



Our vision is that action learning, action research and related processes and approaches are widely used and publicly shared by individuals and groups creating local and global change for the achievement of a more equitable, just, joyful, productive, peaceful and sustainable society

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From the President

ALARA's Management Committee (with the exception of our Swedish member, Claudia Gillberg) met in Sydney in the first week of January this year to review its strategic and operational plans. With the facilitation of Susan Goff, the Committee members were able to identify and reach agreement on a number of important strategic issues.

An important matter in many conversations during this strategic planning day was whether there was still a need for an organisation like ALARA. The conclusion we reached was that ALARA is still required – we believe members want us to be facilitators of CONNECTION. We also believe, however, that ALARA needs to change the way it operates to meet the changing needs of members and / or the community that access ALARA and its services.

A significant conclusion that we reached was that the Committee was over-extending itself. In trying to expand ALARA's reach and grow the services to members and the community, we were struggling to meet timeframes. In addition, we were not delivering to our own satisfaction in some fundamental areas that are essential for the future of ALARA. We believe we need to run the organisation in a light, agile, responsive way that relies on available technology. This approach supports the desire to create and facilitate connections between those in the AL / AR community through sustainable means.

This insight, hard as it was to accept, led to the conclusion that we must stop certain activities, and concentrate on core functions of ALARA.

The continuing core functions included facilitating connections between those in the AL / AR community through conferences, website / Internet presence, journal and membership, in particular, greater presence in the academic stream and mentoring. I have provided more information on these functions below.

Identifying these core functions helped us identify those functions that we cannot afford to continue by ourselves. We need other people – members or others – to offer to continue these functions. These offers could be one-offs or on an on-going basis.

ALARA Functions to Continue

The Management Committee believe that we need to concentrate our time and energy on developing the following functions. We welcome others who wish to assist in delivering these functions.

1. Conferences

ALARA Conferences are unusual in that there is much time allocated for connection between delegates, including between presenter and attendees of each session. The Management Committee wants to continue this concept by conducting conferences that are like a professional development retreat. At these conferences, delegates will be encouraged to participate in storytelling, conversations and networking. Academic and practitioner presentations will still be an important part of the conferences, but facilitators who focus on process will support those presenters. If possible, conferences will be in the same venue for successive years, building a sense of place, and possibly leading to a World Congress. This approach was successful in Melbourne for the 2009 Conference and 2010 World Congress.

As you will be aware, Pamela Kruse and the loyal group of Brisbane members are organising the 2013 Conference, which is at Riverglenn on 23 – 24 September. The theme is **Creating a Better World**, with the conference investigating how individuals, organisations and communities contribute to handing on a better world.

Registrations have commenced, with a great discount for ALARA members (see www.alara.net.au). I hope I will see many members in Brisbane in September.

2. World Congresses

ALARA wants to continue to conduct World Congresses. We have attempted to find a partner with whom we can hold the next World Congress, with interest expressed from people in USA, Hong Kong, South Africa, China and India. The enthusiasm expressed by these people diminishes with the realisation that a World Congress is a very big event. In financial terms, it is several (up to ten!) times the value of an Australasian Conference, and represents more than the total assets of ALARA. With such a significant event, the Management Committee wants to ensure that any partner is capable of sharing the risk and the effort required to deliver to the standard expected by the AL / AR community. We will continue to strive to deliver further World Congresses.

3. Academic Stream / Mentoring

Many secondary and tertiary institutions encourage the use of Action Research. The Management Committee believes that ALARA's future lies with those involved in these Action Research activities, as they are the future generation of members. We want to connect with those offering, leading and conducting these activities and inform them of ALARA.

To aid in this 'spreading of the word', Robyn Taylor has co-developed a LinkedIn discussion group with the support of Phil Crane at QUT, Shankar Sankaran and Chivonne Algeo at UTS and Marina Harvey at MQ to support students and educators in universities and educational institutions who are interested in collaborative and participative approaches to learning and research. As part of the group, individuals are invited to connect and learn with each other. Launched at the beginning of April, there are already over thirty members in the group.

If you are interested in participating in the online discussions or becoming a member of the ALARA Tertiary Education Community, please join the group at:

http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4914977&rk=myg_ugrp_ovr

4. Website / Internet Presence

The LinkedIn group is one of several forms of Internet presence ALARA has that the Management Committee wants to continue to develop. ALARA currently has its somewhat dated website at www.alara.net.au, which the Management Committee is working towards replacing, under the guidance of Ross Colliver.

ALARA also has two Facebook sites – a conference one, for this year's Conference:

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/131822073618358#!/groups/131822073618358/>

and a general Facebook site:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/218695368241066/>

Another site, not run by ALARA, but one we support, is the LinkedIn group ARLO (Action Research and Learning in Organisations), led by Eugene Fernandez at

https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=1806421&trk=anet_ug_hm

The Management Committee believe that ALARA's Internet presence is essential for continuing to spread the message about Action Research and Action Learning.

5. Journal

For seventeen years, ALARA's volunteer editorial teams have produced the *ALARj*, and the Management Committee wants to continue this service. Recently, we moved the Journal to the OJS (Online Journal Service) site to assist with its production and distribution, and arranged with Sydney University Press to offer printed versions of the Journal. We now submit the Journal to EBSCO and Informat, so that a larger number of people interested in Action Learning and Action Research can access it.

The Editors (Susan Goff and Phil Crane) are working on future issues of the Journal, and there are further improvements required for its production. This is an important function for the ALARA community, and we welcome submissions of articles and offers of assistance to peer review those submissions.

