QUEST

ISSUE 3 2026



Sharing their lessons: MC Sheron Sultan with panellists Arron Brienesse, Memnuna Kadric and Casey Fox. (Image: Helene Cochaud)

IN THIS ISSUE

- Finding our true north
- CEO Message
- Taking the leap
- On their way
- How learning brought me home
- Messengers of hope
- Sharing the power of learning
- Member News

Finding our true north through learning

Every September, Adult Learners Week invites Australians of all ages to embrace learning throughout our lives.

Adult Learners Week 2026 and its theme of "*Follow Your Compass - Learning for Life*" was celebrated from September 1-8 with more than 400 events, bringing people and communities together across Australia to explore how learning can create new opportunities, strengthen our society, and reshape lives.

The national week of celebration opened with a memorable launch in Sydney, attended by adult learners and educators, community leaders and ACE experts, and special guests including federal Minister for Skills and Training, the Hon Andrew Giles MP.

During a powerful Welcome to Country at the Cabramatta campus of launch co-host **MTC FutureReady,** Aunty Marjorie Campbell from the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council honoured indigenous connections to learning.

"For Aboriginal people learning has always been lifelong, for countless generations knowledge has been shared through stories, observation, practice and experience. It has been carried by elders and passed across generations on Country, around family, within community and through our relationships with the land, waterways and all living things," she said.

"May this week inspire people across this country to follow their own compass, to recognise the knowledge they already carry and remain open to wherever learning may take them."

MC Sheron Sultan had the audience up dancing, before **SBS' Lost for Words** teacher and correctional centres educator Adam Nobilia delivered a compelling keynote speech, sharing his own learning path which led him to teaching inmates in maximum security prisons.

"The best teachers do not just help students read their compass; they help them upgrade it," Adam said.

"They help them see the strengths they could not see before, the directions they did not know existed, the latent talents waiting to be named and the possibilities they did not know they were allowed to pursue."

(Story continues on p. 3)

Message from the CEO



"Even in difficult times, wonderful things are happening in our communities."

It is easy to feel weighed down by the news of the day, and by the bigger challenges of our times. Turn on the TV, open a newspaper or scroll through social media and there is no shortage of reasons to feel anxious, angry or simply exhausted.

Sometimes, I think we need to deliberately make room to lift our spirits.

For me, Adult Learners Week is one of those opportunities.

In the first week of September each year, ALW invites us to focus on something that is happening all around us: people learning, growing, changing and giving things a go.

ALW shines a light on the extraordinary adult learners, educators and community organisations creating opportunities for learning in communities across Australia.

It gives us the chance to hear in their own words from people who have pushed through barriers to take another step, learn something new, build their confidence, change direction or simply discover the joy of learning.

And it reminds all of us that, even in difficult times, wonderful things are happening in our communities. Sometimes we just need to notice them.

Our ALW Ambassadors, Scholarship winners, and all adult learners show us, in their own different ways, what it means to keep learning throughout life. Their stories lift our spirits because they remind us that our lives are not defined only by the circumstances we find ourselves in.

There are always possibilities for growth, connection and change.

Wendell Berry, the revered American poet, farmer and environmentalist, who recently died aged 92, wrote about the sense of wonder that comes from paying attention to the world around us. He described living attentively as living "from one revelation to another" in a world that is often "inexhaustibly beautiful and wonderful."

I think learning can do something similar. It can make the world bigger rather than smaller. It can make us curious again.

The composer and Sufi teacher Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee describes spiritual ecology as recognising the spirit that connects all living things. He writes that it is "not about learning something new but remembering something very, very old."

I believe learning, too, can be about remembering - remembering our curiosity, our capacity to change, our connection with others and our place in the wider world.

That is why this year's ALW theme, *Follow Your Compass - Learning for Life*, feels so timely. We each have one life. How do we want to live it?

For me, part of the answer is to keep learning and stay curious and make room to notice the good things that are all around us.

That is one of the gifts of Adult Learners Week: a chance to look up, follow our compass, and lift the spirit, both individually and as a community.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this ALW such a memorable celebration of what we can achieve together, and through learning.

