

Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council



Annual Report 2017

Presented at the 2018 AGM

Annual Report 2017 – January to December

Dear VALBEC members,

Welcome to the 2017 Annual Report for VALBEC. This report documents activities during the period of Jan – Dec 2017. This report will also be presented at the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 21st April 2018 at Melbourne Polytechnic in Preston. In addition this report is available on the VALBEC website.

Presidents' Report

2017 was another interesting and busy year for the VALBEC committee as all of our reports indicate. We had a full committee in 2017 consisting of 12 members. The committee consists of people working in the sector from Learn Locals and TAFEs in Foundation Skills courses, accredited and pre-accredited to VET training programs. Collectively the committee's shared knowledge, skills and collegiality proved to make it a rewarding and fruitful year. VALBEC continued to build relationships and advocate for the adult literacy field with regular meetings and with a number of organisations such as, the Victorian ACE Policy Network and Adult Literacy Connect, Reading and Writing Hotline, ACAL and others. These ongoing meetings and relationships help ensure we have current knowledge and are a strong voice in Victoria regarding adult literacy and basic education learning needs, research, training and the professional development.

Highlights and activities of 2017

Annual Conference 'Teaching & Learning: Reflecting on practice, 19th May
AGM and Forum – Hands Across the Water-Volunteer teaching in Thailand, 3rd May
Forum –Working with Learners Experiencing Family Violence, 14th November
Workshop – Spelling Knowledges: taking a strategic approach.' 17th November
Fine Print Journal 3 editions
See reports for more details.

Committee members attended and contributed to

- ACAL committee
- Reading & Writing Hotline advisory group
- CMM GS &FE advisory group
- Victorian ACE Policy Network
- CGEA Champions group
- EAL Advisory Group
- CGEA reaccreditation project steering committee
- EAL Frameworks reaccreditation project steering committee
- ACFE Professional development project
- State Library of Victoria's Adult Literacy Round Table forum
- Adult Literacy Connect steering committee

Other activities included

- Strategic planning session
- Monthly meetings
- eVALBEC 11 editions, first of the month to distribution (900)
- Promotion of events, activities, resources, employment opportunities, funding and grants available through the government and non-government sectors
- Establishment of the Adult Literacy Connect group with Public libraries
- Creation of Facebook and Twitter accounts
- Attendance at the 2017 ACAL conference in Darwin, N.T
- Planning for our 40th year celebrations

VALBEC supports and would like to recognise the important work of two committee members who are investigating important issues in the field with their International Specialist Skills Fellowships. The Department of Education and Training funds the International Vocational Training Practitioners Fellowships each year by offering ten (10) International Fellowships. This is to support practitioners to travel overseas and examine innovative approaches that demonstrate potential benefits for, and application in, Victoria. A key outcome from this Fellowship is to develop effective approaches for student engagement and participation, quality teaching and learning, employment and industry productivity. Linno Rhodes is investigating the idea of creating secure attachment relationships between adult learners and teachers, meeting and working with adult literacy and trauma specialists in the fields in the UK, Canada and America. Karen Dymke is identifying best practice in Europe that increases engagement of disadvantaged, unemployed adults engaging in initial training and moving to VET or equivalent programs. We congratulate these dedicated and passionate committee members helping to make a difference to access and success in education for all.

In 2017 VALBEC continued to support the Indigenous Literacy Fund (ILF) through donations in lieu of conference speaker payments and the attendance at the Annual ILF Trivia Night at Fitzroy Town Hall. The VALBEC Valkyries team remain valiant in enthusiasm if not their trivia score card. The ILF does important work in providing and publishing books and other literacy initiatives for Aboriginal Australian children in remote communities.

A significant new group named Adult Literacy Connect has been established this year with VALBEC as the lead agent. Adult Literacy Connect (ALC) has been established in collaboration with adult education providers such as community centres, Learn Locals, TAFEs, Public Libraries and the State Library of Victoria to build and strengthen adult literacy provision in Victoria. This network is an opportunity for an integrated approach to promote and connect adult educators and librarians in this field. Our mission is to strengthen the collaborative capacity of libraries, adult educators and the community to support adult literacy learning. A key aim of this network is to improve adult literacy resourcing and explore the establishment of an online portal of quality resources to support adult literacy learning.

