President’s report

The last twelve months have seen another strong year of growth for VALA. With more activities attracting more attendees, increasing membership numbers and a solid financial position, VALA is well placed for an exciting future.

I have been part of Victorian Applied Learning Association from its inception, and I still regard it as such an exciting initiative. From grass-roots beginnings, VALA has evolved in its status and sophistication. Yet throughout this, VALA returns constantly to its core function: to serve its members through the provision of professional development, networking opportunities and advocacy in applied learning.

Professional Development

The 2009-10 VALA Professional Development program has increased to thirteen VALA events and twelve VALA-badged workshops (at partner events), with an additional thirteen SAFE-T1 events as well. A total of 1340 people attended these events, more than doubling the number of attendees of VALA events in the previous year.

As well as increasing the density of the VALA event calendar, VALA has also increased the quality of the events, evidenced by attendee feedback. Our professional development is regarded as “informative, topical and useful”.

Partnerships

VALA values its position in the matrix of applied learning thinking and practice, in Victoria. But we don’t exist in isolation, and strategic partnerships assist VALA’s provision of services to the sector and our membership.

VALA enjoys a very warm relationship with Victoria Curriculum Assessment Authority. In 2010 VCAA offered its continued support for VALA and our major professional development events, for which we are grateful.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development supports VALA through annual provision of funding for our member services and communications. In 2010, DEECD has also funded VALA to undertake two initiatives on their behalf.

Other VALA partners include Consumer Affairs Victoria, VISTA – The Association of VET Professionals and WorkSafe Victoria.

SAFE-T1

The second year of our three-year applied OHS teaching and learning project, SAFE-T1 has shifted from research and planning to implementation. Project Manager Jan Hagston has established metropolitan and regional focus groups, and the website is recording a high level of student and teacher activity. Our SAFE-T1 Steering Committee has provided excellent guidance to the project, and I thank Janet Marshall, Ron Wilson, Cornelia DeBrincat, Megan Verry, Karen Dymke, Luke Hayden, Andrea Summits, Michelle O’Brien, Glenda Fisher and Don MacDowall.
Critical to these improvements is the small but brilliant VALA staff team, which has grown in 2009-10 to facilitate growth in the organisation.

**VALA Staff**

Jan Hagston has put in another excellent year in the role of Project Manager of VALA. She has driven the organisation to the next level, expanding and leading the range of VALA activities and administration (PD, advocacy, relationship management and reporting). Jan also manages the VALA-Worksafe project, SAFE-T1.

Don McDowall continues to provide steadfast brilliance to his role as VALA Administration Officer. In his own inimitable manner, Don keeps VALA’s books in order and our communications flowing (website, newsletters, etc).

Linnet Hunter has joined the VALA staff team as Education Officer. With impressive educational acumen, Linnet has increased VALA’s capacity to deliver on its service commitments to members. Linnet is an insightful and creative complement to the VALA staff team.

**VALA Committee**

At the 2009 Annual General Meeting, the VALA Committee expanded to welcome new members to an already strong base. This diverse, passionate group has offered wonderful leadership to VALA over the last year. Coming from across the Melbourne and across the state our Committee members bring together voices from a full spectrum of VALA membership:

- Michelle O’Brien, Victoria University / Skills Victoria (Vice President)
- Bruce Pridham, LaTrobe University (Treasurer)
- Gill Meek, Inner Eastern LLEN (Secretary)
- Karen Dymke, Luther College
- Mick Murphy, Baw Baw LLEN
- Onno van den Eyde (Vanda), DEECD Gippsland
- Linda Mitchell, Harvester Technical College
- Luke Hayden, Gateway LLEN
- Melissa Quinn, Adass Israel School Inc.
- Don Hudson, Chisholm Institute
- Katrina King, Carrum Downs Secondary College
- Richard Brown, Centre for Adult Education

Our Committee meets regularly both face-to-face and via Elluminate. My thanks go to these volunteers, who give of their time, expertise and leadership to keep VALA lively, topical and dynamic. In particular, thanks to the office bearers who assume increased responsibilities in the Governance of VALA.
At this year’s AGM, we bid farewell to three long-time Committee members, who have each played such a significant role in the evolution of VALA:

As a member of the VALA Committee, Michelle O’Brien has brought a wealth of knowledge and experience of education and training operations and governance, to the organisation. As Vice President of VALA (2008-10), Michelle applied her considerable leadership skills to the role, and will be sorely missed.

