President's column

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The president's column is a chance to share reports about ACCE activity and to make comment on issues of significance to the members of state CEGs. In this president's column, I will combine these two purposes and also draw your attention to recent activity completed by the president on your behalf. In this column, I particularly want to make some remarks about ACCE's development of a Statement about the Learning Technology Competency Movement in Australia.

It is useful in this first issue for the year to remind readers of AEC, that The Council consists of 9 members; the computer education groups of each state and territory and the Australian Computer Society. The ACCE Board contains 9 people; 7 of whom represent their CEG, one who represents ACS and a representative of TEFA. ACCE is funded by capitation from state groups, conference capitation, national journal overseas subscriptions and management fees for occasional projects undertaken by the Board. ACCE has a number of specific tasks which include ensuring the journal and national conference activities occur, hosting the ACCE Educator of the Year, and advocacy at national and international level, though its core role is to support Computer Education Groups as they care for their members. Recently the Board has undertaken some national projects, a development which recognises the strategic position of ACCE and its expertise. For a small group of people, the ACCE Board's efforts on your behalf, are quite extraordinary.

In 1998, ACCE began a project to develop a Statement about the Learning Technology Competency Movement in Australia, on behalf of all member groups of ACCE. There was a significant data collection activity at the ACEC 98 in Adelaide and some research has been completed. While the statement of positions for ACCE will be printed in the second issue of the year, it is extremely important that all members of CEGs have opportunity to react to the ACCE positions, before the Statement is published in final form. This consultation will occur in a number of forums. The draft statement has been published on the ACCE Web site (www.acce.edu.au). Each CEG will be asked to respond to the document. Individual members of CEGs and other educators will participate in an online forum. Strategic groups like the Australian Computer Society and the Australian Education Union will provide direct input. Please have your say. Begin this now, by consulting the ACCE web site to collect the draft statement and contribute to the collections of comments. We look forward to your responses which will be collated to develop a document which represents the views of Australian teachers.

Since 1997, ACCE has been involved in a professional development project called Natcom, with the national associations from the eight key learning areas. This year, our role has been to consult with associations as they design telecommunications curriculum projects. It is clear that these associations value the expertise and knowledge of ACCE communities and that they share our determination to develop cross-curricula links and to develop innovative approaches to learning technology in schools. The project designs are very sophisticated and have strong curriculum rationales as well as embedded professional development philosophies. They will shape the future for online activity in the country. The project is nearing completion with proposals to potential funding bodies being developed.

As president, I have opportunities to advocate issues on your behalf, to groups like the National Office for the Information Economy and the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. In particular, I have been drawing attention to the professional development needs for early adopters, computer coordinators in schools and computer studies teachers. Recent federal budget announcements highlighted professional development in IT (their term) for the aging population of teachers.
The papers indicated that helping more teachers become involved in using IT was priority. ACCE would agree with this sentiment. However, it struck me that constantly providing funds to coerce technology-shy teachers to 'get started' was not supporting the majority of CEG members. Early adopters have taken Australia forward in the use of learning technology and deserve to be provided with resources that help them continue leadership roles. Further I am frustrated by the lack of support for the educators who take on IT management roles in schools, which inevitably include technology planning roles and professional development roles. I have also become very vocal about the omission of computer studies teachers from professional development agendas.

It seems that the ACCE voice was loud enough. We were invited to provide a discussion paper for DEETYA to consider in their budget discussions and the AEU have asked to discuss this issue with the ACCE Board at their next meeting. This paper is available from the ACCE web site. Please share the ideas within your communities and raise awareness of the needs of members of our professional community.

Last issue, I commented on ACCE’s role in supporting the rejuvenation of the Computer Education Group of the Northern Territory (CEANT). Progress has been made with Northern Territory teacher Marg Littler working with a local team to begin the activities. Marg will meet with the ACCE Board later in the year and will be invited to use this journal to share news of NT computer education.

In the remainder of the year ACCE will finalise the MACCE membership tiers, help CEGV plan ACEC 2000 in Melbourne and continue construction of online services to CEGs. ACCE will also finalise development of a proposal for a 2000 Natcom project and plan the development of further strategic documents to shape Australian Education.

I wish you well for the remainder of 1999 and I invite you to contact me by email about any issues you would like ACCE to pursue.

Regards
Michelle Williams
President ACCE.

The Board of the Australian Council for Computers in Education (ACCE) is delighted to announce that the recipient of the 1999 ACCE Educator of the year is Jeremy Connel from Brisbane Grammar School. Jeremy is also the QSITE Computer Educator of the Year.

The standard of nominations for the ACCE Educator of the Year was excellent. The work of educators across the country is testimony to the quality of educational activities found everywhere.

Jeremy, is an active and long serving member of QSITE and has been prominent in computer education and computer studies communities in Queensland. He has contributed to the development and shaping of computer studies syllabuses in Queensland and has been QSITE’s representative on the Board of Senior School Studies Subject Advisory Committee on Computer Studies and member of the State Panel (Work program development and Assessment) for several years.

ACCE has also recognised the contributions of Jennifer Elwin from South Australia. Jennifer is respected and well known in South Australia for her creative ideas, clever curriculum interpretation and knowledge and for her volunteer work in CEGSA.

ACCE Educator of the year 1999

(From the right) ACCE Educator of the Year Jeremy Connel, Nina Netherway CEGV ACCE board member, Anne McDougall Australian Computer Society representative on the ACCE board and Jennifer Elwin.