

## MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

DR JIM WATTERSTON, FACEL



Happy New Year to all ACEL members.

Hopefully, by the time you read this you still retain the enthusiasm, excitement and energy that the start of a new school year heralds and you have regained full momentum after a reinvigorating summer break. On behalf of everyone at ACEL, I

wish you all the best for a successful year ahead.

We live in exciting times as the education landscape in this country continues in 2011 to transform in a way that will bring unprecedented collaboration and collective enterprise to our work. There is significant reason to feel optimistic about the work of the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and Education Services Australia (ESA) as they coalesce around the innovative national architecture that has the potential to significantly improve teaching and learning across all parts of the country. Groundbreaking initiatives such as the emerging Australian Curriculum; the development of teacher, Principal and pre-service standards; continued creation and access to innovative digital resources for teachers; and work around consistency in teacher registration across the nation, will prove to be essential ingredients to improving the way we all go about our work.

This is an unprecedented period in our educational history and it is to be hoped that ACEL members will continue to take the time to contribute to the development of these ongoing initiatives as the opportunities arise. This includes contributing to the thinking around the Commonwealth Government's *Review of Funding for Schooling* which is currently being conducted. This timely reconsideration of how we allocate Federal educational resources in this country, can only be enhanced by considered submissions from educators from all sectors. This is a chance to improve outcomes for all students regardless of the challenges and differences.

### HOLIDAY LEARNING

For my own intellectual and professional nourishment over the summer break I was fortunate to be afforded the opportunity by ACEL to attend the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI) Conference in Cyprus from 2–4 January. For those like myself who have not previously been to Cyprus I can attest to its value as an intriguing destination and conference venue. Examining 3000-year-old ruins and savouring the local cuisine were two of the many highlights in addition to the incredibly stimulating ICSEI Conference itself. The quality of many of the presentations was outstanding and the collegiality amongst attendees provided a rich platform to learn about prevailing educational conditions and innovations across a range of countries.

The ICSEI Conference was attended by about 300 international scholars, researchers and key educators. While attendees come



from all parts of the globe, it is worth noting that Australia had a strong influence at this forum with Tony McKay presiding as President of the Congress in addition to a number of key Australian researchers presenting throughout the three days. This year's Congress was structured around the central themes of *Linking Research, Policy and Practice to Promote Quality in Education*. Within this context four sub-themes were identified:

- Leader learning and learning leaders;
- Methodological advancements in research on school effectiveness and improvement;
- Educational policy-making and the politics of change and improvement;
- Professional development and professionalisation in education.

The Conference was well organised and timely not only in terms of the range and quality of presentations but also in relation to the opportunities for quality professional conversations that were stimulated as a result. It was clear that all countries are grappling with similar issues and challenges within their education systems and from that point of view the accompanying dialogue was highly relevant. The dominant notion of school and teacher autonomy prevailed throughout, although this movement is interpreted differently in various locations.

Next year's conference is in Malmo in the south of Sweden in early January which should prove to be a most worthwhile destination for those looking for an opportunity to engage in quality professional learning. I would urge you to consider such an opportunity and if possible, begin planning your attendance.

### FORTHCOMING ACEL EVENTS

I remind all members that we have a range of quality learning opportunities available around the nation in the coming months. Please look out for information about Annual Conference, our professional development activities and the upcoming Branch ACEL elections. Please consider standing for a position on our Branch Executive and contributing to the growth of our wonderful organisation.

I encourage you to contact me and other members of the National Board and state and territory branches if you have any ideas or questions as we strive to enhance member services and opportunities during 2011.

Yours in Educational Leadership,