6. Fortnightly Updates

Our Administration Secretary, Robyn Lynn, will continue to distribute the fortnightly email with latest news and events. Please advise her of relevant information at secretary@alara.net.au (please keep your information brief – we want the items to be only a couple of lines in the email).

ALARA Functions Requiring Assistance

The Management Committee believes that it must obtain assistance from others to continue some functions, as described below. Without this assistance, these functions must cease, or the timeliness or quality of core functions will continue to suffer. If you would like to assist in these areas, please contact me.

1. Newsletter

This Newsletter is one of those functions that we will stop. This issue is therefore the last ALARA will produce – unless someone would like to volunteer to prepare quarterly Newsletters. If you are interested, please contact Susan Goff or me to find out more.

2. Monographs

Eileen Piggott-Irving has delivered to me the latest Monograph. This Monograph will be available soon (next week), but Eileen has indicated that it will be the last she can edit. She has led the revival of this important publication. This is the fourth Monograph she has edited, and we thank her for her enormous contribution.

Unfortunately, without a new Editor, we cannot produce any more Monographs. We therefore seek a new Editor. This role requires someone who can seek out and encourage people to write longer papers of between 8,000 and 16,000 words (which are too long for the Journal), and then manage the peer review process. That process includes communicating with and encouraging the editorial panel members, of which we have several. For each Monograph, Eileen estimates about three to five days' work, plus the communication with the editorial panel and chasing new submissions. We aim to publish only one or two Monographs per year, and the workload is highly flexible.

If you are interested in helping, please contact Susan Goff or me to find out more.

3. Conference and World Congress Proceedings

You would have received an email last month announcing the launch of the ALARA 2010 World Congress Proceedings. That email included news of a discount, on offer until 19 May 2013, so please hurry if you wish to purchase the book (available in printed paperback or pdf formats). It is available for purchase through Sydney University Press at <http://purl.library.usyd.edu.au/alara/18391168>.

ALARA has not produced a Conference Proceedings for several years, and we do not expect to produce Conference Proceedings in the future. The effort required to produce the World Congress Proceedings has helped us realise that ALARA will need a small team outside the current Management Committee and Editorial team for future World Congress Proceedings. Without that extra assistance, a Proceedings publication is unlikely.

4. Storage of new information on the ALARA website

Ross Colliver and I have discussed the idea of introducing a content management system to the new ALARA site. In that site, we wanted to catalogue the information in the existing site, and seek and store new information relevant to Action Learning and Action Research. We had hoped that we could develop an extensive resource available to the community. Sadly, the work required, and the likely cost and complexity of such a content management system, has forced us to put the idea on hold.

If someone who has knowledge in content management systems wants to assist us, we would be pleased to hear from her or him.

5. Links to other like-organisations

ALARA has a page on its website that has links to 26 AL / AR organisations around the globe. Unfortunately, about half of these links no longer work, as the organisations have disappeared, changed their details, or moved their sites.

Our VP International, Deb Lange, Claudia Gillberg and Cathryn Lloyd are helping ALARA (re-)connect with some AL / AR organisations, but we need more people willing to refresh and maintain a link with relevant organisations. If you have semi-regular (or more frequent) contact with an AL / AR organisation, you may want to help in this area. We ask that you make

that organisation aware of ALARA, and, if the people with whom you communicate are appropriate, suggest that the organisation may want to have communication with ALARA (and refer them to me – but warn me first, please!).

6. Advocacy and representation to Government on Action Learning / Action Research

ALARA wants to promote, and educate about, Action Learning and Action Research to those in Government (any countries' federal or local governments). This desire is beyond our current capacity. Please contact me if you would like to assist in this area, at any level, in any country.

7. Standards and Credentialing

The Management Committee has been exploring, with the assistance of Susan Goff, standards and credentialing. We have published a document *Principles of Action Research and Action Learning: An Invitation to Dialogue*, which will soon be on the ALARA website. Developing standards and investigating credentialing requires much discussion with members and other interested parties. The Management Committee has concluded it cannot do this work, but it will assist and support anyone who wishes to explore this area.

Reviewing the areas I have covered over the three pages above, I believe you will see that ALARA has many irons in the fire. The Management Committee, however, does not have enough resources to give all of those irons the required attention. We believe that our decision to concentrate on the essential / core functions is appropriate. We welcome any assistance in these functions, or any of the others that we have had to put aside.

Colin Bradley
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Publications

Journal

Phil Crane or Susan Goff would welcome contact from anyone wanting to submit a paper. Please contact them via editor@alara.net.au or Robyn (at secretary@alara.net.au).



Group Contacts... If you want to get together with other action researchers and action learners – contact someone and do lunch (or Skype)!

Melbourne ALARA Network contact details: Jill Sanguinetti, Jill.Sanguinetti@vu.edu.au; Bill Genat, bgenat@unimelb.edu.au

Sydney ALARA network contact details: Susan Goff, susan.g@cultureshift.com.au and Rosemary Shapiro-Liu, rosemary.shapiro.liu@gmail.com

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We thank everyone who agreed to make themselves available as a friendly face for practitioners near and far.

If you want to add your name to this Group Contact list, please let editor@alara.net.au know!



ALARA Management Committee 2012-2013

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ALARA Activities Requiring Your Assistance (please contact Colin Bradley at president@alara.net.au)

- **Publications Co-ordinator**
- **Editor ALARA Monograph** (we have several people willing to continue as Reviewers)
- **Editor ALARA Newsletter**
- **Editor Conference and World Congress Proceedings** (future work)
- **Networker with other AL / AR organisations**
- **Advocate in Action Learning / Action Research to Government organisations**
- **Website content management**
- **Standards and Credentialing research**