



**COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA**

# **SENATE**

**EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING REFERENCES COMMITTEE**

**Reference: Developments in adult and community education in Australia since 1991**

**HOBART**

**Monday, 2 September 1996**

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**CANBERRA**

## SENATE

### EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING REFERENCES COMMITTEE

#### Members

Senator Crowley (Chair)

Senator Carr	Senator Stott Despoja
Senator Colston	Senator Tierney
Senator Forshaw	Senator Troeth

#### Participating members

Senator Bolkus	Senator Bob Collins
Senator Brown	Senator Denman
Senator Chamarette	Senator Margetts

#### *Substitute member:*

*Senator Sandy Macdonald to substitute for Senator Troeth from 12 July to 12 August 1996*

Matter referred by the Senate for inquiry into and report on:

The developments in adult and community education in Australia since the 1991 report of the Senate Employment, Education and Training Committee entitled *Come in Cinderella: The Emergence of Adult and Community Education*, with particular reference to:

1. Describing the structural and policy changes at Commonwealth level in adult education since 1991, and assessing the impact these have had on the delivery of adult education in the community;
2. Examining any significant changes in the patterns and level of participation by adults in education and training over the last five years;
3. Describing the range of provision of structured adult education by community-based providers (including that provided by organisations such as libraries, museums, galleries);
4. Identifying those technological, demographic and economic trends which are

likely to influence significantly the nature and extent of adult education provision in Australia, with particular attention paid to the impact of the rapid expansion of computer-based resources such as the Internet;

5. Examining the extent to which the training, professional development and role of adult educators has changed since 1991; and

6. Proposing guidelines for the nature and level of contribution which Australia should make to the forthcoming Asia-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education Conference to be held from 1 December to 8 December 1996 and UNESCO International Conference on Adult and Community Education to be held from 14 July to 18 July 1997.

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SENATE  
EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING REFERENCES COMMITTEE

*Adult and community education*

HOBART

Monday, 2 September 1996

Present

Senator Crowley (Chair)

Senator Ferris

Senator Troeth

The committee met at 2.06 p.m.

Senator Crowley took the chair.

**BLOOMFIELD, Ms Rosemary, Representative, Australian Education Union—TAFE Division, Patrick Street, Hobart, Tasmania.**

**CHAIR**—Welcome. In what capacity are you appearing before the committee?

**Ms Bloomfield**—I am the representative of the Institute of Adult Education on the Australian Education Union executive, so I am here representing the union but I am employed by the Institute of Adult Education.

**CHAIR**—The committee prefers that your evidence be given in public but should you at any stage wish to give your evidence, part of your evidence or answers to specific questions in camera you may ask to do so and the committee will consider your request. I point out, however, that evidence taken in camera may subsequently be made public by an order of the Senate. We have a document from you which is No. 14. Is there anything you would like to add to that, or some introductory remarks you would like to make?

**Ms Bloomfield**—As yet, no. But I have mentioned budget cuts and we have had another round of those in our state budget, so there is probably more to add to this at a later date.

**CHAIR**—Are you able to give us anything approaching what you see is the definition or the limitations of adult education? By limitations I do not mean restrictions; I mean where the definition stops.

**Ms Bloomfield**—Of adult and community education?

**CHAIR**—Yes.

**Ms Bloomfield**—It is always a contentious issue as to where it starts and stops, but I take a fairly broad view. I also am a member of the AAACE, and you will hear from them later. But I take a fairly broad view that it is anywhere that adults are learning, really. I think typically it has been left out of, or kept separate from, TAFE and perhaps from universities though, broadly speaking, that is adult education as well. But I see it as anywhere that people learn as adults. It can be formal or informal; it can be in libraries, museums—wherever.

**CHAIR**—Given that broad definition, can you then talk about the bias towards more accredited courses, particularly when it comes to government funding, and whether you would see that these are a distraction from a broader brush definition and delivery of ACE?

**Ms Bloomfield**—A ‘distraction from’ is an interesting term. I think it could be a valuable adjunct to adult and community education. I see that, for example, within the Institute of Adult Education or within neighbourhood houses the availability of accredited

courses could be a positive bonus for people, especially in a state like Tasmania where most of us are termed as rural and isolated. I think it can be an advantage. It is the resourcing of that, as well as keeping up what we already have in terms of short, non-accredited courses, that I think is a problem.

**CHAIR**—Are any of the accredited and the non-accredited courses, or all or none of both, fee-for-service? Can you talk about how many of those courses you pay for?

**Ms Bloomfield**—Within the Institute of Adult Education or within Tasmania?

**CHAIR**—As much as you can tell us. We understand that a lot of the non-accredited courses are on a fee-for-service basis and, depending on the costing, that can disadvantage some people.

**Ms Bloomfield**—Yes, certainly. In the Institute of Adult Education, in community houses, et cetera, yes, you either have to seek funding, which is getting slimmer and slimmer, or we have to charge. Certainly within adult education there is a set fee at the moment and it has gone up to \$4.10 per hour for the majority of courses. There are concessions available but, yes, there is a fee to be charged. However, if we are able to, as TAFE often does, access funding under ANTA, for example, growth funds—yes, those courses can be offered at a very low fee or no fee. That is where we often miss out, certainly.

**CHAIR**—This is my last question at this stage, then I will call on my colleagues. In TAFE, at least in other states, the further education component has been cut back. Is that the case in Tasmania—the old stream 1000 courses are no longer being regarded as core TAFE business?

**Ms Bloomfield**—When you are talking about other states, you are assuming, I think, that those stream 1000 courses are more and more run in TAFE in other states. The Institute of Adult Education tends to provide most of those here. So I do not know that your question actually applies to this state.

**CHAIR**—That is really what we want to know. In other words, you are saying TAFE is not undergoing significant rearrangement of the courses it offers at the moment.

**Ms Bloomfield**—I really do not know a lot about TAFE; you would have to ask them. Certainly what I see that they offer, just through the newspaper and talking to colleagues, is that they offer basically accredited courses, unless there are access courses for women, for example, and then those courses are not accredited. Within Tasmania, the stream 1000 courses tend to be offered by the Institute of Adult Education. We have a certain amount of money we can spend on that, but it is how many people can afford the cost of those courses that restricts us.

**Senator TROETH**—Has the profile of students in the Adult and Community



Education Centre changed significantly over the last few years as a result of the further accreditation of those courses?

**Ms Bloomfield**—To date, the number of accredited courses we are offering in our institute is still very low, so I cannot tell you that the profile has significantly changed. In fact, the lack of data along those lines is a problem. The little bit of data I do know from what the institutes have collected, and this is only verbal, shows that about 60 per cent or thereabouts of people in the northern region—the 003 region of Tasmania—are doing courses for work and study related reasons, whereas in the south it is about 30 per cent. So it is interesting, but I do not have that on paper at all.

**Senator TROETH**—So you do not have any data about the sort of people who access the courses.

**Ms Bloomfield**—I can say it is still predominantly women—I think about 75 per cent women. That has not, as I perceive it, changed.

**CHAIR**—Right. And if they wanted to do a vocational course, from what you have just said they would probably go to TAFE. Is that right?

**Ms Bloomfield**—If they wanted an accredited vocational course, yes, but if people wanted an introductory computer course they may go to TAFE to a longer course or they may come to us, and in many cases it is all those barriers about assessment and what does accreditation mean, so people are more likely to access our courses. Many people may access our courses for vocational reasons, but the courses are open to all.