In Bruce Pridham’s day job, he manages post graduate Applied Learning programs for LaTrobe in Bendigo. Bruce’s academic perspective was valuable to VALA and for applied learning in Victoria. We thank him for his contribution to VALA as Committee member and Treasurer.

Don Hudson has been a member of the VALA for the 2009-10 year. His passion for VCAL was readily welcomed into the Committee and we know that we will not lose Don from the Applied Learning community.

Rounding out my final term as President of the Victorian Applied Learning Association, I want to reiterate my personal thanks for the wonderful staff and committee members who give life to the organisation. VALA has a vibrant member base, some excellent projects and activities on the go, and an exciting future ahead. I am proud and delighted to have played a part.

Andrew Williamson
(Retiring) President, VALA
Project Manager’s report

Presented at the VALA Annual General Meeting, October 28, 2010

2009/2010 has been a very busy year. As the statistics on the following pages indicate, VALA’s activities have increased significantly in the twelve months from 2008/2009 to 2009/2010. While at times this has put strain on staff, it has also been very rewarding to see the outcomes of the work.

In part, the increase in VALA’s activities has been due to the employment of a part-time Education Officer in October 2009. Linnet Hunter took up this position and, although only 2 days a week, her appointment has given VALA considerably greater capacity to meet the needs of members and to achieve its goals. Linnet is a welcome addition to the team and I have enjoyed working with both her and Don MacDowall. Don continues to provide administrative services to VALA and I have appreciated his support and practical advice based on his considerable experience working with not-for-profit organisations.

Working with a supportive and constructive committee has also been enjoyable and rewarding. I would particularly like to thank Andrew Williamson and Michelle O’Brien for their support and advice over the last year. Andrew has decided not to stand again as the President of VALA and Michelle is standing down from the committee. Their counsel has been invaluable – they have acted as a sounding board, and brought ideas, information and policy matters to my attention.

I have also been privileged to work with dedicated and inspiring educators. Hearing their stories of applied learning in practice makes the job particularly satisfying.

From an operational perspective, the development of a Strategic Plan for VALA has been significant. VALA resources are limited and the Strategic Plan provides a guide to how these resources should be allocated.

What follows are details of what has been undertaken in the year to 30 June 2010.
Office bearers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>2008/09</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Andrew Williamson, Victoria University</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-President</td>
<td>Michelle O’Brien, Victoria University / Skills Victoria</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Bruce Pridham, LaTrobe University</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gill Meek, Inner Eastern LLEN</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Committee members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>2008/09</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kay Hawkins, PYE / CFA</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Dymke, Luther College</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mick Murphy, Baw Baw LLEN</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onno van den Eyde (Vanda), DEECD Gippsland</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Mitchell, Harvester Technical College</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke Hayden, Gateway LLEN</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa Quinn, Adass Israel School Inc.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Hudson, Chisholm Institute</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katrina King, Carrum Downs Secondary College</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Brown, Centre for Adult Education</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 committee meetings were held between July 2009 and the end of June 2010.

In addition:
- the AGM was held in October 2009
- a half day planning meeting was held in November 2009. This meeting initiated and worked on the VALA Strategic Plan January 2010 – December 2012.

Personnel

The following personnel have been contracted to VALA during the report period
- Jan Hagston - Project Manager
- Don MacDowall – Administration
- Linnet Hunter – Education Officer
- Susan Jackman – consultant undertaking short term projects.
Membership

Membership of VALA has grown from June 2009 to June 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>30 June 2009</th>
<th>30 June 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals members</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational memberships (up to four people)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student members</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Principal activities

VALA has continued to provide services aimed at supporting applied learning educators and promoting applied learning. The principal activities undertaken by VALA are as described below.

*e-newsletter*

10 e-newsletters were produced and the number subscribing to the newsletter has doubled.

No. registered to receive the VALA e-newsletter:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 2008</td>
<td>803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 June 2009</td>
<td>1024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 June 2010</td>
<td>2052</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Website

The VALA website continues to be updated on a regular basis. Apart from ensuring the home page is regularly updated and information on the site is current, the focus has been on updating the Resources webpage which will enable users to search for applied learning resources across different levels and curriculum areas. At 30 June 2010, work was still being undertaken on ironing out ‘bugs’ in the database that sits behind the page and on identifying resources to be included. (See Education Officer’s report for more details)

