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26Ten

Tasmania's strategy for adult literacy and numeracy 2016–2025

2023 Annual Progress Report

26Ten supports all Tasmanians to lift adult literacy and numeracy skills

Lifting adult literacy and numeracy in Tasmania is fundamental to building our State's wellbeing, resilience and prosperity. Tasmania was the first state in Australia to launch a comprehensive, long-term, and statewide response, engaging all Tasmanians in lifting skills.

Through [*26Ten Tasmania: Tasmania's strategy for literacy and numeracy 2016-2025*](#), 26Ten unites businesses, community and government in a statewide effort to raise adult literacy and numeracy levels. The *26Ten Tasmania Strategy* sets a framework for action by the whole State, including business, community groups, government, education and training providers, and individuals, who want to live in a Tasmania where all adults have the reading, writing, numeracy and communication skills they need for work and life.

Like any complex social challenge there is no single or quick solution. It takes time to build reading, writing and everyday maths skills. It takes us all working together in a persistent effort to make progress towards our vision of a Tasmania where everyone has the skills they need for work and life.

In 2023, 26Ten continued to make progress on this vision through the three goals, established in the *26Ten Tasmania Strategy* in 2016:

1. Everyone knows about adult literacy and numeracy
2. Everyone is supported to improve their skills and to help others
3. Everyone communicates clearly.

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Tasmanian
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2023 snapshot



9

organisations received a 26Ten Workplace Grant



\$500k

was allocated to workplace grants



28

new members joined the 26Ten network



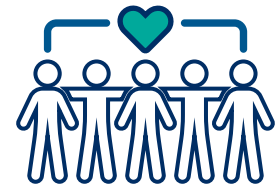
245

total number of 26Ten member organisations



80

new supporters joined the 26Ten Network



1020

total number of individual supporters



523

people learned about plain English



46

free plain English workshops



314

people learned about the complex issues surrounding adult literacy and numeracy in 25 free literacy awareness workshops

Goal 1. Everyone knows about adult literacy and numeracy

New 26Ten Coalition members

The 26Ten Coalition is a group of prominent and influential Tasmanians who recognise the importance of working together to help everyone get the reading, writing and maths skills they need for everyday life. Coalition members work to gain support for adult literacy and numeracy in their own industry or community sector, and most importantly, inspire those within their sector to act towards this aim.

In late January 2023, an Expression of Interest for new 26Ten Coalition members was advertised in newspapers, social media and through the 26Ten member network. Thirteen applications were received with five appointments recommended to the Minister by a selection panel. The new members appointed to the 26Ten Coalition were:

- Traycee Di Virgilio, representing the building and construction sector
- Craig Limkin, representing the State Government sector
- Dr Charlie Burton, representing the communities and social services sector

- John Upcher, representing the legal sector
- Mayor Bec Thomas, representing the local government sector.

These new appointments extend the reach and influence of the 26Ten Coalition.

Traycee, Craig, Charlie, John and Bec join:

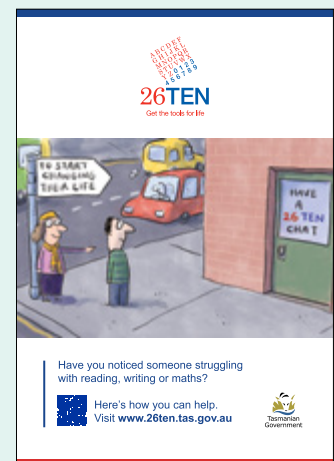
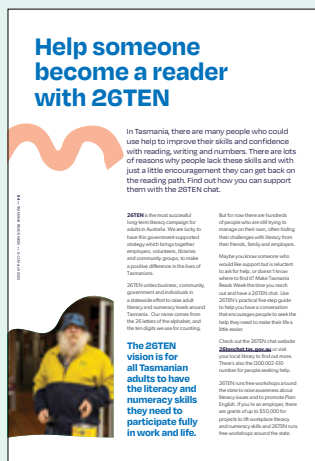
- Malcolm Wells, 26Ten Coalition Chair
- Gail Eaton-Briggs, adult learning and trades sector
- Richard Warner, agriculture sector
- Allyson Warrington, community and disability sector
- Dr Judith Watson, health sector
- Sue McKerracher, Libraries Tasmania (ex-officio)
- Libby Doughty, Skills Tasmania (ex-officio).

