$20/class for four participants or more.

The NSW Association of Community Adult Education Centres recommends to its constituent centres, that tutors who are individuals and not contractors be placed on the payroll.

In Victoria childcare workers are mostly frequently employed on a casual basis.

Employer support services

A number of the peak and employer bodies in the states visited provide support services in the area of industrial relations. They make information about the various awards used in the sector available on a regular basis, and are available for individual organisational assistance.

Unions

A number of Unions were reported as having members within the sector. Union coverage was very limited. Unions mentioned were the Australian Services Union (mostly community centre workers) and the National Tertiary Education Union (mostly Victorian workers).

In New South Wales the Evening and Community College Principals are covered by a branch of the NSW Teachers Federation. Both the Teachers' Federation and the Independent Education Union which covers private business colleges believe they have a claim to other workers in the ACE sector.

Employment practices

All but some of the smallest organisations visited throughout the study tour reported that job descriptions were in place. Many organisations reported that these job descriptions were in need of review, or otherwise in need of being rewritten. The level of detail varied, many organisations had generic job descriptions for tutors. Volunteer positions were also frequently covered by job descriptions. Some providers also had job descriptions for the members of the management committee. In one case a provider reported including personal specifications with job descriptions.

Performance planning and appraisal has been very patchily implemented across the providers interviewed. Most large providers reported annual appraisals. One provider had separated this from the contract renewal process, and were working towards a bonus system for rewarding good performance. For large providers who have implemented META (Management Enhancement Team Approach), performance appraisal which is directed at individual rather than team performance, requires a different approach. Systems for team based performance appraisal are not readily available. (The META process, which has been implemented by some large providers in New South Wales and Victoria, has been developed by ANTA for VET organisations.)

With the implementation of quality assurance one provider reported that they are now advertising for tutors who are then placed on an eligibility list.

Professional development

While some of the largest providers reported systematically planning for professional development, throughout the sector professional development mainly occurs on an as needs basis or is opportunity driven. Small providers reported that professional development was conducted on an ad hoc basis, namely when low cost opportunities were available. Where organisations performed staff appraisals, some built professional development into their organisational budgets. One provider also included professional development for its committee of management within its internal professional development budget and program.

Many centres and providers had a commitment to tutor training, either by providing training sessions either quarterly or semi-annually or annually, or, where the vocationalisation agenda was more advanced in New South Wales and Victoria, by offering Workplace Trainer courses. Often tutors were given the opportunity to take advantage of other courses offered by the provider, either at no cost or at a discount.

Tutors and at times voluntary staff were invited to organisational planning days as a professional development activity. This was also seen as important for assisting to integrate these workers into the organisation.

Some interesting approaches to professional development were mentioned. One provider reported the use of peer training especially for computers as a

component of professional development. Another provider conducts training for its staff in performance planning and review.

South Australia

“The ACE Council has focussed on professional development for community-based educators, volunteers and coordinators working in the delivery of adult community education” (VEET (1996) Annual Report, p. 30). This has included offering modules such as *National Teaching and Learning* and *Adult Literacy and Basic Education* courses. Support is also provided for community educators, tutors and coordinators to participate in adult and community education conferences held in South Australia and throughout Australia. These include the AAACE National Conference, the Brainfood Conference and the SA Council of Adult Literacy Conference. The regional coordinators employed by the ACE Unit are encouraged and supported to undertake personal study.

The Community Centres and Neighbourhood House Association (CAN) and the ACE Unit run conferences for professional development.

Western Australia

Community and learning centres reported drawing on the professional development opportunities offered by Learning Centre Link. This also included direct assistance and mentoring. Other organisations reported that professional development was opportunity or need driven.

The Community Skills Training Centre offers a program to a broad range of community services organisations which assists centres with their professional development needs.

Victoria

The Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board through its regional councils provides professional development opportunities for community providers. Some providers in rural and remote locations found access to this training difficult as it is often conducted in Melbourne or in larger regional centres.

Both peak bodies, ACE Vic and the ANHLC offer a range of professional development opportunities. These include conferences and workshops. The ANHLC focuses on management committee training. Networks of community houses also offer professional development workshops to meet local needs.

The annual “Brainfood Conference” with its varied program covering information for beginners to well-established providers, is organised by the Statewide Program Network. This conference provides professional development and networking opportunities for the spectrum of providers in Victoria.

Regional Councils of ACE and peak bodies both play a role in professional development. Regional Councils offer network or cluster meetings, and a variety of workshops to implement new infrastructure requirements. The ACE Council's annual conference was an important activity for centre staff. Providers varied on how professional development was being implemented. For those who had commenced on the Quality Assurance path, professional development was seen as tied to performance appraisal, which was considered part of the quality assurance process. For others it was accessed on an as needs or when opportunity offers basis.

The role of volunteers, students and trainees in program management

What is currently known as ACE provision has had several periods of development historically, and this has varied between states. Earlier developments gave rise to the Council of Adult Education, the Evening and Community Colleges and the Workers Educational Associations. The Council of Adult Education also spawned new providers, such as The Centre at Wangaratta in 1961. The most recent movement, occurred mostly in the 1970s and 1980s. The first neighbourhood house, Diamond Valley Learning Centre came into being through the LaTrobe University in the 1970s. This movement for community-based education was reported as having commenced largely as a voluntary movement in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.

A very small number of organisations maintained a commitment to work within the purely voluntary philosophical and organisational framework of the movement through which they were established. Other organisations developed different organisational structures involving paid workers for service and training delivery. Currently the role of volunteers in the management and operations of providers varies between two extremes, from being the sum total of a small number of providers to playing no operational role.

Many, mostly smaller providers reported that volunteers were the lifeblood of their centres. They were especially important in literacy one-to-one mentoring, conversation classes, organising parties and excursions. One provider, with a strong community arts focus, reported a volunteer base of 150 people, who were involved in organising concert programs, an art gallery, recreation and entertainment activities for the home-bound, and a neighbourhood house program.

In Victoria some providers reported utilizing traineeships to fill staffing requirements in some situations. Also student placements were reported as a source of volunteers. Some students have commenced Certificate IV level course in ACE management and administration. Work experience is an aspect of this program which offers some voluntary assistance to some centres.

South Australia and Western Australia

Adult Literacy and Numeracy programs and many general adult education programs offered within community houses are heavily supported by volunteers tutors. Other individual tutoring or mentoring programs also relied on volunteers.

In the case of some community houses, and other providers, the role of the coordinator was directed to managing and supporting volunteers in the whole range of services delivered by the house. In places where childcare formed part of the Centre's service, volunteers also assisted in this provision.

Victoria

Providers interviewed in Victoria reported a wide range of levels of volunteer involvement from low to high levels of support. One provider with a part-time (5 to 35 hours/week) staffing level of 35 people involved 20 to 25 volunteers in a range of activities from administration, maintenance, childcare, gardening and security. In this situation the volunteers are considered centre workers and are treated as such. For other providers the turnover of volunteers after their training was considered an obstacle to significant involvement.

New South Wales

Very few ACE providers in New South Wales used volunteers, except in non-accredited language and literacy programs. However, one small rural provider was entirely managed by a volunteer committee and had a volunteer program coordinator, though tutors were paid. It operated out of committee members' homes. The target audience of this provider was farmer's wives, and elderly people mostly with a low income. Its program was important for local social networking. Social visibility in a small community limited some of the programs it could offer, such as literacy.

At times some providers offered courses run by voluntary tutors and voluntary professionals. Study and learning circle programs were facilitated by volunteers.

Since very few neighbourhood houses and community centres are funded by BACE to provide ACE courses, the role of volunteers by these community organisations in the provision of ACE was not investigated.

One provider emphasised the need for staff working with volunteers to be

- trained to work with volunteers, and
- paid for the extra time needed to work with volunteers.

This provider also emphasised the need for:

- clarity in volunteer roles,
- having grievance procedures in place
- setting up a recording process for the hours and tasks undertaken
- giving feedback and positive reinforcement for the voluntary effort

Organisational and management tools

The use of organisational and management tools such as

- ACE Competency Standards
- policy and procedure manuals,
- strategic, annual and business planning,
- quality systems,
- enrolment and financial management systems,

varied widely across organisations interviewed. Some organisations reported commencing this development process. In Victoria and New South Wales, with the growth of VET programs, the requirements of the registration process, and the progressive implementation of quality assurance, these were more likely to be in place.

Use of the Competency Standards for ACE Managers

Throughout the study tour there was a variable awareness of the existence of these standards. In South Australia and Western Australia no provider reported using them to any extent. Many providers who had been established before their development considered that they already had the appropriate systems in place.

A Victorian provider and some in New South Wales have used the competencies to assist with planning, and developing job descriptions. They had been used for the senior management team in one instance, in others to describe the management positions for coordinators of outpost programs or community program managers. One provider reported using the standards as a reference tool for writing quality policies.

The standards have been used in New South Wales by a peak body, to develop a model workplace agreement and model employment contracts for coordinators.

Strategic and annual and business planning and budgeting

In New South Wales and Victoria, regular planning cycles are part of the requirements of being providers. The practice is still variable in its application, and the level to which it is seen as integral to the organisation.

One provider in a provincial city in Victoria constantly updates its plans. Staff at this centre are responsible for updating development plans and budgets on a monthly basis.

Quality

In Victoria a number of larger providers have undertaken a pilot Quality self-assessment process designed for TAFE institutes based on the Australian Business Council's Quality Principles. This was subsequently customised for community based providers. (During 1998, 60 providers of different sizes and types piloted the quality process.)

In New South Wales the ACE Quality Strategy specifically tailored for ACE providers has been developed. Providers were in the process of implementing the strategy. Work was being undertaken to bring it into line with state-wide quality assurance for training providers and registration of training organisations with VETAB.

One of the large community college providers has chosen to gain quality assurance under the ISO 9001. This allowed them to be positioned to submit for tenders at any level as well and potentially internationally, and they believed it overcame any need to go through various stages of quality assurance system development.

Enrolment and financial management

A number of different programs are available for the management of enrolments and the collection of statistics. Those mentioned are N-ROLLS (Sericon Pty. Ltd., ph. 03 9380 6866), CAS (OMNIA Computer Services, ph 015 505 513) and Diamond Enrolment Database (Graham Edgar, 02 6625 1890). Another system developed by Sydney Community College (02 9555 7411) is call GLEPP. Other organisations utilized a customized spreadsheet. One provider had developed an Access database.

There was no general agreement reported as to the most appropriate software or systems. Some providers are developing their own systems, based on a variety of programs.

Some of the programs mentioned above handle finances, however, MYOB and Quicken were also being used for financial and accounting purposes while another provider was using a financial system call CASHMAD.

Funding and resourcing

This section covers a number of different resourcing issues and the impact of these on ACE providers. The topics covered are:

- access to funds to support particular clients whose group has low participation rates, for example, people with a disability, and
- partnerships with other organisations,
- philanthropic trusts,
- how centres operate within funding arrangements available.

In every state gaining funding for infrastructure, and longer-term funding allowing for some stability and ability to plan, is seen as an issue. Funding is available for delivery of courses in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, but not in Western Australia. In Western Australia support for the sector is demonstrated through the funding of the peak body on a triennial basis. The amount of this funding to the sectors in each state, and also the types of program areas that are funded within the scope of the sector, varies enormously. What is funded and exactly how it is funded varies from state to state, but each state is trending towards only funding programs with vocational outcomes.

A number of federal funding sources were accessed across all States visited. Many of the providers who had been involved with labour market programs had tendered for FLEX programs and some were involved in job placement programs, and "Work for the Dole", where they had won a tender. A small number of ACE providers across Australia, who provide programs and attract a certain proportion of indigenous people, have access to the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives (IESIP) from DEETYA.

The majority of neighbourhood/community and learning centres visited were funded through departments with family and community services portfolios, and had some level of funding relationship with their local council. This ranged from subsidies and grants to provision of accommodation and maintenance of premises. Other community based providers also had achieved similar support from their local council. In Victoria, a shire council guaranteed the loan for the purchase of buildings.

Tendering for projects is having a variety of outcomes across providers especially in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. Where organisations have been successful in tendering for funds, some were finding that, due to the pressure to tender at a low cost, these tenders were not covering the cost of additional staff to run the program. Programs run as part of tenders were, therefore, drawing from the organisations' other resources. In other situations tendering is seen as being a bonus, and bringing new funding resources into the sector.

Tendering is having other impacts as well. These effects are beginning to impact on the relationships between community sector organisations. In one case, in New South Wales, a neighbourhood centre had been operating a Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service for three years. This service covered

80% of the State, and was operated cooperatively with a wide network of other neighbourhood and community centres. Evaluation of the service had shown no problems, and had resulted in some increased funding for the service. When the project came up for an expression of interest for tender, the auspicing organisation were given to understand that all that was required was a letter expressing an interest to continue. Three other organisations tendered for the project, and this placed the neighbourhood centre at a disadvantage in relation to preparation of the tender documents. In that local area a large ACE provider offering a range of other specialist services, tendered for the project and won it, although only a quarter of the project comprised community education. A subsequent lobbying process resulted in an increase in funding to the tenancy advice program as a whole and a distribution of the project across a number of organisations. The tendering process and its outcomes caused much dislocation, required a large investment of time and energy on the part of one organisation, and raised several issues regarding the process of tender selection.

No matter what funding source is accessed, providers reported the importance of only seeking and obtaining funding where the funding fits within the organisations philosophical and social justice frameworks. It was important to consider resourcing, staffing, and all the costs associated with the project/program to ensure these are covered.

South Australia

Community centres are funded through the Department of Family and Community Services and through local councils for much of their service provision. The ACE Council funds general adult education with vocational outcomes only, and some limited funding to literacy programs. This funding is distributed to a range of organisations including community centres.

Other providers drew on a range of funding sources such as Home and Community Care (HACC) and Federal Government programs, such as tendering for FLEX programs, when these were available. Other funding sources that are accessed by providers include the South Australian Health Commission, the Federal Attorney General's Department, Youth SA, Parenting SA and other income generating activities such as a bookshop. One large provider is able to resource its education provision to a large extent through student fees and other income generating activities such as a travel agency and commercial training.

Sources of funding for groups with low participation rates mentioned by providers included Intellectual Disability Services and funding for subsidies for the involvement of older people in courses during the Seniors Week Program

Tendering to South Australia's Diverse Training Fund, for State Training Profile provision, had not proved to be very successful for those providers interviewed who had gone through the registration process to become providers of accredited courses. This had caused discouragement with this process as a source of funding to meet local community needs.

One provider works in an area with rapidly changing demographics, with influxes of seasonal workers and other highly transient populations. In this case there is a constant need to be identifying local community needs and finding funding sources to meet these needs, whether educational or for direct service provision to people in need. In this situation, monitoring and meeting needs is an especially large task.

Western Australia

Six community centres receive a proportion of their funding from the Department of Family and Children's Services, Family Support Program. The remainder of their funding comes from course fees, venue rental, creche fees, fundraising and other services. Small amounts of Adult Literacy tutor coordination funding are also available. Other centres drew their funding from a variety of other sources, including self-funding, venue hire, local council assistance and fundraising.

The Lotteries Commission was reported as a source of funding for projects and major equipment purchases. Telecentres have an arrangement with the Commission for funding to replace outdated equipment after three years of operation.

No community house or learning centre providers interviewed were accessing competitive tendering funding. The reasons given were that it didn't fit with the organisation's philosophy, the process was seen as being too onerous, prescriptive and time consuming. There was also a lack of expertise to write the applications, and for those who had tried, there had been a lack of positive outcomes.

One provider involved in labour market and enterprise development programs reported obtaining funding through State and Federal government programs such as NEIS management, Job Club, and a Department of Training grant. This provider runs courses and programs and operates services such as a business incubator, offering small offices for people who are setting out.

Victoria

Changes in the funding arrangements for providers, competitive tendering for funding, changes in federal funding for programs such as de-funding Skillshare, and the vocationalisation of the ACE sector has had many impacts over recent years. Some smaller providers have closed their door or been taken over, one large provider has passed into receivership. One provider reported that with the reduction in levels of funding for general adult education courses, they were unable to provide some programs and the local neighbourhood centre was picking up a range of courses which were provided with the assistance of volunteers.

