

Media release

Lifelong learning creates jobs and enriches lives

Adult Learning Australia, the national peak body for adult and community education, welcomes the priorities that Labor outlined at the National Skills Summit. In his address to the Summit, the Opposition Leader Bill Shorten emphasised three top priorities for jobs and growth – lifelong learning, jobs for the future and a shared approach. He also emphasised that all Australians must have access to the skills and training they need for work that enriches their lives, their families and their communities.

Adult Learning Australia believes that lifelong and lifewide learning must be the centrepiece of all education policies in order to promote a system that provides opportunities for Australians to adapt to the ever-changing economic and social landscape, and to continue to learn throughout their lives.

“It is now time for an integrated, well-resourced, flexible, adult education sector that has defined pathways between community, TAFE, University and industry-based learning programs,” said Jenny Macaffer CEO of Adult Learning Australia.

The modern economy and society have created new demands for foundation and life skills, including literacy and numeracy. Technological advancement and globalisation have decreased the availability of low skills jobs and increased the number of jobs that require high levels of information processing, digital and communication skills. Adults who are educationally disadvantaged are at even higher risk of being left behind.

“The adult and community education sector has a proven track record in re-engaging people in education who have had negative or interrupted schooling, and in providing effective adult foundation skills training that enable people to take the next steps on their path to further education and training.

“We have an education system that has the potential to provide opportunities for people to develop their skills and knowledge; to build their confidence and to contribute to our diverse and changing society. What we need now are resources and political will,” says Ms Macaffer.

It is now more important than ever to build strong alliances within the education sector and with those in adult and community education in the interests of working effectively together to meet this challenge.

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