

Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council



ANNUAL REPORT 2009

Presented to the AGM in June, 2010

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Presidents' Report

Main activities for 2009

The VALBEC committee participated in a diverse range of activities throughout the year. Central to this work was the critical role of advocacy on behalf of members and learners. At each monthly meeting issues were raised and discussed and work done, mostly via email, between meetings to prepare letters and responses on various issues and concerns.

Ongoing representation on ACAL and support for ACAL lobbying for funding for nationally coordinated activity are part of the wider role of VALBEC. Provision of professional development and *Fine Print* journal remain the major focus in meeting the needs of our members and the wider LLN and adult education community.

The list below provides a summary of the roles and main activities of the committee.

Representation on

- o ACE Capability Building project reference group
- o IBSA consultation for proposed qualifications in LLN
- o CMMFE board.

Letters of concern sent to the Minister, ACFE and politicians regarding:

- o the definition of Foundation Skills in Skills Reform
- o funding cuts to the Adult Literacy National Project and in particular, the Reading and Writing Hotline, targeted adult literacy and numeracy research and loss of Literacy Link newsletter
- o appropriateness of research funding of AiG.

Responses to

- o media requests for information and advice regarding LLN in potential television projects
- o request from Aspire training for feedback on LLN for resources being developed for workers in the mental health sector
- o IBSA regarding proposed qualifications in LLN
- o queries and requests through the website about teaching qualifications, resources and availability of classes.

VALBEC/ Fine Print History publication

Bev Campbell completed work on the book *Reading the Fine Print: a history of the Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council (VALBEC) 1978-2008* that was launched by Dr. Rosie Wickert on Thursday May 7. The launch was well attended by VALBEC members and luminaries of the field past and present. The book makes a significant contribution to the history of adult literacy in Victoria, Australia and internationally and we commend Bev on the exceptional quality of her work.

Fine Print

After a successful planning day and review of production processes, Sarah Deasey and the *Fine Print* editorial committee worked closely with editor, Tricia Bowen to produce three excellent editions. The varied content and quality of articles ensured the *Fine Print* readership was rewarded with great reading. The success of the Student Writing edition was built on with a fantastic collection of writing complemented by teachers' reflections. The excellent design and production work of Mick Kannegiesser (Digital Environs) ensured the high quality of the journal was maintained. We are justly proud of our flagship journal and thank each member of the *Fine Print* team for their energy, skills and commitment.

Communications

eVALBEC – circulated to around 850 people on the first of each month with a spread of information and related links. It is being used by more providers, researchers, networks and conference organisers as a means of communication with the field and beyond.

VALBEC Website – continues to be improved and updated regularly. It provides a valuable conduit for information about VALBEC, the LLN field, links and activities. The statistics for 2009 show over 29,463 visits with over 92,000 pages being viewed. Thanks to Don (web master) for the skills he brings to this task and the timely manner in which enquiries are handled.

Contacts database – this list of programs across the state is updated annually and continues to provide an easy referral base for learners, their supporters and practitioners.

Liaison with ACAL

John Radalj (Victorian state representative) actively participated in online meetings, the ACAL conference and regularly reported to the VALBEC committee on national and states issues. Debbie Soccio (Vice President) promoted and facilitated the ACAL online and e-learning activities as well as providing leadership on the ACAL executive. We thank John and Debbie for their dedicated work and commitment in another busy year.

Committee thanks

A huge thank you to the committee members who have so generously given their time and energy to attend the VALBEC monthly meetings, facilitate professional development activities and contribute to all the other matters that required attention throughout the year.

Thanks to all the committee for another terrific year.

2009 Committee

Ann Haynes	Co- President
Lynne Matheson	Co- President
Dianne Parslow	Secretary
John Radalj	Treasurer & ACAL representative
Debbie Soccio	<i>Fine Print Liaison</i>

General Committee members

Marie Bonne	Kerrin Pryor	Yvonne Russell
Pauline O'Maley	Corinna Ridley	Sandra Wolfe

Administration and Financial Management

Don MacDowall continues to manage the administration, finances, archive, book sales and website tirelessly and always with good humour. We wish to thank him and acknowledge the high standard of his work that keeps things ticking over so efficiently.

