

Project Manager's report

Report to June 30, 2009 presented at the AGM on October 22, 2009.

This is my first year in the role of Project Manager at VALA. I didn't begin in the position until November of last year and have been away for two months of this reporting period.

For me, the highlights of the year have been working for an organisation and towards goals that I believe in; working with dedicated people with similar goals; the 2009 VALA conference which was extremely successful and had a great 'buzz'; getting the SAFE-T1 website up and running; putting in place a range of practices and procedures to carry VALA into the next year; and hearing the inspiring stories of applied learning in practice.

What follows are details of what has been undertaken in the year to 30 June 2009.

Office bearers

| Position | Name | 2007/08 | 2008/09 |
|----------------|--|---------|--|
| President | Andrew Williamson, Principal, ATC Sunshine | ✓ | |
| Vice-President | Michelle O'Brien, Victoria University | ✓ | |
| Treasurer | Mick Murphy, Baw Baw LLEN | ✓ | Stepped down from position June 2009 |
| | Bruce Pridham, LaTrobe University | | June 2009 - agreed to take up position |
| Secretary | Position not filled | ✓ | ✓ |

Council members

| Name | 2007/08 | 2008/09 |
|--|-----------|--|
| Karen Dymke, Luther College | ✓ | ✓ |
| Kay Hawkins, PYE / CFA | ✓ | ✓ |
| Gill Meek, Inner Eastern LLEN | ✓ | ✓ |
| Mick Murphy, Baw Baw LLEN | Treasurer | Stepped down from Treasurer's position June 2009 |
| Bruce Pridham, LaTrobe University | ✓ | June 2009 - agreed to take up Treasurer's position |
| Elisa Ryan, Wantirna College | ✓ | resigned February 2009 |
| Onno van den Eyde (Vanda), DEECD Gippsland | ✓ | ✓ |

8 committee meetings were held in 2008 – 2009.

In addition:

- the AGM was held in September 2008
- a half day planning meeting was held in early 2009. This meeting:
 - drafted the VALA mission, vision, and goals
 - drafted Structure for working with regional chapters
 - changed the meeting schedule.

Personnel

The following personnel have been contracted to VALA during the report period

- Erin Juers - Project Officer - until September 2008
- Jan Hagston - Project Manager - from November 2008
- Don MacDowall – Administration
- Linda Mitchell – consultant undertaking short term project

Membership

As at 30 June 2009

| Individuals members | Organisational memberships (up to four people) | Student members |
|---------------------|---|-----------------|
| 34 | 78 | 4 |

Principal activities

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

e-newsletter

10 e-newsletters were produced.

In December 2008, 803 people were registered to receive the newsletter. As at 30 June 2009, this number had grown to 1024.

Website

The VALA website continues to be updated on a regular basis. The Links page has been completely updated and a significant amount of work has gone into making the information on the home page current and relevant.

There were over 13,000 website hits in the second half of 2008. In the first half of 2009 there were 5868 unique visitors; approx 13700 visits; approx 28,800 pages accessed and 1784 MB downloaded.

Professional development

A range of professional development activities were conducted in 2008 / 2009. In the second semester of 2008, 186 people were involved in VALA professional development and networking activities and events. In the first semester of 2009 the number was 440, the majority of these being participants at the VALA conference. Participants came from all sectors and DEECD regions.

Conferences

| Conference | Date held | No. of participants | Comment |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|---|
| VALA / VISTA Conference: <i>License 2 Create</i> | 23 August, 2008 | 54 | 100% of those who completed the evaluation sheet indicated they found the conference useful or very useful |
| 2009 VALA Conference - Take away with the lot: <i>principles, pedagogy and practice</i> | 26 March 2009 | 300 + | Participants came from Government, Independent and Catholic schools, TAFE and ACE providers, and higher education. Forty-six different sessions were offered. 95% of those who completed the evaluation form rated the conference as 'Good' or above and 2/3 Two-thirds rated it "Excellent" or 'Fantastic' |

Other VALA professional development events

| Event | No. of participants |
|--|---------------------|
| Learning in the Pub: <i>How important are actual learning environments?'</i> | 19 |
| Learning in the Pub: <i>'VCAL + VCE + VET – your students can have it all'</i> | 23 |

SAFE-T1

| Where | No. of participants |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 2008 | |
| 2 x Melbourne | 17 |
| Gippsland | 10 |
| 2009 | |
| Mildura | 18 |
| Melbourne | 35 |

Joint or cooperative activities

3 *More than just fun: running programs that inspire* conducted by Mark Collard from inspireyourgroup.

Other

- Supported workshop at GALA launch – October 2008
- Workshop session at VISTA 2009 Conference delivered by Andrew Williamson
- PDS PD Day - Mildura for Loddon Campaspe DEECD Region delivered by Jan Hagston
- Employability skills delivered by Karen Dymke at a govt Secondary School.
- Short presentation at VCAA's VCAL Induction Training day.

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 the VALA conference, something VALA greatly appreciates.

- **Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)**

For the last 6 months of 2008 VALA received Strategic Partnership Funding from DEECD. This was part of an agreement which provided funding for the period 2006 – 2008. Towards the end of June this year, the Youth Transitions Division of DEECD contracted VALA to undertake activities such as updating the VALA website, producing the e-newsletter, providing networking or professional development activities.

- **WorkSafe Victoria**

During 2008, WorkSafe funded VALA to undertake 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. Much work has been done on this project, the SAFE-T1 project this year. This has included:

- The appointment of Jan Hagston, as the Project Manager for VALA and the Safe-T1 project
- Further development of the project concept
- Researching existing materials
- Developing teaching and learning materials (an on-going job)
- Appointment of OHS consultant, web developer and evaluator
- Development of the SAFE-T1 website – www.safe-t1.net.au

- **Skills Victoria**

Skills Victoria contracted VALA document Efficient thinking principles program at Northland Secondary College and to develop an exemplar which could be used by the VCAA.

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, and regional DEECD networks.

VALA also provided a response to the National Curriculum framework papers.