I hope you all enjoy this edition of *Quest*.

Jenny Macaffer, CEO

(story continued from p. 1)

No single starting point

This year's ALW theme reflected the enormous diversity of adult learners everywhere, said ALA President John Sheen, who announced **six outstanding learners** as Learning Changes Lives Foundation prize winners at the launch (read their stories on page 7).

"A compass is about direction. But importantly, it doesn't tell everybody to travel in the same direction. It helps each of us work out where we are, where we might want to go, and how we might get there," John said.

"And I think that tells us something important about adult education: there is no single adult learner; there is no standard starting point, and there is certainly no single destination." Video messages from **ALW 2026 Ambassador Corey Armstrong**, former Ambassador Emma Griggs and award-winning musician Nicky Bomba also invited people to discover the life-changing impact of learning throughout life.

That was echoed by the inspiring stories of the launch panellists – ALW 2026 Ambassadors **Arron Brienesse** and **Memnuna Kadric**, and learner-turned-vocational educator Casey Fox – who generously shared their insights into embracing learning as adults.

Arron described feeling "very dormant" until his decision to go back to learning reignited his desire to pursue new career paths.

Casey shared the challenge of overcoming her fear – felt by many of her adult students – that she did not have the time or the right to be in a classroom again.

She hoped, she said, that hearing her story could act as a "permission slip" for others thinking about returning to learning or exploring it for the first time: "You can do it. You can come back to learning and you deserve to take up that space."

"Don't wait, just go ahead and give learning a try and you will see which way you would like to go. I'm so happy with learning. I'm not young, I'm 59 years old, and I am happy to go to classes, and every day learn something new."

- Ambassador Memnuna Kadric

Showcasing stories of determination

We were also delighted to welcome federal Minister for Skills and Training the Hon Andrew Giles MP to this year's launch, where he announced the three winners of the **2026 ALW Scholarships**, chosen from more than 20 outstanding nominees:

Malama Papadopoulou (Pines Learning, Victoria)

Tash Bridgland (Zahra Foundation, South Australia) – read Tash's story on page 5

Damon Hamilton (MTC FutureReady, New South Wales)

"I am thrilled! I owe everything to all the wonderful teachers, with endless support, patience, and understanding. I'm so excited I want to dance. I will keep going with education because it makes me feel brand new. Thank you kindly from the bottom of my heart."

- Malama Papadopoulou, ALW 2026 Scholarship Winner

With ALW now in its 31st year, Minister Giles noted the many stories of lives and communities changed by education at every stage of life, giving people the skills they need to fully participate in work, social and community life.

Lifelong learning, he said, "is something absolutely fundamental to underpinning the social contract that binds us all as Australians."

(Story continues on p. 4)



Dream team: Learning Together Award winners Zhixin Chen and Neil Walsh, with GEALC's AMEP Coordinator Kerry Moore (left) and Student Support & Engagement Officer Diana Lambros (right)

(story continued from p. 3)

Celebrating the dream teams

New to ALW in 2026 was the **Learning Together Award**, showcasing the impact that educators and adult learners can have on each other when learning is shared and transformative.

We congratulate this year's runners up: Arpure (Min) Shuemue and Jan Reynolds (Here2Help, New South Wales), and our 2026 Award winners: Neil Walsh and Zhixin Chen (Glen Eira Learning Centre (GEALC), Victoria).

Both Neil and Zhixin paid tribute to GEALC's staff and their fellow students.

"This award does not belong to just the two of us. It belongs to everyone who is willing to share, help others and learn together. In the future, I will continue to share the spirit of "Learning Together" and do my best to help others, so that we can keep learning and growing together," said Zhixin.

Neil said that his own learning compass led him to volunteer as a tutor in the Beginners English class where the pair met.

"Asian philosophy interested me when I did it as a Melbourne Uni subject. Since then, I have become interested in the martial arts and also take an interest in Zen philosophy and practice.