**Senator TROETH**—If you have said that you are able to provide short course opportunities to a diverse population in rural and remote areas but that you are also under pressure to make money rather than cater to educational needs, how do you reconcile those two objectives? There is obviously a limit to what you can charge in some areas.

**Ms Bloomfield**—We are in a position to offer those courses but more and more we are seeing a decline in areas, for example, outside Launceston. I know Launceston is still a big country town, but outside Launceston there is that decline. We are in a position to offer them, we are able to be flexible and so on. Compared to a private provider or consultant going out and providing those courses, we are cheap, but a lot of people in rural areas cannot afford—whether it is for vocational reasons or not—those courses. So, yes, the numbers have dropped. We are out there trying—we have put in to the state training profile for funding for women in isolated areas for computer courses and so on. So we are trying to get into that area to provide it. But the other side of that coin is that it lacks a bit of flexibility in what we provide.

**Senator TROETH**—Do you think there is a need to encourage more males into the system, if you said that women are by far the larger number of customers? Do you see

that as an imbalance? How would you propose to address that, given that there must be many men who would like to enter into the field?

**Ms Bloomfield**—I guess I would need a bigger picture to say if that is a problem, or if those men perhaps go direct to TAFE I would need to know more, before I gave a firm opinion on that. However, if you broke up what we provide and looked at, for example, computer courses, I think you will find that there is much more of a gender balance within that. So, if we were able to provide more computer courses, for example, in country areas and perhaps other retraining courses that are more of a technical nature, then we may get more men into adult and community education.

Also, of course, a perception people have of the Institute of Adult Education is of craft and painting. That is something we would like to gradually overcome. So we still have that, but we also have the other. We could do as a marketing thing, but I do not know—

**Senator TROETH**—It was just whether you wanted to widen your market.

**Ms Bloomfield**—No, it is something we have discussed and we ought to do. It is always dollars.

**Senator FERRIS**—I have a couple of questions related to our ageing population, so could you talk to me a bit about what I understand to be your school for seniors, and I would also be interested to know how you are tapping into other private training markets—the private courses—and the devolution of training back into companies and how you tap into that.

**Ms Bloomfield**—The school for seniors program is run in the south and the north of the state. I am most familiar with the northern region's program. It has been a subprogram of the Institute of Adult Education which has been promoted for people over 55 years of age. It utilises the skills of its members to a large degree. They do have people come in from the outside as teachers or tutors, but predominantly it is the members who have a specific area of expertise who deliver the courses. They have tremendous numbers: they might have 25 in their French class, for example—something that we in what we call the class program, the short courses, can only dream about. So they are certainly very well subscribed courses, and as a result of having volunteer teachers or tutors, of course, the fee is I think \$20 a term. We have the three school terms still. So the costs are kept significantly down.

I cannot tell you the actual number of people who are members of that, but certainly it is very successful. It has been a subprogram of the Institute of Adult Education and is now a separate body but utilises some of our resources, including the venue, at a nominal fee.

**Senator FERRIS**—How is the curriculum determined, for example? Is that by

demand or by supply?

**Ms Bloomfield**—I was going to say a bit of both. If you do not have anybody who can teach French, you are not going to teach French, but certainly, yes, it would be done through needs analysis. There is a coordinator who talks to people and asks for suggestions on an ongoing basis. So it is looking at what people want and, from there, it is also looking at mapping that with the skills that people have already, and also utilising volunteers. So courses like 'Know Your Council', for example, run through the Launceston City Council, are offered, and that is a free service of the council.

**Senator FERRIS**—Moving to the other part of my question in relation to the privatisation of training courses, particularly through larger employer groups, could you talk a bit about your role in that?

**Ms Bloomfield**—Yes. I am not exactly sure what you mean. We have a workplace adult education services arm which actually goes out and liaises with management and relevant unions and provides training courses. Are you talking about that or—

**Senator FERRIS**—I am talking about, if you like, the supply of curricula, I suppose—staff and books and papers and so on—to satisfy that essentially private market.

**Ms Bloomfield**—Right. Certainly, we do have the subprogram of workplace adult educational services. It has been based in each of the three regions, and it actively seeks predominantly basic computer and communication skills courses, including literacy and numeracy courses, in workplaces. The curriculum is developed in consultation with the tripartite group within the particular company. I actually worked in that program for some time when it first started in the north here. At first, managers were not interested in accredited courses, to any large degree. I believe that more and more they are now wanting accredited courses. But they also want those accredited courses developed to be specific for their type of industry, so communication skills need to be adapted to whatever industry you are looking at. The health industry is different from the timber industry, and so on.

**Senator FERRIS**—Would you provide that on a fee for service basis?

**Ms Bloomfield**—Yes.

**Senator FERRIS**—Would that be a growing market? Would you see that as being an expanding market?

**Ms Bloomfield**—It has grown significantly since the time that I was doing it, which was about four years ago, but some of that growth is reliant on funding such as the WELL funding and the food industry funding—which, I believe, is now gone. Those sorts of things certainly did help. But even though the food industry funding has gone, a

number of industries are still continuing.

**Senator FERRIS**—So they are accepting that responsibility and are buying your services to deliver it?

**Ms Bloomfield**—Yes, to some degree. I cannot speak for everybody. It always was a seed funding type of arrangement, where gradually industries had to pay more.

**CHAIR**—Who funds you?

**Ms Bloomfield**—We are funded predominantly by the state government.

**CHAIR**—Are you a stand alone institution, or are you actually a subplot of some department?

**Ms Bloomfield**—We are a subplot of a department. There are four institutes of TAFE and the Institute of Adult Education within the Department of Vocational Education and Training.

**CHAIR**—I see. What do you mean by ‘four institutes of TAFE’? One for each region?

**Ms Bloomfield**—One for each region, and the state-wide institute, which is the Drysdale hospitality institute.

**CHAIR**—How closely do you work with TAFE?

**Ms Bloomfield**—Through the workplace program, there are some connections. It is basically informal. There are not close links. There have been in the past some areas where people have felt competitive against TAFE; but we are providing a particular area, as I said, with a lot of the shorter non-accredited courses, whereas they have a different focus. However, that is being a little more blurred now with the workplace services and accredited courses.

**CHAIR**—You said that you have recently come from a meeting where the state government has informed you that your funding is reduced. Is that right?

**Ms Bloomfield**—It was not at a meeting, but we have been informed that the funding to the institute has been reduced.

**CHAIR**—By what percentage?

**Ms Bloomfield**—I cannot tell you the percentage. I know it is \$300,000. We have lost eight staff members as a result.

**CHAIR**—Eight staff members—out of how many?

**Ms Bloomfield**—Out of about 35 or 40. It is a significant number. It is hard to say how many, because we have a lot of part-time workers.

**CHAIR**—Right. That is a significant cutback. When are those cuts starting to operate?

**Ms Bloomfield**—I believe it is almost straightaway. That is the sort of question you could best put to the next person, the director of the institute, who is sitting behind me.