Providers draw on various sources of funding. All providers interviewed were funded through the ACFE Board. To be eligible for this funding, providers must be registered with the ACFE Board and become approved to

deliver accredited further education courses. This funding is based on student contact hours, infrastructure costs are built into this to some extent. The emphasis for this funding is on vocational programs. General adult education attracts a low level of financial support to assist with infrastructure, and participants are expected to contribute most of the costs. Some ACFE Board funding rounds are via the tendering process.

Accredited VET programs, delivered by providers registered through the State Training Board are funded through OTFE. To be eligible to tender for general training funding providers about 90 providers have undertaken the registration process to become private providers. (However limited access to OTFE funding is available to ACFE registered providers, who do not become private providers, for such programs as basic education and English as a Second Language.) OTFE offers funding through an open competitive tendering process. OTFE priorities are very specific, and it can be difficult for providers to be successful in this process. Providers reported that a large portion of the tenders offered do not meet the needs of the clientele of particular centres and organisations.

For organisations that are successful, competitive funding through OTFE increases the amount of funding available. However, the organisation needs sufficient resources to submit enough tenders to be able to balance out the losses. It is also important to monitor the strike rate, and be very clear about quantifying outcomes, and building a reputation and record.

Other sources of funding include ANTA funding which is tendered regionally, and covers all adult literacy. City and Shire Councils play a large role in providing or resourcing accommodation and providing support funding to community houses and some ACE providers, and the Department of Human Services administers funding for childcare for ACE courses. The Education Department supports a number of centres through providing accommodation at minimal or low cost.

Sources of funding accessed for specific target groups were offered by ACFE, OTFE and the Workplace Language and Literacy (WELL) program. The Department of Human Services funds a number of disability programs.

Australian Capital Territory

Two community providers were interviewed. In both cases their buildings had been provided, one through community services grants, the other through a peppercorn rent as the ACT Government owns the facilities. The centres draw fees through charging fees and venue hire. One of the Centres attracts grants from a range of Federal and ACT Government sources to provide services, while the other centre is self-funded through its income generation, tenant rent, adult education course fees, secretarial service and venue hire, eg squash courts and hall hire.

One centre recently became a registered training provider and has commenced offering vocational courses of its own and in partnership. The other centre offers user pays, non-accredited courses only.

Until a recent funding round offered by the newly formed Advisory Council on Adult and Community Education, there had been no funding for general adult education programs. This first funding round has funded some creative community education programs.

New South Wales

Funds are distributed by the Board of Adult Community Education, based on a formula which takes into account a providers past effort and demographics. A requirement to receive funding in NSW is that the organisation is specifically chartered to provide adult education. In contrast with Victoria and South Australia, other organisations, such as Neighbourhood Houses, are unable to access ACE funding, except for a limited number under the "Other Provider" category. Multi-ACE funding was designed to fund providers for some coordination for ACE programs. The proportion of a providers budget that this funding constitutes, varies greatly between providers depending on the socio-economic status of the local community, the size of the provider and the geographic distribution of the local population, amongst other factors.

The NSW Contracted Training Program, which provides funding based on the State Training Plan, is becoming a new source of funding being tapped into by providers. Some providers reported being registered for this program. Payment of funds through this program was reported to be based on outcomes, with some of the funding dependent on completions.

Evening and Community Colleges, through ACE Training and Consultancy, have collectively and successfully tendered for the NSW State Supply Service to be one of the preferred providers of training services to NSW government departments. The bulk of the training services in the contract are nationally accredited modules, most of which articulate into certificate courses at AQF levels 1, 2 and 3 and are suitable for administrative staff grades 1 to 6, plus a range of general courses drawn from colleges' non-accredited programs.

Fee for service training and consultancy work is now being targeted by providers. For some large providers this is becoming an increasingly important source of funding.

A variety of funding sources were accessed for specific target groups. These included Seniors' Week, Heritage Week, Health Commission for a program for disabled adults living at home and the Department of Community Services for a range of programs.

Other funding programs included the

- Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL);
- BACE Equity funding,
- Post School Options, funded by the Department of Community Services,
- Department of Aging and Disability,
- Helping Early Leavers Program (HELP) funded by Department of Education,

- ArtStart (Arts Council) for people with an intellectual disability,
- Department of Fair Trading for a Tenancy Advice Project
- ANTA funding for Australian Student Traineeship Foundation
- Department of Probation and Parole Service for literacy training

Many of these are small project based, and are not consistent sources of funding.

At the time of the study tour a new funding formula was being developed by the Board. This was causing some concern for some providers, especially some larger ones, and creating divisions within the ACE sector. With a static funding pool it was considered difficult to offer equitable dispersal of funding across the State. Some providers thought that funding formulas provided transparency, but it was difficult to take all variables into account. This was especially so in rural areas where the current rural economy, climate, drought, commodity prices, and a low population density can make it challenging for programs to be economically viable.

In some areas TAFE was increasing its offering of leisure and general adult education programs. This was increasing the competition for ACE providers in user pays areas.

Neighbourhood houses and community centres were not, in the main, approached as part of this study, because with a few exceptions, they are not able to access BACE funding. This is due to the policy of only funding providers whose main aim is to provide adult education. Many large ACE providers, however, have obtained funding and contracts for services which are not purely related to adult education.

In New South Wales a number of providers reported owning their own premises for which they had paid off mortgages. This applied mainly to older, longer established providers.

Partnerships with other organisations

Partnerships and networks in the field of adult and community education had a variety of purposes, however, their common element revolved around resourcing the organisation to help meet the local community's needs. This resourcing takes many forms from having accommodation available to more directly meeting people's and other organisations needs through training and education courses.

ACE providers, especially, but not exclusively, where they are offering accredited programs, reported a wide variety of partnerships and networks, including

- TAFE colleges and TAFE Outreach
- small business organisations
- organisations such as Relationships Australia, YMCA, YWCA
- local schools, local libraries, Citizens Advice Bureaus
- local chambers of commerce and traders groups, business clubs,
- farmer's organisations
- Rural Women's Network

- Community Arts Network
- service clubs such as Rotary, Apex
- reciprocal referrals between former Skillshares
- Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service
- business and professional women's associations
- local politicians
- local sporting associations
- large manufacturing enterprises, such as BHP, CSR, Australian Cement Limited, and others such as food processing companies

One rural provider was in the process of setting up a partnership with a small business.

One partnership strategy involves offering a number of modules from an accredited program through the community-based provider, with the arrangement that TAFE or another provider offered the remainder of the program. Providers suggested the importance of establishing Memoranda of Understanding for these arrangements, to provide clarity for participants. Partnering with TAFE sometimes seconding a tutor from the TAFE College.

An important relationship for many community centres and some other providers was their arrangements with local councils. These were long term and provided some of the basic necessities to operate the centre, for example, community centres are frequently housed in local Council owned properties. At times the local Council hall is managed by the Community Centre as part arrangement. Some administration functions were also, though rarely, undertaken by council, eg wage payment, banking.

Western Australia

TAFE in negotiation with Learning Centre Link have been working on the use of some community neighbourhood centres to run courses. This applies to the Certificate of General Education for Adults, and a number of other courses were under discussion. The effectiveness of the relationship appears to be dependent on the local relationships with TAFE Colleges.

LETS (Local Employment/Enterprise/Energy Trading Systems) were mentioned as a partnership organisation for those centres that used bartering.

Victoria

In order to avoid local competition with a like-minded organisation one provider reported establishing a cooperative venture to meet a local need for literacy training.

Partnering and establishing relationships with local schools, hospitals, workplaces and other organisations opened a new source of program development for a provider. This provider built part of their training program on meeting these organisations professional development needs.

A specific partnership agreement between Colac ACE and TAFE Gordon which formed the Colac Otway Education Centre has been documented in

an ANTA Demonstrating Best Practice in VET publication titled "Community Partnerships – Quality Programs". In this arrangement TAFE Gordon contracts with Colac ACE to provide front office staff, student course advice, staff support, student recruitment and identifies courses which meet local community needs and to provide a specified number of student contact hours of training. It was reported that students move seamlessly between the two organisations.

One partnership in a regional city took the form of a consortium of five non-profit organisations covering different fields and willing to pool resources and expertise. The consortium looks at all large tender offers and chooses which are appropriate. Other consortia comprising community-based education providers were also being formed to enable the organisations to work collectively.

A provider in a regional city partners with a number of neighbourhood houses. These identify the community needs in the vocational area and in access areas, while providing general adult and community education programs themselves. The provider applies for the funding, coordinates and manages and runs the program at the house or centre which requested it, also paying for the venue hire, while the neighbourhood house advertises the course and gathers participants. This arrangement works with about 20 organisations.

Other partnering arrangements include smaller organisation accessing the resources and management systems of larger providers for a management fee. This may include, for example, the payroll system or insurance coverage. These types of arrangements need to have written agreements.

New South Wales

One initiative in 1996, the "Partnerships in ACE" project, funded by BACE "assisted neighbourhood centres and ACE providers to jointly run pilots of the Life Experiences Count (LEC) program. The LEC course is designed to assist people identify their skills and expertise (Recognition of Prior Learning)" (Local Community Services Association Annual Report, 1997). This program is pre-access, and provided an entry point to pre-vocational and bridging courses.

One large provider has 10 centres through which it delivers its program. Two of these centres are collaborations with neighbourhood centres and a third is an alliance with the Business Unit of a Shire Council. This provider also has a relationship with ATSIC which owns a building through which the provider organises programs for the local Koori community. Other relationships are with Rural and Town Youth Services, and the Aboriginal Health Service for two other programs.

Partnerships have been formed between the peak bodies and providers to enable these organisations to access the NSW State Supply Service. This enables the providers as a group to be placed on the State's approved provider lists for purchasing.

Industry training partnerships are becoming a new important source of funding for a small number of providers. In one case literacy training for workers from non-English speaking backgrounds was being contracted with BHP. In another case a provider had formed a partnership with CSR to deliver staff training in Categories I & II of Workplace Training and Assessing. The need to become immersed in the business's culture was seen as an important part of being able to be flexible in delivering to the business.

A locational partnership had been established in the Central Coast area between the University of Newcastle's campus and NSW TAFE, and the local community college. The University campus and TAFE are being run under the supervision of one director, and courses are streamed together. The concept is that students can move from the studying for a Certificate through to a PhD. The community college and the TAFE work together to provide pathways and avoid competition such as offering the same course.

One provider has been recently established as a partnership between ACE and TAFE, as a result of New South Wales' ACE/TAFE policy and strategic plan. This provider works through a rural TAFE college and the arrangement draws on the capacity of the TAFE for a range of tutors, as well as other community members. The coordinator is co-located within the administration centre of the TAFE college. One of the issues involved in establishing the new centre was to ensure that there is no duplication of courses and programs offered by other organisations in the local area.

Some neighbourhood houses and community centres work with TAFE Outreach to deliver accredited training. This takes the form, in some cases, of providing the venue, childcare, advertising and promotion, and locating participants for programs. TAFE Outreach provides the equipment and the tutors.

Philanthropic trusts

Very few providers anywhere in Australia obtained funding through philanthropic trusts. Occasionally projects had been funded. One of the conditions which limited applications to a number of trusts was the requirement by various trusts that the providers were also registered charities or public benevolent institutions, and thereby had tax-free status. Only a very small number of providers were also registered public benevolent institutions.

One provider in New South Wales reported success in obtaining a bus to support access to programs by people with a disability, and also the aged.

How centres operate within the funding arrangements available.

Competitive tendering

The move to competitive tendering for contracts requires dedicated management and the people with time and skills to be looking for and creating opportunities. If this is not the case it has the impact of taking staff away from the activities that are involved in their position. While submission writing also had this effect, it is more acute under the new tendering model.

Competitive tenders have to be presented in a different manner from what the sector has become acquainted with under grant submission writing. Often the presentation required is more expensive and requires different skills from those available to smaller organisations. It is feared that tenders are judged on their presentation rather than on the demonstrated ability of the provider to undertake the project.

With competitive tendering issues arise with maintaining relationships and sharing information between similar organisations. Competition can start to dominate the interaction. Information becomes “commercial-in-confidence”. Relationships with funding bodies also tend to become more formal.

Also with competitive tendering some larger organisations, such as TAFEs and others, are able to undercut costs to remove players from offering courses. Competitive neutrality is being introduced in Victoria and it was believed that this should reduce this problem.

Grant seeking

Funding bodies require high levels of accountability and evaluation for, at times, relatively small grants. This places a heavy pressure on organisations. Also the constantly changing guidelines for and requirements of providers poses problems with obtaining the necessary funds to maintain programs. In the case of volunteers this pressure can be onerous.

With the demise of a range of federally-funded employment and training programs, such as New Work Opportunities, Landcare and Environment Action Program (LEAP), Special Intervention Program, many providers were impacted significantly. In some cases program funding was frozen just days before courses and programs were due to start. Government departments failed to meet contractual obligations, and this made it very difficult to plan and deliver quality programs and services (Central West Community College, Annual Report 1996, p. 18).

South Australia

After five years of participating in the State's training effort through competitively tendering through the Diverse Training Fund, one large provider has found that frequently the costs of administration and accounting for competitively tendered programs limited its value as a funding source. This was especially the case because of the levels of reporting required, that is, commencement, progress, completion and financial acquittal reports, and the organisation involved.

Several community centres, who had gone through the process of becoming accredited training organisations, had experienced difficulty in accessing the Diverse Training Funds, and had been unable to deliver the courses they were registered for. This had been experienced as discouraging.

Infrastructure funding for small providers, where the activities of the provider is not supported by other programs, such as community centres, was seen as a major limiting factor. Funding was available for training delivery only. This posed many difficulties as projects and various programs were variously funded and defunded depending on changes in Government policy. There were significant difficulties in staying established and operational.

Western Australia

Since providers in Western Australia do not receive funding for adult and community education or vocational education and training, its topic was not investigated.

Victoria

In recent years funding has moved from a grants process which assisted with infrastructure, overheads and salary costs to funding for vocational education and training based on student contact hours delivered. This change of focus reflected current approaches in government from funding providers of services for the costs of inputs, to focussing on the end user or customer and outputs. The move has had some varied effects.

The change was particularly acute for rural and remote providers where climatic conditions determine how much surplus is available to people, and therefore, whether they have the funds to attend courses and programs. Rural providers also indicated that the rate paid per student contact hour makes working with small numbers of students difficult. Larger formal educational organisations will only work with 10 or more participants. However, this number of students can be difficult to achieve in rural areas, where there are also other increased costs of delivery. In order to meet community members needs, much smaller numbers of participants need to be catered for, sometimes as low as one.

Some providers experienced the move as having the effect of limiting the potential to try new and innovative programming due to the lack of

certainty about success. The lack of success of a course or program affects the student contact hours (SCHs) delivered and hence future funding.

The funding level per student contact hour doesn't allow for any margin, therefore, providers aren't able to build up any reserves which enable them to take risks of loss on new or innovative ideas. In recent times several providers have gone broke, this was having a salutatory effect on the sector, and providers reported the need to stay within a comfort zone.

Providers also reported that the funding levels for VET courses did not cover all the infrastructure costs, these costs needed to be covered by other parts of the budget. Some providers suggested that this cross-subsidising is influencing their provision in other areas, such as user-pays courses. However, contradictorily, other providers reported that the funding available through VET funding for ACE providers has become essential to providers as they cannot run sufficient user pays course to stay afloat. When courses and programs have to cover their infrastructure costs they become too expensive to attract sufficient enrolments. This variation in perception is believed to depend on how providers in the region develop unit costs and what level the providers tender at. The unit cost includes variables such as ownership of venue vs venue hire costs, facilitators fees and travel. These can vary considerable between different locations.

For some neighbourhood houses the reducing funding for ACFE funded general adult education, where only low levels of ACFE funding is allocated, and the administration costs make it increasingly difficult to undertake the level of activity necessary to sustain provision of a small number of classes. This again depends on the unit costing for each centre, and the need to reach a threshold of delivery to be able to break even.

Lack of recurrent funding also creates instability in an organisations staff, and centres are constantly losing good people to positions of greater security. Senior management in one centre have, at times, been on six monthly contracts. Another effect of this situation is that the training delivery component of managers at this centre had increased from 25% to 75%. This was seen as posing problems with the ability to seek new opportunities.

Another issue for ACE providers involved secure infrastructure funding and access to capital grants such as available to TAFE and Universities. If requiring loans for infrastructure purposes ACE Providers were required to take out loans at normal commercial rates. Access to capital grants and low-interest Treasury loans for mortgages, equipment and for capital works would greatly assist the sector. This access was in the process of being negotiated.