Meeting Zhixin at GEALC has genuinely transformed my learning life. My compass is therefore pointed to making deeper connections with other learners and teachers."

"I wanted to just say how lovely the opening ceremony was - I certainly felt inspired and proud to be part of the ACE and adult learning community."
- Amanda Martin, Zahra Foundation

After a fantastic week of connection and celebration during ALW, it's clear that the learning, and the relationships and opportunities it creates, will go on.

The spirit of ALW 2026 was summed up at the September 1 launch by Ambassador Arron Brienesse, who said while the first step into learning as an adult can be hard, "after that its a path forward."

"And it doesn't have to be a straight path, it can branch off in many different ways," said Arron. "Just keep pushing forward, keep learning, keep motivating yourself and follow your compass."

You can watch the launch here: ***https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCrTVC88GoM***

We would like to thank the Australian Government for their ongoing support of Adult Learners Week.

Save the date for the next ALW – September 1-8, 2027.



Left to right: ALA CEO Jenny Macaffer, Aunty Marjorie Campbell, the Hon Andrew Giles MP, MTC FutureReady CEO Rob Marshall, ALA President John Sheen, keynote speaker Adam Nobilia, and MC Sheron Sultan. (Image: Helene Cochaud)

Taking the leap into learning



Quest talks to Tash Bridgland, an outstanding adult learner from South Australia whose exceptional learning journey won her one of three ALW 2026 Scholarships, with a $1000 prize. Tash was nominated for the Scholarship by the not-for-profit **Zahra Foundation**, which supports women impacted by domestic abuse.

Big congratulations on being recognised with an ALW 2026 Scholarship Tash – can you describe what led you to take those first steps into learning as an adult?

I began my adult learning journey with the Zahra Foundation in 2024. I was in a domestic violence relationship with the father of my children for 14 years and in July 2022, my three children were removed by the Department of Child Protection. This was the hardest time of my life.

In September 2022, I found an opportunity to leave and start my journey of healing and being the best mother that I can be. I wanted to prove to not only myself, but more importantly, to my children that no matter what you go through in life, there is always a way to become a better person. My children were away from me for 18 months in total and in that time, I did every free online course that I could find on topics ranging from parenting to substance abuse and of course the effects of domestic violence on children.

It opened up a whole new world to me, allowing me to learn and expand my horizons in regard to being a woman, a mother and a daughter. That's when I found the Zahra Foundation's Empowerment to Women Course. To be honest, it was such a big step for me to get back into the world and be around people again. I was scared of my own shadow back then and I self-isolated whilst I started to heal. I was full of fear, guilt and shame and I didn't want to be that person anymore.

What impact has your learning experience so far had on your life and outlook?

It has honestly changed my life, I am now making plans for the future on a year-by-year basis, instead of day by day or month to month. I have a folder of certificates from all of the online and in-person courses I've completed.

When I have a self-doubt day, I look at how far I have come in just four years since being free. I have taught my children that knowledge is power and at the end of each school day, we tell each other one thing that we have learnt that day no matter how big or small.

Taking the leap into learning

Your nomination for the ALW Scholarship mentioned that you see learning and education as helping to build a better future for yourself and for your children. What do you hope your children learn from watching you take this journey into learning and a new future with all the hard work and commitment that involves?

This is a great question and honestly, it makes me a little teary. Our future is now big, beautiful and colourful, with endless opportunities. For 14 years of my life and for the majority of the children's lives, we lived in a very dark and dismal environment. I hope that my children learn that no matter what life puts in our way, we always have education to help us learn and build from it.

You're about to begin a Certificate III in Community Services - what attracts you to that area of study?

I started my Certificate III in Community Services in October, and I am so excited to get back into a learning environment and to broaden my horizons that little bit more. I was attracted to this field because of my lived experience in both DV and Child Protection. Being able to use my lived experience to help change the lives of women and children who are either going through or have been through what I have experienced—that is a superpower I am proud of. I don't want to see another woman face the battles and hurdles that I did after leaving.

What does the ALW Scholarship mean to you?

