



Australasian Conference Agreement

[DATE]

1. The Parties

This document constitutes an **Agreement** between the Action Learning, Action Research Association Inc (ALARA) and [...].

2. Purpose

This Agreement records that the identified parties agree to deliver the ALARA Australasian Conference in 20XX.

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 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

- Legal status

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

ALARA is managed by an annually elected, voluntary Management Committee whose members are drawn from the financial membership.



ALARA is funded by membership fees and activities. It has members in many 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).”

b) [...]

- Legal Status

[...]

- Statements of Intent

[...]

4. The ALARA Australasian Conference

ALARA has conducted Australasian Conferences since 1995 and they usually incorporate the ALARA Annual General Management (AGM). The Conference may be delivered in one of a number of methods, one of which is in partnership with external organisations. 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.

ALARA celebrates that all participants have valuable knowledge, skills and experience, and can share these in participatory learning practices during all Conferences and World Congresses so that personal and collective learning will occur. ALARA's desire is that this learning will result in the generation and embodiment of new knowledge that leads to better, more conscious actions in the world. The Australasian Conference itself must have a mix of learning by listening, learning by doing, sharing through discussion and through multi-dimensional learning methods. It will be experiential.

The ALARA Resource document "ALARA Conferences and Events: Creating Connection through Participatory Processes", included in [Schedule 1](#), should directly influence the structure, format and conduct of the Congress.

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 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
- ALARA's Administrator prior to Agreement signing to familiarise the partner organisation's administration with ALARA's administration, exchanging communication, invoicing and auditing details for example
- ALARA's Treasurer to understand the financial planning, resourcing and value of the Conference from all parties' points of view

After signing the Agreement, 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 [...]

[...]

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.

7. Mutual Interest of the Parties

a) Theme

The agreed theme for the 20XX ALARA Australasian Conference is:

[...]

The parties share interests in this theme as discussed below:

[...]

b) Approach

The agreed approach to the Conference is:

[...]

The parties share interests in this approach as discussed below:

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:

[...]

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 agreed 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

Conference Milestone	Date to be completed
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	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 20XX Australasian Conference is:

.....

From (name of organisation)

.....

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

Name	Organisation	Contact	Role

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:

[...]

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 \$XXXX 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:

[...]

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
- 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

[...]

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.

ALARA encourages its Life Members to attend its Australasian Conferences by providing a low special rate for those members as agreed with its partner in the Conference.

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:



[add details regarding timing, criteria, audience and management of the evaluation strategy]

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 the ALARA Australasian Conference 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

(please add material or state “no other matters”)

Signed:

[...]

[...]

[Title]

ALARA Inc
PO Box 162
Greenslopes
Queensland 4120

[...]

Dated ____ / ____ / ____

Dated ____ / ____ / ____



Schedule 1

ALARA CONFERENCES AND EVENTS: CREATING CONNECTION THROUGH PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES

Resource Document

By Deborah Lange¹

ALARA is a strategic network of people interested or involved in using action learning or action research to generate collaborative learning, research and action to transform workplaces, school, colleges, universities, communities, voluntary organizations, governments and business.

ALARA's 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 and, just and joyful, productive and sustainable society.

The purpose of this document is to create a learning culture at ALARA's conferences and events. ALARA aims to cultivate connections, and to engender participatory practices.

ALARA'S Purpose

1. To serve our members' action research and action learning practices, communities and fields of action
2. To build ALARA so it may promote AR and AL in multiple fields beyond the organization itself
3. To create the resources to actively co-operate with the global network of Action Learning and Action Research

It is fundamental that the actions of ALARA align with its purpose. The design of conferences and events need to reflect the values and beliefs of the organisation, and therefore ALARA encourage organisations with which it aligns to design events in this way.

Intentions

ALARA celebrates that all participants have valuable knowledge, skills and experience, and wants them to share these qualities in participatory learning practices so that personal and collective learning will occur. The intention is that this sharing will result in the generation and embodiment of new knowledge that leads to better, more conscious actions in the world.

ALARA events intend to bring about meaningful change through new understandings and building of communities of practice around Action Learning and Action Research.