26Ten acknowledges the contributions of the outgoing Coalition members Siobhan Gaskell, Mellissa Gray, Tim Tierney, Kym Goodes, and former chair Daryl Quilliam, and thanks them for their advocacy and continued support of 26Ten.

Tasmania Reads Week

In early March, 26Ten Communities engaged with Tasmania Reads Week and hosted/attended events raising awareness about reading and adult literacy.

20,000 *Tasmania Reads* magazines that included an article and advert for 26Ten were distributed around the State and 26Ten was included in the Tasmania Reads campaign and magazine.



Articles from the Tasmania Reads Magazine

26Ten Week

26Ten Week is celebrated annually in October with various activities taking place at libraries, workplaces and in local communities right across the State.

This year's campaign, designed to align with the Department of Education, Children and Young People's (DECYP) *Numeracy Action Plan 2021 – 2025*, was themed *Making numbers work for you*.

26Ten created resources focussing on everyday maths and the ways that good numeracy can help with shopping, budgeting and financial literacy.

In conjunction with Libraries Tasmania, 26Ten ran the *Supermarket Challenge* prize draw to highlight the importance of estimation and rounding in managing everyday numeracy tasks like grocery shopping. There were over 800 entries from around the State and 50 people won gift cards in random prize draws.

More than 60 Adult Literacy Coordinators and volunteer tutors benefited from workshops conducted in Hobart and Launceston by renowned numeracy expert, David Tout. David's workshops focussed on having fun with numeracy and maths.

The Terror Australis Writers Festival recognised 26Ten Week with a new choose your own adventure crime novel aimed at emerging adult readers. Author, Ann Cleeves, of *Vera* and *Shetland* fame launched the book and two Library staff members, Emma Cutting and Allison Mitchell, each contributed a chapter.

26Ten volunteers play an important role in supporting literacy attainment across the State. These contributions were recognised in a various ways, including a visit to the Burnie Library by Minister Jaensch.



Minister Jaensch with volunteer Paddy, at Burnie Library



(Left to right): 26Ten Manager, Trish Scholwin, Minister Jaensch, and 26Ten Coalition members Traycee Di Virgilio, Gail Eaton-Briggs, Dick Warner and Malcolm Wells.

A special annual occasion is a networking event at Government House, where Coalition members, supporters, workplace grant recipients, adult literacy volunteers and individuals benefiting from 26Ten activities, come together to celebrate another year of contributions and achievements.

Over 90 people celebrated 26Ten Week at Government House at a reception hosted by Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania. It was attended by members of the 26Ten Network and representatives from our State's three main political parties, the Minister for Education, Children and Youth, the Hon. Roger Jaensch, Labor Member for Elwick in the Legislative Council, Josh Willie, and Green Member for Clark in the House of Assembly, Vica Bayley.

Communications

26Ten continued to communicate the importance of adult literacy.

Activities included:

- National press coverage through the Guardian, which was prompted by a new national study into adult literacy.
- State press in the Mercury, Examiner and Advocate.
- Radio interviews through Triple J Hack and Leon Compton ABC Local Radio.
- Supporting Tasmanian filmmaker Elli Iliades, who created *The Tea Leaf Reader*, a moving story about a woman with low literacy skills. Around fifty people attended the GRiT Short Film Festival which included *The Tea Leaf Reader*, among other short films. The film series was also shown at the Neighbourhood House Conference.

