

Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council



## **Annual Report 2020**



## **From the President:**

The Valbec committee is pleased to reflect back on 2020 and know that we have responded to the Covid19 pandemic by continuing to meet our members' requirements with a creative and innovative approach. We have achieved our goals of providing quality professional development for language, literacy and numeracy educators in the adult education field by providing four workshops via zoom, and a full day's conference with 21 workshop options for participants - which were also available for two weeks after the conference for registered participants. We continue to work with members from Learn Local, Tafe and private providers and listen to their feedback which we regularly ask for via e-valbec, our digital monthly newsletter and through evaluations from workshops.

The committee have continued to meet monthly throughout the year and towards the end of the year, we have met more frequently to ensure we have the necessary skills to host and run conference sessions in the online format.

### **Thanks to - 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 Adult Literacy and Numeracy field. Successive state governments in Victoria have supported adult literacy and numeracy provision through generous financial commitment to ACFE. The ACFE board, chaired by Maria Peters, sets the direction of its funding programs and always prioritises adult literacy and numeracy provision through Valbec and other activities like our robust and wonderful Learn Local sector.

### **Thanks to - all of our members!**

### **Thanks to - The VALBEC Committee**

I would like to express my thanks to the committee – we all volunteer our time because we are committed to Adult Literacy and LLN in general. We value the importance of adult education and life-long learning. We give our time to VALBEC because we believe that we provide a quality service in the form of conferences, forums and workshops to our members, the benefits of which flow on to the adult students we are all here for.

The VALBEC Committee for the 2020 year was appointed at the AGM in April 2020.  
2020 Committee

President – Linno Rhodes,

Vice President Elizabeth Gunn

Treasurer – John Radalj

Secretary – Pariss Frangie

2020 Conference Convenor Kerrie Tomkins, (Associate member) Rhonda Pelletier

General members – Sandy Iyngkaran (resigned), Christine Tully, Kerrie Tomkins, Pam Mahlis, Denise Reynolds.

Co-opted member Shruti Malavde (IT Lead)

Committee members represent VALBEC in other steering committees and advocacy groups. Members attend and contribute on behalf of VALBEC and report on current issues as well as providing expertise on matters pertaining to adult literacy and numeracy provision.

Committee members attended and contributed to:

ACAL Committee – Liz Gunn

Reading & Writing Hotline Steering Committee – Linno Rhodes

CGEA Champions group – Chris Tully

EAL Curriculum Advisory Group – Denise Reynolds

Administration support provided by

Anna Musgrove to May.

Leanne Wu (with support from Adult Learning Australia) May – ongoing

## **PD/Forums of 2020**

All forums or workshops were well attended and received positive feedback. The direction of our forums reflected the currency and interest expressed at our conferences and through feedback from our members.

1. Dr Ron Wilson “**Adult literacy matters in a Corrections environment**”
2. Self-Care Professional Development for LLN educators.
  - With Kirke Olson and Sher Kamman
3. Shame: One of the Biggest Obstacles for Adult Learners
  - Presented by Holly Armstrong – Head of Student Success for Advance EDU, Denver Colorado.
4. Numeracy for teachers
  - Working with embedded numeracy in generalist teaching.
  - Presented by Chris Tully from Melbourne Polytechnic

## **eVALBEC**

11 editions of e-valbec are emailed to members and non-members of VALBEC.

E-valbec contributions are written by committee members and sent out by VALBEC's admin to members each month.

Topics range from promoting VALBEC's annual conference, professional development for adult literacy and numeracy (ALN) educators, up-coming conferences across a range of relevant fields, and other professional learning resources, to celebrating the United Nations' yearly sustainability campaign. For 2020, the Year of Plant Health, VALBEC Committee members regularly wrote about teaching ideas related to sustainability and plant health to stimulate practitioners' classroom teaching practice.

E-valbec updates practitioners about teaching resources and information on digital literacy developments. It has been especially important during the Victorian lockdown for more than six months when members' access to information through the usual channels of talking to colleagues at work has been unavailable in most situations.

Linno Rhodes

**President**

**VALBEC**

*L G Rhodes*

## **VALBEC Treasurer's Report**

The VALBEC Committee ensures that the financial status of VALBEC remains in a sound position. The report provides an overview of VALBEC's financial position and includes income and expenditure for the 2020 financial year. In response to Covid-19, the committee ran all professional development free for members and at a very low fee or free for non-members.

Again in 2020 the main sources of income were membership fees, the annual conference and the ACFE grant. The main expenses were the VALBEC Conference, statewide professional development, the production of the 'Fine Print' journal, and the administration and management of the association, including the compilation of the monthly newsletter, e-VALBEC. While expenditure for professional development activities and Fine Print was \$24,340.14, administration costs for 2020 incurred considerable expense with an additional \$16,720.01 (running total as at 1 December).

Please refer to the attached, audited financial statements for the detailed breakdown of expenditure.

John Radalj

**Treasurer**

## **Conference:**

VALBEC Conference 2020 – All Comers Welcome

The original focus of the conference for 2020 was to be on student's experience of learning. We hoped to include students to talk about their journeys in learning and to hear from their teachers about the strategies that enabled their students to make positive gains in self-confidence and skills. As usual, the conference was to be in May at William Angliss and to be live.

Rather than decide not to run a conference in 2020 because of the virus, the committee decided to try a virtual conference. We engaged Conference Online to assist with the technology to do this. Conference Online had ably provided administrative assistance with the 2019 conference and VALBEC had found that to be positive both financially and practically. For 2020, their involvement was to be significantly larger. After some deliberation, and a pause as we watched to see if a live conference might, in fact, become possible, a date was set for December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The conference title was retained but the theme was reframed to enable practitioners to bring whatever key learnings or experience they had had while teaching online. The conference was opened by Maria Peters, Chair of the ACFE Board. It was always the intention to retain our keynote speaker, Victoria Wilson from USQ, to continue the dialogue on the impact of trauma on students' ability to engage in learning.

