



# Victorian Branch Newsletter

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## In This Issue

President's Report

(including Annual Meeting Report)

Upcoming Events

Recent Events

## President's Report

As the end of the year approaches it is timely and appropriate to contemplate the year ahead. I know many of us are already partly functioning in a 2012 mindset. A timetabler I once worked with cleaned out her entire pantry throwing out everything past its use by date and wondered why the cupboard was so empty. She realized she had been working 12 months ahead of herself - she was so totally immersed in the next year's timetable. As I continue preparing for the future with ACE Victoria (which I hope will be rich and rewarding) I am reminded of the work that is done with Third Culture Kids: those who move countries and cultures often in their lives, so their own culture is not tied to any country but is a 'culture of change' and new beginnings. So often people work with these children to prepare them for going to a new country/city/school and do not give them time to acknowledge and reflect on what they are leaving. Symbolic acts like compiling a folder of memories and messages from current contacts become crucial. It is very important to 'honour the past' and work out ways that we can move ahead without forgetting where we have been.

2012 will be a big year for ACE Victoria and we fully intend to continue extensive representation on and contribution to key educational bodies and initiatives in this state.

So, stock up for Christmas and ensure all your cupboards are full with excitement for the future, joy in the present and, of course, wonderful memories of 2011. Best wishes for a wonderful Christmas and holiday from all in ACE Victoria.

Annette Rome

Please find below excerpts from the **President's Address at the 2011 Annual Meeting**

## National Context

2011 was a most significant year in the College's history. The National Office moved to the Graduate School of Education at The University of Melbourne and the College welcomed a new CEO in Ms Debra Goldfinch. Deb comes to us with a very strong history of building not-for-profit organisations. She has set about, with her team, making an impact in a variety of circles to the point where organisations around the country are watching the College with interest. The Victorian Branch thanks the outgoing CEO Margaret Clark for her intelligent and informed contribution to education discussions in this country. I know that Deb is setting up a consultative group to target matters strategically and has already commenced a membership drive.

The National Council secrets became revealed to me as I attended my first meetings this year and had the opportunity to spend some significant time with our retiring National President, Prof Lyndsay Connors and President-Elect Prof Alan Reid as well as other members of the National Council and Board. There are face-to-face meetings twice a year for Board and Council with a number of teleconferences during the year. For those of you who have not met Lyndsay, words cannot describe the humility, humour, intelligence and sheer 'goodness' she exudes. While Alan Reid can unfortunately no longer take up the mantle of President, we were all delighted to hear of the appointment of Bob Lingard as the new National President with Prof Stephen Dinham the new President Elect. The College is in outstanding hands.

A number of key fora relating to education have been held around the country in recent months and what is of particular interest about these is the absence of some traditional stakeholders in these events - in particular individual school or professional association representation. Education in Australia has a significant improvement agenda as indicated by the work of ACARA and AITSL, but lying alongside this is another agenda where those less traditionally involved in education such as business and the not-for-profits are demanding a say, particularly in the area of

equity. While many of us may have no real issue with this, I think the message of people such as Centre for Strategic Education (CSE)'s Tony MacKay and groups such as ACE and ACEL, is that practising educators need to be part of the conversation as well. We know that the country is about to experience the application of the National Professional Standards for Teachers and National Professional Standards for Principals. The first Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders was released in November and sits alongside the Charter for the Teaching Profession released in 2008. Add to this the continued release of the Australian Curriculum and it makes schools very busy places in the next five or so years. The coming years will also be crucial in the determination of professional regard, career paths and conditions for all in education. When drivers in education are, in Michael Fullan's words, the wrong drivers, it is likely the profession, and the associated students, will not benefit. The 'wrong' drivers' include<sup>1</sup>

- Accountability: using test results and teacher appraisal, to reward or punish teachers (and schools) vs capacity building;
- Individual teacher and leadership quality: promoting individual vs group solutions
- Technology: investing in and assuming that the digital world will carry the day without concomitant increase in developing teacher pedagogy
- Fragmented strategies vs integrated or systemic strategies (ie the many 'bolt on' projects we witness)

It should be noted that the aspects just listed are important and should certainly be considered, but they should not be the main drivers of change else we risk the following becoming a true reflection on education: *its end has not been to make us good and wise, but learned. And it has succeeded. It has not taught us to seek virtue and to embrace wisdom: it has impressed on us their derivation and their etymology. We know how to decline the Latin word for virtue: we do not know how to love virtue. Though we do not know what wisdom is in practice or from experience, we do know the jargon off by heart* (Michel de Montaigne 1572)<sup>2</sup>.

Perhaps our role in ACE is one of promoting the 'right drivers' a la Fullan i.e. i) focussing on improving learning/instruction/assessment; ii) building the social capital of the profession, iii) harnessing the incredible power of technology effectively using sound pedagogical approaches and iv) developing systemic synergy rather than a series of isolated initiatives.



