



MEDIA RELEASE

Disadvantaged Australians left behind when it comes to work-related learning

Recent ABS research on rates of participation in work-related adult education provides a troubling snapshot of educational inequality in Australia, according to Jenny Macaffer CEO Adult Learning Australia.

Where you live and the sort of work you do determines how much access you have to adult education opportunities in Australia according to the Work-Related Training and Adult Learning, 2020–2021 ABS report.

Australians living in the most socially and economically advantaged areas of the country are more likely to engage in any form of adult education and training (47%) compared to people in the most disadvantaged areas (33%).

Regional and remote Australians' participation in all forms of adult learning is lower than people living in cities, and Australians born overseas participated less in learning overall.

Of the 23% or 4.4m Australians who engage in work related training, 91% are employed. People in professional positions such as architects and school principals do twice as much training as people working in call centres or on factory lines. One in two Australians do their work related learning online, more than double the rate from four years ago.

'Australians who could most benefit from work-related adult education have the least access to it. People who are unemployed, looking for work, in unskilled work or with low digital literacy have fewer opportunities to access work-related training, which compounds disadvantage and is bad for our economy,' says Jenny Macaffer.

'ALA is calling on the Australian government to develop a national policy framework to enable free, accessible and inclusive adult community education that recognises the crucial role of non-formal education in improving social cohesion, opening pathways towards more formal training and work for those Australians whose formal education has been cut short or disrupted and particularly for those in rural and regional areas.'

About ALA

Adult Learning Australia is the national not for profit peak body for adult learning and community education with over 1,000 members representing all states and territories of Australia.

Source

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) [Work-Related Training and Adult Learning, Australia, 2020-21 financial year](#).



16 March 2022

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