



# Australasian Conference Agreement

6 June 2014

## 1. The Parties

This document constitutes an **Agreement** between the Action Learning, Action Research Association Inc (ALARA) and CultureShift Pty Ltd.

## 2. Purpose

This Agreement records that the identified parties agree to deliver the ALARA Australasian Conference in 2014.

This document provides background to the parties and the event, states the mutual interest of the parties, agreed **milestones, and responsibilities and outcomes** of the 2014 ALARA Australasian Conference.

It is understood to be the **terms of reference** within which the Conference will be delivered.

As such, it is the first reference to inform communications, planning, implementation and evaluation of the Conference.

Through this Agreement the signatories recognise each other as important organisations in the Australian and international effort to advance Action Learning and Action Research in the realisation of a more just and sustainable world.

## 3. Background to the Parties

### a) ALARA Inc

- Legal status

ALARA (previously, ALARPM) is an incorporated association registered with the Department of Fair Trading, Queensland, Australia in 1991.

ALARA is administered by a contracted, professional administrator, and managed by an annually elected, voluntary Management Committee whose members are drawn from the whole financial membership.



ALARA is funded by membership fees and activities. It has members in over ten countries. ALARA's Management Committee is charged to manage ALARA's human and financial resources and activities in the interests of its members and its constitutional vision and objective.

- Statements of intent:

The ALARA vision is:

“that Action Learning and Action Research will be widely used and publicly shared by individuals and groups creating local and global change for the achievement of a more equitable, just, joyful, productive, peaceful and sustainable society.”

The ALARA objective is:

“to promote by all available means the scientific study, practice, research and teaching of Action Learning, Action Research, and to bring together those of whatsoever professional discipline who are concerned with Action Learning ( AL), Action Research (AR) and Process Management (PM).”

CultureShift Pty Ltd

- CultureShift is a company limited by guarantee. The company has specialised in delivering research and consultancy services in participatory action research, action learning and participatory evaluation strategies in social and environmental policy and practice research since 1990.
- CultureShift is a management consultancy with a difference. As a social enterprise we continuously work to our clients' self-reliance in converting their own potential to meet their needs *themselves*. We do this through our specialisation in *participatory knowledge production* - valuing people's first-hand experience, enabling them to work together to create powerful questions, and supporting them as they find their answers to achieve their goals in everyday, credible and practical ways. We have a particular dedication to inter-generational health and wellbeing in cross-cultural relationships with First nations peoples.

#### 4. The ALARA Australasian Conference

ALARA has conducted Australasian Conferences since 1996 and they usually incorporate the ALARA Annual General Management (AGM). The Conference may be delivered as in-house, ALARA members only, management function, or in partnership with external organisations open to non-members. This Agreement applies to a conference that is



delivered through a partnership. As such, it reflects equity in the interests and risks that both (and all) parties have in delivering the event.

The ALARA Australasian Conference is an opportunity for ALARA to work with partner organisations to strengthen Action Learning and Action Research in Australasia (and beyond) and the use of such practices in diverse social sectors.

As a partnership event, the Conference enables the meeting between ALARA members and members of the partner organisation(s) and their networks to explore new issues and directions, to develop practice and to incorporate new fields of engagement in Action Learning and Action Research approaches.

Australasian Conferences are open to non-ALARA members, however ALARA may wish to make non-members financial members through their registration fees (unless they expressly wish for this not to be the case). If ALARA membership is included in the registration fee, the Conference registration form must include an option not to be registered as an ALARA Member.

The Conferences recognise the need to support the unwaged and any participants who are actively engaged in marginalised, high need areas of development. The Conferences also wish to recognise the need for environmental sustainability.

## **5. Working with ALARA**

ALARA is an equal partner in the Australasian Conference “project”. We contribute seed funding and membership resources including voluntary labour, networking and expertise, to assist with the establishment of each conference venture. We work to blend the interests of Conference Partners with our organisation through ongoing dialogue, documentation, provision of resources and formal decision making at specific milestone deliveries as detailed in the milestone schedule in this Agreement.

The ALARA Management Committee is concerned and committed to the formal aspects of making and keeping this Agreement, as well as the tasks and commitments of project management. We relate with the Conference Partner with a working assumption that the same respect for the Agreement is shared.

We take these responsibilities seriously in the interests of each of our organisations’ members’ and staff investment, in the respect awarded to ALARA as an internationally respected professional association and to our partner organisation, and in the interests of strengthening the partnership relationship as reflected in this Agreement for the future.