In response to the changing conditions of funding and the introduction of competitive tendering, a number of providers responded by developing a business culture rather than community service approach. One large provider in a regional centre reported that they considered that they had

always operated in a competitive environment, that all funding was competitive to some extent, and that this was like any business. The effect was that the organisation was focussed on satisfying customers and gaining the next contract.

Flexibility and responsiveness to community needs was seen as a distinctive feature and valuable aspect of the ACE sector. However, a new requirement for ACFE Board funding involves developing program profiles of courses to be delivered. This makes flexibility and responsiveness difficult, especially in rural and remote areas where needs arise quickly at times and need to be responded to quickly, and this cannot be reflected beforehand in a training profile.

New South Wales

For most of the large providers BACE's funding represent around 5 to 8 % of their budgets. Whereas for many of the smaller providers, the Board's funding represented a much larger contribution to being able to provide programs in their local communities. At the time of the study tour the formula was in the process of being renegotiated.

Gradual changes to the funding formula involved an emphasis on funding according to a demographic disadvantage for the community and the level of participation, ie. enrolments and student contact hours, as well as the number of courses offered.

For many providers, the move to student contact hour funding has created an emphasis that is more strongly focussed on training delivery only, rather than roles including community development. This is the result of the greater accountability requirements.

For some large metropolitan and rural providers the lack of certainty with funding for non-accredited adult education levered them into getting involved in delivering accredited training. The need was expressed as diversifying to survive. Also, for some large rural and regional providers, the non-accredited programs are more difficult to sustain for a range of reasons including travelling distance to course venues. This was also perceived to have provided an incentive to become involved in accredited training.

For the large providers, especially those in more affluent suburbs of Sydney, general adult education is as strong as it ever was. With a focus on survival through diversity in funding sources, some of the large providers have entered into employment and other services. This caused great difficulty when federally funded programs, such as the labour market program, was cut at short notice.

In some areas there is a level of competition between providers who are funded by BACE. This was felt by some providers to be duplicating infrastructure in the local area. Other providers in the area believed that the different organisations were reaching different markets, and was therefore seen as useful competition.

Increasing accountability requirement for funding and compliance with funding guidelines was having a number of impacts. This includes random audits of providers and impacts associated with data collection. One provider reported that up to mid 1996 the centre had been able to meet all enrolment requirements with a half-time staff member. With AVETMISS data collection this had risen to one and a half staff members.

Funding from the Board and from many of the other sources tapped by providers is in annual cycles. This made it difficult for providers to make long term plans. One small provider reported cashflow problems arising when grants didn't arrive on time.

The Board has been developing a growing focus and interest in equity outcomes, to "improve access to education and training and educational and employment outcomes for disadvantaged sections of the community" (The ACE Advantage, 1995). Providers reported that this area of activity can't be self-funded, given that disadvantaged groups frequently need longer lead, delivery and follow-up times. To enable providers to have a greater role in this area it was seen as important that longer term funding be made available for equity programs planning and delivery.

Competitive tendering is a growing area of necessity for providers and this was being encouraged. Competing in the open training market was reported to have the effect of putting community providers into direct competition with other providers such as TAFE. This raises some issues especially in New South Wales, which has an ACE-TAFE Policy and Strategic Plan in place.

Vocationalisation and its impact

The National Training Reform Agenda's impact on the ACE sector has included a move to deliver accredited courses and training; a focus on the vocational outcomes of adult education; and a move to become a formal part of the vocational education sector. The issues and impacts generated by these changes varied substantially from state to state. What was reported depended on the level of development of vocationalisation of the ACE sector in the state. However, some common themes were raised as outlined below.

Many of the courses and programs offered by providers in the sector which are not accredited are treated as non-vocational education by the key funding agencies. However, many of these courses do have vocational outcomes and offer an important step on the educational pathway. The vocationalisation of ACE is resulting in general adult education attracting less and less support from these funding bodies, and an increased emphasis on making non-accredited adult education user pays. In some states this provision has long been heavily subsidized by volunteers. These courses can become unsustainable when offered in areas where people can't afford the costs. This was perceived to have the effect of removing an entry point into education for some people.

Philosophical issues regarding vocationalisation were also raised. This was especially acute for providers working with VET programs with marginalised people. The stringent focus on learning outcomes for VET programs was seen as antithetical to ACE with its focus on the learner, their needs and development and the conduciveness of the learning environment. Accredited VET courses were not seen as being able to be flexible enough to accommodate these people's needs.

With the move to delivering accredited training, organisations also reported a number of practical impacts with substantial resource implications, such as

- the cost of getting courses accredited and maintaining registration of courses;
- the cost in staff time in managing, assessing, supporting teachers, students and employers;
- locating and meeting the costs of qualified trainers and industry people, and ensuring tutors/ trainers are accredited. Higher levels of specific qualifications are needed in order to deliver training, eg. welding for farmers;
- ongoing tutor and trainer professional development;
- extending the provider registration to come into line with state-wide registration ie. VETAB registration in New South Wales, State Training Board registration in Victoria; and
- maintaining statistics;
- management implications such as documenting policies and procedures;

- ensuring a consistent outcome for the students, ie. moderation of assessment, content and outcomes;
- maintaining a competitive price with TAFE (as a government provider)
- establishing quality assurance;
- establishing venues to meet occupational health and safety requirements;
- maintaining the viability of vocational education and training in rural areas with small class sizes.

Where organisations were not resourced to undertake this activity, these issues had a substantial impact on the organisation.

South Australia

ACE Council funding to the sector in South Australia is specifically for courses with direct vocational outcomes only, though these do not need to be accredited. By limiting the support for general adult education, vocationalisation was seen as a threat to the role that community houses play in being small providers who are responsive to local needs and provide a starting point for people to meet their education and other needs.

Another effect of vocationalising ACE was perceived as the narrowing of the groups of people who are included in the scope of ACE, for example, seniors and others whose learning is for other purposes than jobs. It also limits the scope for attracting funding to provide learning opportunities.

In South Australia's shrinking economy a heavy focus on vocational education and training and job skills was seen as not making sense. In such situations there was seen to be a greater need for family and local support, and assistance with surviving on a limited budget.

AVETMISS data collection for ACE Council funded courses is required. Centres run many other programs for which no data was officially collected. The collection of data for a section of courses only was reported as skewing the course delivery statistics. Also, AVETMISS data collection requires the collection of information on course and module completions. However, this can be particularly difficult with some target groups, where getting people through the door, which offers the potential for eventual growth in confidence to undertake learning, is a success in itself, but can't be recorded as course and module completions.

The lack of flexibility in national training frameworks, especially for indigenous people and other social justice target groups, makes providing programs which meet people's needs difficult. Mainstream industry requirements, reflected in the national training system, do not necessarily match what Aboriginal and other groups have to offer or require.

The constant changes in the Vocational Education and Training system causes much confusion, especially for smaller organisations. Becoming registered providers takes up much time, and then the goal posts change.

Western Australia

Interviewees reported that with no funding available for the delivery of ACE there is a lack of recognition of the learning opportunities offered by the sector. All of the interest and value of adult and community education is seen as being in the pathways to vocational education and training. This is limiting the value of ACE.

Acknowledging the importance of pathways, issues brought forward involved the importance of the first steps catered for by the informal, supportive settings provided by community based providers. These first steps, which may take many years, are needed before some participants are prepared or ready to enter the formal education sector. If these steps are vocationalised, with the attendant requirements, they may need to occur in some other setting or the opportunity may be lost for current community based providers.

Another opportunity cost involves the cost of time needed by providers to develop as deliverers of accredited curriculum. This time detracts from that available for other courses and programs which are not accredited. There is also the cost of the venue and the loss of income from the venue, the cost of childcare which are not covered by VET funding and the potential outcomes of having to increase the fees for childcare. This can then make this service unavailable to those who could benefit.

Victoria

The move to providing accredited training is well advanced in Victoria and many of the initial organisational impacts were worked through several years ago.

One rural and a provincial centre provider both reported increasing demand for accredited training. The provincial centre reported that 80% of attendance were for vocational rather than other adult education activities. However, another rural provider reported contrary information, namely that there was little interest in accredited courses.

The move to provide accredited training was experienced as essential for survival in some settings, becoming a significant funding source. Offering accredited programs created new opportunities, catered to whole new groups of people, making use of some centres during daytime and on weekends, where this had been limited before. For example, one centre reported that men infrequently attend any programs other than vocational offerings, and their attendance at the vocational courses offered had increased substantially over the centre's previous offerings. Also the equipment and materials purchased for accredited programs became available for use by other courses.

The importance of the process which people have to go through in order to be able to access accredited training was mentioned. In the vocationalisation of ACE provision it was seen as important not to lose sight of the grass-roots

courses and services which feed and commence this process for people. Many providers saw it as undesirable that the vocational agenda was being promoted at the expense of general adult education. On the other hand, some believed that, by working with the vocational agenda, they were helping to shape that agenda. They believed that they do vocational education and training well but make it look like ACE, making it possible to get good outcomes with difficult clients.

For some neighbourhood houses vocationalisation, the reducing funding for ACFE funded general adult education, where only low levels of ACFE funding is allocated, the nature of the quality assurance processes and the demands of grants management were reducing the feasibility of offering courses. The outcome was that the traditional adult education activities undertaken by houses and community centres was not seen as valued.

Lack of infrastructure is limiting the types of vocational education and training which can be delivered by providers. Community development, community services, office skills, hospitality and a number of other areas can be delivered effectively by the sector within the resourcing constraints.

Some providers mentioned that vocationalisation of ACE provision placed them in competition with local TAFE Colleges and other private providers. An example involved computer training, ACE providers needed to purchase/obtain their own equipment, while TAFE was funded to purchase this equipment. This made competing in the local situation more difficult.

It was suggested that it is important to be clear about the organisation's core business and vision. Once these are clearly established then vocational education and training won't overwhelm other aspects of the program.

New South Wales

With the growth of accredited vocational education and training in ACE especially since 1993, the Training Reform Agenda has been having a large impact on ACE providers. This impact has been most significant in the areas of language and literacy, access courses and English as a second language which were some of the initial areas of vocationalisation, along with labour market programs. Some of these areas, especially labour market programs, were initially well-funded, however, now the funding is shrinking, or in the case of labour market programs ceased, and the areas are becoming extremely competitive.

For some providers, the question is starting to arise whether it is worthwhile to be delivering in these areas at such low rates of funding per student contact hour, with the attendant costs of AVETMISS data collection. This is more the case for those providers who can draw on a population base that can afford user-pays courses.

On the other hand, vocationalisation and the funding which has become available with it allows some groups of people to have access to education which was not available to those who couldn't pay for general adult education.

“ACE has traditionally responded to community demand for education courses. However, as most of these courses are fee for service, they are predominantly servicing the more affluent sections of the community. Course venues are in well-to-do suburbs making it easier for these people to attend. If one considers issues such as access and equity, one realises a significant percentage of the population is not having their needs met. The acceptance of VET funds allow ACE providers to run courses for nominal (if any) fees. Hence we have more options about where and for whom we can offer courses.”
(Mortimer, 1997, p.13)

The focus on the outcomes of vocational education and training is a recognised certificate. However, the learning outcomes may have little impact on the receiver's quality of life, depending on whether employment is available, or what use the qualification can be put to. Non-accredited education programs, especially in the area of literacy, don't provide a recognised outcome, but often have a very significant impact on the quality of life of the participant. With much of the funding in this area targeted to accredited vocational education and training provision, it is difficult to meet the needs in non-accredited areas, such as assisting a mother with limited literacy skills learn to read bedtime stories to her children (Mortimer, 1997, p.14).

Another effect of the agenda has been to encourage the development of infrastructure systems. This was assisted through the Board of Adult and Community Education (BACE). Registration and quality assurance procedures, namely the ACE Quality Strategy, were developed. Providers reported that the leadership role taken in this regard by BACE, and through BACE, the professional development offered by Regional Councils, was of great assistance.

How vocationalisation is perceived depends greatly on the attitude of the provider organisations and their staff. One provider has incorporated the further implementation of State and Federal vocational education and training policy in the community into the organisation's mission. It is seen as giving community providers more credibility, and as more a matter of re-badging what was already on offer through community providers.

Participating is seen as essential to survival for many providers. Vocationalisation of ACE has brought a lot more funding into some ACE providers and has been a launching platform into other areas of service delivery. Though it has also put organisations under strain, especially when funding sources for those areas evaporated.

Program delivery

Providers offered such a broad range of courses and programs that it was beyond the means of this project to analyse the content or delivery in any way, especially with respect to the non-accredited programs. Brochures were collected from every provider and showed that practically every conceivable subject was covered somewhere. For most providers these programs are well established and any practical issues involved with running the programs had been resolved some time ago, and, excepting issues concerning venues and promotion were not raised by providers. The main current issues regarding non-accredited programs revolved around resourcing and funding and are covered in other sections of this report.

With the delivery of accredited training, providers are developing ways to maximize the outcomes of training programs. In one case a provider had incorporated two certificates into one class. This enabled participants to obtain a Certificate in General Education and a Certificate in Childcare. In another case, a program offering Workplace Trainer qualifications was also used to place the trainers for on-site training in literacy and numeracy. This workplace training involved the workers using their own worksheets and other documents to obtain Food Processor Certificate I qualifications.

Industry placements for long-term unemployed people were causing conflict and tension for one provider. Under the requirements of the funding programs to assist the long-term unemployed, providers have no ability to screen or choose participants. As participants are not always entirely voluntary in some cases, problems have arisen. Another provider in the same area has a rights and responsibilities document which students entering VET programs are requested to sign. In the situation where this is practised there were issues about participants taking responsibility for their learning.

Workplace experience/ industry placement

Where providers were delivering accredited curriculum requiring workplace experience or industry placements, their local community businesses and organisations were able to provide these. Providers reported being able to establish good relationships with local businesses and other organisations in order to place students from accredited courses.

Where a work experience component is required for accredited courses, the need to set up dedicated project management was suggested. This is required to monitor placements and support student and employers to ensure the relationships remain on a good footing. It is also needed to develop resources. Casual tutors and sessional teachers are contracted in some situations to supervise industry placements.

Victoria

Some community centres that offer a range of services, for example, childcare, were able to offer childcare industry placements in-house. In other situations where providers offer a range of other programs, this is used to advantage. One provider in a regional town ran a printing business and tea rooms for some of their other programs. These were also used for industry placement purposes.

In rural areas providers reported a large amount of on-site delivery of VET, such as viticulture and other primary production courses.

New South Wales

Some providers do a lot of work-based training. This is increasing especially for those working in the fee for service area.

One ACE provider reported a partnership to conduct a building and construction program, a Certificate in Fitout and Finish, which involved the provider in providing the course registration, and a worker who links the training to competencies. The other partner, a medical centre, was responsible for the trainer, venues, and the workplace.

Flexible delivery

Flexible delivery was interpreted by providers of general adult education programs and non-accredited programs to take the form of offering classes at times convenient to participants and having childcare available in some form, whether that be on-site or through arrangements with local childcare centres. In Victoria funding is available for childcare for participants in courses.

Other forms of flexibility in delivery involved taking programs to participants. In the case of a Western Australian community centre, a writing class went to the local hospital because a participant had been admitted.

Self-paced learning programs allow participants the flexibility to attend to their learning activity as they choose. This was being used especially for some computer training programs. Self-study through providing manuals and setting tasks provided a flexible alternative for some programs which are or can be oriented to individual study. A number of ACE providers in New South Wales are delivering a Certificate III level Assistant in Nursing course. Some of these providers are working together to develop and produce a self-paced resource for this Certificate.

Telecentres in Western Australia increase the flexibility of their provision of satellite delivered accredited courses by taping them. The live interactive component is lost, but the student can access the materials at a time of their choice.

The ACFE Board in Victoria has been supporting the sector to utilize “New Learning Technologies”. This is resulting in the early stages of some programming moving to being delivered online.

Providers were highly variable as to the level of expertise and knowledge about information and communication technologies. Larger providers were mentioning that they were considering offering courses through the Internet in the near future.

One provider reported installing special keyboards, providing talking books and trialling a voice activated computer to provide opportunities to people with a variety of disabilities.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning is offered where possible/ appropriate when providers offer accredited courses. At times providers reported having trained RPL assessors on staff. It is offered by some providers on a user-pays basis, though not many people are applying for it.

