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# 26Ten

## Tasmanian Adult Literacy

## Strategy – 26Ten

### 2026–2035

Help for adults with



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writing



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# Contents

Introduction	3
Definition	3
Reflecting on where we've come from	4
What we've learned	5
Scope of the <i>Tasmanian Adult Literacy Strategy – 26Ten 2026–2035</i>	8
Our vision	9
Our guiding principles	9
Our goals and priorities	10
Oversight of this Strategy	11
Measures	11

# Introduction

*The Tasmanian Adult Literacy Strategy – 26Ten 2026–2035 (the Strategy)* is Tasmania’s strategy to help adults build their literacy and numeracy skills for everyday life.

The Strategy builds on *26Ten Tasmania: Tasmania’s Strategy for Adult Literacy and Numeracy 2016–2025*.

It is informed by:

- ✓ our current Tasmanian adult literacy landscape
- ✓ Australian and overseas adult literacy programs
- ✓ data and stories from 26Ten members
- ✓ research about what’s been successful in other sectors, such as public health.



## Definition

The Tasmanian Government defines literacy as:

*“Literacy involves listening, reading, viewing, speaking, writing, creating texts, and using language for different purposes in a range of contexts.*

*Literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills needed to access, understand, analyse, and evaluate information, make meaning, express thoughts and emotions, present ideas, opinions and interact with others.*

*It involves a continuum of learning to enable individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society.”*

*(Lifting Literacy Implementation Plan 2024–2026)*



# Reflecting on where we've come from

Tasmania was the first state to have a whole-of-state strategy to raise literacy and numeracy skills for adults. It had support from politicians, business and community. It also set up a network of people who committed to action across three goals:

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

The Strategy was supported by the 26Ten Coalition, which included people from the following sectors:

- Adult learning and trades
- Aged care and disability care
- Agriculture
- Arts, culture and media
- Building and construction
- Education
- Community
- Government
- Health
- Legal.

Each Coalition member built an action plan showing how they were helping adults and businesses in their sector to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

There are many success stories to celebrate. But we know there is still more to do.



# What we've learned

We have learnt a lot about how to connect with adults. Reading Writing Hotline (2025) research named the strategies that have been successful in reaching potential learners. Many of these are in our first Strategy, including:

- having a long-term campaign
- place-based services, with outreach to learners
- making sure learning is relevant
- having strong partnerships that refer, support and share knowledge between them
- long-term commitment
- support staff working in communities
- connections to programs that adults consider are valuable.

## Improving literacy and numeracy skills has many benefits

Helping to improve someone's reading and writing skills has many benefits including:

- reading and understanding official letters and instructions
- following policies and procedures
- reading to children or helping children with their reading and writing
- being part of a community
- getting a job or finding a better job.

When people build their literacy skills, they do better at work and study and are more likely to become active in their community. Across Tasmania, we hear the same story: when learning focuses on people's goals and builds skills, their confidence grows and success follows.

## Adults can improve their literacy

It is important to understand that each adult is unique in:

- the reading and writing skills they already have
- how they feel about learning and their past learning experiences
- what they want to learn and why
- when and how they want to learn.

For example, some adults may have a good level of spoken English but may not have the same level of reading and writing skills.

We know that spoken language can be learned through listening but reading and writing skills need to be taught explicitly. There is strong evidence of success when reading and writing instruction is incorporated into an individual's learning goals.

We need to create learning opportunities for adults that are:

- easy to access
- easy to return to
- delivered in places where they feel comfortable.

We will do this by strengthening learner pathways and making it easier for adults to get help.



## Adult learning is not a linear approach

Adults want to get information from people they trust. These people are often in their local community, including in their workplace. Communities, including workplaces, can play an important role in building a culture of learning by:

- offering information and immediate help
- helping adults to build their skills
- referring adults to learning opportunities
- building a culture of learning by reducing barriers.