Natalie Craig, ACE Media Award Winner (the Sunday Age) and Dr Ian Sloane, Media Awards Chair at the Annual Meetin.g

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<sup>1</sup> Fullan, M; Choosing the wrong drivers for whole system reform. Summary of CSE Seminar Paper no. 204, May 2004

<sup>2</sup> Michel de Montaigne *Words on Words* D. Crystal, H. Crystal. Penguin, 2000

## ACE Conference

July this year witnessed the National Office hosting the ACE Conference in Sydney: *Equity in Education: Connecting for Change*. Of particular note, and I mention this as it represents to me the strength of an organisation such as this, is that every single speaker at this event gave of their time for nothing. The calibre of speakers was most impressive and they were some of the people best placed in the country to talk on the issue at hand: equity in education. I would add that this was one of the most deeply thoughtful events in education I have been to and one that was totally free of frippery. Equity had been a somewhat quiescent concept in education debate and policy in recent years but it has clearly become a focus again for ACE and ACE will continue to promote equity in education policy and debate. Papers are available on the College website.

## Victorian Context

2011 witnessed ACE Victoria's growing agenda. We continued to be involved in both the DEECD Excellence in Education Awards as well as the National Excellence in Teaching Awards, sitting on a number of panels. Regular events for Victoria include the New, 25 Year and Life Members event and the Annual Dinner. Events for the Melbourne Region include the Sylvia Walton Event, Ballarat key events include the Opening of the Education Year and for the Gippsland Region the Len Falk event is a real drawcard on the educational calendar. All Regions offer a large number of other professional learning sessions. The Victorian Branch (including the Melbourne, Ballarat and Gippsland Regions) hosted 21 events of which well over half were free to members. Events covered topics including developments in teacher professional standards, language education, adolescent mental health, biochemistry of learning, creativity and learning, directions in education, student leadership, body image and working with teachers to better understand Indigenous ways of knowing and being. I would like to think there was something for everyone.



*Gamilaraay woman Stephanie Armstrong speaking at the 2011 Sylvia Walton Event*

The Victorian Branch produced a submission to the Victorian Government Parliamentary Inquiry into the Education of Gifted and Talented and has had significant involvement with the Ministers for Education and Teacher Education. This year has seen a renewed focus on effective state education department liaison.

As always we celebrate the achievements of educators. The 2011 ACE Fellows and James Darling Medalist, Stephen Newton awarded at the annual dinner in September reflected extraordinary contributions to education in this state. The 2010 Education Media Award went to Natalie Craig from *The Sunday Age* and we are delighted she was able to address the AGM. We also acknowledge the achievement of one of our own: Professor Stephen Dinham who this year was awarded the Ann Clark Medal (Parramatta Diocese NSW) for services to Catholic education and an OAM in the 2011 Australia Day Honours.

Partnerships are often recognised as indicators of strength and I would like to publicly acknowledge the excellent relationship we share with a number of organisations.

Key relationships are or have developed with Wesley College Institute, Careers and Counsellors Association and now MLC. This year we were supported for the first time by a financial backer – the Victorian Teachers Credit Union. As a serious (personal) debtor to this organisation I thank them most sincerely for their support which has enabled the state branch of the organisation to undertake a number of new activities.

Other institutions have been incredibly generous to the College namely Haileybury College, Gippsland TAFE, Australian Catholic University (Ballarat) and Trinity Grammar. We look forward to energised interactions with these and other organisations in Victoria.

To quote from the ACE history published in 2009: *“However, it is clear that the College really began when 14 Heads of Vic Independent Schools, 14 High School Heads and 3 university*

*Professors were entertained to dinner at Wesley College on 6 June 1958*<sup>3</sup>. How fitting that 50 years later in 2008 until earlier this year, Wesley again became the host for the Victorian meetings and for that school's support over the last 4 years I thank them.

The ACE Foundation funded a research project examining the impact on teachers of an Indigenous unit in a Melbourne school in which members of the Vic Committee were involved. I mention the ACE Foundation with particular reference to its role in producing quality research for the College and community. I have noted that a number of members are not hugely aware of ACE's research agenda and the function of the Foundation.

## **Financial Arrangements and Governance**

Suffice to say, that the College is in a sound financial position and is looking forward to a period of accelerated growth and consolidation with the appointment of key personnel, including the aforementioned new CEO, Ms Deb Goldfinch and her team, to the national office. Details relating to the previous financial year may be found on the website <http://austcolled.com.au/>

## **Looking Ahead**

Plans for 2012 are well underway. There are events under discussion with key others including the Centre for Strategic Education, The Songroom and The Australian Council for Educational Leaders. We will continue our relationships with existing organisations and we look forward to an even greater presence on the education platform in 2012.

