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## Committee News

### 1. VALBEC PD

At our meeting on 24 July we discussed ideas and plans for professional development activities later this year and early next year. The committee is aware of the pressures on people's time but hopes to conduct activities in both city and regional centres, face to face and online.

The date for the 2014 conference will be Friday 16 May at the William Angliss Conference Centre - more information to follow. We are planning an event in mid-October to coincide with [Mary Hamilton's](#) visit to Melbourne after the ACAL conference. We have received terrific feedback about the [Building Strength with Numeracy resources](#) from around Australia.

Jan Hagston was interviewed by SYN Youth Radio about functional literacy and numeracy. [Listen to it here.](#)

### 2. 2013 International Year of Statistics • What about your own statistics?

*VALBEC has adopted the International Year of Statistics as our theme for 2013. Each month a VALBEC committee member will be digging up some fascinating numbers that you may find interesting and potentially useful in classroom activities. This month it's Rhonda Pelletier.*

Being born in early Spring I have always had, boringly, a fascination about how often it rains on my birthday. After a winter I would expect to have a sunny day for my birth day.

So I asked others for their dates of birth and how often they thought it rained on the day.

Ann was born on Dec 7th and felt that it never rained.

Amee, born on Aug 24th, said 8%.

Their guesses were based on memory and an understanding of what the weather does at that time of year - Spring, Summer ...

One of the things we often encourage people with low numeracy skills to do is to use a guess and then to verify - so very often people's best guesses are quite accurate.

So I went to the Bureau of Meteorology to check their guesses:

And of course the BoM's statistics are far more refined than ours:

Dec 7th - typical days of rain - 0 mm = 67%, 2mm = 18%, 5mm = 11%, 10mm = 5%, 25mm = 1%.

So Ann was pretty accurate.

24 Aug - typical days of rain - 0 mm = 47%, 2 mm = 31%, 5mm = 18%, 10mm = 7%, 25mm = <1%

So Amee didn't guess very well.

Needless to say the statistics for my birthday, being close to Amee's, are not very different. So I was being a bit melodramatic with 'it always rains on my birthday' when, in fact, 48% of the time it rains and most of that is less than 2mm.

So many of our students grow their own veggies - perhaps taking them to BoM could help them predict the best times to plant or save water? This site also gives some interesting historical information and, of course, temperature ranges.

<http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/index.shtml?bookmark=200>

### 3. What I'm reading now ...

I am a keen book shopper - I sometimes plan a day when I can visit a number of my favourite secondhand and new bookshops. This means that I sometimes have several books on the go at once - not an unusual situation.

At the moment I'm reading 'Mr Wigg' by Inga Simpson a Queensland writer. It was recommended to me by my local bookshop because I was looking for a 'gentle' read - something engaging but not verbose or violent ... And, indeed, this is a beautiful read about a grandfather living in the old farm house surrounded by his beloved fruit trees. I am halfway through and enjoying it immensely. I also have a book on CALL - computer assisted language learning - 'Teaching and researching: computer-assisted language learning' by Ken Beatty. I have resisted the pull to CALL for some years but with the increased use of blended learning feel I need to start getting my head around it to support foundation skills students who will move onto mainstream where they are increasingly being asked to use online learning tools. So this book will go some way to bringing me up to date. I am halfway through Peter Ackroyd's

biography of Wilkie Collins one of the first crime writers and a contemporary of Charles Dickens. I've read 'The Moonstone' (quite a contrast to Mr Wigg!) and am getting ready to launch into 'The Woman in White' - that will take me a good month to read.

*Rhonda Pelletier*

## Fine Print

### 4. Next issue

Fine Print coming to you any day now (if you're a member)! Don't miss out on reading the best from the field of further education.

[Fine Print Archive](#)

## Professional Development

### 5. VALBEC Numeracy Forums

Practical workshops to introduce participants to the new resource '[Building Strength with Numeracy](#)', a collection of activities that builds on and updates elements of the previous resources, as well as including many new, previously unpublished ideas, activities and student practice exercises.

- **Tuesday, 17 September 2013 • 3.30pm to 5.30pm • CAE, Melbourne** [More](#)
- **Tuesday, 3rd September 2013 • 1- 3 pm • GOTAFE Benalla Campus** [More](#)

### 6. ACAL conference 'Local practices, global contexts' • Early Bird closes Aug 5

**Sydney Sep 30-Oct 2, 2013**

**Early Bird offers closes August 5, 2013**

Full session details are now available with over thirty sessions to choose from focussing on eight conference themes.

- Creating educational pathways
- Developing the L and N workforce
- Interrogating theories and policies
- Embedding LLN in VET
- Working with VET products
- Improving people's lives (Tuesday only)
- Strengthening communities (Wednesday only)
- Innovative learning environments.

[More](#)

### 7. ACAL Conference scholarships

ACAL (Australian Council for Adult Literacy) is about to announce some scholarships to assist people to attend the 2013 Conference. Find out more on the [ACAL website](#) or the [conference website](#) now!

## Resources

### 8. Free numeracy resources

'[Building Strength with Numeracy](#)' is a collection of activities that builds on and updates elements of the previous resources, as well as including many new, previously unpublished ideas, activities and student practice exercises.

[Available for free download.](#)

## Employment

### 9. Employment opportunities

ACFE, ACE, RTO and TAFE managers can post adult literacy, language and numeracy practitioner job ads in eVALBEC. Send your request (50 words limit) to [info@valbec.org.au](mailto:info@valbec.org.au) by the 26th of the month.

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### 10. On and off

#### Subscribe to eVALBEC?

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### 11. Contact VALBEC

eVALBEC is the monthly electronic newsletter of (VALBEC) the Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council.

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This is the electronic newsletter of VALBEC, the Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council, and is sent to about 1000 practitioners on the first of each month (other than January). It is also available in the 'News' section of our [web site](#)

Disclaimer: The activities, goods and services mentioned in eVALBEC are not endorsed by VALBEC in any way. People should make their own judgment about the suitability of each item.

How to submit items: <http://www.valbec.org.au/news.htm>