



QUEST

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IN THIS ISSUE

- ◆ Learning on the road to recovery
- ◆ Riding the trails
- ◆ Off the streets and into education
- ◆ Tasmyn makes a mark
- ◆ Member round up
- ◆ ACE update

Learning on the road to recovery

Odyssey College, the educational arm of Sydney's addiction treatment service Odyssey House, provides free adult education to help residents recovering from addiction to develop the skills they need to rebuild their lives.

Like many residents, 'Anne', 32, was referred to Odyssey House's residential program from the criminal justice system.

She arrived at Odyssey House after being arrested and after losing care of her three children.

'I had no option about being here,' Anne says. 'I had to come here to get my children back. It was tough but they are my whole world.'

'Education opens doors to new avenues. It breaks the old routines that have contributed to their addiction and gives them new ways of spending their time.'
Greg Hughes

The idea of attending the college was intimidating. Anne had dropped out of school in year 10 after she got pregnant and didn't have much faith in her ability to learn.

'My self-esteem was pretty low. I thought "I'm just a mum." I had no job, nothing.'

Seven months on Anne has found new confidence and is preparing for the transition to her new life and being reunited with her children.


Catherine Macgonigal, principal of the college, says re-engaging residents with learning can be difficult. But developing education plans around each person's particular skills and aspirations and building rapport is crucial.

All residents start with a three month foundation program and can progress to core and senior levels, studying subjects including art, woodwork, computing, physical education, maths and English. Vocational training in hospitality, forklift, traffic control and white card is also on offer.

Greg Hughes, one of eight staff at the college, teaches woodwork and is co-ordinator of vocational training.

(Story continues on p. 3)

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Lifelong and lifewide learning
for all Australians

Message from the CEO



Lifelong learning must be a priority of all levels of government. To that end we will continue to advocate for a national policy to help guide our future steps so that we learn best how to meet the many challenges before us.

Welcome to 2023. I hope you had an opportunity to rest and enjoy time with family and friends over the break.

I spent time catching up with some reading over the holidays, including the recently released World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2023 that explores a range of severe risks we could face over the coming decade, with inaction on climate change at the top of the list.

Over the last 12 months we have experienced extreme weather in our own backyard, an experience that has brought the full gravity of climate change home to many Australians, with much public discussion about disaster prevention, preparedness and recovery, all of which require large scale behaviour change.

Our recent special edition of the Australian Journal of Adult Learning highlights the role of adult education in climate justice. It explores the diverse approaches that adult educators and communities are taking to help address the issues and where local transformations are taking place.

As we move through 2023, ALA will be working closely with government, our members and partners to look at the proposed reforms in the areas impacting our sector. ALA has been invited by the Minister for Skills and Training to participate in a newly formed VET Workforce Blueprint Advisory Committee. We want to ensure that the ACE workforce is recognised and that a framework is developed to support pathway learning to VET and that the framework recognises non-accredited, informal and non-formal learning.

The establishment of Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) provides us with an opportunity to advocate for a co-ordinated and evidence-based approach to foundation skills training. We are pleased that one of the first initiatives announced by JSA is to lead research into adult literacy, numeracy and digital literacy among Australian adults. This research will lay the groundwork and we look forward to providing input and putting the case for the expertise of adult and community education providers in being part of the solution.

This year we are offering a range of webinars with some of our national partners and bringing back our successful What Works webinars for a third series, focusing on adult literacy and learning practice.

People need hope in these turbulent times. Lifelong learning must be a priority of all levels of government. To that end we will continue to advocate for a national policy to help guide our future steps so that we learn best how to meet the many challenges before us. A commitment to lifelong learning can help encourage a more inclusive system that caters to marginalised Australians, particularly those with low literacy, numeracy, and digital skills.

Often it's our colleagues who are our best teachers. We are sad to farewell Catherine Devlin our Operations Manager, who is leaving ALA after more than a decade of service. On behalf of the Board and staff I'd like to thank Catherine, for her vast contribution, not only to ALA and the ACE sector but to the ALA team and to me. We have all learned so much from working with Catherine and benefitted from her expertise. We wish her all the best. She will be a great asset in her new workplace.

