



# GLF Update

16 August 2011

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## GLF2011 UPDATE – STEPHEN PARSONS – DEPUTY DIRECTOR, LEARNING AND TEACHING UNIT, UNISA

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The year rushes past. The GLF11 participants are now really getting to know and understand one another, and yet the end of the year is in sight.

The mid-year break was perversely full of activity. The various Action Learning projects continued to take shape. The mid-year project presentations by each of the groups were exciting and uplifting, but also provided an insight into how much effort and thought was still required to create a meaningful outcome.

July was also a chance for us to do our community work placements. This involved two components - an evening with Fred's Van and a session at Barkuma. Barkuma assists people with disabilities to live and work in the community – for the GLF participants, spending time in the classroom with the wonderful young men and women preparing themselves for a place in the workforce was inspiring.

The St Vincent de Paul Society's, Fred's Van, had us preparing meals and then going out with the mobile service to distribute the food. Preconceived ideas, about both the volunteers and the recipients, were challenged. A spirit of shared humanity was the defining feature of the experience.

The second half of the program year was launched with the Leaders Institute of SA's Leadership Week Lunch. Christine Nixon was the Leaders Institute's guest for the day, sharing her views on leadership highs and lows with a capacity audience at the Intercontinental Hotel. Few Australian leaders are better qualified to speak on this topic. Christine provided many insights into her fascinating leadership story, and the GLF11 Facebook site discussion which followed showed our appreciation of the opportunity to hear her story.

Next came the mid-year field trip. Based in Pt. Augusta, we heard from a wide range of community representatives on their home turf. Time spent at Davenport Aboriginal Community was a highlight. A day trip to Roxby Downs and Olympic Dam mine presented us with the dramatic complexities of a development that will shape the economic future of South Australia. The size of the current mine impressed us – the scale of the proposed expansion is mind-boggling! The opportunities and risks involved were the main topic of conversation as we headed back to Roxby for dinner.

The bus travel over the 3 days also provided a great chance for us to find out more about each other. Some of the information we learnt about the taste in music of certain people was unsettling, and will not be shared outside the group.

Soon after the field trip we were finally able to have our mid-year review and retreat. This had been postponed due the reluctance of leadership consultants Diana and Richard to walk to Adelaide from Melbourne when flights were cancelled due to ash clouds. There was plenty of honest talk about group and individual challenges, and a strong sense that we have a wonderful opportunity to make the next 3 months something special. We move forward with a heightened sense of anticipation.

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