The growth in the use of the VALA website has grown significantly between 2008/2009 and 2009/2010.
Website usage statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Website hits</strong></td>
<td>105,549 (8,796 per month)</td>
<td>311,881 (25,990 per month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unique visitors</strong></td>
<td>5,868 (1st semester 2009 only)</td>
<td>12,110 (1,009 per month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(948 per month)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pages accessed</strong></td>
<td>28,800 (1st semester 2009 only)</td>
<td>61,915 (5,160 per month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4,800 per month)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of visits</strong></td>
<td>13,687 (1st semester 2009 only)</td>
<td>27,678 (2,306 per month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2,281 per month)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Downloaded</strong></td>
<td>1,784 MB (1st semester 2009 only)</td>
<td>51,112 MB (4,260 MB per month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(297 MB per month)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Professional development**

A range of professional development activities were conducted in 2009 / 2010. More information about the VALA professional development program and activities can be found in the report by the Education Officer, Linnet Hunter. As can be seen in the table below, the number of participants attending VALA and associated professional learning events and activities more than doubled and the number of events and activities has also grown. Participants attending the activities came from all sectors and DEECD regions.

**Total number participating in VALA and associated professional learning events and activities**

(see Appendix 1 for details of the events and activities)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>626</td>
<td>1334</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support and partnerships

VALA works in partnership with a range of organisations. The organisations mentioned below are those VALA has had a contractual and financial relationship with in the 2008-09 year.

- **Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)**
  The VCAA continued their support for professional development activities targeted at VCAL educators. In 2009/2010 this included the 2009 VALA/VISTA Conference, the VALA VCAL Induction day and the VALA conference. VALA greatly appreciates the support offered by the VCAA and the partnership with the VCAL staff at the VCAA, particularly David Gallagher and Cornelia DeBrincat.

- **Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)**
  Funding received from the Youth Transitions Division of DEECD in 2009 was for the period ending June 2010. The funding was to undertake activities such as updating the VALA website, producing the e-newsletter, providing networking or professional development activities.

  Towards the end of this period, discussions with the Youth Transitions Division of DEECD resulted in DEECD contracting VALA to undertake similar activities for an eighteen month period ending 30 December 2011. One requirement of the funding was that VALA apply for Strategic Partnership Program funding when it becomes available.

  Towards the end of 2009 VALA was also asked by the Youth Transitions Division, DEECD to provide event management for a Community VCAL information day.

  In addition, VALA was successful in its response to the DEECD RFQ for the project *Promoting good practice in re-engagement programs*. The project began in early June and Susan Jackman was appointed as the Project Officer. The project is to establish a network and deliver a professional development program to teachers in senior secondary re-engagement programs.

- **WorkSafe Victoria**
  VALA has continued to work on the WorkSafe funded project, SAFE-T1. This is a 3-year project to develop teaching and learning resources to improve the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) awareness of young people entering the workforce. The project was funded in mid-2008 and is due to be completed in 2011.
2009/2010 has seen:
  o the development of a range of teaching and learning resources for students and their teachers. This is on-going and is likely to continue until mid-2011 with an increased emphasis on non-print based materials
  o professional development activities including one-off workshops and the professional development day *Learning to work, working to learn* which was held in May 2010
  o competitions for students
  o small grants for students to encourage them to develop OHS resources – and engage in the topic.

**Skills Victoria**

In 2008/09 Skills Victoria contracted VALA to document an Efficient thinking principles program at Northland Secondary College and to develop an exemplar which could be used by the VCAA. This project was completed in late 2009 and Skills Victoria was provided with a report and VCAL exemplars based on the documented program.

**Consumer Affairs Victoria**

VALA undertook the ‘mapping’ of the newly developed CAV resource, *Responsible Gambling* to the VCAL.

*Advocacy*

VALA has discussions with a range of organisations to raise the profile of applied learning and VCAL, to investigate how it can work with the organisations and their existing networks to support applied learning educators, develop resources, etc. These organisations include subject/education associations, community organisations, LLENs, higher education institutions, government departments and bodies, regional DEECD networks and the Catholic Education Office.

VALA put in a written response to the Victorian government’s paper, *Stronger futures for all young Victorians: Discussion paper on the youth transitions system* and has also been involved in a range of consultations including the Australian Curriculum and the Productivity Commission’s Education Workforce Study.

*Jan Hagston*

*Project Manager*
**Education Officer**

**Presented at the AGM held on October 28, 2010**

**Professional Development**

The Education Officer role has this as one of its primary focus areas. The Professional Development program enjoys a high reputation amongst its members and the associated professional communities, and we have endeavoured to extend and enrich this core program without overstretching the capabilities of the staff.