Peak bodies, networks and other sources of support available to community providers

The range of support and services available to assist community-based ACE provision varies greatly from state to state.

Providers in the sector are supported by the following peak bodies:

South Australia

Community and Neighbourhood Houses (CANH) and the
Community Employers' Association

Western Australia

Learning Centre Link

Victoria

ACE Vic, and the
Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres
(Formerly the Council of Adult Education played a significant sector
support role.)

New South Wales

Evening and Community Colleges Association,
NSW Association of Community Adult Education Centres, and the
WEA Association of NSW

Nationally

Adult Learning Australia (formerly Australian Association of Adult
and Community Education)

Peak bodies specifically addressing the provision of adult and community education, mainly in New South Wales and Victoria, provide a range of membership services, including:

- offering networks of providers meetings, forums and conferences
- advice for management committees
- support with industrial relations issues and industrial relations service
- assistance with a range of human resource management issues
- professional development for staff and committees
- tender information service
- formation of consortia to enable tendering for government contracts
- direct support to individual organisations
- group insurance schemes
- bulk purchasing/ leasing and other arrangement eg. for cars
- software licensing schemes
- copyright collection schemes with the Copyright Agency Ltd.
- lobbying on behalf of the membership on a whole range of issues, eg. funding arrangements
- representing members' interests
- information and updates on current developments
- development of quality systems
- providing accredited training for and within the industry, eg. accredited tutor and management training, Recognition of Prior Learning training

amongst other forms of support. Some of these services are also offered by the peak bodies in other states mentioned above.

South Australia

In South Australia the Community and Neighbourhood House, and the regional Networks of Neighbourhood House Centres were reported as being valuable support. Literacy coordinators were supported by bi-monthly regional meetings organised through the ACE Regional Coordinators employed by the ACE Unit. The ACE Unit's conference was also seen as a support. The ACE Unit is described under the section on formal ACE structures and support.

Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Centres (CANH)

CAN's role involves identifying and responding to the training and support needs of community and neighbourhood houses and centre. The association works with and acts as a lobbyist on behalf of members to various government departments, is involved in policy, budget recommendations, urban development issues. It undertakes special projects as required.

Western Australia

Learning Centre Link was reported as being an excellent source of support to community providers within that network (comprising 72 community and learning centres). Telecentres are supported through the Department of Commerce's Telecentres Support Unit and are grouped into regional networks which also provide support.

Learning Centre Link

As well as providing training and support and other services to member organisations, Learning Centre Link has undertaken some of the following developmental activities:

- providing access to resources, mentoring and centre support including a small amount of financial assistance to newly forming centres
- assistance with the development and accreditation of curriculum, namely a "Course in Group Facilitation" developed by a community centre and with
- providing assistance for number of centres with the registration process for centres to become registered providers
- development of a program to enable recognition of prior learning "Life Experience Counts"
- research into adult learning and community education.

Victoria

With a large number of organisations in Victoria recognised as ACE providers, providers had a range of other community providers who they can draw on for support. Large providers, offering a variety of different types of services and programs, have a network and draw upon each other for support.

ACE providers almost universally mentioned ACE (Vic) as their major source of support, while neighbourhood houses and learning centres drew their support from the Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres (ANHLC) and their local Neighbourhood House Networks. Neighbourhood houses also found their local government area networks of assistance. In some areas these encourage local houses to become supportive of each other, and can assist with shared advertising, resources and support.

ACFE Regional Councils, in their role of keeping providers informed about Board level decisions, are an important source of support for providers. Mention was made of the need for Regional Councils to be flexible in interpreting policy because what is appropriate in larger metropolitan settings doesn't necessarily work in rural and remote settings. Issues with the autonomy for providers also arise at times around what a community needs and what will be funded.

From its inception in 1947, the Council of Adult Education (CAE) was instrumental in the development, support and advocacy of communities having the right to run their own adult education. During the 1970's and 1980's the CAE committed substantial resources to administering funding and support programs, such as tutor training, committee of management training to assist the development of providers. During the 1990's the CAE developed AEON (Adult Education Organisation Network), a support service subscribed to by 250 members who were supported by email, professional development, newsletters, a brochure exchange, and a journal article service. From the 70's to the 90's the CAE employed field officers to support providers. The CAE also initiated the award for workers in the sector. Currently the CAE's main role in supporting the sector involves providing resources for book clubs, a library service on adult education issues and maintaining an email discussion list.

ACE Vic

ACE Vic offers a wide range of the services of peak bodies listed above. This organisation also offers meetings of providers, and though it is an employer body, supports committees of management and centre staff alike, in order to ensure minimal problems arise between the two levels of management.

ANHLC

The Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres (ANHLC) offers a range of services to members, and was mentioned as an important source of support especially by their constituent organisations. The 340 neighbourhood houses in Victoria are linked into 16 regional neighbourhood house networks. One such group of providers is CHAOS (Community Houses Association of the Outer Eastern Suburbs), another is the Southern Western Port Community House Network which provides support services.

Australian Capital Territory

Support for community centres is available through a number of organisations including CANACT (Community Centres and

Neighbourhood Houses in ACT), National Link, ALA (National Office) and interagency meetings.

New South Wales

With the

- ACE sector in New South Wales being largely prescribed as those non-profit organisations whose primary role involves the provision of adult education, and
- division of the sector into three types of providers,

support is provided largely by the peak bodies for each type of provider. These organisations are the Evening and Community Colleges Association (ECCA), the WEA Association of NSW and the Community Adult Education Centres Association (CAEC Association). All providers mentioned one of these associations, depending on which part of the sector they were aligned with. Each peak body provides a range of services as outlined above.

Where organisations are funded through BACE, the 9 Regional ACE Councils were also seen as a source of support. There are some larger providers, however, who believe that the regional council structure doesn't serve their needs.

The networking promoted through Adult Learners' Week, especially the state conference, was seen as a good networking tool for small organisations.

Neighbourhood houses and community centres draw on the Local Community Services Association for support. There are also regional networks of neighbourhood houses and community centres.

Evening and Community Colleges Association

Alongside providing a wide range of the services listed above, in January 1997 the ECCA established the ACE Training and Consultancy unit as a registered business (ECCA Annual report, 1996-97) owned by ECCA. This unit has the role of developing a range of professional development programs and support services that are aimed at the whole of the ACE sector and other providers. These include providing accredited training for ACE.

The Principals of Evening and Community Colleges have also formed a Principals' association.

NSW Association of Community Adult Education Centres

Alongside providing a wide range of the services listed above, the NSW Association of Community Adult Education Centres is based on nine regional networks, in rural and non-metropolitan areas. A network leader from each region is on the management committee.

WEA (Workers Educational Associations) of NSW

The Workers Education movement established the first WEA in 1919. All WEAs were part of the one organisation until 1993, when each became

separately incorporated. The three separate providers have a peak association which provides support and other services. This is staffed under a contract with a consultant.

ACE Council

The three peak bodies, working together since the early 1990s, have formed the Council of NSW Adult and Community Education Organisations, known as the ACE Council.

Local Community Services Association

Although not described as directly part of the ACE sector, this association provides a range of peak body services to neighbourhood and community centres. These include undertaking

- research and providing resources
- a telephone information service
- representing centres and their communities with policy and decision makers and lobbying for the representation of its members on various bodies including the Community Services and Health ITAB; and
- various projects, such as a neighbourhood house census, professional development programs, Neighbourhood Centre Week and an annual conference.

National peaks and employer bodies

Adult Learning Australia

The Adult Learning Australia (ALA), formerly the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education, is a national body, with state branches. It draws membership from a wide range of settings, and is open to all who work in or are interested in the field of adult education. It functions as the national peak organisation in the field of adult and community education, providing membership benefits such as publications, newsletters, national conferences, research and development projects, and public education activities. ALA provides advice to Parliament, Ministers, DEETYA and ANTA. It represents the field nationally and internationally and provides information, research and advisory services to the sector.

Jobs Australia (formerly National Skillshare Association)

Some of the larger ACE providers especially in New South Wales and Victoria, especially those who are involved in employment services, and a neighbourhood house noted the National Skillshare Association as a source of support for the committee of management.

This organisation provides many of the services listed above as an employer body. Membership is open to any not-for-profit organisations engaged in the delivery of programs and services to assist unemployed people and other disadvantaged people in the community to gain and retain employment.

Other support

Support for providers also came from a variety of other sources, such as:

- Some providers of accredited training have developed strong links with the Industry Training Advisory Board covering their main area of training.
- The local Chamber of Commerce and Industry provided support to some organisations visited.
- Local network and interagency meetings were cited as sources of support. WACOSS was also mentioned.
- ALA and its newsletter were cited as being of support. In WA where the local branch of ALA is strong, this was cited as being of support. ALA is noted as a support in all states especially through Adult Learners' Week promotional activities from 1994 – 1996.

ALA's website can be found at <http://www.ala.asn.au>, and a further project Adult Learning on Line has a website at <http://alonline.com.au>

- LERN (Learning Resources Network) is a United States based organisation which resources adult education providers. A monthly newsletter carries a wide variety of articles about different aspects of adult education. Its Internet address is <http://www.lern.com> This provides a range of reports, a chat room, brochures and news.
- ACE Web is an Australian web-site providing information and resources. Its web address is <http://yarranet.net.au/aceweb/>
- The Council of Adult Education houses an email mailing list which provides a wide range of information about adult education. Entry to this mailing list can be found on the Council's web-site at <http://www.cae.edu/>
The email address for the list is cae-ozace@vicnet.net.au
- Education Network Australia has a website covering a range of information on adult and community education. Its website is <http://www.edna.edu.au/EDNA/>

Literacy programs draw on a range of support structures that were not investigated as part of this project. However, literacy support can be obtained from the Adult Education Resource and Information Service at http://sunsite.anuledu.au/language_australia/aris/index.html

Formal infrastructure and support for ACE

During the 1980's the internationalisation of economies and cultures, the development of communications technologies and other technological changes, and attendant social changes generated a concern about Australia's long-term economic competitiveness, and the skill levels of the Australian workforce to enable Australia to compete in world markets. This led to large scale reforms of the education sector through the National Training Reform Agenda.

The National Training Reform Agenda is a cooperative initiative between Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to develop a national system of training that is competency based. The Agenda involves establishing industry specific competency standards that are linked through a national hierarchical skills level framework, and aligned with industry awards and wage levels. The Agenda calls for a national framework for the recognition of training and training providers. It also involves the implementation of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Other aspects of the Agenda include

- the development of training programs based on industry endorsed competency standards which are accredited by the various state training recognition authorities, in accordance with the National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT),
- flexible delivery and competency based assessment, both on and off the job, and better articulation of credit transfer capabilities, Recognition of Prior Learning,
- an expanded and enhanced system of entry level training,
- an open and competitive training market.

Since the inception of the National Training Reform Agenda a number of government structures were in place to drive the agenda and reach agreements on the direction and implementation of training reforms. Agreements between the state, territory and federal governments led to the formation of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) in 1992. From 1993 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) amalgamated a number of Ministerial Councils in order to optimise coordination of policy making across interrelated portfolios. The Ministerial Council on Employment Education Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) was formed.

MCEETYA established a number of taskforces in a range of areas to provide advice to it. An ACE Taskforce was established comprising a range of representatives mostly drawn from the formal support mechanisms which have been established for ACE in the various states. In NSW and Victoria, the Boards are represented. Queensland is represented by an officer from the Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations. Adult Learning Australia also has a representative on this taskforce. This taskforce was responsible for the initial development of and subsequent revision of the National ACE Policy.

ANTA exists to support the Ministerial Council in all of its functions and is responsible for the development of, and advice on, national policy, goals and objectives, a national strategy and Annual National Priorities. ANTA is also responsible for the disbursement of federal training funds to the states / territories. Each state or territory then has responsibility for its allocation. The formal structures which exist in some states play a role in ensuring that ACE provision is allocated some funding.

Parallel to the developments in the National Training Reform Agenda, the provision of adult education through local communities was growing rapidly in many states of Australia. From this growth and development and for the first time since 1944, adult and community education gained significant recognition with the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training's 1991 investigation. The Committee inquired into the existing policies and practices, funding, barriers to participation, outcomes, professional development of adult educators, and made recommendations for a coherent approach to provision. The resulting report was titled "Come in Cinderella: the emergence of Adult and Community Education" promoted significant development of the sector with the recommendations for, amongst thirty others,

- a National ACE Policy,
- the establishment of a formal Advisory Committee to assist the federal Minister with policy formulation,
- the establishment of an office within the Department to ensure implementation of policy.

Within a short time of the handing down the Senate Committee's first report into adult and community education in 1991, adult and community education provision started to experience the impact of the National Training Reform Agenda. In part this occurred because federal funding for post compulsory education and training (excluding universities) was channeled through ANTA, and ANTA was instrumental in implementing training reforms. It has been through this process that the emphasis for ACE providers has shifted to vocationalisation of their delivery, and funding has shifted to competitive tendering based on unit costing.

In 1996 the Senate once again referred an inquiry into the developments in adult and community education in Australia since 1991 to the Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee. This inquiry looked into:

- the structural and policy changes at Commonwealth level and assessed the impact these had on the delivery of adult education in the community;
- significant changes in the patterns and levels of participation of adults over the preceding five years;
- the range of provision of structured adult education by community-based providers;
- identifying technological, demographic and economic trends likely to influence the nature and extent of adult education provision;
- professional development of adult educators.

This report documented many of the issues arising for the Ace sector from the training reforms.

Within this national policy framework and developments in ACE, state and territory government policy and support for community-based ACE provision varies considerably from state to state. The following sections describe the policy mechanisms and implementation strategies for each state visited. A brief comment about Queensland is also included.

South Australia

In South Australia the provision of ACE is supported by the Adult Community Education Council which was established under the Vocational Education, Employment and Training (VEET) Act of 1994. Its roles include:

- promote and encourage the provision of adult community education
- advise the Minister on matters relating to government support for adult community education
- make recommendations to the Minister on the allocation of grants to providers of adult community education (Vocational Education, Employment and Training Board (VEET) Annual report 1996, p. 26)

The Council established a Strategic Plan in 1994 which reflected the goals of the National Policy on Adult Community Education. As part of this Plan the Council undertook a mapping exercise of ACE activity and provision across the state.

The Council is supported by a Secretariat, the ACE Unit within the Department of Employment, Training and Further Education. The Manager of the ACE Unit provides Executive Officer support to the ACE Council. The ACE Unit develops policy, undertakes research, develops resources, administers the Adult Community Education Grant program and manages projects to fulfil the functions of the ACE Council (VEET (1996) Annual Report, p. 27). Regional Coordinators are also employed by the Council. These workers support providers by publishing newsletters and holding bi-monthly meetings which keeps providers up to date.

The Council has been allocating funding for a range of general education, vocational and employment preparation, language, literacy and numeracy programs. It also provides "professional development opportunities for community-based educators, volunteers and coordinators working in the delivery of adult community education" (VEET, 1996, p.30). This includes training and support for individuals to participate in conferences.

This Council comprises nine people appointed by the Minister. These people are individuals and not organisational representatives. This raises issues about responsibility, accountability and reporting back by these appointees. Disquiet was expressed by providers in this regard.

Western Australia

The Western Australian Department of Training established an ACE Reference Group to:

- assist in data definition, collection and administration for the purposes of the State Training Profile, in relation to the participation of the ACE sector
- provide advice with the implementation of National and State policies and strategies
- promote quality adult community education in WA, including through Adult Learners' Week
- provide advice on community needs for recognition of adult learning
- provide advice in respect of TAFE Colleges and centres developing cooperative and/or collaborative arrangements with community providers.

This group has a broad membership including the Executive Director, Strategic Services, who is the Chair, representatives of the peak bodies, TAFE, University, clients/users of adult community education, nominated by ACE providers, regional representation from organisations and/or local government. Executive support is provided by a Senior Policy Officer from the department.

Community-based ACE provision is not funded by the Department. However, Learning Centre Link is funded on a triennial basis to provide support to the sector. Individual projects, such as a sector mapping exercise, are funded.

Telecentres

The Western Australian Telecentres Support Unit, based within the Department of Commerce and Trade, supports the Telecentre network comprising approximately 60 centres, through three regional coordinators and a centrally located staff of four. Each telecentre receives a grant of up to \$20,000 for a coordinator and on-going funding subject to the particular centre meeting a performance agreement.