There are some big steps ahead of us this year – all of which I am looking forward to taking with you.

Jenny Macaffer, CEO



Making classes relaxed and fun helps to engage adult learners who have had bad school experiences in the past.

(story continued from p. 1)

A former high school teacher, Greg has been with Odyssey for 17 years. He says starting learners off with tailored projects that are both achievable and challenging is a balancing act, but it pays off.

'Most of them have got a history of dropping out or of bad experiences with teachers so it's important to help them see things through to completion and to say it's OK to make mistakes, whether it's in art or woodwork or English or maths!'

For residents who have had poor educational experiences in the past the satisfaction and sense of accomplishment that comes from completing a project is a powerful incentive to keep going.

Small classes, an environment that is fun, safe and free of judgement ensures that the learning experience is a positive one.

'I think all our teachers understand these people have hit rock bottom and they have to attend college so we have to make the environment conducive to learning. The majority respond well but there are a few who don't, but through encouragement and acknowledgement they end up coming round. They respond so well when a teacher gives them a pat on the back.

'We offer them projects that aim to rebuild the relationships they've lost through addiction with their kids or their partners. The project is a way of saying "I am thinking of you while I'm in here". It's a way of building trust and love. So everyone makes something

different. They make small toys or a jewellery box or wooden puzzles that they can use themselves.'

Despite the importance of education to their recovery, resident turnover can be high and as a staff member you have to be prepared for that, Greg says.

'I have to look at it that whether someone is here for two days or 12 months, every day someone is here is a success. They're becoming healthier, they're becoming dependable. While they're here we are creating opportunities for them and there's fewer overdoses, there's crime off the streets, the health system is being used less.'

The profile of residents is different now to when Greg first started. 'The drug culture has changed a lot in the 17 years that I've been here. Back then it was heroin use that had a big physical impact and our residents were mainly older guys with a good work ethic. Now it's ice which has a big impact on the brain so we have a lot of people with mental health problems and emotional disability, who might be antisocial or have depression or anxiety. Some people have really damaged themselves and might not recover fully.'

One of the rewards of the job is seeing people follow a career pathway and establish a new life. 'I've seen people leave here and go on to take up a trade or tertiary study who said, "You inspired me to do this." One resident went on to do training and now he is a manager in our community services team. So seeing someone go on and do something like that is very rewarding.

'Most people who come in have earned a lot of money selling drugs and when they come in they want to get back out there after they've finished the program and earn big money again in some high paying job. So we have to tell them that's never going to happen. We

'My passion and drive to see people change their lives is what keeps me here.' Greg Hughes



Education helps people at Odyssey House to find a career pathway and rebuild relationships.

say, “The best thing you can do to keep clean is to find an occupation you love and that will give you purpose in life that will make you happy.”

Anne is now a senior at the College with her sights set on a career and working towards her goal of being reunited with her kids. She puts her change of attitude down to Odyssey College. ‘It’s given me self-confidence and self-worth.

‘I take things a lot more seriously than I did at school. I don’t muck about. Mum used to say “I’d give anything to go back to school” and I used to think, “No way.” But now I know what she meant. I’d love to go back and complete year 12. And I wouldn’t rush through, I would do it properly. I want to support and encourage my kids to do the same, to keep studying because you can make so much more of your life.’

For Anne the Barnardos case worker assigned to her was an inspiration for a new career.

‘She has been a great friend and support to me. Her support and the support here at Odyssey has changed my life.’

Anne wants to pursue a career where she can use what’s she learned through her own experiences to help others.

‘I’d love to help young women who are in the same spot as me. I want to work at Barnardos to help restore children to their mother’s care. In five years time hopefully I will have my own place, I’ll have my kids living with me, and I will do everything I can to make that happen. I will also be working in my career at Barnardos.’