To this end, the ALARA Management Committee delegates the ALARA Australasian Vice President (hereafter referred to as “ALARA Executive Representative”) with governance responsibilities for this Agreement, and to facilitate communication and engagement with partner representatives and ALARA members. There are also specific duties of care,



which the Management Committee supports the ALARA Executive Representative to facilitate with our Conference Partner representative:

- The Conference Partner representative is invited to engage with ALARA's President to understand the Conference's responsibilities to each organisation, including strategic development and core values
- Likewise, to engage with ALARA's Administrator prior to contract signing to familiarise the partner organisation's administration with ALARA's administration, exchanging communication, invoicing and auditing details for example
- Likewise, to engage with ALARA's Treasurer to understand the financial planning, resourcing and value of the Conference from all parties' points of view

After signing the contract, the ALARA Executive Representative will introduce the Conference Partner representative to the ALARA Working Group whose members will negotiate support and creative development of the Conference approach in reference to their key portfolio responsibilities: web page, publication, membership and marketing and special interest groups.

## 6. Working with CultureShift

CultureShift is a Collective of independent action researchers. Our Collective members are located throughout urban and regional Australia, New Zealand and the Asia Pacific. Additionally two of our members, Ross Colliver and Vicki Vaartjes are active members of the ALARA Management Committee and Susan Goff is the Association's Managing Editor for their journal.

As Principal of the company, Susan is responsible for all executive decision-making and formal consent processes. That is: any decisions related to financial, practical, reputational or other business risks and opportunities that could affect any member of the Collective or the overall market visibility and value of CultureShift need to be deferred to Susan. To some degree this includes methodological decision-making regarding the approach of the conference, as such issues relate to company reputation and viability. Susan will participate in ALARA committee meetings for such discussions and decisions via Skype.

However, we also act through a principle of collective self-determination, which means that within this level of executive decision-making (once such a decision has been made by Susan in consultation with the Collective), then individual members are invited to carry out decision-making on behalf of the Collective and their decisions will be upheld.

Thus Ross and Vicki have the trust of the Collective to act in its interests as well as those of ALARA on the committee.



The exceptions to such decisions are those that have general or specific consequences for Indigenous interests (conference approach, focus or attendee interests, for example). At such times Susan or the Collective member involved is to consult with Indigenous Collective members and communicate their considerations back to Susan first, then the ALARA committee.

As Susan is located near the conference venue she will carry conduct the arrangements needed with local interests in the Canberra region (venues, promotions, local members etc).

The ALARA Management Committee and Conference Partner agree to work with each organisation's values, resources, administration and financial planning to realise both the spirit and the intent of this Agreement.

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## **7. Mutual Interest of the Parties**

### **a) Theme**

The agreed theme for the 2014 ALARA Australasian Conference is:

“The Circle of Fire: an Asian-Pacific construction of Action Learning and Action Research.”

The parties share interests in this theme as discussed below:

To date there has been no explicit investigation into the actual characteristics of action research and action learning that are developing in the Asia-Pacific ring of fire. Mostly there have been adaptations of European theorists, or local theorisations and applications that have emerged and been modified through European-originated disciplinary schools and fields. This conference honours these inheritances and also inquires into the possibilities of recognising others to spark a new critical mass for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Asia-Pacific ring holds within it a richness of indigenous, colonial and post-colonial traditions drawn from some of the world's oldest traditions (Aboriginal Australia, Asia, Canada and the Americas, the Pacific nations) facing some of the world's most pressing issues in the most pressing ways: climate change, ocean pollution and food security; population growth and movement including human exploitation; governance, freedom, democracy and learning; and economic viability, for example. At the heart of the issues is the broadly shared experience of colonisation and subsequent variants of decolonisation, including the need for

systemic viability in post-colonial terms. Aid in particular has played an important role in bringing AR and AL to the region, an intervention with very mixed intentions and outcomes and which has little back-flowing or reflexive influence on the governments and corporates funding the aid.

Our conference proposes that action research and action learning are evidently viable and effective means for appreciating what has happened, and working in these dynamic and high-pressure settings to recognise a latent critical mass to spark confidence in the practices. It also gives delegates the opportunity to explore that if this is so, what kind of action research and action learning is emerging as culturally recognised and valued forms of the practice for this region. The metaphor of a ring of fire explains both the region and also the concept of radical renewal.

## **b) Approach**

The agreed approach to the Conference is:

Two separate events taking place in the one-week following the same pattern of activities around two distinctive themes, which together make up the foundations of the ring of fire:

Theme 1: Indigenous self-determination, and  
Theme 2: Structural adjustment.