¹ (Originally written in 2006 and updated in Oct 2012 by Deb Lange, with additions by Rosemary Shapiro-Liu, 2013, and further updated in 2014 and 2016 by ALARA)

Learning Design Overview

The conference or workshop needs to be seen as one part of three aspects of the networking and learning process:

- The **lead-up**
- The **event** itself and
- The **follow-through**.

In the lead-up and follow-through there can be networking and co-learning through a variety of methods, including online meetings, webinars, sharing of material and starting groups that will continue through the event and afterwards.

The event itself will have a mix of learning by listening, learning by doing, sharing through discussion and through multi-dimensional learning methods. It will be experiential. It is important that methods used in the event are followed through - that they are given adequate time, facilitation and support to be successful. The core value in the design of the event is the belief that each person has knowledge, skills and experience that is both valuable and useful to the other attendees. The core action is to ensure that successful sharing of the knowledge, skills and experience leads deepened learning, meaningful change and carefully chosen actions.

The conference or event needs time for:

- Setting personal **expectations** and expectations of one another and of the content;
- Personal **journaling or documenting**;
- **Support for people to create an action plan** (basically, reflection on action, plans for new action and ways of being supported in trying new actions).

By the end of such an event, the participants should be satisfied that they have:

- **Shared** their knowledge, skills and experience;
- Have **been exposed** to new or interesting action learning and action research practices;
- Have **chosen** in which areas they might amplify or accelerate their own practices; and
- Have **found people** with whom to learn or network if needed.

Multi-dimensional learning methods

The use of multi-dimensional learning methods is increasing globally. These developments are based on beliefs of the existence of multi-dimensional learning modalities. The following principles and intentions are based on this belief of multiple modes of learning to enhance our multiple intelligences. In order to honour the principles and intentions of ALARA and give participants the opportunity to feel that they have had a life-changing, or life-enhancing experience, multi-dimensional learning methods are encouraged.

1. The Action Learning Systemic Cycle is an integral part of the design and evaluation of conferences and events. There are opportunities for:

1. Being open, questioning
2. Pattern/sense making/reflection
3. Synthesising and enabling new learning to emerge
4. Creating applications in the world
5. Planning actions and new ways of working after the event

2. Individual and group learning

The whole conference and individual sessions offer the opportunity for:

1. Individual reflection

2. Group hub learning
3. Collective whole group learning

3. Core elements

The event makes use of various types of sessions, with an action learning facilitator integrating the parts into a whole with introductory and continuity processes. The event might make use of:

1. Keynote sessions
2. Learning hubs for reflection
3. Parallel sessions that are experiential and informative
4. Cross-over sessions where lightning sharing from events that people have not attended fill them in on the gaps
5. Open space time
6. A coming together at the beginning and the end (of each day and) of the event to synthesise

4. All modes of learning are considered and included if possible:

1. Auditory
2. Kinaesthetic

5. Multiple realms and mediums of human experience are explored:

1. Physical sensory
2. Historical/psychological
3. Emotional
4. Spiritual

In addition, music, dance, art, nature, physical learning and sharing can be used, for example:

- **Arts based mediums are integrated; for example:**
 1. Physical sensory: movement, dance, drama
 2. Visual art/imagery: drawing, painting,
 3. Sensory material: music, colour,
 4. Imagination: Storytelling, poetry
 5. Voice: singing, chanting
- **Nature based mediums are integrated; for example:**
 1. If possible, there are workshops and experiential sessions occurring in the natural environment.
 2. That experiential session/s occur by reflecting on the day with nature, e.g. walking outside in silence; being drawn to something in the natural environment, e.g. a leaf, tree, pebble, animal, clouds, water etc.; and through a process of deep connection, silent meditation with that natural element asking what that element is sharing, teaching, what is this element expressing, what does it want you to know?
 3. Natural materials: seed pods, rice, grains, pebbles – perhaps natural materials collected sensitively from the area to contribute to a collective or individual sculpture or mandala making

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Appendix 1: Process Design Examples:

The following activities are examples of how to evolve and deepen the learning throughout events.

These are suggestions and can be modified as a result of collaborating / conversing with the conference/event organizers about the intention and content of the program.

Option 1: Visual Art

Participants can have available materials to reflect, play and learn with, for example:

Art materials could be made available where an ongoing, developing mural of individual and collective learning could organically grow. This mural could in a space where people can walk past to add their imagery, poetry, paste collages and stories, etc.