ACFE Support

Negotiations in the latter part of the year with ACFE, now in the Department of Planning and Community Development, resulted in a commitment to funding and support for 2010. We would like to acknowledge the support of the ACFE board and the partnership with ACFE that allows VALBEC to play such an important and vital role in the LLN field.

Lynne Matheson and Ann Haynes

June 2010

Conference Report

The 'Navigating Laneways' conference theme was a stimulus for some great images from the laneways of Melbourne that filled the screen in the William Angliss auditorium on Friday May 8. The Brunswick Women's Choir provided lovely harmonies as people moved to their seats for the start of the conference. Sandi Forbes, ACFE General Manager, provided the official opening and made reference to some of the challenges facing the sector in 'finding new ways to work in adult literacy, language and numeracy', especially in the environment of Skills Reforms.

The keynote speaker, Rebecca Lister from Jesuit Social Services spoke about the Artful Dodgers studios. She described the program with examples of art work and successes in assisting young people with issues of drug misuse, mental health issues and homelessness, to make their way in the arts world.

The conference workshops were all well received. The Skills Reform panel provided several perspectives and information on effects of implementation. The Resources showcase was a new addition to the program and people appreciated the time to see resources in action and the opportunity to discuss with the creators. The delightful Kate Burrige had everyone enchanted at the end of the day. It was nice to see so many people continue conversations at the now traditional post conference refreshments.

The pre-conference workshops on Thursday afternoon have become a value-add for conference attendees who can make the time for some hands-on classroom focused sessions. This was followed by the launch of *Reading the Fine Print: a history of VALBEC 1978-2008* that was a gala event with Rosie Wickert providing a wonderful speech and many of the doyens of the field in attendance.

The venue, AV and IT were efficiently managed on the day by Manny and the WA team who also ensured the catering and service were first rate. Thanks to all the presenters, Don MacDowall and the committee members who assisted in the planning and organisation of another successful conference.

Lynne Matheson

Conference convenor

Professional Development Report

Professional Development 2009

The VALBEC committee facilitated a range of professional development events throughout the year. Much of the planning time in term one was taken up with the annual conference and pre-conference workshops and an unsuccessful attempt to run a workshop in a regional location. The first Twilight forum was held in conjunction with the AGM and Mark Brophy from the Australian Study Circles Network presented an interesting look at the way in which study circles can be used to inform and broaden practice.

Adult Learners' Week was celebrated with the second Twilight forum, *The Language of Memory and Emotion*, at which Kerry Cue spoke about her writing experiences and launched the Student Writing Edition of *Fine Print*. It was lovely to hear some of the students read their stories with much emotion and genuine appreciation from the audience. The teachers who spoke were all rightly proud and in awe of their students' achievements and spoke with much warmth. It was very affirming of the good practice and extra yards that teachers will go.

The following two Twilight forums had an international flavour. In October we hosted Snoeks Desmond who spoke about Family literacy and success stories from South Africa and beyond. This forum was attended by people from a range of organizations and settings with much interest in the literacy programs in KwaZulu Natal.

In November, Tannis Atkinson spoke on *Whose Knowledge counts? A Canadian Perspective*, based on her doctoral research in which she is examining changing adult literacy policies in Canada and how these might be interpreted through the lens of 'governmentality'. This was very relevant to events and experiences in Victoria and Australia. Both Snoeks and Tannis contributed articles to *Fine Print*.

The Spring forum took a different theme with Mental health issues and classroom practice. Presentations by Dr Claire Kelly, the coordinator of the Youth Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) program at Orygen Youth Health and Research Centre, at the University of Melbourne and Fran MacMahon from the Young Adult Migrant Education Program (YAMEC) at NMIT were appreciated by the small audience who made the trip to Epping in the term break.

Each year the committee provides a PD program for a range of interests. The opportunity to include visitors from overseas enhanced the 2009 program and we thank Bev Campbell for her liaison.