‘Troy’, 36, has been at Odyssey House for seven months. He left school in year 9 and completed year 10 at TAFE before finding work in film and TV production.

He’s worked his way through foundation and core levels and is now a senior enrolled in a TAFE drafting course online. The college has helped him identify his strengths.

‘I’ve done a lot of trade work in the past and enjoyed the maths side of it, measuring stuff out and ordering it. It was nice to get a refresher. I’m a practical learner so if I can see how things apply in real life it’s much easier for me. Getting back into maths made me feel like I have a good mind for problem solving.

‘It makes me feel good to be able to learn things I missed first time round. It’s been good for jumpstarting my brain.

‘It’s different to school. You’re treated like an adult and you work at your own pace, which is good because you can take your time.

‘I was most nervous about English because I’ve never been a good reader or speller. It was challenging but I’m more confident now. The teachers are great, they bend over backwards for you and make it enjoyable and fun. It’s been years since I’ve read for pleasure. Now I enjoy reading autobiographies.

‘I’ve also learned that I’ve got good patience and my concentration is a lot better than a few months ago. As long as I take my time and don’t rush through things I’m OK.’

Even if college wasn’t compulsory Troy says he’d still attend because it’s a welcome relief from the intensity of group therapy sessions.

He’s currently half way through his drafting course and intends to get as much done as he can before he leaves Odyssey House and will continue with his studies until he finds work.

Riding the trails

A huge uptick in cycling since COVID is creating new business opportunities for the bike savvy in Victoria's Yarra Valley.



A new Lilydale course is training up locals for careers in cycling tourism and services, and forging new community connections.

The pre-accredited eight week introductory bike maintenance course at Box Hill TAFE's Lilydale campus began in 2022 and demand is strong.

Annabel Mounsey, ACFE Programs Coordinator, Centre for Adult Education at Box Hill Institute, says staff at Lilydale campus saw the potential after a surge in the number and range of bicycling opportunities in the Yarra Valley, including new pump tracks, extended rail trails and a recently approved mountain bike trail that will attract enthusiasts from Australia and overseas.

'We thought a course like this would open up opportunities for people to work as volunteers on professional bike rides, in men's sheds, in starting up coffee carts, or being bike tour guides. It's aimed at getting people back into work or study, at helping people change career paths or connecting them with the community.'

Open to people aged 17 and over the course has attracted students from their early 20s to their mid 70s who ride road bikes, ebikes, and mountain bikes. They include cross country riders, commuters, casual riders and dedicated enthusiasts.

The appeal of the course is that DIY maintenance

'We didn't expect the course to be so popular. And we didn't expect the marvellous response and the feedback.'
Annabel Mounsey

can avoid costly servicing and repairs and makes cyclists more self-reliant. In the process students develop foundation skills like following instructions, communicating clearly and teamwork and group problem-solving skills.

But teacher Damian Auton is also a drawcard.

'Participants love the knowledge that Damian brings to the class,' says Annabel. 'He's incredibly knowledgeable about the industry and about business and work opportunities. He's very well known and has competed in rides around the world, so he has heaps of experiences and stories to share.'

'We've had such wonderful feedback from the first few courses. The students love coming along and working in the group. It's exposed them to what's around when it comes to bike riding opportunities as well as employment opportunities too. There's also the social aspect. They meet new people and potential bike riding buddies and share ideas and tips and connect with people they've got something in common with. Not to mention the health and wellbeing aspects and being empowered to do your own repairs. That's great for people's confidence too.'

Damian Auton says involving students in sharing their experiences and a hands-on approach keeps learners engaged.

'For the first half of the class I'll talk a little bit about the topic; for example, if it's brakes, I'll give a little history of brakes, what can go wrong, and reasons why your brakes aren't working. I don't like to talk too much so we'll have a group discussion about times they've had problems with their brakes and we put it all together. I'll draw a diagram on the whiteboard and do a demo. The second half is their chance to get their hands dirty and practise fixing things.'