The selected venue is a retreat, which accommodates up to 30 attendees in single and shared rooms. The conference room holds up to 40 people. Because of the small-scale of the venue and the preference for small numbers for maximum participation at the conference, two separate events are required to make the conference financially viable and systemically effective.

Each of the two events will follow a delivery pattern of:

- a) A conference dinner to meet and discuss the approach, and celebrate new Life Members if so required
- b) A first day which uses Open Space Technology (OST) approaches to enable participants to engage with each other, the themes and to develop their thinking
- c) A second day which follows a pre-designed scenario for each theme, drawn from attendees' papers and worked with by a pre-selected team of action research and action learning specialists who deliberate and facilitate the methodological choice of inquiry in full transparency to the participating co-attendees. Both second days follow a pattern of four, two-hour sessions that progress the scenarios for each theme. The pattern is: a) AR AL team deliberation (20 minutes); facilitated workshop with conference attendees as scenario actors (1 hour); post workshop reflections and documentation (30 minutes); a refresher break before initiating the next two hour session (10 minutes).

CultureShift will facilitate the overall event, including the selection of papers and AR and AL team members, but will be in a background role (time keeper) at the event. While the event has some business opportunities (and risks) for CultureShift the



intention is to give fellow expertise equal billing to strengthen the field, and for participants to take responsibility within the time available for ensuring that the patterns are kept intact.

At the conference event members of the CultureShift Collective will be responsible for:

- a) Registration, information, social media and hosting roles
- b) Liaising between the participants, special guests and the venues
- c) Coaching the adherence to the conference's methodological commitments (Open Space Technology, methodological discourses, scenario enactments, reflective learning, debriefing and closures).

The parties share interests in this approach as discussed below:

- a) The development of a model of engagement for use in other AR and AL conferences
- b) A co-authoring and co-production of Asian-Pacific constructions of AL and AR to be published in a Handbook on the Circle of Fire: Asian-Pacific constructions of AR and AL for the twenty-first century (working title)

### **c) Impacts and Outcomes**

The parties have interests in the impacts and outcomes of the Conference that benefit their organisations, stakeholders and other areas of interest as discussed:

- a) The recognition and development of a stronger (connected, recognised) Asia-Pacific community of AL and AR practice
- b) Increased membership of ALARA
- c) Increased understanding and willingness to engage with action learning and action research methodologies in public policy, corporate management, academic scholarship and community development in the Asia-Pacific region
- d) The recognition of Asia-Pacific constructions of AR and AL that are drawn from assimilations of local and other regional traditions of learning, collaboration, deliberation and action
- e) Increased collegial respect, communication and support of AR and AL leadership in the region to practically build the region's capacity for transformation in a manner that advances ALARA's vision
- f) Significant AR and AL refreshment and nourishment of all who participate.

## **8. Milestones**

The agreed Milestone Schedule includes the delivery of the Conference Profit and Loss statement, Conference Budget, Conference Project Plan and Conference Marketing Plan. These documents are the responsibility of the Conference Organising Team to produce

and deliver. Templates are available on request from ALARA through the ALARA Executive Representative.

The Conference Organising Team agrees to be responsible for the delivery of these documents according to the following Milestone Schedule (please replace generic dates with specific details):

Conference Milestone	Date to be completed
Submission of Expression of Interest and draft Agreement to ALARA Executive for formal endorsement	T-11 months
Establishment of Conference Organising Team and communication systems/schedule	T – 10 months
Submission of 4 documents to ALARA Executive for endorsement: a) Conference Profit and Loss Proposal, with differing participant numbers, b) Conference Marketing Plan and c) Conference Project Plan d) Conference budget (Templates available through ALARA)	T – 9 months
ALARA Executive approval of Conference Budget, Marketing Plan and Project Plan	T – 8 months
First pre-Conference review of performance against Project Plan by ALARA Executive and Working Group	T – 7 months
Finalisation of Conference facilities and programme. Approval by ALARA Executive	T – 7 months
Call for abstracts/papers/participants	T – 6 months
Meeting between Conference Organising Group and ALARA Working Group to plan final 6 months of project management and delivery	T – 6 months
Conference marketing begins	T – 6 months
Early bird registration commences	T – 6 months
Second pre-Conference review of performance against Project Plan with ALARA Executive	T – 3 months
ALARA Executive approval to proceed with Conference or cancellation due to lack of registrations	T – 2.5 months
Venue cut-off date for return of deposit if Conference cancelled	T – 2 months
Final Conference Organising Team meeting with ALARA Executive	T – 2 weeks





Conference Milestone	Date to be completed
Conference	T
Post-Conference evaluation and meeting with Conference Organising Team	T + 1 month
ALARA receives return of seed funding if used, and profit, if any, distributed	T + 3 months
Conference accounts reconciled, audited and closed Agreement concluded	T + 4 months

## 9. The Conference Organising Team

To effect this Agreement and deliver the Milestones a **Conference Organising Team** is formed. This Team has equitable representation from the partners, with clearly identified roles for Conference delivery responsibilities as described in the Milestone Schedule.