This activity could roll out as a learning journey: i.e. a mural over the consecutive days of the events

Mural for Day 1
Mural for Day 2
Mural for Day 3

Option 2: Integration of learning through movement, story, dance, play: A Symphony of Learning

At the end of each day, people could be invited to form groups and integrate their learning through movement, story, dance, play. These groups could remain the same each day for this process. This would also add an element of connection with a small family of people. 6-10 people in each group.

The sequence of these ideas can be designed over any timeframe.

Example for a 3-day event:

Each day could have a theme that develops with the conference themes and integrates learning modalities.

Day 1: the emphasis on seeking out new knowledge, being open, questions, and stories of what brought people here and what they are seeking.
This could be recording as an oral story, writing poetry, creating a movement, dance, drawing a symbol or an image

Day 2: the emphasis on seeing patterns, making sense of the information, knowledge from the conference and the people and the environment

Day 3: the emphasis on what has been learnt, what could be applied, new questions. On the final day, the groups could share their Symphony of Learning with another group and involve the other group in their creation.

Option 3: Silence to allow new ideas to emerge

There could also be a time for silence in the program, daily. This allows synthesis, reflection – my experience in conferences is that many people feel full up with information – and silence and stillness allows this to settle and let new ideas to emerge.

Option 4: Nature for reflection

One or more experiential session/s could occur by reflecting on the day with nature e.g. walking outside in silence; being drawn to something in the natural environment e.g. a leaf, tree, pebble, animal, clouds, water etc.; and through a process of deep connection, silent meditation with that natural element asking what that element is sharing, teaching, what is this element expressing, what does it want you to know? Sharing this reflection with a partner.

Nature for creating a mandala

If the natural materials that have been used for the reflection are able to be collected e.g. a pebble, seed pod, etc., they may be used to create a nature mandala as a symbol for the conference. Or the participants could be asked to sensitively bring something from their environment to the conference that they will join together and create a mandala from all of the participants' contributions.

Option 5: Beginning the conference/event each day

Song and dance are wonderful ways to connect and create community. To develop the community of the conference a circle dance, or dance of universal peace, and/or a chant or song could be danced/sung together.

Option 6: Ritual for Opening and Closing the conference/event

A ritual honouring the land and all of our past teachers and all of us as teachers and learners could be created for the conference opening and closing.

Option 7: Celebration

In the evening arts based activities could be applied to celebrate and create community e.g. dance, storytelling, poetry readings, theatre.

Option 8: Visual Imagery and Music

Evocative images of nature and the planet portraying the themes of the conference could be played in the foyer or main room. Participants could be invited to record symbols, poetry, creative writing after being immersed in the imagery and music.

Option 9: Open Space and Conversation Cafes

“Open Space” time and conversation café time as the design for conferences/events or integrated into the design.

Option 10: Circle Dialogue

Circle dialogue or an “Elder Circle” designed as an integral part of an event.



Option 11: Invitation to Participants

Participants can be invited to prepare to co-create the learning culture prior to attending. An outline of ways they can contribute can be prepared and forwarded in their conference material e.g. bring percussion or musical instruments, symbols from their “place” in the world etc.

Option 12: Learning Culture Hosting Team

A Learning Culture Hosting Team can be gathered together prior to the conference and/or during the conference to nurture the conference/event learning culture throughout the conference.

Option 13: Using open space to offer a mix of co-learning and didactic learning

The conference concept can be turned on its head. After introductions and expectations sessions of the conference, and perhaps one keynote address, the participants can proceed to workshops. These can be open-space driven, with a 'voting process' where time slots are allocated to ideas that people want to work with. The agenda is drawn up publically, for instance, as four half hour sessions, with four concurrent sessions (16 sessions in all). People proceed to the area of their choice for discussion. There is a 'conclusions' page from each. These are fed to the speakers, the pre-planned sessions, for the next day, and those speakers or workshop facilitators weave the information that has come out of the open space sessions into their workshops, taking up the areas that are most useful for discussion. So, the event starts with open space and moves to more formal interventions. For more information about this, contact rosemary.shapiro.liu@gmail.com

Concluding

The above are only sample brief outlines of processes. These can be enriched if there are other elements to be inter-woven into any program.