**CHAIR**—Do you get access to any ANTA funds?

**Ms Bloomfield**—We do have access to some; yes.

**CHAIR**—What percentage?

**Ms Bloomfield**—I cannot tell you that.

**CHAIR**—Is it increasing, do you know?

**Ms Bloomfield**—I cannot tell you that either, at this stage.

**CHAIR**—Are you part of the state training profile process?

**Ms Bloomfield**—Yes, we are.

**CHAIR**—Right. The other thing that we have had raised with us is the lively tension between qualified staff and casual tutors or people of good intent who are willing to participate. I wondered if you could talk to us a bit about the teacher in adult education and the qualifications of that teacher being now changed or reduced to tutors, facilitators or people with different or fewer qualifications.

**Ms Bloomfield**—Are you talking about a specific area like adult literacy? You said it has been brought to your attention.

**CHAIR**—We have been talking to people across the country in various public hearings about ACE. One of the things that has been raised with us is that in some of these areas of adult education, the qualifications of the teachers are a very variable beast. Could you talk to us about the qualifications of the teachers in ACE?

**Ms Bloomfield**—They are variable; however, there are number of aspects that are taken into account: the communications skills that people might have, the technical skills

that people might have, and the support that we can give to those people. I guess what I am saying is that, even though the qualifications may be variable, we can ensure quality through other means. The adult education officer's role is to support tutors within the Institute of Adult Education and to help ensure that quality.

**CHAIR**—What about in the neighbourhood houses and the community centres? Does the union have an interest there?

**Ms Bloomfield**—They are not members so, no, they do not. The AAACE would be able to talk on that side of things.

**CHAIR**—So the union only has a concern about the—

**Ms Bloomfield**—It is the adult education officers within the Institute of Adult Education who are the members within the ACE sector. They are the people who are coordinators—managers of programs. As I said, they support and help to train the tutors.

**CHAIR**—So you have got teacher qualified central staff supervising less qualified people who deliver the courses?

**Ms Bloomfield**—We have people who have educational qualifications—in the main, adult education officers. I cannot say that the tutors have fewer qualifications because we might have people who have retired early at 50 from university and who have come back to teach some particular area of interest with us. I guess what adult education officers have is that view of teaching people with the ACE flavour. So it is not like a university lecturer getting up and talking to 200 people. It is a friendly environment where you have 12 people around a table. So that is the sort of input we can give to those.

**CHAIR**—Does the institute have any data about the qualifications of the staff and/or the tutors?

**Ms Bloomfield**—The union would not keep any of those records. I think that is something to ask the institute.

**CHAIR**—I am still having some trouble working out where you stop and the institute starts. But you are here on behalf of the people who are working in the institute, particularly in the central and regional offices? Is that right?

**Ms Bloomfield**—Yes, that is right. The adult education officers.

**CHAIR**—Does the union have a concern about the changes that are taking place in adult education in general but, in particular, in TAFE and the IAE?

**Ms Bloomfield**—There is the TAFE area as well and they have obviously got their

concerns there, but certainly the union is concerned that ACE is sufficiently funded and sufficiently recognised to ensure its future.

**CHAIR**—Is it seen as the poor cousin?

**Ms Bloomfield**—I would say so, yes. It is seen as less serious. People who go to adult and community education are just there for recreation. It is a recreational thing. I really think that *Cinderella* has done a lot to change that. The process of accreditation is doing a lot to change that as well.

**CHAIR**—What further things would you like to see done to make sure that IAE does not become another Balmain basketweavers group?

**Ms Bloomfield**—It comes down to sufficient funding for the range of courses that we provide so that we do not have to go down one road or another.

**CHAIR**—Who are the people who would principally argue the policy case to government, to the community, to the minister for IAE?

**Ms Bloomfield**—Sorry, who are the people who would argue to the minister—

**CHAIR**—Who is your voice? Who are the people who are in there punching to make sure that adult education is less of a Cinderella and even less of an ugly stepsister, but more mainstream?

**Ms Bloomfield**—Certainly, the institute is doing that in its own right, but the AAACE would be one of the main organisations to do that.

**CHAIR**—So it must be somewhat depressing, in the light of those things and those voices that are making a case for it, to find that there has now been \$300,000 lost.

**Ms Bloomfield**—There have been significant cuts but I should point out that they have been across TAFE as well. It is not that we are being victimised, as such, in the union's view. It is not that; it is across-the-board; it does affect us all.

**CHAIR**—As there are no other questions and as timing is all, I thank you very much for coming and speaking to the submission. If we have any further questions, would it be in order for us to contact you for any further information you might be able to provide for us?

**Ms Bloomfield**—That should be fine, or you can contact Ian James.

[2.31 p.m.]

**TAYLOR, Ms Jillian Mary, Director, Institute of Adult Education, GPO Box 1625, Hobart, Tasmania 7001**

**CHAIR**—The committee prefers that the evidence be given in public but, should you at any stage wish to give your evidence, part of your evidence or answers to specific questions in camera, you may ask to do so and the committee will consider your request. I point out, however, that evidence taken in camera subsequently may be made public by order of the Senate. The committee has before it your submission, document No. 65. Is there any material that you would care to add to that or anything you would like to say by way of speaking to your submission?

**Ms Taylor**—No.

**Senator TROETH**—I would like to ask you about your tendering for labour market programs. Has this changed the profile of your institute and how will it change the way in which you operate?

**Ms Taylor**—I guess we have not really had time to absorb all the impending changes for labour market programs. We have certainly had access to the DEETYA budget papers which seemed to signify the end, some 18 months down the track, of the special intervention program, for example, and there are others that we understand will remain. In that context, there is a number of opportunities that we see might be there for us to submit tenders. In regard to the labour market programs, the Institute of Adult Education has submitted tenders mainly in the area of the special intervention program, which is English language, literacy and numeracy, since *Come in Cinderella*.

**Senator TROETH**—I understand that the emphasis will still be very heavily on the opportunity for private providers to provide that labour market training, whatever the name of the program, and that there will still be the same number of people to whom you have to cater. What are the changes that you have made in the past, as far as your operations go, which will provide the basis for that sort of work in the future?

**Ms Taylor**—In the areas of literacy, numeracy and English language provision, we have had a fairly significant professional development program enabling the staff whom we employ and the casual staff who are also employed in those areas to be appropriately skilled to deliver those programs. I would imagine that that requirement would continue, if not increase, as these new opportunities start to emerge.

**CHAIR**—What made someone set you up? As I understand it, the Institute of Adult Education Council has been operating for 12 months. How long has the IAE been in existence?

**Ms Taylor**—It goes back almost to the early 1940s, when a board of adult



education was established in Tasmania. In fact, it might even pre-date that period. The board disbanded and adult education became a division of the then education department, along with TAFE, and Adult Education was a separate division. The division of Adult Education moved out of the education department in 1989, into a new department, as part of a government restructuring. The Institute of Adult Education was created at the beginning of 1994. There were changes to the vocational education and training legislation in late 1994, and that provided the opportunity for the establishment of a council for the Institute. TAFE, incidentally, had had councils operating for many years.

**CHAIR**—Is it constructive? Do you feel that you are able to do what you want to in adult education, or do you feel that the vocational focus is pushing adult and community education towards accredited courses and preparatory training courses?

**Ms Taylor**—We have identified vocational education as a niche market for our institute. A number of people who come to us for second-chance education are also looking to receive some recognition of that training. They are looking to do accredited courses, or to get statements of attainment that they can then take into TAFE or university, or simply use to secure employment. So, I think that is inevitable. There is a balance in all of that, and we are still providing a lot of adult education programs in the community, responding to the needs of the community.