This year we took the opportunity to celebrate Adult Learners Week and International Literacy Day on September 8th by encouraging classroom teachers and students to advocate for adult literacy. The 'Letters for Literacy' lesson activity gave guidance on letter writing to politicians and encouraged people to share the importance of literacy in their lives.

2017 was also the year that VALBEC finally decided to delve into the social media realm via Facebook and Twitter. So far the medium has provided another vehicle to connect with members, share information and have discussions. We hope to build on our following in 2018 especially for the conference time.

Committee thanks

We would like to thank all members of the Executive, and others in the Council, who continue to work to achieve our aims and have supported our work as Co-presidents throughout the year making the role so rewarding. Your time and energy to attend the VALBEC monthly meetings, organise and facilitate professional development activities and contribute to all the other business that required attention throughout the year is much appreciated.

2018 looks like it will be another busy and exciting year with VALBEC turning 40 and hosting the ACAL conference in Melbourne in September.

In 2017, we welcomed two co-opted members to the committee, Kathrin Colgan and Karen Dymke. We farewelled Digna Libera, Melinda Eason, Anna Cranney and Liz Gunn who stepped down from the committee.

Thanks to all the committee for yet another successful year.

2017 Committee

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Meg Cotter | Co- President |
| Linno Rhodes | Co- President & Fine Print Liaison |
| Rhonda Pelletier | ACAL representative |
| Rhonda Raisbeck | Secretary & Public officer |
| Ann Haynes | Treasurer |

General Committee members:

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|
| Elsbeth Collie | John Radalj | Kathrin Colgan | Karen Dymke |
| Lynne Matheson | Kim-chi Forrest | | |

Administration and Financial Management

Don MacDowall expertly managed the day to day administration, finances, archive, book sales and website development and maintenance. We wish to thank him and acknowledge the high standard of his work that keeps things ticking over so efficiently.

ACFE Support

We would like to acknowledge the support of the ACFE board and the partnership with ACFE that allows VALBEC to continue to play such an important and vital role in the LLN field.

Meg Cotter and Linno Rhodes
Co- Presidents

Conference report

The 2017 VALBEC Annual Conference, 'Teaching & Learning: reflecting on practice,' was held on Friday May 19th at the William Angliss Conference Centre.

The theme of this conference encouraged exploration on how we learn as teachers and how this is transferred into classroom practice and student learning. Dr. John Benseman from New Zealand was our keynote speaker who reviewed research findings about what happens between teachers and their learners and what influences their ideas about how to teach. He examined the argument for basing our teaching practices on adult literacy and numeracy research that has emerged over recent years – 'research-informed teaching' with suggestions how institutions can implement a professional development programme to bridge the current divide between research and practice.

Other workshops and presentations during the day included topics on technology, numeracy, community engagement, professional development, lesson planning, spelling approaches, integrating curriculum and assessment. The plenary speaker Karen Charman from the Public Pedagogies Institute ended the day with 'Learning and Teaching in Public Spaces.'

Overall participation and feedback for the day was very positive.

We would also like to thank our opening entertainment for the day The Sussex Skylarks led by Phil Hudson.

Attendance: 115

Evaluations received 74

Overall rating for sessions on average 4.2 / 5

ACFE and The Bookery generously supported this conference with donations also from Victorian Legal Aid and Parliament of Victoria.

Many thanks to all who participated and contributed, in particular the committee members, with special mention and thanks to Don MacDowall and Manny Kaiafas and his team at William Angliss.

Meg Cotter

2017 Conference convenor

Professional Development Report 2017

3rd May AGM and May Forum 1 –Hands Across the Water; volunteer teaching in Thailand

Guest speaker: Annie MacDonald, Hands across the water

Attendance 17

May 17th, Annual conference, Teaching & Learning: reflecting on practice

Key note Speaker; John Benseman, Plenary speaker; Karen Charman, 12 presentations/workshops

Attendance 115

14th Nov, Working with Learners Experiencing Family violence Forum 2

Presenters: Safe Steps

Attendance 24

17th Nov, Spelling Knowledges: taking the strategic approach

Presenters: Jan Hagston and Lee Kindler, Multifangled

Attendance 31

Fine Print

Fine Print in 2017 continued to provide a range of feature articles, reviews, profiles, resources and information for teachers, managers, practitioners and volunteers working in the adult literacy, language and numeracy fields. Writers, both local and overseas based, contributed generously a selection of engaging and relevant feature articles and reports. Innovation and good teaching practice featured in the regular sections of Practical, Numeracy and Technology Matters providing practitioners with teaching and learning ideas and strategies.

