



Media release

Peak body calls for national lifelong learning policy reform in pre-budget submission

Adult Learning Australia (ALA) has called on the Albanese Government to develop a national lifelong learning policy backed by a comprehensive 20-year plan in its 2025 pre-budget [submission](#).

“We urge the Albanese Government to work with all levels of government and organisations like ALA to develop a lifelong learning policy, which would include funding for high-quality adult community education programs that respond to community needs. Learning has no expiry date.”

The submission also calls for funding of key research, accessible professional development and support for other strategic projects.

“In an era marked by rapid technological advancements, shifting economic landscapes, and dynamic societal changes, the imperative to evolve our education and training systems must take a more holistic and strategic approach, embracing a literacy-to-lifelong learning framework across our society, through a range of government departments at all levels and in our communities,” the submission reads.

“Our recommendations would significantly strengthen lifelong learning in Australia and the adult community education (ACE) sector, supporting our communities in building socio-economic capital and driving real economic savings for the government.

Ms Macaffer said the recommendations were informed by decades of work in the field, recent member surveys, and consultations with Australian adult education providers across the sector.

According to [UNESCO’s Fifth Global Report](#) on Adult Learning and Education, the ultimate twenty-first-century skill is the ability to learn. The report found that the main challenge for adult learning and education across the globe is to reach those who need it most.

“Opportunities to continue learning throughout our lives are essential — not just for a more knowledgeable workforce, but for our physical and mental well-being, the health of our communities, and for a just and democratic civil society. We believe the key to Australia’s future is lifelong learning.”

“We welcome the opportunity to provide input into this year’s Federal Budget process and to engage in discussions about any issues our prebudget submission raises,” Ms Macaffer said.

ALA CEO, Jenny Macaffer said “the reality is that those most in need are deprived of opportunities to re-engage in education, entrenching disadvantage and making them vulnerable to unemployment and social isolation”.

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About Adult Learning Australia

In 2025, Adult Learning Australia is celebrating its 65th year as the national peak body for the nonprofit adult and community education (ACE) sector. Its membership encompasses both organisations and individuals from every state and territory, representing the sector's diversity.

Visit www.ala.asn.au or call (03) 9689 8623 for more information. Release date 6 February 2025