The place where adults access learning depends on what they want help with and when they want that help. We know that learning occurs in:

- Personal and community settings, such as:
  - Child and Family Learning Centres
  - community centres
  - libraries
  - local government councils
  - Neighbourhood Houses
- Workplaces and employment settings, such as:
  - induction and onboarding programs
  - mentoring and buddy approaches
  - on-the-job training
- Formal education training settings, such as Registered Training Organisations.

Adults might access learning in more than one of these locations over time.

## Adults learn with a particular purpose

Adults are more likely to ask for help with everyday tasks, for study, to support family members or to meet work needs than asking for direct help with their literacy and numeracy skills.

Literacy mediation describes how we respond when people ask for help with everyday tasks that involve literacy skills. This may include providing one-off help with reading a letter, writing an email or filling out a form.

We are seeing more people in Tasmania asking for this type of help every year. This is also happening in other parts of Australia and overseas.

Literacy mediation is an important way we can help adults to meet their everyday needs. It can also be an entry point for adults to improve their reading and writing skills.

## Skills are used across multiple settings

Adults apply their skills to different parts of their life such as reading a bedtime story or a school newsletter, following a recipe or measuring the right amount of medicine. One example is an adult who improved their reading skills to follow safety procedures at work and can now read the menu when they eat out with friends.

We have built these approaches into this Strategy.

## Time and flexibility are important

Adults are more likely to continue improving their skills if they apply them to their life. Learning and applying new skills take time. Building time and flexibility into our approach is important. We need to provide options on when, where and how learning is delivered.

## Everyone benefits when communication is clear

26Ten introduced plain English workshops to equip people with the skills to speak and write clearly.

Writing in plain English means documents are easier to read, understand and follow.

While we have helped many organisations to build their capability and to adopt plain English in their workplaces, there is still work to be done to embed plain English across Tasmania, especially in government documents.

Plain English continues to be a strong focus in this Strategy.



# Scope of the *Tasmanian Adult Literacy Strategy – 26Ten 2026–2035*

## Literacy mediation

Literacy mediation is when a person helps someone make sense of reading, writing or information so they can use it on their own. For example, helping someone to read and understand words and text in a document or to read a bus timetable. In this Strategy, literacy mediation is valued, visible and supported.

## Explicit Literacy and numeracy

We will continue to support adult learners who want to improve their literacy and numeracy skills in a structured way, through one-on-one or in small group settings.

We have worked with the Department for Education, Children and Young People to embed adult learning needs into the *Lifting Literacy Implementation Plan 2024–2026*, *Lifting Literacy Implementation Plan 2027–2029* and the *Numeracy Implementation Plan*.

## Digital skills

Completing everyday tasks often involves using technology. We will support people to use technology where it is aligned to an individual's literacy learning goals.

## English as an Additional Language

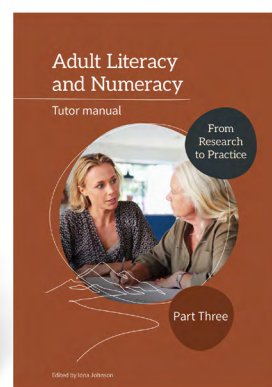
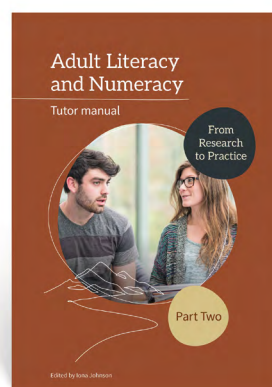
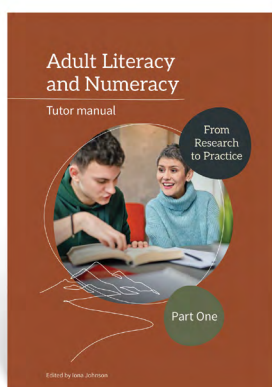
English as an Additional Language (EAL) teachers use specialist skills and resources to help adults whose primary language is not English. We will continue to support adults to get the right help at the right time, from the right people. We will:

- strengthen referrals from national EAL programs to state programs that provide additional support
- identify what tools and resources are needed to help adults have day-to-day conversations in English across different settings such as at home, in the community and in workplaces
- produce tools and resources to help meet these needs.