Teacher Damian Auton brings his extensive knowledge and passion for cycling to the class. Photo: John Christie

'I like to get them working in pairs on their bikes because they bounce things off each other and work together on each other's bikes. There are so many different bikes out there it's great for them to get experience working on someone else's.

'My whole life I've been involved with bikes. I was on two wheels by the age of four so I've always had an interest in riding. I'd love to be able to pass on my passion for cycling to as many people as I can. I've always thought of a bike as a machine of freedom. As a kid growing up in the country I could go to all sorts of different places on my bike. I could ride to the back paddocks, to school or to the shops. If you didn't have your bike you couldn't do any of that. For me sharing that feeling through teaching is my passion and it's my pleasure and a privilege to do that.

'The people in the classes are really enthusiastic, they love the learning and ask lots of questions. They soak it up. Sometimes they're still working on their bikes until after 9pm and I have to say, "Come on guys it's time to pack up."

'Each course is different. There's so many different levels of knowledge in any one group when they come in, so you have to be adept as a teacher to make sure people go away with something valuable.

'The technology is changing all the time. Bikes aren't as simple as they used to be. For example, taking wheels off can be much more complicated on some bikes.

'I want people to feel empowered and enthusiastic about maintaining and fixing their own bikes. At the start I tell them "I want to teach you the skills to be able to service your bike the same way a mechanic in a bike repair shop would. You might take longer but you'll do the same job." I want them to be able to fix

and repair their bike at home and when they have problems in the field. By the end of the course they should be able to diagnose the problem, know which tools they need, and repair it.

'Everyone gets something different from the class. Some people have little experience in basic tool use, so they get a lot out of the hands on practice. Some pick up social skills, they become friends and meet up outside of class and go for a ride.

'We've got people aged from 17 to 75, who ride mountain bikes or road bikes as well as electric bikes, we've got new riders who've taken it up during the pandemic, others who've been riding for years. So there's a real variety and a merging of different worlds that feed off each other. What they've all got in common is a passion for cycling.

'The bicycle world has changed dramatically in the last 15 years. There's been a huge change in bike technology. We've gone from choosing from five to 50 different types of tyres, and it's the same with brakes and gears. There's so much more diversity. With hundreds and hundreds of different kinds it's a real minefield if you are looking for parts to buy and people are not sure what to get.

'So getting to know your bike is really important. In the first class I do an anatomy of a bike with a picture on the whiteboard and a bike on a stand in front of me and I name the parts just like you would the parts of a body, so participants get to know language so they're not referring to a "thingy" or a "whatchamacallit". Knowing the names gives you confidence. If you know the right words you can speak the language.

'Usually in bike classes I like playing music. You can't go past Neil Young or Jimi Hendrix. Playing music creates a space so people are comfortable while



An influx of local and international cyclists to the Yarra Valley will bring new business opportunities.

they're learning. If you don't have any skills coming along to a class it can be quite intimidating. At Lilydale it's more of a classroom setting so while there's no music I use a lot of anecdotes and experiences from my own life. And I keep it as light as possible, particularly if people are worried about making mistakes or asking what they might think are dumb questions. I always say that we're all here to learn.

'What I've learned is that I love being a teacher. But I'm also learning that one of the things that drives me is teaching people how to fix and repair things in a world we're less able to fix and repair. I'm wanting to turn that around. I'm trying to nurture an environment where when something breaks we can work out what's wrong and how we can fix it. And if we can't fix it how can we upcycle or recycle. And more and more people want to be part of that.'

'There's definitely more women who are getting into mountain bike riding and wanting to fix or repair their own bikes. Some come back a second time so they can do it in more depth.'

Sandy Parkinson, 43, works as an accounts manager by day but out of office hours she's a passionate mountain biker. She started five years ago and now rides up to four times a week with other local women at Listerfield Park.

