



# Action Learning Action Research Association

ABN: 41 587 420 126

*Our vision is that action learning, action research & 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*

## Issue 4 September, 2007

Dear Members,

It has been a time of endings and beginnings since our last newsletter with a very successful National conference over. We bid thanks and farewell to Ernie Stringer (Past President), Shankar Sankarin (International Vice President) and Bill Genat (Past Treasurer). We welcome new Management Committee members and to lead us into 2008 with a very new management system and style. A list of the new committee can be found at the end of the newsletter. This will be our final newsletter for the year.

Our newsletter is just one way we communicate with you - for more focused, personable and developmental interactions join our vibrant on-line community at [www.alara.net.au](http://www.alara.net.au) and set up your own account. If you need help ask the Webmaster.

Margaret Fletcher  
ALARA Admin Secretary  
Email: [admin@alarpm.org.au](mailto:admin@alarpm.org.au)



### Message from the President: Susan Goff

**Reflecting on our 2007 ALARPM Conference,**  
Tauondi College, Port Adelaide.

“Our national conference “Moving Forward Together” was the success we all hoped for. Located at the beautiful Tauondi College in Adelaide, we were treated to the gentle courtesy and spiritual recognition of our hosts as we watched a smoking ceremony and children performing traditional dances to declare the conference open. Our pre-conference workshops provided opportunities for focused engagement on post doctoral research and ethical research practices in indigenous initiatives. Our two days of parallel sessions allowed a great range of presentations each touching on very grounded, progressive work in the three thematic areas of health, environment and education. Mostly the ninety or so of us who attended

[alara.net.au](http://alara.net.au)

enjoyed the incredible privilege of informal cross cultural connections, appreciated by all as the following evaluative comments suggest:

“We loved having the conference at Tauondi...The Galiwingku people loved meeting people at the conference who used to live in Arehhem Land... A lot of Aboriginal research that I hadn't heard of before...Viewing and balancing both worlds...Meeting a lot of people working with action research... Learning from each other's knowing... You can see the respect in tangible ways, between all the participants ...It was a safe environment, I felt I could speak up and not feel embarrassed”

Thanks to the excellent management of Team SA and the significant sponsorship of Desert Knowledge CRC and Aboriginal Health CRC we covered our costs and made a small profit to share with Team SA as our MOU promises.

We look forward to our next national conference in '08 and thank everyone for a very special event in '07”  
Susan Goff



### New Monograph Series is Coming!

From Eileen Piggot-Irvine, New Zealand

A new initiative is well underway for a Monograph Series publication. A truly international group is spearheading the publication including myself, Danny Burns (UK), Pieter Du Toit (South Africa), Geoff Mills (US), and Shankar Sankaran (Australia).

We wish to be responsive to submissions to the Series and so will avoid predicting that there might be one Monograph per year etc. We will publish ten a year if we have the material!

The purpose of the Monograph Series is to provide an opportunity for authors to publish refereed work that is more extensive than the length of a conventional paper. This should enable authors to present in-depth

information and analysis with a topic. We want the Series to contribute to theoretical and practical understanding of action research and action learning.

Watch this space for more information on the Series which we hope to launch early in 2008.



**Conference Notifications:**

Sweden

CARN International Conference Umea, Sweden, 9-11 November 2007.

See: <http://www.umea-congress.se/carn.htm>

The Conference Theme is *Action Research beyond Borders and Divides*

Keynote speakers are

**Gaby Weiner** (UK & Sweden) on Action research and PhD studies

**Ken Zeichner** (USA) on Action research and teacher education

**Jane Springett** (UK & Sweden) on Participatory Practice in a Non Participatory World.

Other highlights are

**Stephen Kemmis** (Australia) at al on Pedagogy, Education, and Praxis

**Staf Callewaert** (Denmark) et al on Critical Practitioner Inquiry & Neo-liberalism

**Maureen Robertsson** (South Africa) on Teacher education curriculum transformation and critical thinking groups

**Patricia Maguire** (USA) et al Challenging the university through feminist participatory action research



**International Sociological Association in Barcelona in July 2008**

Invitation to contribute to joint session

**Research Committee 10 on Participation and RC 51 on socio cybernetics.**

**The twin challenges of representation and accountability for sociological praxis Joint Session RC10-RC51 (Sociocybernetics).**

Convenor/organizer: Janet McIntyre.

This joint session seeks to explore the issues of democracy, governance and sustainable futures. The papers will focus on the importance of ensuring that those at the receiving end of decisions are part of the decision making process. The papers will explore issues of representation, accountability, identity, and social justice and engage with the current research on discursive democracy. Papers that embrace

multidisciplinary perspectives are encouraged, including such fields as, but not limited to, informatics and engineering, public health and cultural studies.



**Cultures in Resistance Discourse Power Resistance**

18 - 20 March 2008

Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

Geoffrey Manton Conference Centre

**Keynote speakers**

**Sara Ahmed Terry Eagleton**

**Ann Phoenix Slavoj Žižek**

The aim of this multidisciplinary conference is to provide a forum for the critique of contemporary cultural practices in all their forms.

