



MEDIA RELEASE

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EXPANDED ACCESS TO ADULT EDUCATION KEY TO A MORE COHESIVE AUSTRALIA

Equitable access to learning for all Australians must be prioritised in May's federal budget to help build a more resilient and cohesive nation, says peak body Adult Learning Australia (ALA).

In its 2026 pre-budget submission, ALA calls for a significant increase in investment in adult and community education (ACE), and particularly in opportunities for those from disadvantaged or marginalised communities.

“Helping adults back into learning has enormous social, civic and economic benefits for the entire community,” says ALA’s CEO Jenny Macaffer. “Not-for-profit ACE educators have the skills and expertise to expand this impact, but we need governments to better support our under-resourced sector to achieve that.”

“Research tells us, for example, that many Free TAFE students struggle to complete their courses because of gaps in their foundation skills of literacy and numeracy, or inadequate digital skills.”

“It’s urgent that the federal government ensures that ACE providers can set these and other adult learners up for real success in their education and employment pathways.”

ALA’s submission also calls for:

- Delivery of a national lifelong learning policy committed to re-engaging and upskilling adults of all learning backgrounds, abilities and ambitions
- An expanded role for adult learning and community education in readying communities for natural disasters and extreme weather events
- Support for much-needed research in priority areas, informing strategies and policies which complement the National Skills Agreement
- Stronger collaboration between the ACE, TAFE and tertiary sectors to maximise beneficial outcomes for both learners and employers
- Australia to better uphold its international obligations in education through increased support for the vital but under-resourced ACE sector.

“As the nation’s peak body for adult learning and community education, ALA looks forward to sharing its evidence-led ideas and 66 years of experience with the Albanese government for the benefit of all Australians,” says Ms Macaffer.

For more information or an interview with Jenny Macaffer, please contact info@ala.asn.au , call (03) 9689 8623 or visit www.ala.asn.au.

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