'It's addictive. As you advance you need different bikes that can do more. I just wanted to take the mystery out of repairing bikes out on the trail. If I hear my bike making a funny noise I want to know what to do next. If I can't fix it myself at least when I'm talking to a bike mechanic I'll have a better idea of what went wrong and a much better idea of how to take care of it in the future.'

'I hadn't been in a classroom since I was in high school 24 years ago. But it's been so interesting going back as

an adult because as an adult you want to be there and you want to learn.

'I was excited in the first class because within 10 minutes I'd learned something new. I learned how to take a tyre off without needing tools, which is a really important skill. So it's incredibly practical.'

'Being able to repair my bike is a huge thing for me. I don't need to wait for anyone else. I can fix it myself. I've learned that I'm fairly practical and logical and if something makes sense I'll get it.'

'I've learned how a bike works and to be able to communicate with my mechanic. I can say "I think it's this and I want you to look at it" and not be dismissed. It's given me a new confidence and people respond differently to me.'

'A good teacher is so vital. First Damian discusses what we'll do, then demonstrates what we'll do. In pairs we work through a process trying out the different steps. "OK this is not working, what am I missing?" It's very practical and I can always ask for help.'

'I was out on the trail recently just having a break and a couple stopped and were looking at their bike trying to work out what was going on. I was able to identify the issue and I was very excited about that. But I pretended to be cool about it. His brake was rubbing a floating brake, and all he had to do was undo two screws and let them settle and he was good to go again.'

'Once people start work on the bikes there's a real happy buzz and that's the most rewarding part for me, watching them all tinkering away and learning as they go.' Damian Auton

Off the streets and into education

A new program aims to nip youth crime in the bud and keep young Queenslanders on track.



'Jake' was 21, unemployed and in and out of trouble with the police in Townsville. His future looked bleak until his case manager suggested a government program to get him off the streets and into education.

The suggestion came at the right time for Jake.

'It was something different and I wanted a change.'

He joined Transition 2 Success (T2S) a 15-week course touted as a new approach to youth justice giving young offenders or those at risk of offending the chance to make a fresh start.

Peter Laity, Senior Transition Officer, Transition 2 Success at Townsville North Youth Justice Service Centre, spends time getting to know each young person at the start of the three stage program and understanding what drives them. Jake made an impression on him when they first met.

'We talked about how the T2S program could give Jake the opportunity to have some power over what he wants to do and ways we could help him if he wanted to get into work.

'I needed to understand what his needs were. He has a good work ethic. He always responded when

I contacted him, his communication was good, he could express what he wanted. He is very employable.'

What Jake didn't have was work experience or exposure to the kinds of jobs that might suit him. And the idea of going back to school was daunting.

'I was nervous on the first day because I thought it would be like school. I left school when I was 15. And I didn't do too good at school. But it was different. You had responsibility for what you did. You had more choice. It felt good.'

After the initial stage of identifying the needs of each participant, the program focuses on teaching life skills such as identifying and managing emotions and behaviour, teamwork and communication.

'It was good to be with people in the same situation as me. I made some good mates. And it was good learning how to manage our emotions.'

Pathways to formal training

In the final stage participants undertake formal training. Young people have graduated from T2S with a range of certificates, including construction, hospitality, foundation skills, automotive, and resources and infrastructure.

For Jake trying out different kinds of work through a variety of job tasters at TAFE was eye-opening. 'I tried barbering and hospitality but I liked the eco-tourism work best.

'The most useful thing was developing good work habits, learning how to keep motivated and trying work in different industries.'

'I've got a car and a certificate and a job. I'm proud of myself. I can't imagine going back to that old life.' Jake, participant, Transition 2 Success



Alternative education and vocational training is effective in reducing youth offending.

'Exposing Jake to different industries educated him about what he did and didn't like,' says Peter.

Jake is also persistent. Having decided he wanted to work for a refrigeration company Jake rang the employer every week to see if any positions had become available. He eventually landed an interview and his first job.

Jake's an example of how young people make positive changes through the program and the educational opportunities it offers, Peter says.

'I'm proud of Jake's hard work and determination.