The council has now been operating for about 12 months and we have seen the benefit of having the council there. Their primary role is to advise the minister and the secretary. It has obviously taken about 12 months for people to really understand how the institute works, and we are now starting to see the council being able to go forward to both the minister and the secretary with issues.

**CHAIR**—Just in time to get very large cuts!

**Ms Taylor**—All of the state services have been subjected to that, so it is a question of—

**CHAIR**—Has the IAE had a more significant cut than the TAFE sector has, for example?

**Ms Taylor**—I could not really comment, because I do not know the total cuts that have been apportioned to TAFE.

**CHAIR**—So, are your cuts to the IAE probably only part of the Tasmanian government cutting every sector?

**Ms Taylor**—I do not think it is every sector, but I could not really comment on that.

**CHAIR**—And what is the IAE going to do? Scream loudly?

**Ms Taylor**—It is a matter of looking at what restructuring and elimination of duplication can take place. I would have to admit that there has been some duplication, and that needs to be looked at.

**CHAIR**—Duplication with whom?

**Ms Taylor**—Within the institute. Duplication of administrative activities, for example.

**CHAIR**—Between whom?

**Ms Taylor**—The institute has traditionally been organised on a regional basis. That has been pretty much ad hoc so that each region has made decisions about how and what will be delivered; responding to the community, which is obviously what we are trying to achieve. But within that there has not been any strategic management or planning that has taken place. There are communities within this state that have missed out because the planning has not happened appropriately to take account of all of the needs of all Tasmanians. Resources are being spent in duplicating effort in an administrative sense, not duplicating effort in delivery. I think there needs to be a shift from administration to delivery.

**CHAIR**—What is your total budget?

**Ms Taylor**—The total budget is \$4.4 million.

**CHAIR**—And you have just lost \$300,000 out of that.

**Ms Taylor**—Yes, approximately.

**CHAIR**—So let us call it \$0.4 million. I do not know what 0.4 over four is. Could somebody do it for me? It is a nice round figure anyhow.

**Ms Taylor**—It is around about 10 per cent.

**CHAIR**—A 10 per cent cut. How is IAE going to cope with this? How seriously do you think that sends a message to the community that the Tasmanian government is not serious about adult education?

**Ms Taylor**—Obviously I can't speak in terms of the government's position.

**CHAIR**—I appreciate that. It was a wrongly worded question; I am sorry, Ms Taylor.

**Ms Taylor**—I think we only just received that news about two weeks ago. I am currently working with the managers and staff within the institute to have a look at how we can effect some of those cuts, as I say, to essentially keep it to the management and administration areas. Technology has been introduced which hopefully streamlines and rationalises some of those processes. So until that exercise is complete I am really not in a position to say. But the Institute of Adult Education council is obviously keeping a very close watch on this, and I guess council may well want to provide advice to the minister.

**CHAIR**—One last question. You mentioned a substantial professional development exercise, particularly in relation to literacy and language. How did that come about, and did you actually get any ANTA funding, for example, to do that?

**Ms Taylor**—Yes, we certainly did get some ANTA funding. The national staff development committee, which was previously a TAFE committee and then broadened out once ANTA came on the scene, provided a number of projects and programs for the adult language, literacy and numeracy area. So they developed a lot of resources and provided each of the states and territories with those professional development resources. In addition to that, when we have submitted for labour market programs we have included an amount to pay for staff to be released to undertake professional development.

**CHAIR**—And do you find that you have got increased or the same level of access to ANTA that you had before?

**Ms Taylor**—Up until the current time it has been increased.

**CHAIR**—Increasing.

**Ms Taylor**—Increasing each year. We have had growth funds, and of course they go then into the base of the next year and we get another new lot of growth funds. So, from 1993 to 1996, that has been increasing.

**CHAIR**—I will certainly pick up some more. Senator Ferris, have you got some questions on that?

**Senator FERRIS**—Yes. I am interested in the use of the Internet. You were talking about new technology. I am interested to know if you are using the Internet in any way. If you are, how are you working out the costs to each of the participants in the course? Could you just talk a little bit about that?

**Ms Taylor**—The Internet is something that we basically only introduced into our program in 1995. Like all new programs, it is a bit of give and take in terms of identifying precisely what the cost is. But we do running programs in what we call our fee paying or our class program which we run on three terms, and we have those available in all of the regional areas around Tasmania. We have not yet looked, in terms of providing

that access, in the more isolated areas. I guess that is where the costs start to become a little bit more prohibitive, perhaps.

**Senator FERRIS**—So if somebody wants to undertake a course on the Internet at one of those centres, how do you measure the cost of that? Is it by the normal costing process, or do you have a special way of doing it?

**Ms Taylor**—I have only had a look at the end figure. The people actually delivering the programs, together with the managers, would work out those costs.

**Senator FERRIS**—The other area that I would be interested in hearing you make a comment on is the school for seniors. You heard our previous witness on the school for seniors. I wonder if you have put any thought into some sort of strategic planning for the growing number of older students; older people willing to take up courses?

**Ms Taylor**—We are currently going through a process of restructuring within the institute, and we are identifying areas where we have target groups. Certainly senior students is one of those target groups. There is a need for us to look at what they require and how we meet that demand. So we have a number of people participating in school for seniors classes, but we are currently building on that. We have not firmed up exactly on how we will manage to meet that demand now and into the future, apart from realising that in the future the potential size of those classes is going to grow, so we are currently going through that.

**Senator FERRIS**—Some sort of strategic planning exercise?

**Ms Taylor**—That is right, yes.

**Senator TROETH**—In 5.2 you say that shifting responsibility for professional development from Commonwealth to state is problematic. Could you elaborate on that a little?

**Ms Taylor**—As I mentioned earlier, the National Staff Development Committee has been a significant provider of professional development resources, and there has been funding to pilot programs that have been developing. My understanding is that the money available, particularly for English language literacy and numeracy, is not going to be as plentiful as it has been in the past. So we are simply saying that it is something that we would have to pick up within our state allocations.

**Senator TROETH**—And I suppose, seeing that your funds have just been cut, you would not see any great expansion of that area. I would like to ask you a question about how you see the overall role of the institute. You have spoken about tendering in the past for labour market programs and being part of that section, and Senator Ferris has just asked you about the growing demand for older citizens. I think we heard from the union

earlier that in many of the courses women tend to be the larger number of enrolments. Do you see that role remaining static as catering for those sections of the population? How do you see the place of the institute in the next 10 to 20 years?

**Ms Taylor**—I think we have to acknowledge that there are changes coming, both structural changes and changes generally in the marketplace. I think one of the issues that we have started to grapple with now is that we receive state government money for adult and community education, and we do make part of that money available for community houses to run their programs. Now I think we are going to have to make a decision about whether we are a facilitator of community and adult education or whether we are a provider and how we struggle with that situation.

I think there are lots of opportunities for us to be a facilitator, to work more closely with community houses, neighbourhood houses and community groups in funding the activities. I think we would want to be providing support. If they want accredited packages, we would provide the support and the wherewithal for them to do that and make grants available to them, subject to them meeting certain criteria for delivering within their communities.

On the other hand, I think we do need to look at the opportunities that are being created with the changes to labour market programs, and see if we can move not only into that education role but also into employment placement as well. So, on the one hand, we would be trying to assist the community doing community education and, on the other hand, provide more in workplace training. That is another growth area—workplace training and employment. So those are the directions we are looking at.