- Topic-specific print articles targeted to specialist organisational newsletters such as Libraries Tasmania, the Tasmanian Council for Adult Literacy and TasCOSS.
- Engaging with many organisations and individuals at Agfest, the *Grow Build Protect* project in Hamilton, the Fruit Growers Conference in Launceston, the Coal River Valley Products Association's meeting, and at the Tasmanian Pharmacy Guild Conference.
- Delivering a workshop to around 80 first-year medical students, focussing on literacy as a determinant of health.
- Supporting Coalition members to progress their action plans to improve literacy awareness and activity within their nominated sectors. For example, Richard Warner spoke on a literacy panel at the Australasia-Pacific Extension Network Conference in November that had 260 people attend, and presenting literacy awareness workshops across the State.



Goal 2. Everyone is supported to improve their skills and help others

26Ten Communities: Local Literacy for Work and Life

This year saw our fifth 26Ten Community the *Circular Head Learn for Life* community project, come onboard in November 2023.

The *Circular Head Learn for Life* community project joins Glenorchy (Glenorchy City Council), Clarence Plains (Hobart City Mission), Launceston Northern Suburbs (Starting Point Neighbourhood House) and the Huon Valley (Geeveston Community Centre). Each community is responsible for building strong and tailored literacy and numeracy activities within their communities, to meet the specific needs of their residents.

Each 26Ten Community receives four years of seed funding from 26Ten to support the community to develop and embed meaningful literacy and numeracy-focused activities within their municipality.

A snapshot of achievements include:

- Presenting *Building Stronger Communities through Literacy* at the TasCOSS Conference in August.
- Engaging communities to contribute story stones as part of the Libraries Tasmania and Dark Mofo event, *Stories after Dark*.
- Publishing *Lutruwita Love Stories* which was launched at Fullers Bookshop.



Lutruwita Love Stories pages

This was a collaborative effort by 26Ten Clarence Plains Community, Aboriginal Education Worker Nerissa Fenton and the Department of Education, Children and Young People's B4 Coalition.

- Attending 26Ten Communities, with 26Ten Coalition members Malcolm Wells and Traycee Di Virgilio visiting the Launceston Northern Suburbs Community to see first-hand the impact this program is having in the community.
- Hosting the Huon Valley 26Ten Community Business breakfast focussed on local literacy activities.
- Seventy business leaders attended the Glenorchy 26Ten Business Breakfast in late July, hosted by Mayor Bec Thomas. They learned about how stronger literacy and numeracy skills in the workplace can develop their workforce and transform their business.



Huon Valley Community Business Breakfast



Glenorchy Business Breakfast

CASE STUDY

Nyrstar supporting 26Ten Community of Practice in Glenorchy

Nyrstar is a long-standing member of Glenorchy's Community of Practice and has been a member of the 26Ten Network since February 2014. Nyrstar has operated in the Glenorchy local government area for more than 100 years and currently employs over 600 people.

In 2014 Nyrstar was awarded a 26Ten Workplace Grant to help them evaluate and convert their policies and standard procedures into plain English. This resulted in easier-to-understand documents, greater compliance with policies and procedures and ultimately, a safer work site.

Keen to build on the success of their previous work with 26Ten, the training team at Nyrstar have been working with our Glenorchy 26Ten Community Coordinator, Abi Binning, to develop a programme that aims to:

Reduce stigma and increase awareness of 26Ten

Posters are displayed in the staff room and induction materials include a referral to 26Ten for those seeking support.

Increase awareness about the impact of low literacy

In 2023, 40 members of the leadership team from all departments attended a literacy awareness workshop to learn about the impact of low literacy on individuals and the community. By learning about the 26Ten Chat, the leadership team gained skills in having a conversation with those who struggle with reading, writing or maths, and learned how to encourage them to seek support.

Encourage staff to use plain English

Two plain English workshops were delivered to staff onsite in 2023, giving them the tools they need to communicate information clearly.