Receiving the ALW Scholarship helped me immensely. I purchased a laptop, a printer and stationery to be able to take the best step forward into my future of advocacy and community service.

What is your advice for others, particularly those in situations similar to yours, who are wondering if enrolling in a course or learning something new might be a good next step?

Take the chance, take the leap into the amazing world of learning and education. It is worth it, I promise you. You are worthy and the world is such a beautiful place with you in it. Now, what are you waiting for?

Congratulations again Tash – we wish you and your children all the very best.

Read more about ALW 2026 and this year's Scholarship Winners at ***www.adultlearnersweek.org***



On their way



At the launch of Adult Learners Week 2026 on September 1, we were thrilled to award prizes from ALA's charitable arm, the **Learning Changes Lives Foundation**, to support six outstanding adult learners in their learning pathway. We wish them all every success in achieving their goals and thank them for inspiring others.

Bailey Chaseling, ShoreTrack, New South Wales

Bailey says this award and financial support has been life changing: "It means a lot to me. It means people are listening and they care." It has allowed him to purchase a bed, desk and wardrobe and set up a room for himself rather than sleeping on the family lounge. Aside from privacy, this means he sleeps better and feels better during the day. He feels the experience of speaking on the recent ALA webinar – **Every Path Counts: Young People, Learning and Literacy** – has made him more confident, to the extent that he now runs the ShoreTrack afternoon 'circle' asking every one of the 60 attendees how they are feeling and how their day went.

Through this opportunity, Bailey is developing his leadership skills and has now decided to pursue further training – a Certificate III Agriculture - in 2027 and is currently applying for a scholarship to cover his accommodation through the Royal Agricultural Society. From ShoreTrack's perspective Bailey is a friendly and hard-working young man who makes everyone's day better because of his can-do attitude.
– Jill Ashley, ShoreTrack CEO

Crystal Reuter, Sunshine Coast Libraries, QLD

I have been a member of the Kawana Read and Write for Life Class on the Sunshine Coast for over 12 years. During class I enjoy exploring new learning topics. Each week I have to travel over 30 minutes each way by public transport to come to class. I wouldn't miss it for the world. I work part-time in retail as a check out operator and still manage to fit adult education into my schedule each week.

Attending class has had a significant impact on me. It has given me the opportunity to strengthen my literacy and communication skills. It has also allowed me to meet new people - both learners and tutors - who are taking part in the program. I also volunteer at Lifeline and have been part of the SES in past years. When I found out that I was a Scholarship winner, I was shocked and I was lost for words. I shed happy tears. I am planning to put the scholarship funds towards buying a laptop. It will be the first time I will own a laptop. Thank you for making this possible for me.



Crystal (front, left) with her fellow learners in the Kawana Read and Write for Life class

On their way



Albert Jasareno, Read Write Now, Western Australia

Learning is important to me because it makes me feel alive - if I feel genuinely emotionally drawn to the subject, I find myself learning at a much faster rate. I choose to give myself permission to fail so that I can learn hastily – I ask my teacher questions to the point where I feel as though I might be annoying them, and I also find myself devouring courses or books about the subject. The impact of choosing the path of genuine learning has made me feel as though life is truly worth living. Learning for me is more than just about acquiring information – it is the utmost tool for transforming one's mindset. It also gives me the confidence to reclaim authenticity and enhance my character and intelligence. I plan to use this prize money on anything education-related – things such as technology, courses fees and enrolment, learning materials such as textbooks and stationery.



Lisa Trotter, TasTAFE

I believe that you are never too old to learn. Learning is a lifelong journey, and as an adult, I bring different life experiences, values and beliefs to my education. Learning has had a positive impact on my life by building my confidence and helping me believe in myself. As a woman and a mother, this is incredibly important to me. It has opened up new opportunities, created a new career path and shown me that it is never too late to follow your dreams and create a better future for yourself and your family.

