



Media release

ALA comments on the Australian Government's response to the Don't take it as Read - Inquiry into adult literacy and its importance.

Adult Learning Australia (ALA) welcomes the update on the Federal Government's efforts to implement the recommendations of the Don't Take It as Read Inquiry into adult literacy and numeracy. Released last March, the inquiry's report made 15 recommendations to address literacy and numeracy gaps affecting around one in five Australians which limits their access to training, employment, and community life.

The Government provided an update on the implementation of most recommendations to Parliament last week. This update includes a major redesign of the Skills for Education and Employment program and a national survey of foundation skills.

Jenny Macaffer, ALA CEO, emphasises, "All Australians must be supported to develop the language, literacy, numeracy, and digital (LLND) skills they need to live healthy, autonomous, and full lives. Now more than ever, it is vital that everyone can understand and access government information and services, get job-ready, and maintain social connections."

In its submissions to, and appearance before, the Inquiry, ALA reiterated the importance of adult literacy education being delivered in inclusive and welcoming settings by trained, adult community educators. Ms Macaffer adds, "So many successful adult literacy interventions delivered through adult community-based programs can acknowledge what a person knows without stigmatising what they don't know. This is important in combating the shame so often associated with low levels of literacy and numeracy."

Recognising, optimising and including community-based approaches in a broader adult education strategy, she said, along with a visible, sustainable and appropriately qualified adult education workforce, will go a long way to embedding literacy and numeracy development in Australia within a lifelong learning model.

While the Government has announced an additional \$142 million over five years will be spent to improve the quality and accessibility of foundation skills training, no commitment has yet been made in response to the Inquiry recommendation that ALA be funded to deliver ongoing professional development. This development aims to build the sector's capability to deliver sustainable, non-accredited language, literacy, numeracy, and digital programs.



“We welcome any future efforts to provide support in this area,” said Ms Macaffer, who represents the sector on the Australian Government’s Foundation Skills Advisory Group and is taking part in consultations around the Jobs and Skills National LLND survey.

ALA also welcomes the collaborative efforts of the State and Federal governments to finalise the new National Skills Agreement. Recently endorsed by the National Cabinet, the Australian Government will support states and territories to provide learners with free or low-cost foundation skills training including through a vocational education and training provider or an adult community education provider or equivalent.

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About Adult Learning Australia

Adult Learning Australia, operating for 60+ years, is the national peak body for the non-profit adult and community education (ACE) sector. Its membership encompasses both organisations and individuals from every state and territory, representing the sector's diversity.

Media contact

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

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