This positive relationship between Nyrstar and 26Ten has already seen individuals reaching out for support and being referred for individual tuition to strengthen their skills.



Nyrstar staff promoting 26Ten Week

Developing the workforce of adult literacy and numeracy practitioners

Developing the workforce of adult literacy and numeracy practitioners is crucial to building the skills of Tasmanians.

26Ten works with 26Ten members, Libraries Tasmania and TasTAFE to support professional development in adult literacy and numeracy practitioners.

This year's 26Ten Week included free workshops in Hobart and Launceston for numeracy practitioners with renowned Australian numeracy expert Dave Tout.

Dave Tout also delivered a series of ten online numeracy workshops and Anne Bayetto, highly sought after expert on literacy and numeracy, ran a series of workshops on the *Big Six of Reading*.

Jenni Oldfield delivered two half-day online sessions on *Language, Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Skills in the Workplace*, and we hosted an *Introduction to the Australian Core Skills Framework* for literacy practitioners.

26Ten supported nine new Adult Literacy Trainers to prepare and deliver 26Ten workplace projects and provided mentoring



26Ten Manager, Trish, with 26Ten Community Coordinators, Taylor, Kate and Lucy, and tutor Tricia, at ChangeFest23.

support to beginning trainers as they took on their first projects as part of 26Ten's Workforce Development program.

Over three days, 26Ten members attended ChangeFest23 at Kutalayna/ Jordan River. ChangeFest is an annual event, held across different parts of Australia since 2018. It brings together community leaders, organisations, and individuals who are working to create positive social change in Australia. There is a strong emphasis on Indigenous leadership and inclusion.

Digital Ready for Daily Life Partnership

26Ten collaborated with the Skills Tasmania *Digital Ready for Daily Life* program offered by the Department of State Growth to provide funding for each 26Ten Community Host Organisation to support digital upskilling by employing a Digital Literacy Project Support Officer.



Governor Visit to 26Ten Clarence Plains Community

On 20 March 2023, the Governor of Tasmania, the Honourable Barbara Baker, and Emeritus Professor Don Chalmers visited the 26Ten Clarence Plains Community to hear about the 26Ten community model and what literacy and learning activities were taking place in Clarence Plains.

Her Excellency and Professor Chalmers asked some engaging questions about reducing stigma around literacy and the importance of word-of-mouth referrals.

Her Excellency then spoke with parents and carers at the Child and Family Learning Centre, and some participants of an English Conversations workshop.



The Governor visits Clarence Plains Community



Susan is pictured here with Trish Scholwin, 26Ten Manager.

The Kate Warner, AC, Literacy Volunteer Bursary

26Ten continues to benefit from the thoughtful, generous and active support of now retired Governor, Kate Warner AC through the *Kate Warner AC, Literacy Volunteer Bursary*.

Susan Wise, a volunteer at the Launceston Community Legal Centre, received the Kate Warner, AC, Literacy Volunteer Bursary in 2023. Susan helps people fill out legal forms and used the bursary to improve her own computing skills, helping her to navigate the increasing number of services that have moved online.

Growing the network of 26Ten Members

The 26Ten Network brings together individuals, organisations, and the Tasmanian community in a collaborative effort to boost adult literacy and numeracy skills. This year 28 organisations and 80 individuals joined the 26Ten Member Network. This means that 1,265 organisations and individuals have committed to improving adult literacy and numeracy in Tasmania to date.

Building literacy and numeracy with 26Ten Workplace Grants

26Ten Workplace Grants support organisations to build their skills in literacy, numeracy and plain English. Ten recipients from across the State received grants to support workers to improve their skills so they can do their jobs better, providing mutual benefit to the organisation and to individual workers. Grant recipients represent a range of sectors including areas where there is high workforce demand, such as disability and community care.

