

# AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF ADULT LEARNING

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## **From the Editors' desk**

Cheryl Ryan and Piper Rodd

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I am pleased to bring you the latest edition of the journal. You will note that typically, indeed for many decades, AJAL has been published three times each year. While these editions have been named for their month of production (usually April, July and November). I am labelling this edition, volume 65(2), our Spring edition in celebration of the turn in weather as I seek to find cause for celebration in small, important things that unite us during dark political times.

As I write this editorial, right-wing populism seizes the United States and genocide in Gaza continues unabated. It is now more important than ever that, as educators, scholars and community workers, we come together and use our collective voices for reason, compassion and unity. These events might feel distant to us in Australia, but they affect many living, working and learning locally. As attacks on protest by students and teachers challenging the right to academic freedom to express views about ongoing injustice continue on campuses and in our streets at home and overseas, it's important for all of us to reflect on what we value about learning for life. We know also that many people are struggling to make ends meet and funding for invaluable public services reaching into and shaping community, including those of us who fiercely value education, feels ever more limited.

With all of this in mind, I am pleased to announce the theme for the next

special edition, "Policy, practice and pedagogy: adult education in times of decaying capitalism and failing democracy". This topic borrows from Freire's notion of education as freedom in our collective fight against oppression and invites authors to consider the imperative role of adult teaching and learning to shine light on hope in dark times. A formal, more detailed announcement will be circulated shortly with details of the guest editors and dates for calls for abstracts and submissions of papers. In the meantime, I warmly invite all those potentially interested in this broad topic to begin considering possible papers for inclusion.

This edition features four research articles, one practice piece and a book review. All six of these pieces selected for this edition are united by their focus on the importance of dialogue and openness as tools of pedagogy. While the contexts vary, with some centred on formal sites of adult teaching and learning like the university and vocational colleges, others break free of these institutions to consider the importance of public pedagogies for community in our times.

Our practice piece is by Griff Foley entitled simply, **The Dump**. It tells the story of members of a local Australian community coming together to protest an unwanted waste site.

The book review for this edition is by Kent Getsinger who writes about Canadian-American academic and community activist, Astra Taylor's 2023 publication **The age of uncertainty: Coming together as things fall apart**. As manufactured insecurity engenders feelings of precarity and helplessness, Taylor argues for the importance of collective organising in its many contemporary guises as critical to continued community growth and development.

The first of our research papers featured in this volume examines a subject of great and continued critique and criticism for adult learners and teachers alike. Roz Jani discusses her research into the efficacy of the Certificate Four VET qualification in Training and Assessment. Her paper, entitled **The Certificate IV Training and Assessment qualification: Intended to innovate, but falling short** analyses trainers' experiences and reflections on teaching to this ubiquitous qualification that often feels more about compliance than about how best to teach adult learners.

The second paper included in this spring edition is by Jenny McDougall,

Caroline Henderson-Brooks and Bobby Harreveld on the Australian university experience for students from CALD backgrounds. Their paper, entitled “**They can slip through the cracks**”. **Supporting domestic CALD students as they begin university** draws on research concerned with giving voice to a student cohort sometimes forgotten about by equity and inclusion administrators.

Our third paper brings an international perspective. Written by Mohammed Amine Douai it is called **Motivating adult learners to join literacy programs in Morocco**. Douai discusses factors which impact and shape the experiences of adults dipping their toes into some uncomfortable waters to improve their reading and writing skills at different life stages.

Our final article comes from Xinglin Jin who writes of some features of continued learning and professional development for VET teachers. Her research, set in China and entitled, **The characteristics of expert feedback in vocational teachers’ professional learning**, celebrates some of the benefits of experience and knowledge.

Dr. Piper Rodd

23 September 2025