## Plain English

Using plain English principles in our written communications makes it easier for everyone to read and understand what is being said.

We remain committed to using and advocating for others to use plain English. We will continue to improve the clarity of communication through plain English and will build the capability of Tasmanians to write in plain English.





## Our vision

Tasmanian adults have the literacy skills they need for work, education, family and community life.

## Our guiding principles

We have used the following principles to develop this Strategy:

- ✓ **Learner centred:** Adults are at the centre and in charge of their own learning.
- ✓ **Accessible:** Adults can access the help they want, when they want it.
- ✓ **Place-based:** Local communities and workplaces have the literacy resources they need.
- ✓ **Evidence-based:** Research is used to guide high-impact practices and builds on successes.
- ✓ **Collaborative:** The government supports literacy services to work together and share resources more effectively.

# Our goals and priorities

## Tasmanians know about adult literacy

We will continue to raise awareness of adult literacy across Tasmania, and will:

- strengthen public awareness activities through the 26Ten brand
- strengthen collaborative partnerships
- foster a culture of learning and collaboration
- establish a 26Ten Champions group, who work across local communities and industry sectors to raise awareness.

## Tasmanian adults can get help with literacy

We know adults want to improve their knowledge and skills but can be reluctant to ask for help, so we will:

- help adults (including parents, carers and people in workplaces) with everyday literacy needs and to take the next step to continue their literacy learning
- have multiple entry and re-entry points to learning
- develop services and programs that meet learner needs
- strengthen pathways and transition support between service providers.

## Tasmanian communities have the skills and literacy resources needed to help adults

Communities already do significant work to support adults who want to improve their literacy. We can strengthen this support further so people in local organisations, workplaces and educational settings have the information, resources and skills they need to help others.

In local communities we will:

- build skills, knowledge and capability
- create an enabling environment with collaboration between providers
- maintain our commitment to plain English
- continue existing funding for the Circular Head 26Ten Community until 2028.

In workplaces and organisations, we will:

- work with employers to build greater understanding of adult literacy
- improve support for workplaces to be able to help people who want to improve their literacy skills
- work with employers to identify and address literacy and numeracy gaps in their workforce
- build capability in organisations that provide literacy and numeracy instruction and training.



# Oversight of this Strategy

The Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) is accountable for the *Tasmanian Adult Literacy Strategy – 26Ten 2026–2035*. It forms an important part of the State Government’s long-term commitment to improve literacy rates of all Tasmanians. The Strategy sits within the *Lifting Literacy Implementation Plan (2024–2026, 2027–2029)* and the *Numeracy Implementation Plan*.

DECYP will set up an Adult Literacy Advisory Group to oversee this Strategy. This group will:

- advise the Tasmanian Government on implementation of this Strategy
- promote the Strategy to communities and potential stakeholders
- foster collaboration between key stakeholders to improve adult literacy.

We will use government as an enabler for this work and will leverage relationships across agencies, industries and communities. This includes, for example, strengthening our relationship with Skills Tasmania and with DECYP through Child and Family Learning Centres.



*A Language, Literacy and Numeracy Coach with a former participant of the Build Up Tassie Pre-employment Program. The participant secured an apprenticeship in construction after finishing the program, which is run by Loreto Community Housing.*

## Measures

We recognise that the adult learning environment is a complex one. Unlike formal learning in the school years, adult learners often engage in learning in informal settings, across multiple sites and for a particular purpose. Adult learners are often reluctant to provide demographic information or to agree to have their learning journey tracked and measured.

This is particularly the case where adult learners have low literacy.

Through Tasmania’s previous commitment to adult literacy, we have obtained activity-based data and rich stories about individual learner experiences.

Through this Strategy we will identify better ways to measure literacy skills and progress. Measures to monitor our progress will be included in the implementation plans that support this Strategy as follows:

- ✓ Tasmanian adults know where to find literacy help.
- ✓ Adults can and do access literacy support.
- ✓ Community responses meet adult literacy learning needs.



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# 26Ten

Improving reading, writing and  
everyday maths for all Tasmanian adults.

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