Sandra Wolfe and Lynne Matheson

ACAL Report 2009

Conference

The ACAL 2009 conference 'From Strength to Strength' was enjoyed by 210 delegates including a strong local Western Australian contingent. Evaluations were very positive with 70% of responses selecting "very satisfied" or higher. Sessions can be viewed online at <http://www.waalc.org.au/09conf/presentations.htm> there are PowerPoint's, PDFs, movies and radio interviews

ACAL Committee

At the AGM held during the 2009 Conference the new committee were elected.

ACAL President - Geri Pancini

Immediate Past President - Margaret McHugh

Co-Vice President - Debbie Soccio

Co-Vice President - Keiko Yasukawa

Secretary - Lindee Conway

Treasurer - Lorraine Sushames

The representatives are appointed by each state or territory organisation and are currently

NSW ANLC Rep - Stephen Black

QCAL State Rep - Lynne Pantaur

NTCAL State Rep - Alison Reedy

TCAL State Rep - Trish Hopwood-Wade

SACAL State Rep - Sue Shore

VALBEC Rep - John Radalj

WAALC State Rep - Cheryl Wiltshire

Reading Writing Hotline

ACAL successfully lobbied the Federal Government to ensure continued support for Reading Writing Hotline into 2010.

Consultations

ACAL participated in consultations on:

The Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) Practitioner Scholarships Program was included in the 'Building the Basics Package' component of the 'Jobs and Training Compact', announced in the 2009-10 Federal Budget.

The primary objective of the program is to provide an incentive for individuals to enter the adult LLN field by supporting them to undertake approved study towards an adult LLN practitioner qualification. It is specifically targeted at: New entrants (individuals with no prior qualifications as teachers or trainers) who wish to gain an adult LLN qualification and enter the field; Vocational trainers wishing to gain an adult LLN specialisation and enter the field; and individuals with prior relevant training (e.g. generalist teachers) wishing to 'up-skill' into an adult LLN specialisation with the intention of entering the field. ACAL provided input and advice regarding the appropriateness of this scheme and the need to increase access to and availability of further education and professional development for practitioners.

ACARA Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority: K-10 Australian Curriculum
ACAL was represented by Cheryl Wiltshire and Jan Hagston at the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) in Melbourne to discuss the first proposal for the new Senior Years English Curriculum. Four courses are proposed. One of these is English for Life and the Workplace. ACAL identified a number of problems with the draft proposal and is arguing that

this English course should focus on the user's repertoire of language skills and the application of these in real life, authentic contexts. To achieve this, the curriculum writers will need to have particular skills. Further down the track, to ensure that this course is effectively taught, recruitment and professional development issues will need to be addressed.

John Radalj

ACAL representative 2009

Treasurer's Report

It's my pleasure as Treasurer to report on the finances for the year January to December 2009.

At December 31, 2009 net assets were \$45,728. The main sources of income for 2009 were the ACFE grant and membership fees.

The ACFE grant provides support for the annual conference, workshops and forums, for eVALBEC and *Fine Print*.

Our expenses reflect these activities with the Conference and *Fine Print* being the main expenses followed by administration (Consultant fees).

The detailed Profit and Loss statement is provided below and the full audited accounts are available for perusal.

John Radalj

Treasurer

VICTORIAN ADULT LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION COUNCIL INC

**INCOME STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2009**

	Note	2009	2008
		\$	\$
INCOME			
Grants		25,000	24,200
Annual Conference		18,532	19,666
Sales - Fine Print		995	523
Subscriptions		15,744	17,209
Other Income		282	410
Fancy Footwork Publication		153	359
RTFP - Book		2,154	-
Interest		179	5,193
		<u>63,039</u>	<u>67,560</u>
EXPENDITURE			
A.C.F.E. - Database Project		2,482	1,654
Affiliation Membership Fees		695	866
Audit Fees		1,683	640
Bank Fees and Charges		542	451
Catering		160	-
Committee Expenses		576	59
Conference		24,672	29,073
Consultant Fees		10,212	9,519
Consultancies and Conferences		2,351	653
Fine Print		9,572	12,901
Fine Print - Editor		6,143	5,860
History Project		4,200	-
Licence Fees		59	-
Memberships and Subscriptions		79	-
Fancy Footwork		-	418
Paymate Fees		61	94
Postage, Courier, Freight		533	194
Printing and Stationery		30	-
Prior year audit adjustments		6,285	-
Rent and Storage		821	923
RTFP		1,377	-
Web and Email		-	44
TOTAL EXPENSES		<u>72,533</u>	<u>63,349</u>
Profit before income tax		<u>(9,494)</u>	<u>4,211</u>

