

## Media release

### A lifelong learning policy for Australia

Adult Learning Australia, the national peak body for adult and community education, welcomes the Hodgman Government's recognition of adult education as a foundation to building Tasmania's future and in helping Tasmanians access the skills they need for work and life.

Adult Learning Australia's recent conference in Hobart explored the different ways equitable access to lifelong learning can change people's lives. At the conference, delegates showed support for developing a national policy on lifelong learning to coincide with 2018's National Year of Lifelong Learning.

'Lifelong learning must be the centrepiece of all education policies in order to provide opportunities for Australians to adapt to the changing economic and social landscape,' said Jenny Macaffer CEO of Adult Learning Australia.

'But a policy approach that is solely focussed on the skills required by industry fails to recognise the importance of learning in helping adults to adapt to and manage changing roles at work, in families and in communities,' said Ms Macaffer.

A lifelong learning policy would acknowledge learning beyond employment and re-skilling, and highlight its role in social mobility, community building and wellbeing.

'Today, we are calling on the Australian government to adopt a formal policy on lifelong learning as an essential feature of a healthy, active democracy,' said Ms Macaffer.

Adult learning and education is a core component of lifelong learning. The UNESCO Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (2016) highlighted the contribution that it makes across many sectors of society, and described it as:

- an indispensable component of education, and a fundamental and enabling human right
- an integral dimension of a balanced life course
- part of a holistic, inter-sectoral sustainable development agenda with the potential to offer multiple benefits and lasting impact.

'We are also calling for a renewed Ministerial Declaration on adult and community education as part of the lifelong learning policy. The last Declaration was expressed in 2008 and a renewed commitment is now long overdue,' said Ms Macaffer.

A renewed Declaration would recognise adult and community education as a significant contributor in both accredited VET and non accredited education that fosters the skills people need to engage and participate fully in their communities and the economy.

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