'He's changed a lot. He set himself big goals and achieved them.'

Jake agrees he's changed.

'The course rehabilitated me. I can't see myself going back to crime. Now I want to study mines and machinery so I can get into mine operations work.

'I feel my future's pretty good, it's under control. I've got a car and a job and I'm saving for a house deposit.'

Transition 2 Success evaluation

A 2018 report found:

- The completion rate for young people enrolled in the T2S program is 81%.
- T2S successfully engages young people, with 95% going on to engage in education, employment or training.
- T2S graduates have lower levels of reoffending. Less than half of T2S participants with an offending history reoffended within 6 months of completing their course, compared with 59% of the comparison group. The overall reoffending rate for all T2S graduates was 25%.

Source: Deloitte Access Economics Transition to Success: Evaluation Report, 2018

Tasmyn makes a mark

The Learning Changes Lives Foundation has found a passionate new donor in 10 year old Tasmyn Emerald Wood.



The SBS series *Lost For Words* moved 10-year-old Tasmyn to donate ten per cent of the profits of her fledgling business to the Learning Changes Lives Foundation.

The entrepreneurial 10 year old and bookworm established Tasmyn's Tales to make money for herself and to help adults with low literacy. She sells her personally designed bookmarks, postcards, magnets and bumper stickers to promote the Sapphire Coast, a favourite annual holiday destination for her family.

But Tasmyn is an accidental adult literacy ambassador.

'I went in to say goodnight to Mum and on the TV I saw these adults crying because they couldn't read. One couldn't read a menu and another girl couldn't read to her children. It was so sad and I was so shocked that I wanted to help them as fast as I could.'

Tasmyn had expert help from her mother's best friend, graphic designer Lavinia Hartney.

'I'm very grateful to my Aunt Vinnie. She helped me choose colours and fonts and positioning for my characters. She is an inspiration to me.

'I use mermaids in my design because they represent creativity, beauty and strength.'

Tasmyn approached information centres, museums and local businesses in three towns on the Sapphire Coast about stocking her products, raising awareness

of adult literacy in the process. 'In every meeting I told them I wanted to donate ten per cent of what I make to adults who cannot read.'

Over ten local businesses supported Tasmyn's Tales and bought her range. She's already made her first \$1000.

Tasmyn cast about for an appropriate charity to donate to, and was thrilled when her mother found the Learning Changes Lives Foundation. Tasmyn was particularly drawn to the Footpath Literacy project.

'I was really happy to see the Foundation doing something for people and particularly homeless people who can't read.'

Tasmyn's proud to be making a difference.

'Reading and writing is very important to me. I love the joy of reading. I feel very happy to be donating. It makes me feel like I've done good and I'm very proud of myself.

'I believe it's important to donate to the Learning Changes Lives Foundation because we are all human beings and we should all have equal amounts of education and have the same opportunities and chances. People who struggle with reading should be able to get help.'

For information about Tasmyn's Tales email: nuttwood82@gmail.com

'Reading is a really good skill to have in life. I felt really bad when I saw adults who couldn't read and I wanted to make a change.'

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learningchangeslives.org.au

Member round up

News from ALA member organisations around Australia



Friends and colleagues gathered to farewell Richard Vinycombe after 25 years at Byron Community College.

The NSW government has awarded the **Literacy for Life Foundation** \$1.5 million to boost Aboriginal literacy. Literacy for Life Executive Director Jack Beeton said this additional funding would allow the Literacy for Life Foundation to make a significant impact in Aboriginal communities across the state.

Around 100 friends and colleagues gathered in Mullumbimby to farewell **Byron Regional Community College** CEO Richard Vinycombe, who has retired after 25 years leading the organisation. Richard joined as a part-time employee at the college in 1997 and educational offerings were limited. Today the college has three campuses and offers 500 courses to over 3000 students a year. Richard also brought his passion for adult education and commitment to sustainability to the ALA board as a valued past director.

