MEDIA RELEASE

Lifelong learning must be part of Australia's media literacy strategy

As Australia marks Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2026, Adult Learning Australia (ALA) is calling for adult learning to be recognised as an essential part of the nation's first National Media Literacy Strategy.

With misinformation, digital platforms and artificial intelligence (AI) rapidly changing how information is created and shared, adults of all ages need the skills and confidence to assess information, recognise misleading claims and make informed decisions.

Research highlights both the challenge and the opportunity. While 68% of Australian adults have heard of media literacy, only 33% have some understanding of the term. Notably, 82% support media literacy programs being available for adults.

"Media literacy is not just a school-based issue. Adults need accessible opportunities to develop and refresh these skills throughout their lives," says Adult Learning Australia CEO, Jenny Macaffer.

The 2026 UNESCO Global Media and Information Literacy Week theme, *We All Play a Part – Media and Information Literacy for the People*, reinforces the shared responsibility of governments, educators, researchers, media and communities in creating a stronger information environment.

As the national peak body for adult and community education (ACE), ALA says community-based adult learning has an important role to play. Community centres, neighbourhood houses, Learn Local providers, First Nations organisations, community colleges and other adult learning providers offer accessible, practical learning opportunities in familiar and trusted settings.

These opportunities are particularly important for people with lower literacy, numeracy or digital skills, who may face additional barriers to accessing, understanding and evaluating information.

"Adult and community education can help people build the critical thinking and digital skills they need to navigate online information, understand AI-generated content and participate confidently in their communities and democracy," says Ms Macaffer.

ALA is calling for Australia's National Media Literacy Strategy to take a whole-of-life approach by recognising media literacy as a lifelong learning priority, acknowledging ACE as a key delivery partner, and supporting accessible learning opportunities across metropolitan, regional, rural and remote communities.

ALA also wants the wider ACE sector consulted during the strategy's development to ensure the experiences and needs of adult learners inform the national approach and has developed a position paper that can be found on the ALA website here.

With almost 70 years of experience in adult and community education, ALA brings expertise in foundation skills, digital literacy, critical thinking and lifelong learning, alongside a national network of adult learning providers.

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Media enquiries:
Adult Learning Australia
ALA CEO Jenny Macaffer or more information, please contact info@ala.asn.au or call (03) 9689 8623

About Adult Learning Australia
Adult Learning Australia is the national peak body for adult and community education in Australia. ALA advocates for equitable access to lifelong learning and supports a diverse network of adult learning providers and communities.

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