Other presenters were invited through committee contacts and, in two instances, from professional contacts established by members through the International Specialised Skills Institute Fellowships – one from Italy, and the other from the United States. As has been the pattern over the years, committee members' professional networks and research enabled the programme to develop an amazing breadth of topics and presentation styles.

113 people, including committee and presenters, registered for the conference. Registration was free for members and others could pay a pro rata membership fee and gain other membership advantages. Twelve people took up that option. Registrants came from Wodonga, Goulburn Valley, Tasmania; from TAFEs, Learn Locals, Neighbourhood Houses and private providers.

Setting up the presentations, enabling people to register and navigate the program to find the sessions they wanted and to run concurrent sessions in multiple time slots was a significant learning event for the convenor and the committee. The motivation was the advantage that running a virtual conference offers – every session was recorded and can now be made available to anyone who could not attend on the day. Registrants were given free access until Dec 16<sup>th</sup>. In 2021, the sessions will be available through the VALBEC website for a small fee. It is hoped this will enable practitioners in the regions to 'attend' when, in most years, it is too far and too costly for them to come to Melbourne for one day.

An indication of the possible reach of a virtual conference can be found in the record of 'Country and Traffic Sources' in the Conference Online report. These figures include people who attended whole sessions, who 'dropped' in for a moment or who visited the conference site.

It is still too early to have received feedback from registrants although some anecdotal reports from some registrants and presents suggest it was a good experience.

There were technical issues related to the complexity of the program design and participants' inexperience with this type of virtual event. Nonetheless, the day was a success and the committee is now faced with the challenge of designing the conference in 2021.

Rhonda Pelletier - Conference Convenor

The Fine Print editorial committee; Sarah Deasey, Linno Rhodes, Lini Kane, Liane Hughes, Catherine Clancy and Elizabeth Gunn, has conducted all meetings in 2020 online. The committee meets about seven times per year with Fine Print editor Deryn Mansell to brainstorm ideas for up-coming issues, and to discuss the progress of all the various articles and contributors that are already commissioned for each issue.

Committee members often contribute articles related to their work and research around adult basic education and literacy and numeracy learning. When not contributing, Fine Print committee members regularly contact potential contributors and support the editor in liaising with writers and proofreading copy before drafts.

VALBEC produced three editions of Fine Print, Victoria's signature adult literacy, language and numeracy journal. The focus in 2020 has been on theories of a range of literacies and continue to provide insights into adult literacy, language and numeracy pedagogy. We continued to promote technology and numeracy through articles, resources and practical learning and teaching strategies. Fine Print has also continued to promote professional learning and good teaching practices through articles, resources, reviews, profiles, learning and teaching materials and national and international updates.

**The three editions for 2020 included the following:**

**Volume 43 Issue 1**

**Features**

Freire: theorist or prophet? By Rob McCormack

An alternative tradition in adult education? By Bob Boughton

Critical numeracy: an interview with Anke Grotlueschen By Elizabeth Gunn

**Regulars**

Practical Matters Teaching resources for climate change and sustainability By Sarah Deasey

Foreign Correspondent ProLiteracy Conference – San Diego, California

by Konstantina Vlahos

Open Forum Reflections on the 2019 Australian Council for Adult Literacy Conference By Sally Thompson

Focus on the positive by Amelia Trompf

In Conversation Volunteering at the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre An interview with Jane Woodman

What's Out There Sexing the Animal in a Posthumanist World: A Critical Feminist Approach by Roslyn

Appleby Reviewed by Elizabeth Gunn

Book Creator: an app for turning language learners into authors Reviewed by Deryn Mansell

**Volume 43 Issue 2**

**Features** In Conversation "The world is crazy time." Adult learners speak for themselves about studying online by Dale Pobega

What's Out There Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice

of Freedom by bell hooks. reviewed by Linno Rhodes Carringbush Reading Series by Carringbush Adult Education reviewed by Amelia Trompf

Freire's literacy: reading and writing our worlds by Rob McCormack

Trauma-informed teaching of adults by Victoria Wilson

A tribute to Julianne Krusche by Liam Frost-Camilleri

Road blocks, turning points and light bulb moments by Julianne Krusche

## **Regulars**

Practical Matters Teaching songs in the English classroom

by Carmel Davies and Sharon Duff Putting language to work by Rebecca Smith

Open Forum Policy update: statement and strategy by Sarah Deasey and Linno Rhodes

In Conversation In this together: reconciliation week 2020 Interviews with Auntie Julie McHale and Jacinta Douglas

What's Out There May Street Stories by Carmel Davies Reviewed by Jodie Whitehurst

## **Volume 43 Issue 3**

### **Features**

Reform in prisoner education in Victoria: the legacy of Joseph Akeroyd by Ron Wilson

Literate environments, literacy demands and adult education courses: stories from PIAAC by Elizabeth Gunn

### **Regulars**

Practical Matters Meet me at your learning threshold by Eudi Blakeman

A partnership to build skills for further study and work in food trades, hospitality and tourism by Liane Hughes

Zooming into the digital world by Manalini Kane

Open Forum The MALWAYS experience and its significance for prison educators by Ron Wilson

ALNPP: a practitioner's perspective by Christine Wallis

Surveying student opinion of course delivery changes during the COVID-19 pandemic by Susan Thompson