Victoria

Victoria's 1991 Adult, Community and Further Education Act provides the framework for the formal infrastructure which supports the provision of adult, community and further education. This Act established the ACFE Board; the regions and the Regional Councils; the systems of consultation with providers and users, and government; and systems for coordination and planning.

The main functions of the Board are

- “to plan, develop policies, promote and allocate resource and advise the Minister on matters related to adult, community and further education”.
- The ACFE Board's Chairperson attends State Training Board (STB) meetings by invitation as an observer/participant and also provides a report to that Board on significant adult, community and further education issues (ACFEB

Annual report 1996-96, p. 28). A memorandum of understanding between ACFEB and the STB recognises the role of adult education in the community and the right for community providers to be given fair and reasonable access to funding. ACFEB contributes to the development of the State Training Profile, and the "adult, community and further education targets from the State Training Profile form the basis of the targets in performance agreement with Regional Councils and the Council of Adult Education" (Annual report, pp. 33-34).

The program areas covered by adult, community and further education programs are:

- general adult education programs
- Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE)
- Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)
- general access and bridging programs, including returning to study and work preparation courses
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- vocational education and training programs offered through community-based providers

There are nine Regional Councils of the ACFE Board, each comprising 12 voluntary members appointed by the Minister. Councils may coopt an additional two members. The members are:

- representative of the interests and views of users and providers of adult education in the region, including the interest of TAFE Institutes;
- a fair and balanced reflection of the diversity of the community in the region; and
- representative of the importance of community-based provision of adult education. (ACFEB Annual report, p.77).

Appointees don't represent their own organisations, but rather represent a broad range of views and levels of skills.

Regional Councils draw together expertise and different aspects of local knowledge to "develop regional plans and policies, and promote, support, resource, and evaluate adult education programs" (ACFEB Annual report, p.77). The councils disperse the funding within a region. Regional Councils keep providers informed about decisions of the Board and other developments. They also assist with professional development training frequently through tendering out, and collecting statistics.

In recent years there has been a change of focus for the Board and its Regional Councils. This has been an outcome of National Competition Policy that has led to greater identification of the purchaser/provider split. Previously government supported communities providing their own adult education. The focus is now on identifying students and potential students and the general community as its market. This is funded by purchasing certain training hours on behalf of the community rather than funding the providers directly. The result has been a change from grant based funding to unit costing as a method of accounting for expenditure.

Some providers considered that their involvement in their regional council was an essential aspect of their organisational strategy.

Australian Capital Territory

The Advisory Council on Adult and Community Education was established in February 1997 and released the ACT Policy on Adult and Community Education in July. The Council has developed a Strategic Plan for 1997-99, and offered funding for a range of programs.

New South Wales

The Board of Adult and Community Education Act 1990 defines the constitution, functions and procedure of the Board of Adult and Community Education. Clause 7 of this Act defines the functions of the Board as:

- to promote the provision of adult and community education in the State;
- to foster and support the establishment of organisational structures and mechanisms that facilitate the co-ordinated provision of adult and community education in the State;
- to advise the Minister, the TAFE Commission Board and other relevant agencies on needs and trends in, and the co-ordination of, adult and community education;
- to arrange, on behalf of the Government and in accordance with any guidelines provided by the Minister, for the distribution of government funds to adult and community education agencies;
- such other functions as are conferred or imposed on it ...

and directs the Board, "in the exercise of its functions, ... to consult with the TAFE Commission Board" to develop with the TAFE Commission Board "a strategic plan for the co-ordination and development of adult and community education generally in the State (Clause 8)".

The Board comprises 13 members of which nine are Ministerial appointments. Other Board members are the Director-General of the Department, and the Director of ACE Services.

The ACE Services Branch within the Department provides a Secretariat service to the Board and prepares advice on policy, planning, resource allocation and quality assurance for the sector. It also conducts research, produces promotion and information publications and manages special events such as Adult Learners' Week. (The ACE Advantage, 1995)

The program areas covered by the board are adult and community education as provided by non-profit organisations and the Adult Migrant English Service. With recent departmental amalgamations some new areas have been added.

Nine regional councils are answerable to the Board, though they are not written into the Act. These councils are independently incorporated bodies with their own committees of management (called Boards), but are seen as

instruments of government policy. The Boards comprise 9 – 10 representatives, consisting of three providers, a TAFE, Department of Schools, three community and optional other government and university representatives. The President, who can be nominated by the ACE providers, is appointed by the Minister. The Regional Officer serves and is employed by the Council. Literacy co-ordinators are also employed by Regional Councils.

The process for appointing provider representatives to Regional Councils can pose problems, especially in regions where there are a large number of providers. The selection method can be problematic, especially where there is a mixture of large providers with several outposts and smaller providers.

Each of the nine councils covers a variable number of providers, depending of the makeup of the organisations in the region. Metropolitan providers are not covered by a council. Each council receives an operating budget, project funds and a professional development budget. Funding is also available for literacy and new providers initiatives.

The role of Regional Councils has been defined to:

- promote, support and encourage quality adult and community education
- facilitate liaison between ACE providers in their respective regions
- assist BACE in the implementation of statewide policies and priorities.

They also have a role in funding and monitoring providers, and conducting field visits.

In some cases Regional Councils become involved in special projects. The Central Western Regional Council of ACE applied for and won the ANTA funded Quality project on behalf of the ACE Council. Stages 1 and 2 of this Quality Strategy have been completed. These involved the development and initial implementation stages. Stage 3 involves training facilitators for organisational self-assessment, reviewing the strategy, developing an external review process, and developing a pathway between the Strategy and the statewide system.

Regional Councils are involved in identifying and prioritising needs. These can be met by two means. These are either through an existing provider establishing an outpost, or, establishing a new organisation. These guidelines are being reviewed to allow more options

New providers can only become registered with the Board if they are sponsored by their Regional Council. New initiative funding is available for this purpose. In this process they are supported in the development of their organisation, obtaining assistance with the

- development of policies, procedures and processes,
- management structure,
- financial procedures and processes, and
- rights and responsibilities for tutors, and
- all the other activities which are required to be done, such as obtaining insurances, tax exemption, etc.

After the first two years a process is in place to determine the viability of the organisation. Further assistance is available to become registered to deliver VET. This assistance is provided through the Regional Council or through the sponsoring provider.

To assist the process of becoming registered providers, BACE allocated funding to the Regional Councils. This covered assisting organisations to work through the process together and a \$1,000 subsidy which was reimbursed by BACE upon successful registration by a provider. This covered the registration fees. Regional Officers were trained by the VETAB Accreditation Board to assist the organisations in their area.

Regional Councils also support cluster meetings. These were described by some providers as important sources of information and networking.

AVETMISS data collection is enabling BACE to offer providers a "Provider Equity Profile". This was seen as a useful analysis of the programs being delivered by providers.

Queensland

At the time of publication of this report an ACE Advisory Committee, with advisory status to the Vocational Education Training and Employment Commission (VETEC) was due to meet for the first time in May 1999. It will comprise 13 members selected from a call to nominate for this Committee.

Ideas for good practices

Listed below are a range of practices which providers brought to my attention as working well for them. They could be used as tips for any provider.

Atmosphere

Providers reported the relaxed atmosphere, acknowledgement of and addressing the barriers which prevent people walking through the doors, giving people the time they need and the accessibility of staff, as an important feature of and good practice in ACE provision.

Culturally appropriate responses

Taking account of cultural issues is also an important feature, especially where specific target groups are involved. This was particularly important for indigenous people, and involved spending time outside for discussion groups and other activities where possible. This enabled passers-by to see what was happening and feel more comfortable about making an approach.

Providing programs in locations where people are comfortable, for example, a Men's Health and Awareness Evening was held in a local pub in a rural town. This attracted 260 men and provided information that enabled the provider to plan to meet the need for programs on men's health. Another provider took information on men's health to a football club evening with good effect.

Cultural inclusivity

A good practice regarding cultural inclusivity was demonstrated at one centre where there is an annual flag presentation ceremony to assist newcomers to identify others from their own background. The first person from a particular background to use the centre becomes involved in presenting a flag to the centre. The hall at the centre is decorated with many flags. At another centre welcome signs were displayed in many different languages.

Childcare for course and program participants

Many neighbourhood houses and community centres in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia have childcare centres in some form of close relationship to the organisation, enabling course participants to have access to childcare. The one neighbourhood house visited in New South Wales which is an ACE provider, also provided childcare for its courses.

One provider in a provincial city has a mobile childcare arrangement, whereby childcare goes to the site where the parents are learning. This provider also offers farm-based childcare. Childcare workers go out on a regular basis and set-up in halls or other appropriate facilities. This service is available to parents for work and study purposes. A further service provided involves emergency home-based care whereby workers go into a home for short-term needs.

Organisational and management practices

Devolving a high degree of responsibility to all staff with respect to managing their own workload enabled an organisation to be flexible and creative. It also encouraged the use of staff members full range of skills. The autonomy of staff was built into their job descriptions.

Written policies, procedures and practices are important for organisations, this can be especially useful for management committees.

It is important to structure organisations properly from the beginning, and balance operational and strategic aspects. One way of achieving this in some centres was to offer no programs in a particular time slot, eg Friday afternoon, to allow workers to catch up and plan.

Keeping a record and documenting events and recording people's stories provides a long-term record, and material for longer term evaluations.

One provider invites student representation onto the Board, and as an incentive offers the student representatives a free course.

To increase the direct contact for participants and teacher/tutors alike, and to ensure that the centre's management is not seen as remote, one organisation has the policy that the Coordinator or Executive Officer visits each class three times per term.

Program delivery and evaluation practices

One provider has a rights and responsibilities document which students entering VET programs are requested to sign. In the situation where this is practised there were issues about participants taking responsibility for their learning.

One centre reported evaluating all programs, collating and analysing these evaluations, holding tutor meetings and providing feedback to tutors. If an evaluation form contains an improvement suggestion and the change is made, the "customer" is phoned where possible and thanked for the suggestion. Another provider uses its Board or Council members to undertake evaluation of programs. These Council members ring students and ask for feedback on particular programs.

Cancellation and refund policy

One provider has a refund policy whereby each refund is sent with a letter offering a voucher for a 20% discount if the person enrolls in a course offered in the next brochure.

Advertising and promotion practices

In advertising programs it is important to determine the most effective method of distribution and promotion. One centre found that it was more cost effective to distribute 11 brochures per year through the local free paper than post and distribute a quarterly program. Also they found that by moving from a quarterly program to a monthly program, they have lifted the number of offered courses which actually run from 52% to 68%. In the past the first term had always had the largest number of enrolments; under the new arrangement, the final term had the largest number. The volume of programs offered also increased.

Providing developmental support

Supporting the development of other community organisations and/or seeding their development and auspicing them till they can/want to become independent was shown to be an empowering experience in one community centre.

Postscript

In the time intervening between the undertaking of the study tour and, given the changing nature of the sector, a number of developments and changes have inevitably occurred. This section will cover such issues as have had an immediate impact on ACE providers.

GST

With the proposal to introduce a goods and services tax, Adult Learning Australia and many providers, especially in New South Wales and Victoria, have been involved in a process of assessing the expected impact. Adult Learning Australia developed a submission to the Senate Standing Committee which inquired into the impact of the new tax system in 1998. The submission, titled "A Toll Booth on the Pathway?: Adult and Community Education and the GST" was based on five positions. These were:

Firstly, the cost of excluding non-accredited courses in the adult and community education sector would cost less than \$5 million in lost revenue, and would benefit half a million participant, of which three-quarters are women.

Secondly,

“applying a GST to General Adult Education (non-accredited/non-vocational courses) contradicts the Government’s stated commitment to lifelong learning and an undertaking “to imbue its education policies and associated funding mechanisms with the values and principles of lifelong learning for all Australians”. (Government’s response to the Report of the Senate Committee on Employment Education and Training, Beyond Cinderella, Hansard May 30th 1998)”.

Thirdly,

“the tax legislation would reinforce an educationally outdated and irrelevant distinction between ‘vocational/accredited’ and ‘non-vocational/non-accredited’ education and training, encouraging ‘credentialism’ and underlining the ‘second-class’ nature of ‘non-vocational’ courses ... A nation seeking to build a ‘learning culture’ should be leaving these outdated notions behind”.

Fourthly,

“in particular, the addition of GST to such courses would undermine the widely researched, recognised and supported function of adult and community education as a major pathway – back to learning, and on to further education and training, or to work – for tens of thousands of adult learners each year ...”

Fifthly,

“if passed in its present form the legislation will create pressures for the wholesale accreditation of ACE General Education courses, and non-

accredited VET courses. This would be costly, difficult, and undesirable in principle – as it would entail making all such programs more ‘vocationally acceptable’, and would have the effect of drawing the ACE sector further into the ‘regulated’ formal education and training system. The message to the public at large would be: “if its not accredited, you’re not a serious learner.....”. Its present independence, locality basis, and community management, enable ACE to be different and complementary to other providers”.

While the government argues that the GST will put more money into people’s pockets and, therefore, they will be able to afford any rising costs of courses and programs, the other effects of the GST on increasing vocationalisation of ACE is likely to be of significant detrimental effect. This especially so as funding for general adult education has been reducing in favour of vocational courses.

At a practical level much remains to be seen about how the tax will be implemented. For example, consider a course that has relatively high costs for materials, which have to be purchased including the GST. A GST is then also charged on the delivery of the course. To separate out the components will be an administrative dilemma.

Lifelong Learning

During a large part of the 1990’s there has been a large focus on developing a ‘training culture’ with its attendant infrastructure for the registration of courses and providers and a focus on the outputs of training provision. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), while recognising the interdependence of economic policy with labour market issues and education, reflected in the Training Reform Agenda, has long had a interest in social inclusiveness and the widening of the participation in learning. This has been reflected in the concept of lifelong learning.

The focus of adult learning in Australia is now gradually shifting to a concept of lifelong learning. This development is witnessed by the recent statement of the Chief Executive Officer of ANTA, Moira Scollay, titled “A Vision of Lifelong Learning”. Ms Scollay states

“we need to make everyone in the country passionate about learning at every stage of their career and their lives. This is not only necessary to achieve the goal of making Australia internationally competitive, but it is also vital for social cohesiveness and the democracy we hold so dear”.

Lifelong learning, therefore, places emphasis on a more holistic approach to education and training, embodying much broader aspects than vocational education and training, and including personal development.

Both the Victorian and New South Wales ACE Policy statements have incorporated the notion of lifelong learning. The ACFE Board’s mission is “to lead the vigorous development of lifelong learning in the community so that more people can realise their potential as individuals, citizens and workers” (ACFE Board (1998). Taking ACE to the year 2000). In NSW BACE’s

1996 policy titled "Recognising the Value of Lifelong Learning for All" describes two policy principles, firstly that "lifelong learning is central to the health, vitality and economic wealth of the community", and secondly, that "lifelong learning is essential to the continuing development of informed citizens and the promotion of a democratic society".

Adult Learning Australia has also been involved in promoting a policy framework for Lifelong Learning to the Federal Government. All of these approaches involve broadening and widening the participation in education by adults, especially those from 'non-participant' groups, that is, from the 25% of adults who do not participate in any further structured education after leaving school (Adult Learning, no. 5 Nov. 1998, p.3).

The concept of Lifelong Learning is also being promoted through the establishment of Learning Cities. Two providers visited as part of this tour are currently involved with their local councils in establishing Learning Cities and Shires.

Information / Learning Technology

Developments in information and communication technology and its application in the ACE sector, especially in Victoria, has been moving at a significant pace. ACE providers play an important role in developing community skills in this area. A number of projects, especially in Victoria, are assisting this rapid development. They include:

Skills.net which is a community networking initiative designed to provide access to and training in using the Internet and online services. Many ACE organisations are skills.net providers. This initiative is managed through Vicnet, a State Library of Victoria internet program. Their website is <http://www.skills.net.au/>

CEdRIC (Community Education Rural Internet Connection) which connected community education venues in the Central Highlands Wimmera region to the Internet. Their website is <http://yarranet.net.au/cedric/>

The Duke Street Community House in Melbourne, and others have developed an important role in promoting literacy through information technology. Their website is <http://www.vicnet.net.au/~dukest/>

In Victoria other developments in information technology have also begun to impact on the sector. An online Grants Management System has been implemented for the direct reporting of provider outcomes to the ACFE Board. Little information on developments in other states was readily available at the time of writing this update.