Congratulations to our members whose work was acknowledged in various categories of the Australian Training Awards, including finalists **Djerriwarrh Community and Education Services, Box Hill Institute, Canberra Institute of Technology, TasTAFE, and Charles Darwin University.**

Pines Learning welcomes advocate for adult education Sally Brennan as General Manager. Sally also brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to her role on ALA's Board.

Reading Writing Hotline and **Social Equity Works** have released a new report, Insights from the Classroom, that identifies barriers for providers of adult literacy, numeracy and digital programs as well as for adult learners. readingwritinghotline.edu.au/new-hotline-report-on-adult-literacy-numeracy-and-digital-literacy-needs/

Carlton Neighbourhood House has had a change of leadership. Colleagues and community members gathered to celebrate the contribution of outgoing

Executive Officer Linda Perugini, who steered the house through the challenges of the pandemic. The incoming EO is Tony Milne who has decade of senior management and executive officer level experience in the public health, public education, and not-for-profit sectors and 20 years working on the inside and outside of political systems in New Zealand and Australia to achieve positive change. Welcome Tony!

LinkWest CEO Jane Chilcott was farewelled after 14 years at the helm of the WA-based peak body for community resource centres in small and large communities across WA. In recognition of her service and legacy Jane's contribution will be celebrated at the LinkWest 2023 Power of Community conference on 5 & 6 April.

Are you an ALA member with news to share? Email us at info@ala.asn.au



The announcement of Literacy for Life Foundation's funding boost at Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation.

ACE update

In **SA**, the Malinauskas Government has announced community centres and neighbourhood houses across the state will receive an additional \$2.4 million per year in state government funding with up to 55 community centres receiving the budget boost. The funding will support program extensions, upgraded facilities and new services to help combat the rise in social isolation and loneliness that has spiked in many suburban and regional communities since COVID-19. dhs.sa.gov.au/news/media-releases-2022/record-funding-boost-for-sa-community-centres

Community Centres SA (CCSA) farewelled their CEO Kylie Ferguson and welcomed Scott Dutschke who has worked with CCSA for the past five years in a leadership role. Scott has taken over the position as acting CEO. communitycentressa.asn.au

In **VIC**, the 2022 Learn Local Awards will be held on Friday 24 February 2023 at Zinc, Federation Square. This annual event celebrates the achievements of the Learn Local sector, a network of over 250 not for profit community organisations offering pre-accredited training across the state. Congratulations to all the finalists. vic.gov.au/learn-local-awards

In **NT**, the Territory Labor Government has announced the \$92 million Skilling the Territory Investment plan 2022–23, which includes funding for pre-employment and equity training programs for disadvantaged Territorians. nationaltribune.com.au/suite-of-grants-to-upskill-territory-s-workforce-in-2023



Photo: Chapman River by John Morton CC BY-SA 2.0

In **TAS**, 26TEN celebrated its tenth birthday. The Hon. Roger Jaensch, Minister for Education, Children and Youth launched 26TEN week. The week of workshops, activities and events celebrated a decade of the unique strategy which unites businesses, communities and all levels of government to support adult Tasmanians who struggle with their literacy and numeracy.

In **WA**, Linkwest has announced its upcoming conference: The Power of Community on 5–6 April 2023. Registrations open soon. linkwest.asn.au

Nationally, the Albanese Government has appointed Prof. Peter Dawkins as interim Director of Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA). JSA is a new statutory body within the Dept of Employment and Workplace Relations which aims to provide crucial advice to government on current and emerging workforce needs. In addition to analysing future workforce needs for a decarbonised economy, JSA will lead a \$12 million research study to provide current evidence on the level of foundation skills among Australian adults. ALA looks forward to participating in this review and advocating on behalf of the adult and community education sector.

ALA's AGM is scheduled for May and nominations for Board vacancies will be advertised in March. Nominees are required to be ALA members. Details of vacant positions and closing dates will be advertised in our member newsletter and on social media.

Visit our website to find previous issues of Quest and individual stories for sharing. ala.asn.au

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