

MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 1PM (AEST) TUESDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER

Winners of Adult Learners Week 2026 Award and Adult Learners Week 2026 Scholarships announced

Five exceptional adult learners and two outstanding educators have been recognised at the national launch of [Adult Learners Week 2026](#) today in Sydney.

Adult Learners Week (ALW) runs each year from **1 – 8 September**, celebrating the achievements and ambitions of adult learners with hundreds of events across Australia.

The 2026 theme - **Follow Your Compass: Learning for Life** - evokes ideas of new directions and exploration.

Coordinated by national peak body [Adult Learning Australia](#) (ALA) and supported by the Australian Government, ALW showcases the power of adult learning in changing lives, opening new possibilities, and strengthening communities.

Every year, ALW Scholarships of \$1,000 each are awarded to outstanding adult learners to enable them to explore a new learning pathway or continue an existing one.

In addition, new in 2026, the ALW Learning Together Award recognises partnerships where both adult student and educator have learnt in transformative ways from each other.

Winners of the ALW 2026 Scholarships and the Learning Together Award were announced by Federal Minister for Skills and Training, the Hon Andrew Giles MP, at today's national launch, held at MTC FutureReady in Cabramatta, Sydney.

The winners of the three ALW 2026 Scholarships are:

- [Malama Papadopoulos](#) (Pines Learning, Victoria)
- [Damon Hamilton](#) (MTC FutureReady, NSW)
- [Tash Bridgeland](#) (Zahra Foundation, SA)

The winners of the ALW 2026 Learning Together Award are:

- [Zhixin Chen and Neil Walsh](#) (Glen Eira Adult Learning Centre, Victoria)

The Award runners-up are:

- [Arpure \(Min\) Shuemue and Jan Reynolds](#) (Here2Help, NSW)

Visit www.adultlearnersweek.org to read the inspiring stories of all this year's nominees.

ADULT LEARNERS WEEK - BACKGROUND

Adult Learners Week is coordinated by Adult Learning Australia, the national peak body for adult and community education.

ALW is a UNESCO initiative, supported by the Australian Government, celebrated annually in the first week of September in Australia since 1995.

Hundreds of events and activities are held around Australia and online each year to promote the benefits of adult education and lifelong learning.

Any adult education and training organisation can get involved in Adult Learners Week including neighbourhood houses, community centres, libraries, training organisations, local governments, Aboriginal learning cooperatives, employers, not-for-profits, workplaces, men's or women's sheds, U3As, community colleges, TAFEs and universities.

ALA President John Sheen says the 2026 theme of **Follow Your Compass** captures the spirit of the sector and the diversity of learning taking place across the country:

"During Adult Learners Week, adult education providers across Australia will be celebrating the many and varied ways people learn together, whether in community settings, workplaces, or through informal learning pathways."

"This national celebration of learning is a chance to recognise that learning is lifelong, accessible, and deeply connected to opportunity and participation."

The compass is a powerful metaphor for learning. Used for thousands of years across cultures, it represents guidance, exploration, and agency. Just as there are many types of compasses, there are many pathways and opportunities for learning.

MEDIA INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES & CONTACTS

To arrange an interview or for more information, please contact Rachel Demarco on 0406 002 084 or rachel@goodtalent.com.au

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