Findings

Approaches to ACE provision

The range of approaches to ACE provision varied from very localised provision heavily enmeshed in the local community's social fabric to large social enterprises, with an entrepreneurial and at times expansionist focus. Providers also varied as to the importance they placed on community development, and this depended on the characteristics of the provider.

Community ownership and what it means may become a source of discussion within the sector. Given the diversity in the size of providers, and the imperatives this brings with respect to surviving in a rapidly changing environment, community ownership of providers can mean substantially different things in different communities. For some providers it means bringing local people, sometimes users of the centres into a management committee that is grounded in the users, and providing a source of empowerment. For other providers, often those which are larger and longer established, it means targeting the general community to find people with high levels of skills to assist management of the organisation. Both approaches have their strengths and weaknesses.

Community ownership is believed by some to be a core value of the sector. However, with some larger providers the question arises as to whether the provider is the size the community can own or whether it has become an institution in its own right. Once a provider becomes an institution, it can be challenging to keep its base in the community. On the other hand, the community base of some providers, and a possible lack of, or inability to find resources, can result in organisations with little ability to develop and grow.

With a number of ACE providers apparently taking on some of the characteristics of institutions, it could be seen that a parallel infrastructure to the TAFE system is evolving. Without distinctive characteristics such as community ownership and responsiveness, amongst others, it may become difficult to distinguish some providers from the institutionalised adult education sector. This could become a threat to their viability as independent organisations meeting local community needs.

Organisation and management

Providers ranged from having relatively simple to very complex organisational structures. The sector across Australia provides a great diversity of models for setting up, organising and managing community-based providers. In order to be successful the model developed in any particular community needs to be appropriate to local community needs and responsive to local community issues.

Community providers management skills base was an issue which was frequently raised. A wide variety of strategies had been put in place across the sector to meet this challenge. Finding the balance between selecting

committee or board members purely for their expertise, or as a community development and empowerment strategy, or simply struggling to fill committee positions, will remain a challenge for providers.

Given the experience, especially in Victoria and New South Wales, where some providers expanded rapidly and got into difficulties, several providers recommended the importance of building slowly and solidly on strengths, and ensuring that projects and developments should be undertaken only if they fitted with the organisations philosophy.

Accountability

With funding structures and formulas changing almost annually with changes in government policy associated with economic rationalism and other imperatives, a provider reported that the constant change is like "learning to dance while they pull the carpet from under you". In a number of cases the feeling of a lack of autonomy, the climate of constant change and the sense of being pressured, were almost palpable. Also the levels of accountability and the differences in accountability for different funding sources were found to be onerous.

The increased levels of accountability, reduced funding for general adult education and the impacts of competitive tendering and changing relationships these factors bring are decreasing the ability of smaller providers to meet the learning needs of their local communities. This is decreasing the viability of some providers.

Industrial relations

With such variable conditions under which ACE providers have been established and are operating, the diverse range of services provided, and the large number of short term contracts due to short term funding arrangements, it would be difficult for any single award to be in currency across the sector, even within any state. The outcome of this situation can be that workers with equivalent levels of responsibility, but covered under different awards or other employment agreements, may have dissimilar pay and conditions. This can cause tensions. One provider undertook the internal consultation process necessary to register an Australian Workplace Agreement to overcome these issues, but found this process to be very labour intensive.

While attention is paid to the conditions of workers in administration and management within ACE providers, the conditions of tutors and teachers appear to receive less attention in the sector as a whole. Arrangements are specific to individual providers and vary widely.

Professional development

Providers frequently stressed the constantly changing nature of the sector, ranging from the influence of socio-political changes at the macro level, to daily management issues on the micro level and the need to keep abreast of

the impact of these changes on their organisations. However, given the necessity to stretch funding dollars to the maximum and low funding levels for programs, many providers had few resources available for professional development activities. In those states with strong peak bodies and/or formal ACE infrastructure, low-cost professional development opportunities were available to providers.

Funding and resourcing

The most frequently raised issues was the challenge involved in funding and resourcing organisations to meet the community's needs. Another aspect of this challenge was the constantly changing parameters for obtaining funding and the pressure this placed on organisations. An important development has been the move from grant based funding to cover some infrastructure and management costs to funding student contact hours with an emphasis on vocational outcomes only. This funding frequently does not cover all the costs associated with providing programs.

An effect of this move to output based funding has been a stifling of creativity for some providers who believe that they cannot afford to be experimental. Under the new arrangements it is difficult to absorb the costs of more experimental programs, as any lack of success is reflected in strictly prescribed outcomes which don't allow for variations in approach to be measured.

Vocationalisation and its impact

In those States where the ACE sector was not heavily involved in formal vocational education and training there was a resistance to embarking on this path. Programs to support the sectors with these developments were not in place.

The response of providers to being able to access and actually accessing training funding was defined to a large extent by the parameters of how the funding was offered. Where providers were encouraged through the process by the formal mechanisms for supporting ACE providers, and able to develop the infrastructure to do so progressively, providers had experienced the process as more satisfactory. Having a separate pool of funding to draw on was also helpful to the process. In other situations, where little support was provided, and where outcomes weren't very successful, providers became very discouraged.

Program delivery

The diversity of types of courses and programs delivered by organisations within the sector across Australia is immense. Practically every conceivable topic is covered across the range of providers. The creativity exhibited in how delivery was organised and managed by some providers was also inspiring.

Peak bodies

In other States with strong sectors, where peak bodies offer direct membership services, support, lobbying and advocacy, while the role of ALA (formerly AAACE) National Office remains strong, the branches are becoming largely relegated to the background. In these states providers are more likely to be members of a peak body. There is a clear need for the types of services offered by these peak bodies in support of the sector.

By developing a range of membership services as provided by peak bodies in other states, the ALA Qld Branch could gain a significant role in the development and support of the sector. This would mean a move from being a purely voluntary committee, to, in the longer term, employing staff, and taking on the functions of a voluntary committee of management.

ALA Qld Branch is well-placed as an organisation to investigate, and, if found appropriate, implement this strategy, as it already comprises a broad spectrum of adult education providers. The needs of the spectrum of providers would need to be documented and addressed. This would assist with ensuring an integrated sector, rather than a factionalised sector as has occurred elsewhere.

Initially the target group of providers would need to be community-based, non-profit organisations, as there is currently no support services available to these organisations for adult community education provision.

Formal ACE structures and support

Comparing the levels of sector development clearly demonstrates the importance of government recognition of the ACE sector. However, formal recognition has varying impacts on the sectors, depending on how that recognition is implemented. In the States with the least infrastructure, or less well established infrastructure, a greater diversity of non-profit organisations identify as ACE providers. Recognition, with its attendant regulation, seems to have a limiting effect on the sector and the types of organisations it is perceived to comprise.

Collegial attitude of providers

By far the majority of providers and others who were approached were willing and happy to share their time and information. This made the project possible, and for that I would like to thank all participants.

Recommendations

As a result of this study tour I recommend that:

1. In order to support the community-based ACE sector and help raise the profile of adult community education in Queensland, ALA Qld Branch investigates the range of services community-based providers will need to assist their development,
2. ALA Qld Branch develops a strategy to broaden its membership base, and seeks to encourage membership from the newly emerging ACE sector,
3. ALA Qld Branch seeks other peaks, for example, the Community Centres and Family Support Network, with which to form partnerships, or act in cooperation with, to provide the services the sector needs,
4. ALA Qld Branch develops a vision of, and policy for, the development of the ACE sector in Queensland, and that this policy be promoted to Government and other relevant parties,
5. ALA Qld Branch continues to lobby for an understanding of the breadth of the scope of adult and community education and lifelong learning and the contribution this makes to the whole community, and that this be reflected in any formal ACE infrastructure which is established,
6. Further research be undertaken in the areas of:
 - the nature, conditions and circumstances of the ACE sector in Queensland, especially that of community-based providers in the first instance, but including other providers in the sector as their needs become apparent
 - the nature of the relationship between local government and ACE providers in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. With the development of learning cities internationally and in Australia, this local government role in increasingly important. The research in this area needs to include an international study tour of this development
 - the effects of socio-political changes, including vocationalisation, tendering, information technology, from the macro to the micro levels on the ACE sector in Australia
 - industrial relations issues in the ACE sector
 - the implications and impacts of funding models on ACE providers
 - the issues raised by providers going into receivership, and various provider takeovers and mergers, especially in Victoria. It is important that Committees of Management have the necessary information to know what questions need to be asked of staff, be able to recognise danger signs and know how to deal with the situation. ALA should seek funding from ANTA to undertake this research and publish the results for distribution to Committees of Management,
 - given the increasing focus on lifelong learning and the development of learning cities/communities, a study tour of these developments would assist the development of this concept in Australia
7. ALA Qld, in seeking a policy commitment from the State government for lifelong learning, includes support for ACE provision of lifelong learning.

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Appendix 1 - Definition

Generally agreed features and underlying principles of adult and community education

The National Policy : Adult Community Education (1997) adopted by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), (1997 pp. 7-9), bases its definition on “generally agreed features and underlying principles”. These defining features of ACE are as follows:

“ACE is:

Learner-centred

Adults learn most effectively when they are actively involved in decisions about the management, content, style and delivery of their learning.

ACE operates within a tradition which involves participants in determining learning needs, program design and content and which focuses on facilitative methods of teaching.

Responsive to community

ACE supports local communities and communities of interest in identifying and meeting the educational needs of their members. It strengthens communities by building diverse skills and capacities, including enterprise skills and community management skills.

ACE assists adults to enhance their family and interpersonal relationships and their participation in broader social and cultural debates.

ACE contributes to the development of a cohesive, culturally diverse and creative Australian society.

Accessible and inclusive

Adults, regardless of their backgrounds and circumstances, should have equitable access to a range of relevant learning opportunities to enable them to become lifelong learners and participate fully in society.

ACE learning is accessible, provided in an environment which is open and informal, with an emphasis on equality among learners and teachers.

ACE has traditionally served the learning needs of women. Women comprise 75% of ACE students in Australia. This predominance of women as students is matched by a similar predominance of women as teachers, administrators and members of committees of management.

ACE has the capacity to increase access to learning pathways for adults who are under-represented in employment and training – for example,

people without adequate social and functional skills in English language, literacy or numeracy; people with disabilities; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; people not in the paid workforce; people who are geographically or socially isolated; people with low levels of education; people with low income; and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

ACE recognises a special responsibility for the education of older Australians whose education interest are not a priority for schools, Vocational Education and Training (VET) or higher education

Diverse

ACE programs include literacy, basic education, English and multi-cultural languages, study skills, vocational preparation, training, skills development, liberal education and general adult education

ACE is an important part of a continuum of learning which offers choices of learning outcomes at various stages of an individual's development.

Education and training provision is more responsive when collaboration occurs between all sectors of education and training

ACE makes a significant contribution to the development of work skills. Many participants enrol for specifically vocational purposes. Others gain confidence, skills and knowledge which they apply in the workplace or in seeking work. ACE is a major provider of computer and business management training and increasingly a provider for small business.

ACE has made a valuable contribution to building the national VET system by diversifying supply, increasing competition in the training market and assisting the unemployed.

Local community organisations can most readily identify and respond to the needs of their local community.

ACE brings some important qualities to the national VET system because of its special characteristics of:

- focus on local and regional labour markets;
- community accountability and responsiveness;
- learner-centred focus.

Varied

ACE providers are as diverse as their programs and participants, and include:

- adult and community education centres and colleges;
- Workers Educational Associations (WEAs);
- TAFE Institutes;
- neighbourhood and community centres;
- churches and schools;
- community health agencies and aged care providers.

The educational role of many ACE providers is accompanied by a community development role.

Services should support and strengthen existing community networks and help create new ones.

Flexible

ACE is entrepreneurial and user-focused, and has a long tradition of innovative delivery based on providing learning at times, in places and ways that are appropriate to the learner.”

Appendix 2 - List of Resources Collected

Tauondi College (SA)

Tauondi Vision Statement
Course brochure

ACE Unit, South Australia

Accreditation and Registration Council (South Australia) (1997). *Policies on Registration of Providers*.

Vocational Education, Employment and Training Board (South Australia) (1996). *Annual report of the Vocational Education, Employment and Training Board 1996 incorporating the annual reports of the Accreditation and Registration Council and Adult Community Education Council*. Adelaide : Department for Employment, Training and Further Education.

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Aldinga Community Centre (SA)

Course brochures
Language, Literacy and Numeracy programs - Southern and Rural Region

WEA of South Australia

WEA (1996). Annual report
Course brochure

Course Trends : Tracking the trends in lifelong learning. LERN. April 1997 issue

COPE (Centre of Personal Education) Training & Resource Centre (SA)

COPE (1996/96). Annual Report
Course brochures

Training events Calendar, July – December 1997 : A COPE Youth Sector Training Initiative

Community and Neighbourhood Houses & Centres (CANH) (SA)

The Collective of the National Link of Neighbourhood Houses and Community Learning Centres (1997). An overview of its history, its membership, across Australia, & its purposes and directions. 1st ed, compiled by Margaret Banks. National Link.

Rapporter: Issue no. 10, Autumn 1997. Reflecting the rhythm of community development : Neighbourhood Houses & Community Centres edition

The Community Houses Association of the Outer Eastern Suburbs Network (CHAOS) (1997). The CHAOS Network and the individual stories of its 31 Community Houses, Neighbourhood Houses, and Community Learning Centres in the Outer Eastern Suburbs of Melbourne, Vic.

South Australian Council of Social Service and Northern Suburbs Family Resource Centre (1997), Small agencies surviving.

Junction Community Centre (SA)

Course brochure (done as a bookmark)

Sample job description

Junction Journal [covering the Centre's management, course and other programs]

Annual report 1995

Jack Young Centre for Seniors (SA)

Course brochure

Centre newsletter incorporating Expressions – Multicultural Elderly Link in the Northern Region, edition 98 (Sept. 97) and 99 (Oct. 97)

Positive Ageing Foundation Inc. brochure

Milligan House (WA)

Centre brochure

Course brochure

Adult Literacy Project Flyer

Mundaring Sharing (WA)

Course programme

Sample newsletters

Loftus Community Centre (WA)

Centre brochure

Annual report 1996/97

Loftus Grapevine: Newsletter of the Loftus Community Centre, Spring 1997

Western Australian Telecentres Support Unit (WA)

Telecentres Network brochure

Connection : the magazine of the WA Telecentres. Issue 1 (Sept. 1996),
Issue 2 (Feb. 1997)

Department of Training, Strategic Services, Strategic Development and Advice Branch (Western Australia)

Adult Community Education : There's no limit to learning [kit for 1995
Adult Learner's Week]

_____ (1997?). *Case Study of small training organisations on the road to QETO [quality endorsed training organisation status].* East Perth: The Department.

Sharpe, T. and Roberston, Rachel (1996). *Adult Community Education : pathways to Vocational Education and Training : issues paper.* East Perth: Department of Training.

Coventry, V. and Higginson, C. (1996). *Issues, barriers and strategies : open learning in adult community education.* East Perth: Department of Training.

Learning Centre Link (WA)

Ducie, V (1994). *Opening Doors : a report on community neighbourhood houses and learning centres' influence on personal development, skills development, learning outcomes.* Perth : Learning Centre Link.

Annual reports 1995/96 and 1996/97

Learning Centre Link brochure

Golding, M. (1996). *Learning Centre Link's Life Experience Counts as a learning pathway to TAFE course : an outline and user booklet for the recognition of prior learning.* Perth: Learning Centre Link.

Golding, M. (1996). *Floral arrangement course as a learning pathway to TAFE courses : an outline and user booklet for the recognition of prior learning.* Perth: Learning Centre Link.

Golding, M. (1996). *Learning Centre Link's Computer Confidence Course as a learning pathway to TAFE courses : an outline and user booklet for the recognition of prior learning.* Perth: Learning Centre Link.

Women's Economic Development Organisation (WA)

Organisation and program brochures

Annual report 1996-97

_____ (1992). *Rural women into enterprise : a kit for women who want to set up their own business.* Perth: Women's Economic Development Organisation.