**ACTING CHAIR**—There has also been an announced budget initiative to provide a much smoother transition from school to the workplace.

**Ms Taylor**—That is right.

**ACTING CHAIR**—With all those opportunities opening up, that may well be an area where you would want to make provision.

**Ms Taylor**—Yes.

**Senator FERRIS**—I would like to pick up a point Senator Troeth just raised. It seems as if women are principally the group that take on extra education. Do you have any personal views on why that might be the case? And have you given any thought as to how you might be able to get more of a gender balance into that extra voluntary training, if you like?

**Ms Taylor**—Firstly, on why women in particular access ACE programs, I think it is because they are flexible, they can accommodate times when women are there and they

can actually move and deliver to where women need them to be delivered. We do not have huge buildings where we have to keep classrooms full. We are responsive in terms of how we provide the training and the education to people. And, as I say, I think women as a group have particular demands on them so that we need some flexible approaches to meet that.

In terms of trying to bring about a better gender balance, we conducted a client satisfaction survey late in 1995 just to try to find out what age group we were getting our clients from, their sex, and so forth. We identified that the 18- to 25-year-olds seemed to be an area that had particularly low participation in this state, and primarily with males as well. So with this strategic planning that we are currently developing that is one of the questions we have to address.

But I think we really need to identify what it is that males particularly want if we are going to provide it. I do not think we should sit back and just try a whole lot of things. I think we really need to go about a more objective process to identify what their needs are, and then determine whether we can meet them. But, as I say, workplace training is increasing and there are a lot of males picking up that part of the program.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Is there any state forum that brings together yourself and the other providers in that area, and do you talk to each other on a regular basis?

**Ms Taylor**—No, that has not happened, and that is basically because of the regional arrangements. The new structure that I will be putting in place will be done on a program basis, with program managers running programs throughout the state. I would see that that forum would facilitate much more input from across the state, certainly with me being there as well as directing.

**ACTING CHAIR**—So you are looking to that happening in the future?

**Ms Taylor**—Yes.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Are you part of the state training profile of ACE?

**Ms Taylor**—Yes; I am actually on the State Profile Training Advisory Committee, so I have an entree through there.

**ACTING CHAIR**—And what does that add to the work of the institute?

**Ms Taylor**—If we want to put our hands up to receive some of that money it means a bit of effort in putting submissions together. But I think it is worth it in the long run. Our growth funding has been increasing. In 1995 we had \$74,000, the year before it was about \$50,000 and this year we have gone to \$108,000, so we are gradually increasing our access to growth funds.

**ACTING CHAIR**—We gathered from the previous speaker that there has not been a great deal of data collected on your clients, or anything like that. Could you comment on the effectiveness of what data has been collected and where you see the opportunities for it?

**Ms Taylor**—It is true to say that the ACE sector traditionally has not had a preoccupation with collecting data, mainly I think because of lack of resources. Are you familiar with the AVETMISS? It is a statistical collection for providers who are accessing growth funds.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Who organises that?

**Ms Taylor**—It is done under the auspices of ANTA—I am not quite sure by whom. I think the National Centre for Vocational Education in South Australia is facilitating the collection of this information.

**ACTING CHAIR**—I see; it is an acronym.

**Ms Taylor**—In 1995 we started to collect the data and that gave us some information in terms of where our clients were and what courses they were accessing. But it is still not comprehensive. It is still not picking up workplace participation and the special intervention program. That is essentially a manual count we are doing.

**ACTING CHAIR**—There are some other sections to be added in and you would want to see that. Thank you very much for appearing before us today.

**Short adjournment**

[3.15 p.m.]

**BURNELL, Mrs Norma Anne, Member AAACE, RMB 455 Arthur Highway, Murdunna, Tasmania 7178**

**HAAS, Ms Shirley, Member AAACE, 73 Cormiston Road, Riverside, Launceston, Tasmania 7250**

**HOLDERNESS-RODDAM, Mr Robert, Member AAACE, 155 Main Road, Austins Ferry, Tasmania 7011**

**MACBRIDE, Mr Donald James, 11 Sonning Crescent, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7005**

**ACTING CHAIR**—I welcome the witnesses from the Tasmanian branch of the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education. The committee prefers that evidence be given in public but should you at any stage wish to give your evidence, part of your evidence or answers to specific questions in camera, you may ask to do so and the committee will consider your request. I point out, however, that evidence taken in camera may subsequently be made public by order of the Senate. The committee has before it the national AAACE submission No. 34. If any of you would like to begin with some introductory remarks, then you may do so and we will then open for questions.

**Mrs Burnell**—I am president and treasurer of the Dunalley Neighbourhood Community House. I do belong to AAACE and I am on the executive of the peak body of the Tasmanian Association of Community Houses.

**CHAIR**—To what extent has the Cinderella report and subsequently the Commonwealth's different involvement in adult education improved adult and community education at the state level? Or has it?

**Mrs Burnell**—I cannot answer that one, I am sorry.

**Mr Holderness-Roddam**—It has not.

**CHAIR**—Tell me more about that. What does that mean?

**Mr Holderness-Roddam**—It has not. I can table a document here. Rather than make a submission through my employer, which is the Institute of Adult Education, because I felt it was a sensitive series of comments I was going to make, I sent it up to the AAACE association people in Canberra so they could consider including some of my comments in their submission.

The reason why I say that it has not really done much for Tasmania is because of the way that community education has not really benefited, in my experience anyway.



That is because the Institute of Adult Education is a part of the super Department of Industrial Relations, Vocational Education and Training. I repeat, vocational education and training. I do not see any reference there to adult education or community education coming into that. In fact, it has been made very clear by the senior managers, particularly the secretary of that department, that he does not consider community education to be relevant to his department's needs.

To enlarge on that, I was recently invited to take a redundancy and the express reason given for that was because I was seen to be a community education person and that community education is no longer regarded as being relevant to the Department of Industrial Relations, Vocational Education and Training.

**CHAIR**—Thank you for those comments. That piece of paper that lies on the table there, is that something you would like to make a public document?

**Mr Holderness-Roddam**—Yes, I would be quite happy to make it a public document.

**CHAIR**—Is it the wish of the committee that the document be incorporated in the transcript of evidence? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

*The document read as follows—*

**CHAIR**—That is a very clear emphasis. Do you feel that community education would be better in the education department, for instance? Would it get a better hearing there?

**Mr Holderness-Roddam**—I have done a bit of soul-searching over this. I do not believe it would, although one thing about the education department is that at least it has the word ‘education’ in its name and it is not specifically vocational education. I have outlined our history in my written document. Originally we were an autonomous Adult Education Board created in 1948-1949 as the result of two public enquiries into the way that adult education should be developed in Tasmania. One was the committee of inquiry led by Sir John Morris who at that stage was Chief Justice of Tasmania amongst other things. The other one was a document prepared by Dr Duncan.

Dr Duncan wrote two reports on adult education. The first one was in 1943 and that was a federal one. Then he did the 1945-1946 report in Tasmania and both of those came up with the proposal that adult education should be autonomous in Tasmania. He gave various reasons why it should not be part of the education department and various other organisations, one of which was the ability to respond to controversial issues. The feeling was that if we were part of a government department then the bureaucracy would be there and there would be controversial issues which we would have problems in being allowed to tackle.