The one-day seminars have continued to be well-attended and evaluations show a high degree of satisfaction with the provision of workshops and amenities. In addition to the Numeracy Day, Induction Day and Conferences identified in Appendix 1, the Learning in the Pub sessions offer an opportunity for a more informal gathering and sharing of ideas. In addition, consultants were approached to enable the development of an Evening Ed program. This venture offers short, after-school sessions in a range of suburban locations provided by VALA member schools. As of June 30, this idea had a great deal of in-principle support from teachers, but lacked the number of attendees required to make it viable. However, several more sessions are planned over the next two terms and the decision on their usefulness may be made after that time.

Further additions to the Professional Development program includes: making contact with teacher education institutes; developing a database of inspirational presenters; incorporating a group of VCAL students into the Conference as Event Management Assistants; consolidating regional links; visits to allied programs such as Learning by Doing and developing relationships with other professional bodies such as VATE.
Resources

Time has been spent on the conception and development of the Resources page on the VALA website. This enables users to search for resources, especially in relation to VCAL, that can be used by the classroom teacher. The database behind this has taken a certain amount of building by an external provider, but always with the idea that the uploading, administration of the page will be part of the role of the Education Officer in the future. This training will take place in the later part of 2010.

The resources currently available on the page are drawn from freely available and downloadable items. They have been catalogued using descriptors and tags to make them more accessible and useful. The webpage will be launched at the VISTA VALA conference in Melbourne on August 25, and after this further resources will be added. Some of these will be developed by teachers and shared with their colleagues. These require some editing and further writing. Some will be resources that may be purchased from a third party. For this reason, the staff and the Committee will be working on a policy to determine how resources are selected and the terms by which they will be promoted on the website.

This project has been promoted at every meeting, PD and gathering attended by the staff, to encourage teachers to try out the site, and also to encourage the submission of resources from them.

The Resources page, like the rest of the VALA website, is freely accessible to members and non-members.

Linnet Hunter
Education Officer
VALA 2009/2010 Committee

President
Andrew Williamson, Victoria University

Vice President
Michelle O’Brien, Victoria University

Secretary
Gill Meek, Inner Eastern LLEN

Treasurer
Bruce Pridham, LaTrobe University

Karen Dymke, Luther College

Luke Hayden, Gateway LLEN

Don Hudson, Chisholm Institute

Linda Mitchell, Harvester Technical College

Mick Murphy, Baw Baw LLEN

Onno van den Eyde (Vanda), DEECD Gippsland Region

Melissa Quinn, Adass Israel School Inc.

Katrina King, Carrum Downs Secondary College

Richard Brown, CAE
VALA 2009/2010 Team

Jan Hagston
Project Manager

Linnet Hunter
Education Officer

Don MacDowall
Administration
Appendix 1: VALA and associated professional learning events and activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Approx no of participants</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Approx no of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| VALA ‘badged’ professional development events | VALA 2009 Conference  
2 x LiPs | 300 + 42 | VALA 2010 Conference  
1 x Evening Ed:  
3 x LiPs  
Making maths add up  
VCAL Induction PD day  
Learning to work, working to learn (WRS PD) | 228  
10  
38  
93  
107  
77 |
| SAFE-T1 workshops and presentations | 5 workshops at various venues across state | 80 | 13 workshops at various venues across state | 306 |
| VALA + partner events | VALA / VISTA Conference | 54 | VALA / VISTA Conference  
Western Region VCAL Induction PD day | 107  
82 |
| Associate delivered events (eg. Mark Collard, Adrian Bertollini) | 3 | Not available | 6 | Not available |
### Other workshops and presentations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supported workshop at GALA launch</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop session at VISTA 2009 Conference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDS PD Day - Mildura for Loddon Campaspe DEECD Region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employability skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short presentation at VCAA’s VCAL Induction Training day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 x Literacy in the Real World for ACER</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop session at VISTA 2010 Conference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Schools VCAL Network – literacy and numeracy</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VCAL Video conference - sharing ideas</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy workshop for SEDA</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GALA VCAL Induction</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation at Gippsland QA day re VALA &amp; developing a regional ‘chapter’/network</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations to Deakin and VU teacher education students</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDS workshop for Hume region</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VALA and resources webpage – presentation to OELLEN network</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation to teacher education students at Holmesglen TAFE</td>
<td>25</td>
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</tbody>
</table>