Warracknabeal Neighbourhood House & Learning Centre Inc. (Vic)

Course brochures

Annual report 1996/97

Community House Network of the Southern Western Port Region Inc. (Vic)
Annual report 1996/1997

The CHAOS Networks (Vic)

_____ (1997). *The CHAOS Network & the individual stories of its 31 community houses, neighbourhood houses and community learning centres in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne, Victoria.* Melbourne : CHAOS.

Grampians Community Learning Group (Vic) (now BRACE Stawell, from 1997)

Annual reports 1995, 1996

Horsham Learning Centre (Vic)

Course brochures

Annual reports 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996

Hopetoun & District Education Centre (Vic)

Course brochures

Annual report 1996

Continuing Education Bendigo (Vic)

Course brochures

Annual report 1996-97

BRACE (formerly Ballarat Education Training Employment)

Course brochure

Annual report 1996

Promotional kit

Colac ACE (Vic)

Course brochure

RPL brochure

Annual report 1996

_____ (1996). *Community partnerships – quality programs : demonstrating best practice in Vocational Education and Training.* Colac: Colac Adult & Community Education.

ACE (Vic)

Newsletter, Sept. 1997

Geelong Adult Training & Education (Vic)

Course brochures

Annual report 1996

Community Education : A Geelong Advertiser Advertising Supplement,
Oct. 1997

_____ (1997). *Building community partnerships : a practical model.*
Geelong: Geelong Adult Training & Education and Norlane
Neighbourhood House.

Council of Adult Education (Vic)

Course brochures

Annual report 1996

Adult Educators Planning Chart 1998

CAE:50 : a guide to resources about the history of the Council of Adult
Education 1947 - 1997. Compiled by CAE Library

Resources in Adult Education : a quarterly guide to adult education
journal articles, books and reports available from the CAE Library. June
1997

Vocational Education and Training Database Number 31, March 1997.
Leabrook, SA.: National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd
(NCVER)

Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres (Vic)

Management committee training course brochures

Narre Neighbours Inc (Vic)

Course guide

Annual report 1995

_____ (1997). *The voice of Narre : [Narre Neighbours Profile booklet.*
Narre Warren: Narre Neighbours.

Management committee [Terms of Reference]

Committee [members] entitlements

Adult, Community and Further Education Board

Adult, Community and Further Education Act 1991

Annual Report 1996-96

Multiple choice, no. 3, 1996

Gribble, H. (199_). *Useful knowledge : a brief history and description of
Adult Community and Further Education in Victoria.* Melbourne:
Adult Community and Further Education Board.

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Council of Adult Community and Further Education.

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Melbourne: The Board

Adult, Community and Further Education Board (1997). *The community
in ACE : an issues paper.* Melbourne: The Board

Honeywood MP, Hon. Phil (1996). *Managing diversity : promoting equity and access across the State training system*. Melbourne: Minister for Tertiary Education and Training.

Clemans, A. and Rushbrook, P. (1997). *Forging pathways : good practice in community-based adult education*. Melbourne: Office of Training and Further Education

ACFEB Central Western Region Council

Various funding and tendering guidelines, and registration process guidelines

Springvale Neighbourhood House (Vic)

Brochure

Annual report 1997

Course brochure

Handbook

Duggan, Heather (1994). *Springvale Neighbourhood House : the first ten years : a potted history*. Springvale: Springvale Neighbourhood House

Sandybeach Centre

Course brochure

Annual report 1996

_____ (1991). *The Sandybeach story ... : The Sandyveach Centre : a short history*. Sandybeach, Vic: Sandybeach Centre.

The Centre, Wangaratta (Vic)

Course brochures

Annual report 1996

Continuing Education Centre (Albury-Wodonga) (Vic/NSW)

Course brochure

Annual report 1996

Promotional kit

Tuggeranong Community Service (ACT)

Annual report

Course brochure

Annual report 1996-97

Australian Association of Adult and Community Education

Foreman, Julie (1995). *Review of research and development in the adult and community education sector 1992 - 1995*. Jamison Centre, ACT: Australian Association of Adult and Community Education.

Cumming, Jim (1997). *Community based learning : adding value to programs involving service agencies and schools : a discussion paper prepared for the Dusseldorp Skills Forum*. Sydney: Dusseldorp Skills Forum

_____ (1997). *A guide to conducting a media and publicity campaign : includes information sheets on various aspects of Adult and Community Education*. Jamison Centre, ACT: Australian Association of Adult and Community Education

Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (1996). *Lifelong learning for all : Adult and Community Education and people of non-English speaking backgrounds*. Jamison Centre, ACT: Australian Association of Adult and Community Education.

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Gibson, Graeme (1997). *Plastic shopping bags : an informal discussion guide*. Jamison Centre, ACT: Australian Association of Adult and Community Education.

_____ (1995). *Blue-Green Algae study circle kit*. Jamison Centre, ACT: Australian Association of Adult and Community Education.

WEA (Adult Education) (1994). *Accent on ability : a resource kit for the inclusion of people with disabilities in adult & community education*. Jamison Centre, ACT: Australian Association of Adult and Community Education.

Local Community Services Association (NSW)

Information brochure

Annual report 1997

Local : newsletter of the Local Community Services Association. Sept. 96 and Dec. 96

_____ (1995). *Neighbourhood and community centres in NSW - springboard into your local community*. Sydney: Local Community Services Association.

ACE Council

Model certified agreement

Evening and Community Colleges Association of New South Wales

Organisational Plan 1996

Annual report 1996-97

Peace, Brian W. (1994). *The Evening and Community Colleges of NSW : a study of their history, provision and concerns : a 1990's perspective*. Camperdown, NSW: Evening and Community Colleges Association of New South Wales

Eastern Suburbs Evening College (NSW)

Course brochures

Northern Beaches Creative Leisure & Learning (NSW)

Course / program brochures

Annual report 1996-97

Board of Adult and Community Education

Board of Adult and Community Education Act 1990, No. 119

NSW Board of Adult and Community Education (1995). *The ACE advantage : new options in workforce training and community education* [kit]. Sydney: Board of Adult Community Education.

NSW Board of Adult and Community Education (1996). *Strategic Plan January 1996 – June 1998*. Sydney: The Board.

NSW Board of Adult and Community Education (1996). *NSW Government Policy on Adult and Community Education : Recognising the value of lifelong learning for all*. Sydney: The Board.

NSW Board of Adult and Community Education (1994). *The role of the Board*. Sydney: The Board.

_____ (1996). *Joint strategic plan ACE-TAFE 1996-1998*. Sydney: NSW TAFE Commission and the NSW Board of Adult and Community Education.

NSW Board of Adult and Community Education (1997). *NSW ACE enrolment statistics 1996*. Sydney: The Board.

NSW Association of Community Adult Education Centres (also known as CAEC Association)

Interim Annual Report 1997

Model Staff Performance Appraisal

Model Management Plan

Example of a Copyright Agency Collection Scheme Agreement

Copyright Agency (1996). *Guidelines for copying from books, journals & periodicals in schools, universities & TAFE colleges under the CAL Agreement*. Sydney: Copyright Agency Limited.

Sample information package for circulation to management committees (Nov 1996) including

- an extracts of the ACE Managers and Administrators Competencies Standards,
- Skillshare Award (Community Employment Training and Support Services Award ie. CETSS),
- model Coordinator / Executive Office Employment Contracts and Job Descriptions

- model CAEC Coordinator Job Specification
- model grievance procedure
- model grievance policy

WEA Illawarra (NSW)

Course brochure

Annual report 1996

Sample of Statement of Duties for Adult Literacy and Numeracy Tutors

Sample Language and Literacy Co-ordinator Duty Statement

Kirkby, Maryann (1997). *Working with volunteers : staff development workshop*.

_____ (1996). *Creating alternative student pathways in VET Language and Literacy Programs : an ACE model : a professional resource package [video and resource booklet] . Woollongong, NSW: Adult & Community Education South Coast.*

Mortimer, Lesley (1997). *Management and organisational context of learning*. Unpublished paper, part of a M. Ed Degree.

Central Coast Community College (NSW)

Business Training Division Information Kit

Course guide

Course and Career Guide for Students 1998, Central Coast Campus

Annual report 1996

Wyong Adult & Community Education (NSW) (formerly Wyong Leisure Learning)

Course brochures for accredited and non-accredited courses

Business plan 1997

Strategic plan 1996 – 1999

Constitution

Annual reports 1994, 1995, 1996

WEA Hunter (NSW)

Course brochures

Annual report 1996

Orange Community Resource Organisation (NSW)

Annual report 1996/97

Central West Community College (NSW)

Course brochure

Recognition of Prior Learning brochure

Information kit

Annual report 1996

Central West Regional Council of Adult and Community Education (NSW)

ACE in the Central West : at a glance ...

Annual report 1996

Rules of the Central West Regional Council of Adult and Community Education Inc.

Draft ACE Regional Councils Policy and Procedures Manual 1997

NSW Board of Adult & Community Education (1997?). [*Information package for Regional Council nominees*]

Stages of the ACE Quality Strategy

Central West ACE Professional Development program brochure July-Dec 1997 [in association with Central West Community College, Conoboun Adult Education and Young Community Learning Centre]

Council of NSW Adult and Community Education Organisations (1997). *Core Components : the ACE Quality Strategy : ACEQS*. Sydney: The Council.

Council of NSW Adult and Community Education Organisations (1997). *Quality in ACE : the ACE Quality Strategy : implementing a state-wide strategy in NSW*. Sydney: The Council.

Cuelho, Pam (1997). *Stepping Stones : a step by stem approach to organising workshops that can help you become more involved in your community [kit]*. Orange: Rural Women's Network and the Central West Regional Council of Adult & Community Education.

Cuelho, Pam (1997). *Stepping Stones : Leadership skills for rural women : final report 1996/97*. Orange: Rural Women's Network and the Central West Regional Council of Adult & Community Education.

Peoples, Margaret (1997). *Good... Better... Best! : a self-evaluation activity for vocational teachers and trainers : feom a good teacher/trainer to a great teacher/trainer*. [n.p.]: Australian National Training Authority.

Tamworth Adult Education Centre (NSW)

Course brochures

Annual report 1997

Sample enrolment and evaluation forms

Quirindi Adult & Community Education (NSW)

Course brochures

Course evaluation form [for participants]

Course evaluation form [for presenters]

Sample class list

Brackenbury, Fiona. *An investigation into the establishment of a combined ACE/TAFE service in Quirindi*. [unpublished paper]

Wallabadah Adult Learning Association (NSW)

Course brochure

Sample strategic plan

Raymond Tce Neighbourhood Centre

- Course brochures
- Support and information service brochure
- Helping Early Leavers Program brochure
- Coordinator' report 1997

Taree Adult Education (NSW)

- Course brochures
- Course Planner [worksheets]

Alstonville Adult Learning Association (NSW)

- Course brochures
- Executive Officer's Report 1997
- Provider Equity Profile 1996
- Planning Checklist
- Tutor Checklist
- Venue Checklist
- Student roll

North Coast Regional Council of ACE

- Annual report 1996
- Draft ACE Regional Councils Policy and Procedures Manual 1997
- Regional Council organisational structure chart

ACE North Coast (NSW)

- Centre promotional brochure
- Course brochures
- Annual report 1995

ACE Mullumbimby (NSW)

- Course brochures
- Annual report 1996

Appendix 3 – Itinerary

Time	Contact / Interviewee	Organisation and location	Address and contact information
South Australia			
24 th to 27 th September; 1 st to 3 rd October, 1997			
Wednesday, 24th September			
4.00pm		AAACE National Executive Meeting, Lincoln College, North Adelaide	
Thursday, 25th September			
9.00am		AAACE National Conference, Hotel Adelaide, North Adelaide	
11.00am	Mr. Bill Wilson, Director	Taoundi College	1 Lipson St., Port Adelaide SA 5015 ph: 08 8240 0300
2.00pm		AAACE National Conference, Lincoln College, North Adelaide	
Friday, 26th September			
9.00am		AAACE National Conference, Hotel Adelaide, North Adelaide	
10.30am	Ms. Theresa O'Leary, Ms. Sue Ross, Mr. Paul Davis, Ms Gene Wenham (Chair ACE Council)	ACE Unit, Dept. Employment, Training and Further Education	
2.00pm	Ms Jill Harvie ACE Regional Representative Ms Jane Taylor Community Development Officer	Aldinga Community Centre	Symonds Reserve Hall, Aldinga Beach ph: 08 8556 5940
Wednesday, 1 st October			
9.00am	Mr. Denis Binnion	WEA of SA Inc	223 Angas St., Adelaide ph: 08 8223 1272
1.00pm	Mr. David Hatfield	COPE (Centre of Personal Education), Training & Resource Centre	Unit 2/ 267 Hutt St., Adelaide ph: 08 8825 7272
Thursday, 2 nd October			
9.00am	Ms Rosemary Neal	Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Centres	96 Rundle St., Kent Town ph: 08 8362 7741

Time	Contact / Interviewee	Organisation and location	Address and contact information
11.30am	Ms Kristen King	Junction Community Centre	cnr May Tce & Grand Junction Rd., Ottoway ph: 08 8341 1334
7.00pm	Ms Patricia Natt	Youth Care SA Inc	PO Box 181, Kadina SA 5554 ph: 08 8825 7272

Friday 3rd October

9.30am	Ms Prue Madsen	AAACE SA & ACE Council Member	
3.00pm	Ms. Sue Knott	Jack Young Centre for Seniors	Orange Ave., Salisbury ph: 08 8258 7286

Western Australia

6th to 8th October, 1997

Monday, 6th October

9.00am	Mr. Terry Inman	Bridgetown Telecentre	PO Box 307, Bridgetown ph: 08 9761 2712
1.00pm	Ms. Janice Mason	Milligan House	35 Milligan St., Bunbury 6230 ph: 08 9721 8944
4.30pm	Ms. Nicki Jones	Armadale Family Centre	101 Challis St., Armadale ph: 08 9497 4794

Tuesday, 7th October

9.30am	Mrs. Kath Longely	Mundaring Sharing	Craigie Place, Mundaring PO Box 301, Mundaring 6073 ph: 08 9295 1688
1.00pm	Ms. Kay Raymond	Loftus Community Centre	99 Loftus St., Leederville, WA 6007 ph: 08 9328 3098
3.45pm	Ms. Gay Short	WA Telecentres Support Unit	Dept. of Commerce & Trade, 168-170 St. George's Tce, Perth PO Box 7234 Cloister Sq. Perth 6850 ph: 08 9327 5666

Wednesday, 8th October

9.00am	Ms. Joanna Morris	Dept of Training, Strategic Services, Strategic Development & Advice Branch	152 Royal St., Perth ph: 08 9235 6082
11.00am	Ms Wendy Shearwood & Ms Donna Daniel	Learning Centre Link	335 Pier St., Perth 6000 GPO Box 8252, Perth Business Centre, 6849 ph: 08 9228 9000
2.00pm	Ms Rachel Robinson	Nexus Strategic Solutions	08 9337 3334
4.00pm	Ms. Gina Reeves (Executive Director, Nerina Coops was overseas)	WEDO (Women's Economic Development Organisation)	18 Sterling St., Perth ph: 08 9227 8583

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Time	Contact / Interviewee	Organisation and location	Address and contact information
Victoria			
5th to 19th November, 1997			
Wednesday, 5th November			
Wed 1.00pm - Fri 1.00pm		Brainfood Conference, Mt. Evelyn Recreation Camp	
At Brain- food	Ms Gwen Smith	Campaspe College of Adult Education, Echuca	PO Box 320, Echuca 3564 ph: 03 54 824 601
At Brain- food	Ms Marja Park	Merinda Park Community Centre	151 -153 Endeavour Dve, Cranbourne ph: 03 5996 9056
Monday, 10th October			
9.30am	Mr Glen Warren	BRACE Stawell (formerly Grampians Community Learning Group)	189A main St., Stawell 3380 ph: 03 5358 3700
12.00noon	Mr John Scott	Horsham Learning Centre	PO Box 859, Horsham 3402
4.00pm	Ms Anne Neville	Hopetoun & District Education Centre	PO Box 137, Hopetoun 3396 ph: 03 5083 3477
Tuesday, 11th November			
10.00am	Mr Trevor Tonkin	Continuing Education Bendigo	22 McLaren St., Bendigo 3550 ph: 03 5442 2655
4.00pm	Mr Christopher Carroll	BRACE	632 Sturt St., Ballarat 3352 ph: 03 5331 1744
Wednesday, 12th October			
9.00am	Ms Shanti Wong	Colac ACE	6 Murray St., Colac 3250 ph: 03 5232 1526
11.30am	Mr John Shugg	ACE Vic	PO Box 688, Bacchus Marsh 3340 ph: 05 5367 7498
4.00pm	Ms Christine Denmead	Geelong Adult Training & Education (GATE)	33 Mt Pleasant Rd., Belmont, Geelong 3216 ph: 03 5244 0070
Thursday, 13th October			
11.00am	Mr Peter Fraser	Council of Adult Education	256 Flinders St., Melbourne 3000 ph: 03 9652 0611
2.00pm	Ms Dea Morgain	ANHLC (Association of Heighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres)	9 th fl, 289 Flinders Lane, Melbourne ph: 03 9654 1104
4.30pm	Ms Helen Kimberley	ACFE Board member	
Friday, 14th October			
10.00am	Ms Kay Vrieze	Narre Neighbours	1 Malcolm Crt., Narre Warren 3805 ph: 03 9704 7388