The Conference Coordinator chairs the Organising Team and may be either (1) the ALARA Executive Representative or (2) a representative of the partner organisation, who would report to the ALARA Executive Representative as agreed by the Organising Team.

The ALARA Executive Representative will represent the Conference Organising Team at the Executive and will support the Team's formation, progress and completion as agreed by all parties.

It is agreed that the Conference Coordinator for the 2014 Australasian Conference is:  
Dr Susan Goff

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From (name of organisation)

CultureShift Pty Ltd

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It is agreed that the members of the Conference Organising Team and their roles are:

Name	Organisation	Contact	Role
Susan Goff	CultureShift	+61 (0) 40-9139-634	Conference Co-ordinator
Ross Colliver	CultureShift	+ 61 (0) 41-122-	CultureShift point

		6519	person on ALARA committee
Dan Menges	CultureShift	+61 (0) 45-029-3582	Conference Management Support
Desley Lodwick	CultureShift	+ 61 (0) 41-258-9222	Participant engagement coach
John Molineux	ALARA	+61 (0) 3 9251-7290	ALARA Treasurer and representative
Colin Bradley	ALARA	+61 (0) 421-478-670	ALARA President and occasional member

The Conference Organising Team agrees to:

- Meet at least monthly and more regularly as the Schedule nears Conference delivery
- To reschedule meetings within a week of any cancelled meetings
- To ensure that all represented parties are informed of meeting dates and times well in advance of the meeting to enable them to be included in meetings and decisions made
- To minute meetings and send minutes of Team Meetings within two days of the meeting to the ALARA Minute Secretary by email, ensuring that the minutes are received
- To not proceed with actions outside of Agreements including budgeting, marketing and event management actions unless formally endorsed by the ALARA Executive
- To receive responses from the Executive and the Working Group to endorse milestones and support the delivery of the Conference Project and Marketing Plans
- To talk with ALARA Executive about difficulties that threaten preparation for the Conference, including difficulties in working relationships with ALARA, and to request help when needed either through the ALARA Executive Representative or any other member of the ALARA Management Committee
- To notify the ALARA Executive Representative of any matter that threatens the delivery of the agreed Project and Marketing Plan and the Conference Budget
- To work within the terms of reference of this Agreement



Add any other matters:

CultureShift will meet the ALARA committee's investment of \$2000 seed funding to support Conference costs.

## 10. The ALARA Management Committee

To support the Conference Organising Team the ALARA Management Committee agrees to:

- Engage in reflection, advice and endorsement of any matters that require Executive support to progress the Team's responsibilities in a timely manner
- To provide a recoverable \$2000 seed funding to support Conference costs
- To liaise with ALARA membership directly to promote the event, to garner specific skills and to provide any other assistance that the Team requires
- To provide public indemnity insurance for Conference participants if required
- To provide website, marketing, special interest group and publications service support as negotiated with the ALARA Executive Representative
- To provide Conference registration services and electronic payment facilities if required

Add any other matters:

Nil

## 11. The Conference Budget

ALARA and the Conference Partner agree that the financial objective of the Conference is to make a profit and that the budget should be formulated with appropriate risks considered e.g. low numbers of registrations. It is agreed that:

- Unless agreed otherwise, ALARA will create and manage a Conference Account into which all registrations will be paid, and from which all expenses will be paid or reimbursed
- Profits and losses (if they eventuate) from the event are shared equally between all parties
- Registration fees and all other budgeted items include a small cost to cover ALARA administration and handling costs



- When ALARA and the Conference Partner agree to include ALARA membership fees in the Registration fees, financial ALARA members will be offered a reduced fee reflecting their financial status within ALARA
- ALARA and the Conference Partner financial members pay an agreed reduced price
- Registrations for the Conference will be managed via the website pages created by ALARA, unless ALARA and the Conference Partner agree on an alternative method
- Scholarships and other forms of subsidies for students and those from economically marginalised communities are factored into the budget where they are sustainable
- A 10% contingency fund is included in the budget
- ALARA seed funding will be returned to ALARA after budgeted costs are paid and before profits are shared

Add other matters:

CultureShift project team members will receive a modest fee for delivering the conference as itemised in the budget.

