

Community Colleges Australia 2022 Year in Review

During 2022, Community Colleges Australia (CCA) reinforced its position and role as Australia's leading advocate for the not-for-profit adult and community education (ACE) sector.

Major events:

- A ground-breaking in-person conference in September – the first in three years – engaged many of Australia's most stimulating and powerful skills and training experts, with almost 150 participants and speakers; and
- A half-day virtual summit in April reached 150 participants from 120 organisations and political representatives from 5 jurisdictions.

Significant political engagement with the new Commonwealth Government as well as the New South Wales, Victorian, South Australian and Queensland governments, with:

- a record number of submissions (11) and formal presentations (8) at external conferences and hearings
- participation on several national advisory and steering committees
- communicating the ability and capacity of Australian ACE providers to make a strong difference, especially on the current training issues of foundation skills, aged care and early childhood

Communications: A comprehensive strategy of engagement, publicity and promotions ensured members, governments and skills sector leaders were kept abreast of CCA's work and ACE issues through newsletters, social media, news items, reports and other publications.

Member growth added almost 8% to the membership during 2022.



Representation and Advocacy

The biggest political event of the year was the Commonwealth election in late May. CCA was well-positioned for the election, having established strong relationships with all political parties and a communications plan. We distributed a comprehensive election briefing to almost 200 candidates in all major parties and all states and territories, focusing on candidates in seats where CCA members are most active. Following the election, CCA

engaged with the new Labor Government, meeting with the new Skills Minister and the new Assistant Minister for Charities.

CCA kept extensive representation activities, participating in eight important groups:

- Australian Government Foundation Skills Advisory Group, a new group established by new Commonwealth Skills Minister Brendan O'Connor, announced in his presentation to the CCA Annual Conference in September
- ASQA Provider Roundtable

- Australian Government Department of Employment and Workforce Relations (DEWAR) VET National Stakeholder Committee
- Reading Writing Hotline National Steering Group
- NSW Department of Education CCA Reference Group
- NSW Skills Board Provider Reference Group
- Victorian ACE Peaks Network
- Brotherhood of St Laurence National Youth Employment Body (NYEB) Advisory Committee

Major Submissions

CCA completed a record 11 written submissions in 2022:

- NSW Government on Smart and Skilled tender and implications for NSW ACE
- Vulnerable and disadvantaged students of NSW adult and community education providers (to be released in January in the lead-up to the NSW election)
- Vulnerable and disadvantaged students of Victorian adult and community education providers
- What “Free TAFE” means for Australian ACE providers – sent to Commonwealth and all state/territory skills ministers
- Jobs and Skills Summit submission to Commonwealth Minister Brendan O’Connor
- National Jobs and Skills Summit briefing
- Inequality in Australia: How does vocational education and training address it? – presentation by CCA CEO, Dr Don Perlgut
- CCA 2022 National Election Briefing prior to the May national election
- Outreach proposal to re-engage disadvantaged learners impacted by COVID-19 (Three north coast NSW CCA members – ACE Colleges in Lismore, Byron Community College and North Coast Community College – each received \$50,000 for outreach/engagement from NSW Government)
- Report to NSW Government on COVID-19 impact on NSW ACE providers
- Pre-Budget Submission to the NSW Government on infrastructure maintenance funding for ACE

Events



Grahame Neville and Conference MC Chemene Sinson *Evelyn Goodwin, Dr Don Perlgut, Clare Harris with Chemene Sinson*

Our highly successful **national conference** in September – with the theme “Rebuilding Community” – was CCA’s first major in-person event since 2019. The 150 participants, including speakers and exhibitors, with MC Chemene Sinson, was probably CCA’s most successful conference ever held.

Highlights:

- A record 45 different speakers, including one live from Ukraine, a *Time* magazine member of the “most influential people of 2021” list, and a well-received session on foundation skills

- Sold-out sponsor exhibition, with highly successful discussions between conference delegates and exhibitors
- Great conference dinner, which included the Awards ceremony for the Community Education Trainer of the Year and in-person acknowledgements for eight CCA member senior leaders recently retired or are about to retire



David Collins PSM and Peter Wilson

National ACE Summit half-day online event in April, with 150 participants representing 120 different organisations, including presentations from four skills ministers: Commonwealth, New South Wales, Victoria and just-elected South Australia, along with a live panel discussion with three shadow state skills ministers – VIC, NSW and QLD.

In addition to the first-ever **Community Education Trainer of the Year Awards**, CCA ran an online **2021 Community Education Student of the Year Awards** in February, attended by about 150 people from 50 different locations, and a welcome by the NSW Skills Minister.

Networking and professional development events included 23 online CEOs and VET Managers network meetings, professional development mentoring for VET Managers and PD sessions for member administrative staff.

Presentations and Communications

In addition to publishing 64 news items and distributing 17 electronic newsletters to almost 2000 recipients, CCA staff presented to a record eight (8) external conferences and events:

- Engagement Australia [“The Engaged University Conference”](#), Sydney, on “Engaging vulnerable and disadvantaged students: Lessons from Australia’s adult and community education providers”, by Dr Don Perlgut, CEO.
- National Youth Employment Body (NYEB) Community of Practice, [Brotherhood of St Laurence](#), on Australian ACE providers, outreach and delivery of foundation skills, by CEO Dr Don Perlgut
- Australian Government Productivity Commission [public hearing](#), on how ACE providers can assist Australian productivity, by Dr Don Perlgut
- Women in Adult and Vocational Education (WAVE) [National Forum](#) “Inequality in Australia: What Can VET Do?”, by Dr Don Perlgut
- National Vocational Education and Training Research ([NCVER](#)) Conference ‘No Frills’, “Inequality in Australia: What can vocational education and training do?”, by Dr Don Perlgut – [Link to video presentation \(25’39”\)](#) and download a copy of the slides [through VOCEDplus](#).
- [AVETRA 24th Annual Conference](#): *Are we there yet? Building a research community to shape VET’s future* “Inequality in Australia: How does vocational education and training address it?”, online, by Dr Don Perlgut. [Download a copy of the presentation \(PDF\)](#).
- VERTO Conference “Australia’s Adult and Community Education in Perspective”, Blue Mountains, by Dr Don Perlgut
- National Skills Commission, “The role and function of Australia’s adult and community education providers”, to the Pricing and Performance Branch, by Dr Don Perlgut

Finance and Administration

CCA maintained a stable complement of three professional staff during the year, with its CEO, Manager Policy & Projects and Office Manager. There have been no changes for more than three years, preventing disruption at a time that many organisations have seen rapid staff turnover. Strong use of Zoom and Teams digital video platforms enabled CCA staff to continue to engage members, governments and key stakeholders in a highly efficient way.

Membership and Member Health



CCA visit to ACE Community Colleges, Lismore

CCA CEO, Dr Don Perlgut (far right) visits Byron Community College, Mullumbimby

At the end of 2022, CCA received and accepted three new membership applications, all from quality not-for-profit NSW community education providers, two of them Aboriginal organisations.

Despite extensive administrative, financial and business challenges, no CCA member student teaching location closed its doors during the three years of the COVID-19 pandemic, although a few changes have occurred in ownership structures.

The CCA Board continued to renew its membership with new Directors and the organisation is well-positioned to continue to assist its members and the Australian ACE sector, which will continue to make a positive difference to the large number of vulnerable and disadvantaged adult learners and communities that ACE providers serve.

Community Colleges Australia

12 January 2023