Time	Contact / Interviewee	Organisation and location	Address and contact information
Monday, 17th November			
9.30am	Ms Helen Macrae	ACFE Division	2 Treasury Place, Melbourne ph: 03 9628 3837
12.00noon	Ms Beata Peisker	ACFE Central West Regional Council	Lv11, 568 St Kilda Rd., Melbourne ph: 03 9510 1011
Tuesday, 18th October			
10.30am	Ms Heather Duggan Mr Wilfredo Zelada (Chairperson)	Springvale Neighbourhood House	46-50 Queens Ave, Springvale 3171 ph: 03 9548 3972
1.30pm	Mr Ross Le Clerc	Sandybeach Centre	Cnr Beach & Sims Rd, Sandringham 3191 ph: 03 9598 2155
Wednesday, 19th October			
9.00am	Mr Ray Ferres	The Centre	Chisholm St. Wangaratta 3677 ph: 03 5721 6166
1.00pm	Ms Dorothy Lucardie	Continuing Education Centre (Albury-Wodonga)	63 High St., Wodonga 3689 ph: 060 24 1800
By phone & proforma 4.11.98	Ms Robyn Hewitt	Warracknabeal Neighbourhood Centre & Learning Centre	PO Box 249, Warracknabeal 3393 ph: 03 5398 2469
Australian Capital Territory			
20th November			
9.00am	Ms Sharon Carter	Tuggeranong Community Service	Colishaw St. Greenway, ACT 2900 ph: 02 6293 2942
11.30am	Mr Yung Tran	Weston Creek Community Association	Parkinson St., Weston Creek, ACT 2611 ph: 02 6288 0144
2.00pm	Ms Mary Hannan	Australian Association of Adult and Community Education (AAACE)	PO Box 308, Jamison Centre, ACT 2614 ph: 02 6251 7933
New South Wales			
24th November to 5th December			
Monday, 24th November			
9.00am	Ms Donna Bain	ACE Council	127 Parramatta Rd, Camperdown 2050 ph: 02 9565 1312
11.30am	Ms Robyn Maher	Evening & Community Colleges Association	
8.00pm	Mr Peter O'Reilly	Eastern Suburbs Evening College	PO Box 12, Bondi 2026
Tuesday, 25th November			
2.30pm	Mrs Maureen Rutledge Ms Val King	Northern Beaches Creative Leisure & Learning 102	4 Jacksons Rd, Warriewood 2102 ph: 02 9913 1474

Time	Contact / Interviewee	Organisation and location	Address and contact information
Wednesday, 26 th November			
9.00am	Ms Sam Thomas Ms Lesley Holzberger	Board of Adult Community Education	1 Oxford St. Paddington 2021 ph: 02 9266 8005
2.00pm	Ms Bronwyn Clinch Ms Judy York Ms Bronwyn Clinch	NSW Association of Community Adult Education Centres Baraba Learning Association	c/- "Vermont", Barraba 2347 ph: 02 6782 7253 c/- "Vermont", Barraba 2347 ph: 02 6782 7253
Thursday, 27 th November			
12.00noon	Ms Lesley Mortimer	Language and Literacy Program, WEA Illawarra	97 Corrimal St, Wollongong 2500 ph: 02 4226 1622
Friday, 28 th November			
9.00am	Mr Paul Davis	Central Coast Community College	Central Coast Campus, Ourimbah PO Box 156, Ourimbah 2258
12.00noon	Ms Judy York	Wyong Adult and Community Education	10 Pacific Highway, Wyong 2259 ph: 02 4353 2871
3.30pm	Mr Brett Gleeson	WEA Hunter	63 Union St, Cooks Hill 2300 ph: 02 4926 4066
Monday, 1 st December			
8.00am	Ms Julie Vaughan	Orange Community Resource Organisation	79-81 Kite St., Orange 2800 ph: 02 6362 6555
9.00am	Ms Suellen Young Ms Gina Perks	Central West Community College - Orange Office Central West Regional Council of ACE	185 Bathurst Rd, Orange 2800 ph: 02 6361 3122 185 Bathurst Rd, Orange 2800 ph: 02 6361 2595
Tuesday, 2 nd December			
	Ms Gayle Lander Ms Fiona Brackenbury Mrs Marie Maunder Mrs Coral Jenkins	Tamworth Adult Education Centre Quirindi Adult & Community Education Wallabadah Adult Learning	241 Marius St, Tamworth 2340 ph: 02 6766 4775 PO Box 78, Quirindi 2343 ph: 02 6746 3300 c/- "Deeipiendi", Wallabadah 2343
Wednesday, 3 rd December			
	Ms Val McDonald Ms Mallory McBride	Raymond Tce Neighbourhood Centre Taree Adult Education	14 King St, Raymond Tce 2324 ph: 02 4987 1331 The Big Oyster, Pacific Hwy, Taree 2430 ph: 02 6551 0636

Time	Contact / Interviewee	Organisation and location	Address and contact information
Thursday, 4 th December			
	Ms Melanie Doriean	Alstonville Adult Learning Association	Shop 4, The Gables, 90 Main St., Alstonville 2477 ph: 02 6628 5426
Friday, 5 th December			
	Mr. Alan Ramsay	North Coast Regional Council of ACE	PO Box 92, Alstonville 2477 ph: 02 6628 7046
	Mr Jim Nicholls Ms Georgina Johnston	ACE North Coast	59 Magellan St, Lismore 2480 ph: 02 6622 1903
By phone, 4 th November			
	Mr Roy Bishop	Local Community Services Association	66 Albion St, Surry Hills NSW 2010 ph: 02 9211 3644

Appendix 4 – Study Tour Description



AAACE

**Australian Association of Adult Community Education
(Queensland Branch)**

PO Box 576, Paddington, Q 4064

Research into adult community education (ACE) provision in four states in Australia to assist the development of community providers in Queensland

Project description

The project will be undertaken in a series of four periods of travel to adult community education facilities in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and south west Western Australia, respectively. These travel periods would total approximately 28 days over a period of three months. The current situation in Queensland will also be considered. Findings and outcomes of the project will be presented in a publicly available report.

The aim of the research is to investigate:

- organisational issues and legal structures involved in setting up and running a community learning facility,
- operational issues faced by community providers, namely:
 - industrial relations
 - job descriptions and
 - the use of competency standards for ACE Managers
 - professional development
- funding arrangements, including
 - partnerships with other organisations and relationships with funding partners/bodies,
 - philanthropic trusts,
 - access to funds to support particular clients whose group has low participation rates, eg. disability, and
 - operation within specific funding arrangements,
- range of courses/training programs offered,
- flexible delivery opportunities and strategies in ACE,
- accreditation process, procedures and documentation in ACE,
- access to workplace experience/ industry placement for participants of vocational programs,
- links with other sectors, eg. arts, small business, health, and other education sectors,
- the support structures and networks available to community providers,
- the formal infrastructure for community providers in each state mentioned.

The aims of the report which will be to assist:

- community groups in Queensland to provide and develop provision of adult community education programs,
- in the development of support infrastructure for community providers,
- to provide a national context to the development of community learning facilities and programs in Queensland,
- the development and recognition of ACE infrastructure for a new sector in Queensland.

Background to the project

Currently there are no working models of community learning centres in Queensland. The closest types of organisations are Neighbourhood Houses/Community Centres and Skillshares. Both of these types of organisations have a different focus. Neighbourhood houses fulfill community development and service provision roles, and are funded under a program for this purpose. Skillshares are funded to provide direct vocational education.

A community learning centre would be directed at a different market, namely, those people wanting to pursue an interest, or to try out a new field, to improve their self-esteem, to meet people with a common interest, or to undertake a program which will provide a qualification or skill. Currently TAFE adult education courses are providing for some of this need. However, with changes to the structure of TAFE colleges a new opportunity is arising for community-based providers.

To enable the development of adult and community education in Queensland an ACE Council is in the process of being formed. This will assist the role of a community based provider of education to become more clearly defined. However, in order to support the development of adult community education, information is needed on how to set up effective and well-managed community learning centres and how operate these types of educational services in a community based and managed context.

This project has been funded by the Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund in Queensland.

Appendix 5 - Interview proformas



AAACE

Australian Association of Adult Community Education
(Queensland Branch)

PO Box 576, Paddington, Q 4064

Adult community education (ACE) provision in four states in Australia

Community Provider Interview Schedule

Date: Name: Organisation:

Address: Phone/ Fax / Email:

Outline of project and its aims:

To investigate organisational, operational and funding issues, program delivery (both non-accredited and accredited programs), support and networking and sector infrastructure in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australian and Western Australia.

To provide information to support and develop ACE, especially in the community sector in Queensland.

Interview topics:

Organisational

- What structures and Act does your organisation operate under? How is the management committee structured?
- When / How was the organisation established? (Highlights from the history.)
- What organisational issues are/were involved in setting up your organisation? What are the issues your organisation is currently facing?
- Would a copy of your Annual Report be available?

Operational

- What industrial relations issues arise?
 - Are workers covered by an Award? If so, which award?
 - Does any particular Union cover your workplace?
 - What industrial relations issues arise for tutors/ teachers/ trainers/ facilitators?

- What organisational and management tools do you use, if any? eg.

- job descriptions?
- performance planning and appraisal?
- strategic and/or annual planning?
- budgetting?
- others?

Do you have examples you would be willing to share?

- Do you use of the competency standards for ACE managers and administrators. If so, how?
- Are the paid staff project based or on-going? How many tutors/ trainers/ teachers/ facilitators are involved in delivering courses?
 - What proportions of staff are there in each category?
 - What are the employment arrangements for tutors/ teachers/ trainers/ facilitators?
- What role do volunteers play in your organisation?
- What arrangements are made for professional development of staff and volunteers?
- How is your organisation and its services funded?
 - Do you have funding partnerships with other organisations?
 - What is your relationships with funding partners/bodies?
 - Do you make submissions to philanthropic trusts, or other non-government sources of funding?
 - Do you access to funds to support particular clients whose group has low participation rates, eg. disability? What kinds of programs do you access?

- How does operating within your funding arrangements affect your organisation? eg. Are you self-funded? How does competitive tendering affect your organisation, or grant submissions?

Delivery

General

- Describe the range of courses/training programs offered by your organisation. Are examples of program brochures available?
- Describe any flexible delivery opportunities and strategies which you use

Vocational education and training

- Do you deliver accredited training? If so, which courses and/or modules? Is a brochure available?
- Describe your access to workplace experience/ industry placement for participants of vocational programs
- Describe any organisational and other impacts experienced with the move to deliver accredited training?

Partnerships / Networking

- What links do you have with other sectors, eg. arts, small business, health, and other education sectors, or with specific organisations?

Good Practice

- Describe good practices used in your organisation, or innovations in providing ACE programs

Policy Development and Support for ACE

- What support structures and networks do you have available to you as a community providers?
- How do the formal infrastructure for ACE policy development assist your organisation as a community provider?

Other

- How has the Federal Government and State Government's vocational agenda impacted on your organisation?
- What is your perception about the vocationalisation of adult and community education?
- What is the distinctive role played by community based education providers?

- What contribution do community providers make to the local community and to education and training? eg. In what ways is your organisation involved in community development?
- What impediments do you experience in performing your role?
- What is necessary to enable your organisation to contribute as much as you would like?
- How successful is your organisation at meeting your community's needs?
- Any other comments?

For further information contact: Helen Schwencke, ph. 07 3844 6677, fax. 07 3844 4333



AAACE

**Australian Association of Adult Community Education
(Queensland Branch)**

PO Box 576, Paddington, Q 4064

Adult community education (ACE) provision in four states in Australia

Peak Bodies and Networks Interview Schedule

Date: Name: Organisation:

Address: Phone/ Fax / Email:

Organisational

- What structures and Act does your organisation operate under? How is the management committee structured?
- When / How and for what purpose was your organisation established? (Highlights from the history.)
- What is your role in supporting the ACE sector? Do you have other roles as well?
- Which types of organisations within the ACE sector (very broadly defined) does your organisation support?
- How does your organisation fit within the infrastructure and ACE policy development models which have been established to support community based ACE and other providers?
- What organisational issues are/were involved in setting up your organisation? What are the issues your organisation is currently facing?
- What links do you have with other sectors, eg. arts, small business, health, and other education sectors, or with specific organisations?

Operational

- What industrial relations issues arise?
 - Are workers covered by an Award? If so, which award?
 - Does any particular Union cover your workplace?

- What industrial relations issues arise for tutors/ teachers/ trainers/ facilitators?
- What organisational and management tools do you use, if any? eg.
 - job descriptions?
 - performance planning and appraisal?
 - strategic and/or annual planning?
 - budgeting?
 - others?

Do you have examples you would be willing to share?
- Do you use of the competency standards for ACE managers and administrators. If so, how?
- Are the paid staff project based or on-going, part-time or full-time? How many tutors/ trainers/ teachers/ facilitators are involved in delivering courses/ support programs?
 - What proportions of staff are there in each category?
 - What are the employment arrangements for tutors/ teachers/ trainers/ facilitators (if any)?
- What role do volunteers play in your organisation?
- What arrangements are made for professional development of staff and volunteers?
- How is your organisation and its services funded?
 - Do you have funding partnerships with other organisations?
 - What is your relationships with funding partners/bodies? eg. do you have service agreements or other arrangements?
 - Do you make submissions to philanthropic trusts, or other non-government sources of funding?

- Do you access funds to support particular clients whose group has low participation rates, eg. disability? What kinds of programs do you access?

Education & Training

- Do you deliver accredited and non-accredited training? If so, which courses and/or modules? Is a brochure available?
- Describe any organisational and other impacts experienced with the move to deliver accredited training?
- How do you perceive that the Federal Government and State Government's vocational agenda has impacted on the community based providers which you represent?
- What is your perception about the vocationalisation of adult and community education?

Role of community providers

- What do you perceive to be the role of community providers at present and into the future?
- What is distinctive about the role played by community based education providers?
- What contribution do community providers make to the local community and to education and training? eg. their role in community development
- What impediments do you perceive community based organisations experience in performing their role?
- How successful are community-based organisation at meeting their community's needs?
- Would a copy of your Annual Report be available? What publications do you produce?
- Any other comments?

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AAACE

**Australian Association of Adult Community Education
(Queensland Branch)**
PO Box 576, Paddington, Q 4064

Adult community education (ACE) provision in four states in Australia

Interview Schedule wrt Policy Development and Infrastructure

Date: Name: Organisation:

Address: Phone/ Fax / Email:

- Describe the ACE sector in
(ie mapping exercises)
- What types of organisations (and numbers) comprise the sector?
- What infrastructure and ACE policy development models have been established to support community based ACE and other providers?
- Do ACE providers deliver VET in? If so, what do they deliver?
- What are the accreditation processes and procedures and documentation required to be a community-based ACE provider of accredited and non-accredited programs?
- How do you perceive that the Federal Government and State Government's vocational agenda has impacted on community based providers?
- What is your perception about the vocationalisation of adult and community education?
- What do you perceive to be the role of community providers at present and into the future?
- What is distinctive about the role played by community based education providers?
- What contribution to community providers make to the local community and to education and training?
- What impediments do you perceive community based organisations experience in performing their role?

- How successful are community-based organisations at meeting their community's needs?
- Any other comments?

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