VICTORIAN ADULT LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION COUNCIL INC

INCOME STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2009

	Note	2009 \$	2008 \$
Profit before income tax		<u>(9,494)</u>	<u>4,211</u>
Income tax expense	2	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Profit after income tax		(9,494)	4,211
Retained Profits at the beginning of the financial year		<u>55,222</u>	<u>51,011</u>
Retained Profits at the end of the financial year		<u><u>45,728</u></u>	<u><u>55,222</u></u>

VICTORIAN ADULT LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION COUNCIL INC

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2009

	Note	2009 \$	2008 \$
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash	3	39,920	43,757
Trade and other receivables	4	3,250	16,297
Inventory (at cost)		3,180	-
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>46,350</u>	<u>60,054</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>46,350</u>	<u>60,054</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other creditors	5	<u>622</u>	<u>4,832</u>
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>622</u>	<u>4,832</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>622</u>	<u>4,832</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>45,728</u>	<u>55,222</u>
MEMBERS' FUNDS			
Retained profits		<u>45,728</u>	<u>55,222</u>
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS		<u>45,728</u>	<u>55,222</u>

VICTORIAN ADULT LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION COUNCIL INC

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2009

	Note	2009 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Receipts from Grants		25,000
Receipts from other sources		44,622
Payments to suppliers and employees		(73,638)
Interest received		179
Net Cash provided by operating activities	7	<u>(3,837)</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Payments for purchase of property and equipment		<u>-</u>
Net Cash provided by (used in) investing activities		<u>-</u>
Net increase (decrease) in cash held		(3,837)
Cash at the beginning of the year		43,757
Cash at the end of the year		<u><u>39,920</u></u>

Patron

Joan Kirner

VALBEC Life Members 2009

Delia Bradshaw

Bev Campbell

Jenny Dyer

Daryl Evans

Heather Haughton

Nance Hovey (dec)

Julie Hurley

Robin Kenrick

Robyn Logan

Helen Macrae

Rosa McKenna

Fran O'Neill

Noel Simpson

Sally Thompson

Sam Thomas

Aileen Treloar-Coates

Vale Margaret Simonds



Many members will remember Margaret Simonds, a long time VALBEC member and a significant contributor in the field of Adult Education who, sadly, lost her battle with cancer in February of this year. Margaret was involved in a number of projects and publications: in the development of the CGEA, as a consultee in the "Adult Basic Education Accreditation Framework Project" published in January 1992, and as a member of the writing team for "Writing our Practice" published in 1995 by the ACFE Board.

Throughout her career, Margaret held many positions including Language Consultant, Adult Literacy Field Officer for Wimmera Community College of TAFE, Central Highlands Wimmera Regional Councillor for the Australian Council for Further Education, teacher and coordinator at the University of Ballarat, Horsham TAFE Campus, and Executive Officer for On Track Learning Wimmera.

Perhaps the achievement closest to her heart was her part in the formation of the Wimmera Adult Learning and Basic Education Group (WALBEG) the forerunner of On Track Learning. In those early days of its establishment, the staff was a group of dedicated volunteer tutors who recognised the need to provide adult literacy tuition in rural areas. Margaret devised innovative methods of delivery for her many students in remote areas.

Margaret's work was nationally recognised when, in 2003, she was nominated as the Victorian winner of the inaugural National Prize for Outstanding Contribution to Improving Literacy, presented to her in Sydney by the Federal Minister for Education.

Margaret had the ability to enthuse her colleagues and to carry them with her by her energy and commitment. Her contribution to Adult Literacy has had a profound and positive effect upon both her students and her colleagues; her presence in the field will be greatly missed.

June 2010