

Media release

Renewed goals for education must include adult and community education

Adult Learning Australia is urging the Federal Government to ensure its goals for education recognise community based education's role in retraining and reskilling young Australians, and in providing pathways to work and further learning.

At a recent forum in Melbourne, the Federal Government and nominated delegates met to consider improvements to the 2008 Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.

'A renewed approach to the Melbourne Declaration should seek to integrate the different parts of our education system. If the government is serious about reducing barriers to education and training, and promoting an authentic culture of lifelong learning, it must recognise adult and community education (ACE) as a crucial part of our learning system,' says Jenny Macaffer, CEO, Adult Learning Australia.

ACE organisations provide opportunities that enable young Australians to re-engage with education and adapt to the changing economic and social landscape. They also play a significant role in VET for high proportions of learners who are disadvantaged, disengaged, unemployed, have a disability or did not complete Year 12 or equivalent.

According to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), ACE organisations in Australia currently enrol more than 9% of total VET students, and are acknowledged for their expertise in providing accessible learning opportunities and achieving significant outcomes.

In some communities, the ACE sector represents the only 'on-the-ground' providers of post-compulsory education, and is therefore critically important in terms of addressing access and equity beyond urban centres.

Adult Learning Australia is also striving for a [national lifelong learning policy](#) and the renewal of the [2008 Ministerial Declaration on Adult and Community Education](#), which provided a national policy framework that recognised the importance of ACE in providing pathways to further education and training for 'second chance' learners.

Facts and figures

3.3 million Australian adults leave school at Year 10 or earlier (ABS).

Unemployment rates vary according to education level, ranging from 3.2% for people holding a bachelor degree (or higher) to 10.8% for people with Year 10 or less (Mitchell Institute).

60% of young people from low socio economic backgrounds don't complete high school (Mitchell Institute).

About ALA

Adult Learning Australia is the national peak body for adult and community education with over 1,000 members representing all states and territories of Australia.

Media contact

Visit www.ala.asn.au or call 03 9689 8623 for more information

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