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Mapping the Adult and Community Education Sector in the ACT

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis has as its origins a desire by the Ministerial Advisory Council on Adult and Community Education in the Australian Capital Territory to learn more about the sector with whom they interact.

There was a clear perception that, due to its diversity, a strong reliance on volunteers and an underlying mistrust of beaurocracy, the sector was quite poorly delineated. If this was in fact the case, then the capacity of the Council to support the sector – for example through the grants scheme - was being greatly handicapped. In the case of grants, it was known that requests commonly outnumbered available grant funds by three or four to one. What was not known was the extent of other worthwhile ACE activity that was either electing not to apply for funding or was simply unaware that the facility even existed.

The research, based on the results of a broad ranging questionnaire distributed to all known ACE providers in the ACT, has furthered the level of understanding of the sector. The research approach was modeled on the South Australian Pathfinder Project (1996).

Key findings include that:

- the ACE sector is extremely diverse and active in the ACT;
- it is client focussed in that it develops its programs in response to the identified needs of its target group(s);
- in the twelve months covered by the survey there were over 190 000 attendees in ACE programs;
- a range of programs are available to most community groups;
- there is a strong reliance on volunteers;
- the sector generally feels that there is a demand for even more programs than are currently offered;
- many individual providers do not see themselves as part of the overall ACE sector.

While there are some marked similarities between the ACT ACE sector and the South Australian findings, there also some clear differences. For example, many of the factors that restrict access to ACE in other parts of Australia are less relevant to the ACT. An example of this is that travel distances/times for participants to access programs are generally less of a problem in the ACT than in some other jurisdictions due to the small area and the concentration of population in the ACT.

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Alpine Promotions (ACT) and Marketing

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
Table 1	Ways of Classifying Research	31
Table 2	Categories of Organisation	39
Table 3	Additional Categories of Organisation	47
Table 4	Range of Programs	49
Table 5	Registered Providers	51
Table 6	Origin of Participants	53
Table 7	Target Groups for ACE Programs	54
Table 8	Organisations Receiving Funding	56
Table 9	Number of Programs	58
Table 10	Hours of Programs	60
Table 11	Attendance at Programs	62
Table 12	Staffing of Programs	64
Table 13	Desire to Offer More	66
Table 14	Use of Syllabus or other Course Documentation	69

GLOSSARY

ACE	Adult and Community Education
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AAES	Australian Army Education Service
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs
OTAE	Office of Training and Adult Education
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
ACEC	Adult Community Education Council
CCE	Centre for Continuing Education
ACTAL	ACT Council of Adult Literacy
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
LOTE	Languages other than English
NBEET	National Board of Employment, Education and Training
AAACE	Australian Association of Adult and Community Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperative Development
NCVER	National Council for Vocational Education Research
AIF	Australian Infantry Forces
AGPS	Australian Government Publishing Service
VET	Vocational Education and Training

LIST OF APPENDICES

		Page
Appendix A	Copy of Survey	78
Appendix B	Copies of Letters	
	- Letter of Invitation	89
	- Reminder Letter	90
Appendix C	List of Survey Respondents	91
Appendix D	Directory of ACE Providers	96

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Certificate of Authorship of Thesis	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
List of Tables	v
Glossary	vi
List of Appendices	vii
I	REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE
A Reflection	2
Mechanics Institutes and Schools of Arts	3
The Australian Army Education Service	7
A Definition	8
National ACE Policy	16
Lifelong Learning	19
ACE in the ACT	23
Research Methodology	25
II	SUMMARY OF THE REPORT
The Project	33
The Findings	34
Conclusion	39
The Future	40
III	INTRODUCTION
Role of the Ministerial Advisory Council on ACE	41
Definitions	41
Project Brief	43
IV	METHODOLOGY
Process	45
The Survey	46
Organisation Type	46
Program Type	47
Target Audience	47
V	SURVEY FINDINGS
A. Programs Offered by Organisations	49
B. Registered Providers of Accredited Curriculum	51
C. Origin of Participants	53

D. Target Audience	54
E. Funding	56
F. Number of Programs	58
G. Number of Hours of Program	60
H. Attendance at Programs	62
I. Staffing of Programs	64
J. Desire to offer more	66
K. Determining Program Need	68
L. Use of Syllabus	69
VI CONCLUDING COMMENTS	71
VI BIBLIOGRAPHY	73
VIII APPENDICES	
A. Copy of Survey	78
B. Copies of Letters	89
C. List of Survey Respondents	91
D. Directory of ACE Providers	96