I can give you three specific examples from the last year where some of my activities have been queried by the institute director. First of all, I organised a one-off session for home educating parents, or potential home educating parents. I am connected to the home educating network and we felt that there was potential there for people who wanted to find out a bit more about the law in Tasmania and how to go about commencing to home educate more children. When our director heard about it, because we asked permission to put out a news release, my boss—and I was in the room when he was on the phone to her—was grilled fairly heavily as to why we were doing a session like that and not the education department. She completely missed the point that we were dealing with the parents and not the children. That was the first time that I was queried.

The second time was early this year when I had put on a half-day workshop on making your vote count. It was explained in the blurb that accompanied the publicity that this was an explanation of the Hare-Clark electoral system which we have in Tasmania. Some of us are very proud of that system because we believe it is a very fair way of electing representatives; it is fairly similar to the Senate voting system but not identical.

**CHAIR**—Not quite, thank goodness.

**Mr Holderness-Roddam**—Not quite. We had received an edict that said we were not to put out news releases without having them cleared by our bosses. I might add that for a number of years I was the adult education publicity officer and I never had to clear

my news releases in the old days, I simply sent them out, and no-one ever told me that I had sent out anything that I should not have sent. Anyway, we were queried when we asked permission to send this news release out—correction, it was not a news release, the ABC saw the course advertised in our class program and wanted to interview me. So when I, through my boss, asked the director if I could have permission to go on air and be interviewed about this workshop, the answer came back, ‘No, it is too politically sensitive’.

The reason we put this course on at the time was that for the first time ever we have had many months warning of when the state election would be because of the firm commitment given that it would not be held before a certain date. So I deliberately timed it, and in my view it was not politically sensitive, it was simply a good way to get information out to the public. We had about a dozen people come to that workshop because they felt they needed to know how to make an effective vote. That was the second time I was queried.

The third time was more recently when I went to put on a workshop on defending the environment through the recently instituted Environmental Defenders Office here in Hobart. That one was queried when I wanted to put a news release out: was this a government funded organisation? In other words, the unstated question or criticism was, was this an ordinary community organisation? If so, what were we doing working in with them? I was able to say it was a government funded organisation but I felt very concerned that in fact I was being questioned. As a professional adult educator of 22 years experience, I think I have the nous and the gumption to know what kind of organisations we should be able to employ.

**CHAIR**—Why should you be doing something about the Hare-Clark system and not the Tasmanian Electoral Commission?

**Mr Holderness-Roddam**—They have got the experts but they may not have the expertise to explain it clearly to the general public. I do. I have studied it fairly thoroughly.

**CHAIR**—On the other hand, if they had commissioned that from you, they would have presumably assisted with the cost of it.

**Mr Holderness-Roddam**—They may have, yes. In fact, there was not much cost with it because I was doing it as a paid adult education officer and I am not paid for outside hours work, as it were.

**CHAIR**—One of the big challenges I guess the committee has in trying to deal with where we go as we look at the Cinderella report five years on is just what sorts of things ought to be included under the definition of adult and community education and how they should be included. We cannot expect the government to be funding things that

are ill defined, particularly in terms of being accountable to the taxpayer for the use of taxpayers' dollars. Can you assist the committee with what should be included under the adult and community education definition?

**Mr Holderness-Roddam**—That is a fairly big ask.

**CHAIR**—Well, you are the AAACE are you not?

**Mr Holderness-Roddam**—Yes, I am one of them. I would like to go back to the late 1800s when, amongst other things, there were various institutes and people set up, not by the workers but by the middle class intelligentsia. The stated aim of these organisations was to provide useful knowledge. The purpose of that useful knowledge was not to enhance people's lives but to make them more valuable workers to the bosses and the community.

Subsequent to that, some enlightened people came along with the concept of really useful knowledge. The definition, I guess, of really useful knowledge is the knowledge that we may use to empower ourselves to do things such as influencing political decisions, et cetera. You would be aware that two or three years ago now the report 'Whereas the People' came out as a result of a commission from the previous federal government. That covered very clearly the concepts of citizenship and training of people in the community so that they may be more capable citizens and perhaps more able to influence decisions. I believe that is one very strong area that should be in community education.

**CHAIR**—That being the case then, which is the best part of government to fund you? I guess one of the concerns I have is whether, for example, anything to do with being informed citizens should be a matter for the Electoral Commission and properly their responsibility. They do have the latest information, et cetera and they also have under the legislation a responsibility to do some of that education stuff. If that is the case, how does AAACE exist? I guess what I am trying to get from you is where you want the committee to recommend that AAACE might go. Now we may not necessarily take your recommendations on board but we will certainly give them very serious consideration. Has adult and community education become too weighted towards vocational training?

**Mr Holderness-Roddam**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—Is this the voice of everybody here?

**Mr Macbride**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—Mr Macbride says yes. Mrs Burnell?

**Mrs Burnell**—I only deal with adult education in neighbourhood houses.

**CHAIR**—Ms Haas?

**Ms Haas**—I do not think that it has necessarily become too vocationally oriented. What it does is pick up aspects of general learning opportunities which may have application in the vocational education and training sector or they may not, depending on how a person chooses to use that information they gain through participation in adult and community education. I think there is a place, I suppose you could almost say, for entry level into vocational education and training through community education. But, as I said, a person might choose to do a communications course or a computer course. They might just want that for their own personal benefit, they may want to help their children or they may see it as both of those things plus the opportunity perhaps to improve their skills for getting back into the workplace or improve their existing workplace skills. I personally have recently completed an Excel 5 computer course through adult education. That was for personal benefit but also to enhance my work situation.

**CHAIR**—If there is a swing to or an emphasis on the vocational training and accreditation of courses, does this mean that adult and community education will have better access to funds through ANTA?

**Ms Haas**—I think that relationship could possibly develop. I do not disagree with Bob, who is saying, ‘I think the adult and community education sector needs to be careful that it does not end up beholden to ANTA.’ But, on the other hand, I think it is quite appropriate that some funding comes via ANTA for the adult and community education sector.

**CHAIR**—Is it also a question that adult and community education does not become so disparate, or so amorphous, that no-one can say what it is?

**Ms Haas**—I guess that, in some ways, that is its weakness. But, in other ways, it is also its strength. I think if there is too much of an attempt to compartmentalise it so that it is clearly recognisable and easily fundable from certain buckets of money, it may actually lose some of the diversity which is its current strength. I think that poses a difficulty for statistics collectors—and, dare I say, for the bean counters. But I think part of its richness is in the diversity of work that it does.

**CHAIR**—My last question is to you, Mr Macbride. I understand that you have some very clear views about adult education, and adult and community education, particularly for older people. Would you like to share those with the committee?

**Mr Macbride**—Thank you, Senator. I believe that, fundamentally, our lives are broken up into major parts which need specific attention and direction of education. In the latter stages, you have the 25 to 55 age group where people are still at work, and there needs to be adult education for them in a class of their own. Once you get out of the work force you have a different type of adult education need.

I find it very difficult for people to be expected, at the age of 55 to 60, to find themselves out of mainstream employment, which is commonplace today, and for them to be expected, in this very complex day and age and away from the discipline and information available to them in the workplace, to be on their own and manage their lives effectively, efficiently and healthily for the next 25 to 30 years. It is totally unreasonable to expect that they could do this without some form of guidance.