The 2008 conference will bring together researchers, educators, learners and policy-makers with a commitment to analyse and challenge cultural formations in theory, practice and research. The conference will celebrate the potential for enrichment brought through cultural diversity to the arts, philosophy, psychology, education, religion and ethics.

We encourage a range of presentations: papers, posters and workshops, together with work for exhibition and presentations in the visual and performing arts.

The conference will be preceded by workshops on topics related to cultural resistance including reflexivity, urban ethnography, discourse and deconstruction and writing. Information on the conference is posted on the website at:

<http://www.esri.mmu.ac.uk/dpr/>

Email enquiries to [dpr@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:dpr@mmu.ac.uk)

Telephone +44(0)161 247 2318, +44(0)1752 823091

Call for papers: Friday 11 January 2008



**From Brisbane:**

From Bob Dick – Brisbane

Workshop in Brisbane on action learning- Thursday and Friday 20-21 September

Cost: \$594

Further details on the Interchange web site at <http://bobdick.com.au> or email Bob Dick \_bd@uqconnect.net

There seems to be a growing interest in action learning because it is experiential and collaborative. Some

organisations like the way it helps people do effective project work while also improving their leadership, problem solving and decision making.

The workshop will equip participants with the understanding and skills to design an action learning program and facilitate the action learning group(s).

It is likely to be relevant for consultants and facilitators, for human resource or training and development people in organisations, and also for managers and team leaders looking for ways of involving team members more directly in project work, problem solving and decision making.



**Susan Goff**  
President



This year I graduated with a PhD from the University of Western Sydney. My topic was "living, knowing and writing the value of participatory practice to sustainability". The primary mode of practice was collaborative critical reflexivity. After 18 years, I no longer run my action research consultancy "Cultureshift" and have started a new job as Regional Development Manager with the Cancer Council in NSW. My role is to develop a participatory system in metropolitan Sydney, linking volunteers with services and the Council's operations. As ALARA's President, and following over ten year's activity with ALARA on the management committee, my intention is to build an organisation that enables supported collaborative autonomy to flourish at all levels, in the interests of developing AL and AR expertise and recognition in Australia in particular.



**Ross Colliver**  
Web and IT Group Coordinator

I first started using action research to support the professional development of teachers, then continued this in learning programs with managers. Reading John Heron's "Cooperative Inquiry" was a watershed for me, as was "Communities of Practice" by Etienne Wenger - I suddenly saw that AL/AR was the learning process of a mature community of practice, not just a professional development activity of organisations. I'm currently supporting Landcare



groups reflecting on and initiating action to become more effective and influential in landscape change, a critical time for them, as the old Landcare struggles with being trapped as an agent of government or reinvents itself as an innovator at community level. Why I'm responsible for the ALARA website I have no idea, except that I live in Perth and work mostly in Victoria, so I know about working collaboratively across time and space (but don't we all!).



**Vicki Vaartjes**  
Membership and Marketing  
Coordinator.



I am a co-owner of Twyford Consulting and I work as a consultant in leadership capability development and organisational effectiveness. I love to use highly engaging, progressive processes such as AL, which emphasise new insight and application, so that clients learn "what action to take and what action is effective" within their unique context. I bring to ALARA a desire to learn with like minded people, a desire to "give back" and support the advancement of practice, and an experienced head for business. I look forward to contributing over the next year.



**Stewart Hase**  
VP International

I am married with two grown children and a grand daughter. I like to go fishing, play golf, surf, read and love to write. Amongst all that I find time to play in the words as a psychologist, psychotherapist, academic and consultant. Having been involved in action research for many years and about to leave academia I am interested in keeping involved in AR and promoting it as a multimethodological approach to investigating real-world problems.



**Ted Sandercock**  
Special Interests Group  
Coordinator



I am principal consultant of Concerns\_Based Consultants, an organisation that specialises in leadership of change, performance management, strategic HR, developing learning organisations, action learning and team development with an emphasis on small business. I facilitate Action Learning units in a Diploma of Business in the Higher Education sector and am a mentor for Education for Ministry, a program that uses a theological reflection process.

I am the President of the SA Institute for Educational Research, an executive member of Action Learning, Action Research Association, Fellow of the Australian Human Resources Institute, and an Australian representation for the *ides* (International Design and Enterprise Services) project.



**Marg O'Connell**  
Publications Coordinator (ALAR journal managing editor)



I joined ALARA in 2005, after having developed an interest in action learning through my educational design work at Monash University. I was working on an ongoing teacher education project that was delivered online and was underpinned by a reflective practice methodology. I presented at the 2005 ALARA conference at UTS in Sydney about the project and haven't looked back since!

During that same conference I was invited by a colleague in the VET sector to join ALARA and also found myself on the management committee (having opened my big mouth about how the association's online presence could be developed to attract new and emerging action researchers!). I've been involved ever since – not a long time, but for me, a highly engaging time, and a time in which the association has been challenged by many changes.