This investment pays off for all Tasmanians because when people improve their literacy and numeracy skills at work, their families and communities benefit. Successful recipients for the 2023 grants were:

- Burnie Community House
- Blueline Laundry New Town
- Blueline Laundry Kings Meadows
- Launceston City Mission
- Launceston City Mission – Burnie
- Mitchell Plastic Welding
- Choice Support
- St Vincent Industries
- Cameron of Tasmania
- Hamlet Inc.



Minister Jaensch attended Launceston City Mission – Burnie to officially award their grant. He is pictured with Leanne Wallace, Manager of Work and Training, and Stephen Brown, CEO of Launceston City Mission.

Get Ready Grants

For the first time, 26Ten offered smaller *Get Ready* Grants of \$5,000 to help organisations prepare for a larger project application. This grant offers an organisation a way to understand their business needs and explore how they can support their workforce. In 2023 we provided two grants with the successful recipients being:

- Corumbene Nursing Home
- Federal Group.



Goal 3. Everyone communicates clearly

26Ten continued to promote clear communication by building plain English skills in Tasmania.

There was a steady increase in the number of plain English workshop requests in 2023 and plain English training was delivered to 523 participants over 46 workshops. Organisations, businesses, and community groups from Queenstown in the West to St Helens in the East have taken up the challenge to improve their plain English skills.

June was 26Ten Plain English Month and included free plain English workshops in Launceston, Hobart and Kingston. Organisations who completed one of our workshops were offered a special tutorial session to improve one of their workplace documents.



Other activities included:

- Plain English becoming a compulsory unit for Law Honours Students at the University of Tasmania (UTAS). We delivered our first workshop to students in March and a second workshop in July. We also delivered an introductory workshop to first-year Law students and are planning workshops for students within the UTAS Faculty of Law in 2024.
- Two business units from Department of Justice, Homes Tasmania, and Diversity Equity & Inclusion hosted training for their teams in the South.
- 17 Early Career Teachers attended a live online plain English session organised by the Professional Learning Institute.
- Biosecurity Tasmania hosted a workshop for their communications staff in the South which was attended by 12 participants. The feedback was extremely positive, and they plan to run a similar session in the north of the State. Other workshops were held for the Ombudsman's Office, Metro Tas and Homes Tasmania (Launceston). Homes Tasmania have committed to referring clients to 26Ten for adult literacy and numeracy support. We distributed 150 copies of *Communicate Clearly: A guide to plain English* to the Tasmanian Training Consortium for distribution in their Writing Clearly workshop. We also provided the Centre for Legal Studies with copies of *Communicate Clearly* for their 2023 intake.
- 26Ten hosted a breakfast for plain English practitioners in February 2023. This was an opportunity for practitioners to meet and share feedback to continuously improve our public plain English workshops.

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CASE STUDY

Saving time for clients and staff with 26Ten Plain English workshops

Community Based Support (CBS) is an organisation that provides services for people in the aged care and disability sectors.

They wanted to improve written and spoken communication between clients and staff, so they organised a series of free 26Ten plain English workshops.

Mikayla, a client services officer, said the workshops gave her a new understanding, especially since her job involves helping people navigate the Aged Care or NDIS systems.

“I can see how plain English makes all this difficult information much more accessible and that people are better able to make decisions about the services,” she said.

Writing clearly about complex changes to services improves clients’ understanding

Recently, CBS had to let clients know about a complicated change to service fees. In writing to the clients, staff focused on using the lessons learned in the plain English workshops. They ensured the messages were clear, concise and in language that was direct and easy to understand.

A surprising and excellent result from CBS’ clear communication

Once the information had been sent, customer service staff prepared for a flood of phone calls from clients with questions and requests for more information. But the anticipated tide of calls did not happen.

Very few clients contacted CBS about the information. Their understanding and acceptance of the complex change was shown with the number of forms that were signed and returned.

Read more about CBS’s plain English experience at [Training for Plain English – Community Based Support Tasmania \(cbsaust.org.au\)](https://www.cbsaust.org.au/training-for-plain-english-community-based-support-tasmania)

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