Receiving this award is a wonderful personal achievement. It reminds me that my efforts are worthwhile and that, no matter what stage of life you are at, you can continue to learn, grow and achieve great things. I plan to continue my studies in 2027, focusing on completing my Diploma of Community Services. For me, this journey is about more than gaining a qualification. It is about building a career that I am passionate about, helping others and continuing to grow both personally and professionally.

D'Shay McCoy, Batchelor Institute, NT



After being bullied at school, D'Shay dropped out in Year 10 and began working in a café. Despite those past negative experiences with education, she participates in class, always finishes her work and is confidently completing her Certificate III in Community Services. Through the Young Mums Strong Mums program at the Batchelor Institute, D'Shay has reengaged with learning, developed clear goals and grown in confidence. She now plans to further her studies by undertaking a two-year traineeship to become an Aboriginal Health Practitioner. This will give her the skills to help others with their healthcare, build a meaningful career, and provide for herself and her child.



Georgie Potter, TAFE NSW

Georgie connected with TAFE NSW's Career Pathways program after finding that the traditional high school environment didn't meet her learning needs. Once she began the course, she felt she had finally found an educational setting which suited her, and which offered a pathway to complete Year 10. Georgie demonstrates many of the qualities of successful adult learning, including motivation and persistence.

Georgie has moved on to a Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing). She is passionate about supporting older people and is keen to further develop her career in aged care and support, with a particular interest in becoming more involved in palliative care.

All donations of $2 and over to our charitable arm, the Learning Changes Lives Foundation, are tax-deductible and warmly appreciated: ***www.learningchangeslives.org.au***

How learning brought me home



By Pattie Phillips, ALW 2026 Ambassador

Pattie spent four years in prison and two years on parole. Her story is one of resilience, transformation and the power of learning to shape new possibilities.

When people hear that I have lived experience of the justice system, they often expect a story about what went wrong. I prefer to talk about what went right. For me, so much of what went right started with learning.

My turning point was RMIT University's Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. Inside-Out brings university students and people in custody together to learn side by side, as equals, in the same room. Being part of it was transformative. My ideas were taken seriously. I was not defined by my worst moment, but by what I had to contribute. And the learning went both ways. Students often came into the prison carrying their own assumptions about the people inside, and those assumptions were challenged too.

That is what made the biggest difference to my learning: being treated as capable. Too often, education in the justice system happens in spaces built for compliance rather than curiosity. What kept me going were people who believed I could do more, and opportunities that matched that belief.

Hope Network was one of those places. Over more than 10 years, I went from participant, to volunteer, to paid staff. Each step built the confidence I needed for the next one. Along the way I worked as a Peer Worker with Australian Community Support Organisation's ReConnect program, and today I am completing a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology. There was a time I never thought any of this would be possible.

Learning gave me a voice

Education gave me more than a qualification. It gave me language for my own experience, and the confidence to use it in rooms where decisions are made about women like me.

Today I coordinate Hope Network's Lived Experience Advisory Panel, I am Associate Director of the **Beyond the Stone Walls Advisory Collective**, and I speak with policymakers, funders and service providers. None of that happened because the system suddenly changed. It happened because people believed in me before I believed in myself, and because learning changed how I saw myself. That changed what I was willing to try.

The first lesson is that learning is not linear. Life gets in the way, especially for women juggling housing, family, health and the conditions of their release. A pause is not a failure. Programs that let people step out and come back again are the ones that work.

The second is that relationships come first. Nobody learns well from someone who sees them as a risk to be managed. Trust is the foundation, and it takes time.

The third is about how we describe the women we support. They are often labelled as having "complex needs". I have come to challenge that. The women I work with are not complex. Their needs intersect: housing, income, health, family, education. And they are navigating systems that rarely talk to each other. When we place the complexity in the woman, we lower our expectations of her. When we place it in the systems, we start asking what needs to change.