Open forum provided a space for reflections and updates, while Foreign Correspondence profiled projects and experiences of teaching in Timor-Leste, India and Thailand. The Beside the Whiteboard section showcased the amazing work and dedication of colleagues facing the challenges in adult education in three urban settings across Melbourne.

Fine Print is the only remaining journal in Australia dedicated to adult language, literacy and numeracy and it continues to present current, interesting and reflective content to VALBEC members. Fine Print is a great forum for local practitioners and researchers to share their work, ideas and observations and we encourage people to consider writing or providing input and feedback.

It has been wonderful to collaborate with the Editorial group to source relevant and interesting articles for the three editions published in April, August and November 2017.

Thanks to Editorial group members: Sarah Deasey, Linno Rhodes, Elizabeth Gunn, Lini Kane and Lynda Achren. Thanks also to Sarah Tuke for her excellent design and production work and Melbourne Polytechnic print room which ensures the high quality production of the journal.

Thanks to Don MacDowall for his role in ensuring the journal is distributed and archived on the VALBEC website. Each Fine Print edition was promoted in eVALBEC. Distribution was around 270 copies each edition.

After four years I felt it was time to hand over the commissioning editor role. It has been a great journey and I have enjoyed immensely working with all the people who have contributed to make Fine Print such a valuable journal. We welcome Deryn Mansell who brings to the role a depth of experience across education sectors and in editing and publishing.

Lynne Matheson
(Past commissioning editor)

Treasurer's Report

The financial state of VALBEC is sound and well managed. The accompanying audited financial statements provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure.

The main sources of income are membership, the annual Conference and the ACFE grant. These sources cover our main costs while we retain a working reserve for other projects and activities. Our main expenses in 2017 were the annual Conference, the production of Fine print, and the administration and management of the association, including the compilation and distribution of the eVALBEC newsletter.

Due to VALBEC hosting the National ACAL Conference in 2018, the financial statements will include initial funds from ACAL as payment towards their share of expenses for the National Conference.

Accumulated funds were used to provide members with opportunities to take part in professional development forums.

*Please refer to the attached audited statements.

Ann Haynes
Treasurer

ACAL REPORT 2017

The Australian Council for Adult Literacy promotes adult literacy and numeracy policy and practice. By working with representatives from the states and territories ACAL provides coordinated and cooperative leadership in all aspects of adult literacy and numeracy practices and policy. Members on the committee often participate in reference groups and make representations in response to policy developments at the Federal level.

In 2017

- ACAL turned 40 and celebrated this at the annual conference in Darwin. The 'Traders, Neighbours and Intruders: Points of Contact' conference was bookended with a one-day forum and a half-day research forum.
- In March, Jenni Anderson stood down as President. Daniella Mayer and Jo Medlin are co-presidents for 2017/2018.
- ACAL has participated in discussions and responses to the development of the Foundation Skills Professional Standards; Consultations on the Foundation Skills Training Package – this included representing the place and value of the CGEA and CAVSS;
- ACAL is presented on in the Education Industry Reference Committee by Daniella Mayer.
- Position papers and letters were prepared and submitted for:
 - Paper: Indigenous/Adult LLN
 - Letter: Workplace Literacy, sent to Hon Simon Birmingham
- Members attended a VET Reform working party workshops which are looking at the restructuring of VET and the role of LLN in VET.

- On October 24th John Guenther conducted a webinar, 'Evidence as a tool for contesting the incontestable assumptions of adult learning policy'. At time to of writing (March 2018) this webinar is still available on the ACAL website.

VALBEC continues to be a part of ACAL and despite the difficulties of distance and the spread of members, sees it as an important connection to sustain.

Rhonda Pelletier
ACAL representative

Patron
Hon. Joan Kirner (dec)

VALBEC Life Members 2017

Delia Bradshaw
Bev Campbell
Jenny Dyer
Daryl Evans
Jan Hagston
Heather Haughton
Nance Hovey (dec)
Julie Hurley
Robin Kenrick
Robyn Logan
Helen Macrae
Rosa McKenna
Pauline O'Maley
Fran O'Neill
Noel Simpson
Sally Thompson
Sam Thomas
Aileen Treloar-Coates