
From the President

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It is a privilege to introduce this issue of the *Australian Educational Leader* with an update on aspects of the continuing organisational growth and enhanced professional health of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders. As has been well documented, our organisation has been engaged in a process of strategic renewal in recent times in order to deliver more relevant and high quality member services, so as to enrich our footprint on the national educational landscape. To that end, we have been able to consolidate our asset base in order to provide a sustainable platform upon which we can further enrich our service delivery and advocacy.

Each of our state and territory branches are now providing a greater array of quality events and professional learning as we strive to ensure that we focus on supporting our members to lead in complex times.

On the national front, the ACEL Board has recently determined that in order to ensure that our marquee event, the ACEL National Conference, continues to be a 'must attend' for educators across the country and wider Asia-Pacific region, there is a need to continue to enhance the current delivery model. The Board has taken the view that it is important to hold our conference in locations that are highly accessible and provide the best facilities, accommodation and other attractions. As a consequence, a decision has been made to depart from the previous practice of rotating the conference around all capital cities over an eight-year cycle, to rotating between Sydney and Melbourne in order to maximise attendance and participation by international attendees. While this change may be disappointing for some members located in states outside of Victoria and NSW, evidence demonstrates that significantly more people are able to attend when we conduct the event in our largest two cities.

In another departure from previous practice, the organising committee for forthcoming conferences will no longer be state based. As these conferences are national events,

the organising committee will consist of members from all states and territories who will work under the guidance of a conference steering group set up by the Board. This committee will be tasked with setting the conference theme and putting together a program that features current research and thinking, while showcasing best practices from all sectors of education. The advanced organisation for our 2014 Conference in Melbourne on October 1–3 indicates that these new procedures are working well as this event promises to be one of our best ever. The range of speakers is amazing with a glittering array of experts in their fields addressing our theme of *Passion and Purpose: Setting the Learning Agenda*. Personally, I am particularly excited at the prospect of hearing John Medina speak as, in my humble opinion, he has written the best and most relevant book I have read in many years. His New York Times best-selling publication *Brain Rules* provides 12 pragmatic and relevant neuroscience-inspired brain rules for home, work and school. Having the opportunity to hear John live in Australia will be something not to be missed for those trying to make sense of how to maximise student performance and engagement in these challenging times.

ACEL has also focussed upon the quality and refreshed presentation of the range of publications that has served our members so well over many years through the provision of current and pertinent educational articles and information. This year we will be aligning our publications to the four key areas of Australian educational reform. As a result the next four issues of the *Australian Educational Leader* will contain articles, interviews and information regarding leadership authority, teacher quality, the Australian curriculum and school community engagement. These four areas will also be the main themes of our forthcoming ACEL Annual Conference *Passion and Purpose: Setting the Learning Agenda*.

We look forward to your ongoing feedback and direction as we continue to strive to meet members' needs.