If you work in adult and community education, here is what I would ask of you:

1. **Start before release.** Learning in custody should connect to a real pathway outside, with the same provider or a warm handover, so momentum is not lost at the gate.
2. **Build in flexibility.** Rolling enrolments, recognition of prior learning, and room to pause and return make the difference for women whose lives are still settling.
3. **Remember the basics**. A woman who does not know where she will sleep tonight cannot focus on a module. Education works best alongside housing and practical support, not instead of it.
4. **Involve people with lived experience**. We know what helps because we have lived it. Bring us into the design and delivery of programs and pay us for that expertise.
5. **Hold high expectations.** Believe in people's potential and let them see that you do. It may be the first time anyone has.

Learning brought me home in more ways than one. It helped me find my way back to community, and back to a version of myself I had almost given up on. If you are an educator wondering whether your work makes a difference for people in and beyond the justice system, it does. I am proof of that, and so are many of the women I walk alongside every day.

Messengers of Hope

Our ALW 2026 Ambassadors inspired us with powerful stories of how they have followed their compasses. Two of our Ambassadors – Arron Brienesse and Memnuna Kadric – spoke at the ALW Launch (see cover story), while our other Ambassadors appeared in media coverage across the nation, including ABC Radio, SBS, and metropolitan and regional newspapers.



Corey Armstrong, Tasmania
For the past two decades, Corey has worked as a paramedic, SES leader, emergency manager, trainer and curriculum developer, while volunteering with the SES and Rural Fire Service. Corey, 33, recently began postgraduate studies in adult and vocational education and educational neuroscience. Watch his ALW message here: **www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaR1DjGN7v8**



Chamila Baddesvitha, Victoria
"I felt privileged to be chosen as an Ambassador, and if my story can inspire others to become interested in learning, that would mean a lot to me. It has also motivated me to keep learning."



Zemach Oman Boro, Queensland
Zemach, 47, arrived in Australia as a refugee 14 years ago from Ethiopia, where he was a primary school teacher. He studied English at TAFE before completing a Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways. The confidence he built there led him to a Certificate III in Individual Support, and Zemach now hopes to pursue a career in the health sector.



Tahnee Capon, New South Wales
Tahnee, 36, is a proud Aboriginal woman whose story illustrates her resilience. During her Certificate III in Community Services, Tahnee experienced homelessness, but she pushed on. Moving into the Certificate IV alongside stable employment helped her rebuild, and Tahnee is now turning her own lived experience into a source of strength for her community.



Araya Dammai, Tasmania
With a background in hotel management in Thailand, Araya, 57, enrolled in an AMEP course after moving to Tasmania. Araya has now completed her Certificate III in EAL and is embarking on a new field of study through a Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing). She believes that "knowledge is always valuable and useful".



Lennon Hopkins, Western Australia
"Being an Ambassador made me think about how I can become more actively involved in encouraging people's appetite for learning. What can I do to help others discover the value of learning and contribute to future planning? Just because ALW is over doesn't mean the learning is over."



Tanya Truscott, South Australia
"I've now enrolled in the TAE Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, as I would love to teach Women's Education at TAFE. I also posted about being an ALW Ambassador on my personal Facebook page and was overwhelmed by the supportive response."



Timothy Looker OAM, South Australia
Tim's story is a powerful example of lifelong learning. After leaving school at 15, Tim worked in mining camps and indigenous communities. At 30, he retrained as teacher, leading to a 34-year teaching career, before deciding in retirement to study an Honours Degree in Law. At 74, Tim became a Solicitor and Barrister and now volunteers in a community legal centre. Tim presented at our recent ALA webinar, **Learning, Literacy and Second Chances.**

Read more about our Ambassadors at **www.adultlearnersweek.org**

Sharing the power of learning

Every September, hundreds of events are held across Australia to celebrate Adult Learners Week, in adult and community education centres, libraries, neighbourhood houses and community centres, TAFEs and community colleges, and local councils.

This year, more than 400 events around the country celebrated in a week of curiosity, community and connection as adult learners followed their compass in new directions.

Congratulations to everyone who organised or attended one of these fabulous events, and special congratulations to our three Best Event Award winners for 2026:

Mt Gambier Library (South Australia)

Community College Northern Inland (New South Wales)

Read Write Now (Western Australia)

Well done and thank you to all of our wonderful ALW supporters!