At one time—back in the late 1970s and in the early 1980s—there used to be what were in their day some very good manuals and very good classes, coaches and videos regarding preparing for growing older, for ageing. In the recessions of the 1980s and the 1990s it all went by the board and people just threw it all out of the window. I have an idea that it was an almost wilful thing that governments did, purely and simply because they thought to run these courses for people who were being retrenched in very large quantities was going to be a fairly costly affair. Nonetheless, it is certainly not costly compared with the amount of the payments that were made to those people who were retiring early.

One need only look at the enormous amount of money, running into billions of dollars, that is put out in ADFs or pension entitlements in one way or another to a community that very largely hasn't the faintest idea how to manage these funds because it has never seen them before. On top of that, they have never paid due attention to their health. They have a concern about managing their lives and managing their money, and they have a lack of guidance in an undisciplined environment away from the work force and friends. They do not really realise, in point of fact, how valuable their work related friends are socially and in the impact on their discussions about how they manage their affairs. They do not know how much they miss them until they are not there.

Along with this the government struggles throughout its many departments, particularly in the community services and health areas. It puts out pamphlets and special programs to deal with preparation for marriage so as to save the breakdowns in marriage in the future and prevent wastage in our welfare and community services funds; it runs special things to do with HIV, with children's immunisation—with all these sorts of things. But does it bother to tell anybody how to manage their life in a reasonable and healthy way so as to help cut our enormous bills in health? Where do the community and health services at federal or state level make any input into the needs for adult education? All it does is, you go down to their offices and they just hand you out pamphlets, they hand you out books. There is nobody there who in point of fact can instruct you or tell you or teach you. They are not run as courses.

**CHAIR**—Are we down at the adult education focus, are we?

**Mr Macbride**—Yes. Where do you get the adult education from? Nobody goes to the adult education from other branches of government and says, 'Look, adult education, will you run a course for me? We want to educate the public.' All you are doing is—

**CHAIR**—Do you think they should?

**Mr Macbride**—Of course they should.

**CHAIR**—Do you think that would be a good, constructive use of adult and community education?

**Mr Macbride**—I think it would be better than purely and simply leaving it to the adult education area to try and find out what the needs are. There are plenty of people who are not making use of the adult education system, because it is not being properly used to its capacity. These people say, 'Well, we run a few courses.' But it is an ongoing thing. If you are 60 today, and 20 years down the line you are going to be 80, you do not go to a course today and still find out whether the social security and the welfare forms and the pension you are going to get, and all of these sort of things—you cannot rely on the media to provide this information. They are most inaccurate and scandalous people in trying to provide factual data for some poor person who is getting older and older, when change becomes more and more difficult.

**CHAIR**—I think they are actually some very interesting points indeed and they fit quite curiously and very well with some of the earlier submissions we have had about what might be included under adult and community education.

**Senator FERRIS**—I would be quite interested to take up the point that Mr Macbride has been making. In the community, how would you see, for example, the churches having an ongoing role in this sort of thing? In the past the churches have often had courses for members of their congregation or communities, they have played a community role, and in fact some churches have a welfare organisation attached to them that fulfils these sorts of roles. Have you thought about whether a community organisation or a church should give these sorts of courses, or whether perhaps Mrs Burnell's houses might be the basis for the courses? I am wondering why you think that the governments have an obligation to do this when there are a number of other agencies that also work in this field.

**Mr Macbride**—If you look at any of the people who want to run a retirement course or a health course or something here, they all have something to sell. This frightens people off. I believe that if you have got a formal agency through which it works and if, as was mentioned earlier, the agency is facilitating education and providing it, I believe that the adult education organisation can provide competent people to go to Probus clubs, go to the neighbourhood homes, go out to the community, go to corporate organisations and run classes on preparation for retrenchment trauma.

**CHAIR**—That would send a dreadful message, Mr Macbride.

**Mr Macbride**—I do not think it is a dreadful message at all. I have been in the

corporate seminar education field for three years on the mainland, back in the 1980s. There were plenty of people who turned their backs on coming to the courses who were offered the opportunity by their employers, purely and simply on the grounds, like people do not want to write out a will, they do not want to talk about death, they do not want to talk about their funerals.

There are people who do that and that is an unfortunate trend that one has to work at to try and break down. There was not a single member that came to my seminars who did not walk away and say that they had learned a hell of a lot and they had a lot of thinking to do. You are not telling people what to do; all you are doing is merely reminding them that there are major aspects in their life they need to consider if they want to retain a good healthy life. I do not exaggerate when I say that I know people who walked out of their job and within three days—and I know of two particular occasions—they committed suicide because they simply did not know how to hack it. People do not understand the trauma of being laid off work or being retired early and caught off balance. I say that as just two examples.

**Senator FERRIS**—Mrs Burnell, do you have any comments to make on that? I saw you nodding your head when I asked the question.

**Mrs Burnell**—In terms of neighbourhood houses, especially rural ones, where I come from is a rural fishing village. We offer courses in counselling and coping with domestic violence. We offer child care for the women who want to attend computer classes so they can help their children, because they say, ‘My child is learning the computer at school but I do not even know how to turn it on.’ So we have computer courses, both basic and advanced. We do not only have young mothers; we have elderly people there too.

We have basic first aid courses and we teach people how to cope with road trauma because, as I said, we are in a rural area. We also have courses in basic electronics, chainsaw use and maintenance, marine navigation, and stress management. As you would know about Port Arthur, we are the last neighbourhood house down on the peninsula, so we also had courses in grief and loss awareness. We have counselling all the time by appointment with Anglicare. We have the aged come and they get legal assistance. They can get their pensions explained to them without having to travel all the way into town.

**Senator FERRIS**—So would you see yourselves as perhaps forming a base where the sorts of courses that Mr Macbride was talking about, and I was thinking about the school for seniors as well, in running this ongoing community house, continuing education, comfortably coming from your organisation?

**Mrs Burnell**—Can I just answer Mr Macbride on one thing? On our committee, the committee of the neighbourhood house which is run on an honorary basis, the only person paid is the coordinator, and the child-care workers are also paid. Everybody on our



committee, Mr Macbride, is over 60, including me. The eldest is 80. And that is the whole committee.

**CHAIR**—Who funds the community centres?

**Mrs Burnell**—We are funded by the Department of Health and Community Services. We get \$2,000 from adult education to run these courses that I have just been telling you about.

**CHAIR**—Two thousand dollars.

**Mrs Burnell**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—Do you charge a fee for them?

**Mrs Burnell**—We are not supposed to charge fees; we are only allowed to charge levies.

**Senator TROETH**—We heard about those this morning.

**Mrs Burnell**—May I say that probably a few white lies are told. But that is off the record.

**Senator FERRIS**—Nevertheless, just to bring you back—

**CHAIR**—Actually, Mrs Burnell, it is now very much on the record.

**Mrs Burnell**—I am sorry, but there is not—

**CHAIR**—In other words, there are no formal fee structures. I would just like you to be clear that what you have just said is on the public record now.

**Mrs Burnell**—We charge levies.

**CHAIR**—So if there is any way in which you would like to add to it, please do so.

**Mrs Burnell**—We charge levies, not fees. The tutors who are coming down, because it is a rural area, charge travelling fees, which is anything between \$30 and \$40. They also charge what they charge for tutoring the courses.