## 12. Recognition

It is agreed that:

- The original owners of the land on which the Conference will take place will be welcomed to the event and recognised in formal proceedings
- Published and unpublished authors from any under-recognised demography and under-recognised Action Research and Action Learning innovations and who substantially contribute to Action Research and Action Learning, will be recognised in Conference proceedings
- The parties to this Agreement will be promoted in all ALARA's events and marketing materials for the duration of this Agreement including web page, local workshops and journal publications
- The parties to this Agreement will be promoted at the Conference as agreed by the Conference Organising Team in agreement with ALARA's Management Committee
- One complimentary Conference registration and ALARA membership will be offered to one representative of each partner organisation
- Publication opportunities in the ALARA journal will be open to Conference participants agreeing to ALARA Publication Working Group editorial review



### **13. Life Members**

The ALARA Australasian Conference is an opportunity to celebrate our Life Members, by conferring Life Membership Awards on worthy recipients. A short ceremony to confer the Award may be included in the AGM, Conference Dinner or as a separate event. It is agreed that should a nomination for Life Membership Award occur, and the ALARA Executive believe that the conferring of the Award be held in a separate event, the Conference program will include such an event.

### **14. The AGM**

ALARA usually holds its AGM at the Australasian Conference, but may hold this at an alternate time. It is agreed that, when required, the Conference program will include adequate time for all ALARA members, including all Conference delegates who agree to become ALARA members, to participate in the AGM. The AGM includes a collective deliberation about the progress of the organisation. ALARA may provide light refreshments at the AGM at its own cost.

### **15. Evaluation**

It is agreed that an evaluation strategy will support the Conference as agreed by the Conference Organising Team. This strategy will include:

- Participatory evaluation at the beginning of Day 1 and conclusion of Day 2
- Project evaluation on completion of audit and all financial transactions from the ALARA committee and the CultureShift project group.

### **16. Other Conference Partners**

Any other Conference Partner agreements will be formalised in a similar Agreement between ALARA, the partners and a representative from the other organisation, outlining the extent of the partnership. However, on signing the Agreement, the additional partnering parties will report directly to the Conference Organising Team unless unforeseen matters arise which risk jeopardising the terms of this Agreement and supporting documents, and/or requiring ALARA Management Committee support. In such an instance, the ALARA Executive Representative should be contacted as the first point of communication and decision making on behalf of the ALARA Executive.



## **17. Period of Agreement, Modification and Termination**

The terms of this Agreement are effective for all named parties upon signing the Agreement. The Agreement will be reviewed and where necessary updated at turning points in the delivery of the Conference Project Plan.

Any signing party can terminate this Agreement by providing written notice to the other parties 28 days (1 month) prior to termination of the Agreement on the presentation of matters that would deem such a significant act to both the Conference Organising Team and the ALARA Executive. This right exists up to and not following two months prior to the Conference event dates.

In all other circumstances, the Agreement is considered active until final receipt of Conference financial audit and satisfaction of all Conference/workshop debt within 6 months following the Conference event.

## **18. Deliberation, Mediation and Decision-making**

The signing parties agree that this Agreement is meaningful and will be used to guide management, delivery, and risk and reward that ALARA Australasian Conference 2014 produces.

In the event of any difference of opinion, non-compliance with the conditions of the agreement or any unforeseen difficulty arising as a priority of business all parties agree to:

- a) Advise the other party(ies) of the disagreement verbally, and if the problem remains unresolved within three days, in writing;
- b) If the matter remains unresolved after a further seven days, to enter into mediation with trusted parties as a priority of business before any decisions relating to the conflicting business are taken.

In the event of such conflict, the matters will be regarded as confidential to the parties involved until other notifications are agreed.

Decision-making will be consensus based unless other forms of decision-making such as majority voting or Delphi style deliberation are agreed.

## **19. Any Other Matters**

Social Media: CultureShift is developing a Social Media strategy for promotion of events, publications and others whose actions advance decolonisation and participatory works in any field. The conference may also be advanced through this strategy including at the



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event itself, and protocols will need to be agreed as an aspect of marketing and event management.

Signed:

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Colin Bradley  
President, ALARA  
PO Box 162  
Greenslopes  
Queensland 4120

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Susan Goff  
Principal  
CultureShift Pty Ltd  
PO Box 328  
Bungendore, NSW, Australia 2621