"We were thrilled with the success of our 2026 ALW program. It was a wonderful opportunity to highlight the incredible knowledge and talents that exist within our community, with local presenters generously sharing their skills and experiences. More than 100 people took part across the week, gaining new skills, meeting new people, and strengthening their connection to the community. The enthusiasm and positive feedback from participants demonstrated just how valuable lifelong learning opportunities are in bringing people together."

Danni Reade, Project Lead, Mount Gambier Library, SA

"As one of the recipients of an Adult Learners Week Best Event Award, Read Write Now was proud to celebrate the achievements of adult learners and volunteer tutors from across Western Australia. By sharing learners' stories of perseverance and success, our events during Adult Learners Week highlighted how improved literacy, numeracy and digital skills can build confidence, increase independence and create new opportunities for learning, work and community participation."

Richard West, Manager, Read Write Now, North Metropolitan TAFE, WA

"Adult Learners Week is an important opportunity to recognise the achievements of adult learners and the educators who support them. For many of our students, returning to learning takes courage, and events like our Inverell Pop-Up Café give them a chance to demonstrate their skills, build confidence and celebrate their achievements with the wider community. We were delighted to receive a Best Event Award, but the real success was seeing our learners take pride in what they had achieved and share that experience with others."

Community College Northern Inland CEO Mel Squires, NSW

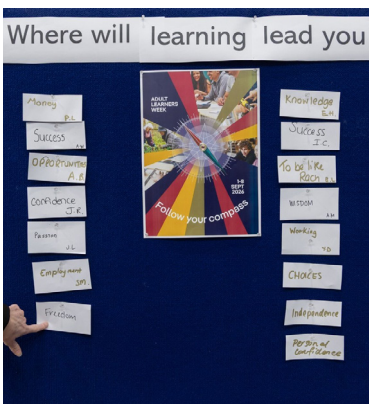


ALW 2026 Project Lead Danni Reade from South Australia's Mount Gambier Library









Member News

The latest issue of the Australian Journal of Adult Learning (AJAL) highlights international and Australian research across a range of educational contexts and for diverse adult learners. This issue features insights into mature-age students in Australian tertiary education; adult learners in higher education in South Korea; students in remote learning in Australian regional higher education; adult education, transformative learning and religious education for adults in Australia; and the value of creative, narrative and autoethnographic modes of inquiry for adult education practitioners and researchers. Published three times a year, AJAL is free for all ALA members. Visit **www.ajal.net.au**.



Image **courtesy of Laverton Community Education Centre**

Australia's Reading Writing Hotline will receive a $7.4 million funding boost over the next three years from the Albanese Government. The free service, which receives about 4,000 calls a year and 66,000 visits to its website, will be strengthened as part of the National Foundation Skills Strategy. Expanding the service into regional and remote communities, building its digital presence and improving networks with support and training services will be prioritised, according to federal Minister for Skills and Training Andrew Giles: "The Reading Writing Hotline is a national treasure, and over more than 30 years has helped change the lives of countless Australians."

Do you want to learn more about keeping yourself and your adult learners safe online? ALA, with support from the Department of Home Affairs, has developed **eight free online modules** focused on cyber security. Learn more and enrol at **www.ala.asn.au/online-learning**.

In Victoria, Laverton Community Education Centre (LCEC) was named Community Training Provider of the Year at the **2026 Victorian Training Awards**. An RTO since 1999, in the past year LCEC has trained students from 69 countries, with more than 350 learners each month accessing the Centre's community-embedded accredited and pre-accredited programs.

At last month's Northern Territory Training Awards, Charles Darwin University won the Industry Collaboration Award in partnership with the NT's Department of Corrections for its collaboration: *"Creating pathways to rehabilitation, workforce readiness and successful reintegration through education"*.

A new online resource from MTC FutureReady has been released to help anyone preparing for their Australian Citizenship test. The **website** offers free practice questions and translated study support across six languages. Visit **www.crc.mtcfutureready.org.au**

QUEST

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