## **Thanks to....**

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all Victorian Committee members, with particular thanks to the regions. The Ballarat, Gippsland and Melbourne Regions have all been very active and the continued high quality of the speakers whom they get for their events is testimony to their standing in the community. Speakers this year have included David De Krester, Ministers Peter Hall and Martin Dixon, Richard Gerver from the UK, Glenn Melvin, Jo Lo Bianco, Michael Gordon and Indigenous Elder Henry Atkinson to name a few. It is also of note that individual committee members' contributions are all on a voluntary basis and this is no small task. It is also interesting to note again that the events ACE provides for its members in Victoria are usually free or at minimal cost. One of the great pleasures of being part of a network such as ACE is the willingness of members to share of their expertise in the spirit of contribution to the professional conversations that direct the future of this profession.

Committee members are also involved in other key educational organizations such as AITSL, ACARA, ACEL, The University of Melbourne and Monash University, the CSE International Education Advisory Group (IEAG), CSE Indigenous Education Focus Group (IEFG), Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, Victorian Principals Association, DEECD Reference and Awards Groups, State Council of the Australian Principals Federation as well as individual schools, universities and research organisations across the sectors. I only mention this to suggest that the committee members, not only are extremely hardworking, but that they are a terrific resource for those in education who may be seeking information regarding a particular development or area in education.

Congratulations and thanks to all Victorian Committee members: Catherine Scott (President Elect Vic and Melbourne Group President), Margaret Plunkett (Gippsland Region President), Bradley Fry (Ballarat Region President) Carl Stevens (Immediate Past President), Grace Kinch (Secretary/Treasurer), Awards Committee Chair Ian Sloane and other committee members Stephen Dinham, Carolyn Woodhouse and until March this year Gerry White. Special thanks also to Margaret Batten for her tireless work on the State Awards Committee and we wish her well in her role as Chair of the National Awards Committee. Likewise Anne McDonald, who for personal reasons had to reduce her involvement in the state committee, receives our warmest thanks. I would also like to thank sub-committee members John Marks (ACE Media Award), Geoff Ryan (Awards Committee), Denis Cunningham (Awards Committee), Max Stevens (Awards Committee), and Marilyn Wiber (Awards Committee). Without the commitment of these people these activities could not continue. A warm welcome to the new members of the Victorian Committee: Henry Atkinson, Ian Keese, Brenda Hutchinson, John Quay, Derek Scott, Adam Smith and Zane Ma Rhea.

In conclusion, I feel the College imbued with a great sense of optimism. With finances now

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<sup>3</sup> Demspster, N, Australian College of Educators, The First 50 Years ACE 2009

managed centrally, it frees regions to concentrate on what really matters: making young (& older!) people the best they can be.

I would like to wish everyone a great summer break and 'thank you' to everyone for their support.

Annette Rome

## References

Demspter, N, Australian College of Educators, The First 50 Years ACE 2009

Fullan, M; Choosing the wrong drivers for whole system reform. Summary of CSE Seminar Paper no. 204, May 2004

Michel de Montaigne from *Words on Words* D. Crystal, H. Crystal. Penguin, 2000

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## Upcoming Events:

**Ballarat Region** Opening of the Education Year, Thursday 10 February 4.30pm (Ballarat Town Hall). Contact [Brad.Fry@bgs.vic.edu.au](mailto:Brad.Fry@bgs.vic.edu.au) for details

**Gippsland Region** Awards Night, Tuesday 6 March. Contact [margaret.plunkett@monash.edu](mailto:margaret.plunkett@monash.edu) for details

**Melbourne Region** Monday Series, Monday 19 March 7.30pm, Wesley College, 577 St Kilda Rd. Further details to come

**Victorian Branch** New & Life Members, Outstanding Service and 25 years' service Awards, Tuesday 24 April, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne. Contact [romeac@mlc.vic.edu.au](mailto:romeac@mlc.vic.edu.au) for details

**Victorian Branch with the Centre for Strategic Education** The Big Equity Challenge: a focus on giftedness, disability and other complex learning needs May 8 & 9, Melbourne Cricket Ground. Contact [romeac@mlc.vic.edu.au](mailto:romeac@mlc.vic.edu.au) for details

**Victorian Branch Annual Dinner** Friday 7 September, University House, The University of Melbourne

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## Recent Events:

**Victorian Group** Annual Meeting 6pm November 10, Methodist Ladies' College

**The Sylvia Walton Event**, 6pm November 16, Trinity Grammar School, Speakers: **Dr Zane Mahrea, Monash University; Yorta Yorta Elder Prof Henry Atkinson, Monash University, Gamilaraay Woman Stephanie Armstrong**: Indigenous Education: teaching teachers to understand Aboriginal ways of knowing and being.



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