**CHAIR**—So the difference is that you are not asking people to pay for the cost of tuition—

**Mrs Burnell**—No.

**CHAIR**—But, for example, to meet the cost of the travelling time, or something of that sort.

**Mrs Burnell**—That is right. We cannot run a course unless we get five people.

**CHAIR**—Sorry, Senator Ferris.

**Senator FERRIS**—I was just going to take you further down that track and ask you whether you thought people in your community, for example, and, in principle generally, would be prepared to pay for the sorts of more, if I could use the word, professional courses that Mr Macbride is talking about—for example, perhaps an ongoing course which might have refresher courses every year or whatever?

**Mrs Burnell**—Not really, because the area that I am in is a very old area, with a lot of retired people. We do have a lot of new people moving into the area because there is cheaper housing down there. The other neighbourhood house at Risdon Vale is in a housing commission area. The other ones are either housing commission areas or in the city, but the city ones charge less for a course than we do because they do not have the travelling fees.

**CHAIR**—How many of the people attending your courses are women and how many are men?

**Mrs Burnell**—It depends on what course we are running. Naturally, if we were running a navigation course the whole course would be men, and on a hydroponics course the majority would be men. We had a bread making course where half were men and half were women. Because the people live on their own they came to learn how to make a loaf of bread.

**CHAIR**—So the majority of the people who attend the courses are women?

**Mrs Burnell**—Yes.

**Senator TROETH**—What is the level of qualifications for those tutors that you speak about that come to the centre; or even right across the sector?

**Mrs Burnell**—Computer course tutors are definitely accredited. First aid ones are definitely accredited. Marine navigation people are accredited. Health and fitness tutors usually come from the department of sport and recreation. Child rearing classes are conducted by people from Lady Gowrie. It would only be the craft ones like folk art or pottery or painting or drawing that are not. Chainsaw tutors would come from the forestry department. We use as many accredited people as we can get, yes, but there is no

accreditation with craft ones.

**Senator TROETH**—So it is not difficult to get well qualified instructors for your courses.

**Mrs Burnell**—In some instances it is difficult because they do not want to travel but in the city, no, they do not have any trouble at all.

**Senator TROETH**—How many people would you have enrolled in your neighbourhood house for those sorts of courses?

**Mrs Burnell**—Do you mean over a period of a year or do you mean in each course?

**Senator TROETH**—A year.

**Mrs Burnell**—Over a period of a year, probably 200.

**Senator TROETH**—And how far are you from Hobart when you talk about being in a rural area?

**Mrs Burnell**—We are 68 kilometres away,, along the peninsula.

**Senator TROETH**—Mr Holderness-Roddam, I was just going to ask you about the extent of the data that is available for adult and community education. We have gathered from a couple of the earlier speakers that there are not a lot of statistics kept.

**Mr Holderness-Roddam**—The Institute of Adult Education has a database which every student is on and we know their ages, et cetera. There are also questions on disabilities and whether they have an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background. That is not available outside the organisation on an individual but it could be used a bit like the census information.

**Senator TROETH**—And who did you say collects that?

**Mr Holderness-Roddam**—That is collected by the Institute of Adult Education. It is because of the ANTA funding requirements where we have to get that information.

**CHAIR**—Is AAACE in a better position now than it was before the *Come in Cinderella* report?

**Ms Haas**—I cannot comment on financial or any of those other things because I am working outside that system now but I am still a member of AAACE. I am inclined to think that the benefit of *Come in Cinderella* was to formally recognise the AAACE as the

fourth sector and playing an integral role in the development of Australian society, but outside the formal boundaries of the normal school sector, the VET sector and the university sector.

The Cinderella report had that advantage, and also the outcomes that followed that, such as the development of the AAACE policy and so on. It has more formal recognition than it did have prior to *Come in Cinderella*, but that does not necessarily mean that that has been backed up with more adequate levels of funding because the AAACE sector is really quite economical when you look at some other aspects of public provision. While it is economical, I think sometimes you would have to say that there was a level of exploitation involved, particularly in relation to the work that is done by the community houses. Even looking at the budget for those Institute of Adult Education organisations, they are really shoestrings compared with the funding for some other public sector provisions.

**CHAIR**—What would you like to recommend to the committee for this, five years on?

**Ms Haas**—My recommendation to the committee would be to continue to value the diversity of the ACE sector; perhaps to look at ways where it could be more accountable. I am sure that could be a logical progression from the work that has already occurred. While I would be quite happy to see it reasonably accountable in terms of statistics and costs and so on, I would not like it to be too constrained by that. But I suppose this is a fairly political view that I am putting forward.

I think that diversity has got to continue to be valued because in a way it is the old 'horses for courses' thing. A lot of providers of adult and community education are very close to their population group, such as the neighbourhood houses. They should be fairly closely in touch with their community so that they can provide the kinds of learning opportunities that their communities want. I guess, even from what Jim is saying, that there is scope for them to be more responsive and so could the Institute of Adult Education. They could be more responsive. Maybe mechanisms to make them more responsive are necessary.

The Institute of Adult Education has recently established a council. Is that an advisory council, Bob?

**Mr Holderness-Roddam**—Yes.

**Ms Haas**—That theoretically should bring them closer to the communities they serve but there is always the potential for that not to happen.

**CHAIR**—Yes, I think you have articulated very well the big challenge for us. That is if you see the standard advancement of any sector in a community, whether it is adult

education or health care or whatever else, it tends to be, 'Let us define what it is, let us campaign and get government funding at whichever tier of government. And so as we can be accountable for those dollars, we can do it in the private sector if you like but I think we are talking here about building on what has already happened through the government contribution to adult education.' The trouble is, as you have pointed out rather well, Ms Haas, that if you define it too clearly then you may cut out a whole lot of things outside of that definition. How do you make sure that Mrs Burnell's neighbourhood houses continue to be the sort of places they are with a considerable community educational opportunity there? How, at the same time, do you meet Mr Macbride's suggestion that really we have not quite got into education for the whole of life? We have not really got into making it something that we expect will be ongoing and that will engage people. I guess the other thing that interests the committee is that so many of the people, particularly at the community level, are women. How do we get more men of whatever age to participate in this adult and community education?

**Mr Macbride**—One of the difficulties is that in general terms men are far more reluctant to indulge themselves in this area of education, from my personal experiences.

**CHAIR**—'Reluctant to indulge'—Mr Macbride, what a splendid way to finish the afternoon.

**Mr Macbride**—Women seem to be far more interested. I do not know whether it is because the majority of them do view that statistically that they are going to be the ones that are left on their own. That may inspire them to take a greater interest. I would not be at all surprised if it is. From my experiences, I know ladies who are far more capable of looking after themselves when they are left on their own than the men. Yet the men singularly and more generally do not do anything about it and I think this is because they have not been properly educated.

**CHAIR**—I think that is one of the continuing challenges for the committee. I am afraid that because we are so close to having to go and catch a plane, this is one time we cannot afford the extravagance of being a little over time. Thank you all very much indeed for coming and contributing to our deliberations this afternoon. It is a very hard area and I think also a very constructive area. I do get the sense that adult and community education is alive and pretty feisty in Tasmania but it has got its challenges. If there is anything further that dawns on you that you would like to add or any further information that you come across that you reckon the committee should have, please let us know and we would welcome that.

That concludes today's session. Thank you very much to you all. Thank you  
*Hansard.*

**Committee adjourned at 3.55 p.m.**