I still work as an educational designer and seek to continue to spread the word about action learning and action research, as I see much benefit in a practice-based environment such as VET for action approaches. Consequently, I am undertaking a Master

of Education to develop a research project with VET teachers using a participatory collaborative research model, based on action research principles.



### **President's report from our first Management Committee meeting**

At ALARA we conduct our Management Committee meetings on line through our fabulous web page. Our Executives and Working Group meetings are on web teleconferences. Each of our Management Committee members takes responsibility for a particular theme and facilitates the discussion to reach a consensus-based decision, which is then taken into either our Working Group or our Executive for action.

Our new meeting timetable, which is important for members to know about so they can raise matters to our attention, participate in the organisation and receive news in timely ways, is as follows:

- Sept: Management Committee Meeting  
Followed by Executive to organise Action Plan and Budget Lines
- Oct: Working Group
- Nov: (no meeting)
- Dec: Working Group
- Jan: Executive (VPs report from Working Group meetings to Exec)
- Feb: Working Group
- Mar:(End Financial year) Management Committee meeting followed by Exec
- Apr: Working Group
- May: (no meeting)
- June: Working Group
- July: Executive (prep for AGM)

At our first Management Committee meeting we made decisions about the following core business interests - (I also provide the name of your Committee member who is responsible for the matter should you wish to know more):

- Name change action plan - Di
- ALARA management action plan - Susan
- New policy for ALARA Treasures - Susan
- Advisory Group - Susan
- New management committee policy - Susan
- WC 7 Groningen - Susan
- Emergency powers and climate change - Susan
- Supported collaborative autonomy - Susan
- New budget and business plan - John
- The next national conference ('08) - Iain
- SA conference wrap up - Iain
- Visionary directions for ALARA - Stewart

- WC 8 - Stewart
- Growing the Special Interest Groups - Ted
- Website development - Ross
- New livery for ALARA - Vicki
- Publications (journal, newsletter, monograph) - Marg O

If you are a financial member you have access to our management committee meeting on line after the event so you can track the conversation. The minutes are also available on the Management Committee meeting (Sept '07) link - also for financial members only. Executive meetings are closed to general membership in the interests of confidential matters.

Our first meeting was highly successful attracting full participation from all our Management Committee members with most matters being substantially addressed. We now update our action plan and get to work on the items in our Working Group and Executive meetings.

Best wishes to everyone for the rest of '07 and look forward to seeing you again in our newsletter March '08.

**Susan Goff**  
President

PS: keep checking your post box in October for our fantastic next edition of the Journal!



**From our Victorian affiliate SPIRAL**

The next SPIRAL seminar will be 5.30-7.00pm Thursday 25 October in the Library oases Graduate School & Community Learning and Research Centre The Augustine Centre 2 Minona Avenue Hawthorn

Our discussion starter will be Dr Susan Goff, President of ALARA (Action Learning Action Research) visiting from Sydney, will speak about her PhD using collaborative critical reflexivity to explore the value of participatory practices to sustainability. Also...

'Continuing the conversation about postgraduate study using action research'

Thought for the day: *One doesn't discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time.*

**Andre Gide**

Contact information:  
ALARA

PO Box 1784, Toowong Qld 4066, Australia  
Fax: (61-7) 3342 1669  
Email [membership@alarpm.org.au](mailto:membership@alarpm.org.au)  
<http://www.alara.net.au>



**WANTED: A practitioner to deliver a workshop on AL with Hornsby TAFE - free exchange and opportunity for new client contact**

Hornsby TAFE design school is looking to ALARA to provide a staff workshop about action learning. This will not have any fees attached to it initially. ALARA will pay your costs.

It is an exchange or barter for the college's offer to design ALARA's new livery free of charge. If you are interested to trial a new workshop, or open up a potentially very lucrative market in the NSW TAFE system, let us know and we will provide the details.

For more information contact our administrator, Donna at [admin@alarpm.org.au](mailto:admin@alarpm.org.au)

### ALARA Management Committee, 2007-2008

Name	Position
ADMINISTRATION Donna Alleman <a href="mailto:admin@alarpm.org.au">admin@alarpm.org.au</a>	Administration Coordinator
EXECUTIVE Susan Goff	President
Dianne Allen	Minute Secretary
Margaret Fletcher	Administrative Secretary
John Molineaux	Treasurer
DUAL PARTICIPATION Iain Govan	VP National Exec and WG Member
Stuart Hase	VP International Exec and WG Member
WORKING GROUP COORDINATORS Ross Colliver	Web and IT Group Coordinator
Margaret O'Connell	Publications Working group Coordinator
Edward Sandercock	Special Interests Group Coordinator
Vicki Vaartjes	Membership and Marketing group Coordinator
PAST OFFICE BEARERS - ex officio status Ernie Stringer	Past President
Bill Genat	Past Treasurer