

TAFE Queensland

# Submission: Inquiry into Adult Literacy and its importance

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## Executive Summary

As a result of TAFE Queensland's extensive experience providing vocational and foundation skills training to adult learners, our submission focuses on two aspects of the inquiry:

- The relationship between adult literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills and socio-demographic characteristics, particularly migrant status, First Nations status and individuals living on households that have experienced intergenerational unemployment;
- The effect that literacy and numeracy skills have on an individual's labour force participation and wages

TAFE Queensland is the largest provider of vocational training courses in Queensland, working closely with employers in all major industry sectors as well as business and industry representative bodies. This close liaison ensures all vocational training offered by TAFE Queensland continues to align fully with current industry needs and emerging trends, and promotes early employment opportunities in a wide range of industry roles.

Our courses attract applicants from all Queensland community groups, including migrants, refugees, Indigenous peoples and those suffering intergenerational disadvantage, and we are therefore ideally placed to understand the extent and degree of low literacy, numeracy and problem solving skills within these populations, and the impact such skill and knowledge gaps have on their workforce participation rates, prospects for sustainable employment and personal and social well-being.

To support positive employment, personal and social outcomes for residents, TAFE Queensland continues to deliver a suite of federally and state-funded foundation skills programs, including the Adult Migrant Education Program and the Skills for Education and Employment program, which are offered across the state, as well as more targeted Foundation Skills for Your Future programs. In addition to these formal literacy programs, all vocational students, apprentices and other trainees have access to Learning Support services. These support services are designed to provide short term assistance to help students to bridge specific literacy and numeracy knowledge gaps, which may be hindering the progress of their vocational studies.

The period of remote working introduced across business sectors during the COVID-19 lockdown, exposed the extreme shortage of digital skills and knowledge amongst a broad spectrum of the population. In an environment where digital technologies are increasingly embedded in all aspects of efficient business management and working practices, and where international competitive advantage will rely more and more on the ability to deploy a technology aware workforce at all organisational levels, we believe it is imperative that the definition of literacy in this inquiry includes *digital literacy*.

As reported by a variety of international organisations, the widespread automation of routine tasks in many workplaces is also leading to the disappearance of roles traditionally available to those with lower levels of literacy and numeracy, and a commensurate migration to higher literacy roles for all employees. Therefore, to provide ongoing, realistic employment prospects to all Australians, i.e. those entering the job market for the first time (young people and new arrivals) and mature-aged job-changers, it is vital that a revised approach to adult literacy aims to improve literacy and numeracy

levels across the board, preparing all jobseekers for the higher demands of new and future roles and industries.

Finally, in evaluating potential solutions to increase literacy and numeracy skills within the target communities and drawing on the experience of delivering literacy programs and services over many years (thereby gaining an understanding of the factors which contribute to low adult literacy) we suggest that improving literacy rates for all populations can only be achieved by adopting a multi-agency approach, and this issue is addressed in more detail within the TAFE Queensland submission.

## **The relationship between adult literacy, numeracy and problem solving skills and socio-demographic characteristics, particularly migrant status, First Nations status and individuals living in households that have experienced intergenerational unemployment.**

### **Language, Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Needs in Australia**

Language, Literacy, Numeracy and Digital literacy (LLND) form the core foundation skills needed for individuals to participate in society and work. The Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF), is Australia's tool for describing individuals' performance in the five core skills of learning, reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy. (ACSF 2012, 2017, 2020). The ACSF has recently been extended to include Digital Literacy as it has become increasingly critical to be competent in the use of "digital technologies to achieve personal goals, enhance employability skills and support education and training." (Australian Government, 2020). The importance of digital literacy skills was recently reinforced as a result of COVID-19 related lockdowns which forced training to move to online delivery. TAFE Queensland believes that any discussion of Literacy and Numeracy must now also include Digital Literacy skills.

People greatly affected by reduced Language, Literacy, Numeracy and Digital (LLND) skills include young people, First Nations people, mature-aged job seekers, migrants and people with disabilities. LLND skill acquisition starts in childhood, however due to family, socioeconomic or health issues, many people lack the skills required for successful participation in society and the workforce.

The impacts and consequences of low levels of literacy and numeracy skills have been demonstrated in much research (e.g., Bynner & Parsons, 2005, 2006 & 2007; Hartley & Horne 2006; OECD, 2013). Research demonstrates that investment in improving the literacy and numeracy skills of youth and adults has substantial and potentially long term social and economic benefits.

TAFE Queensland acknowledges that for LLND provision to be successful, it needs to be offered over the long-term with collaboration between training providers, industry and support organisations. It is not easy to overcome a skills deficit. The provision of training to develop and maintain LLND skills requires the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to support life-long learning and skills acquisition.

*"Foundation language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills are key to Australian's participation in the economy. As the labour market continues to shift towards service industries and non-routine manual or cognitive jobs, workers will need to develop new skills throughout their lives to transition within and between jobs and industries."*  
(Australian Government, 2019).

### **Economic Impacts**

Approximately 25 years ago, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation (OECD) recognised that low levels of literacy were impacting social cohesion and economic performance at an international level. (OECD, 1997). Since that time, there have been surveys conducted by the OECD about every 10 years.

The last survey of adult literacy and numeracy skills in Australia were part of the 2011-2012 Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIACC) survey. The PIAAC 2nd Cycle of the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) is taking place from 2018-2024 with the participation of over 30 countries. Data collection will take place in 2022-2023 and the results will be published in 2024. Australia is participating in this Skills Survey. (OECD, 2021)

The OECD Survey of Adult Skills (2013b) describes five levels in literacy and numeracy from Level 1 (lowest) to Level 5 (highest). Please refer to Appendix 1 for a brief description of the PIACC literacy and numeracy levels. An approximate alignment to the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) has been added.

The results of the 2011-2012 survey are shown in Figures 1 and 2 below.

Of the 7,428 adult Australian respondents surveyed at the time, nearly half (44%) demonstrated low levels of literacy, while over half (55%) demonstrated low levels of numeracy. (OECD, 2013a).

Figure 1: *The Literacy level of Australians aged 15-74, based on the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (2012).*

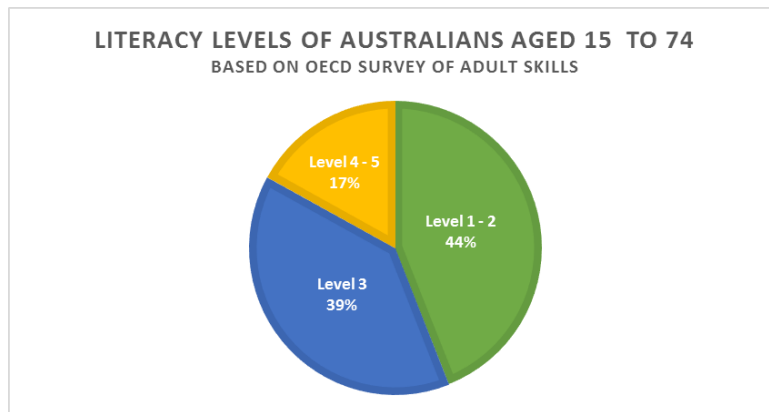
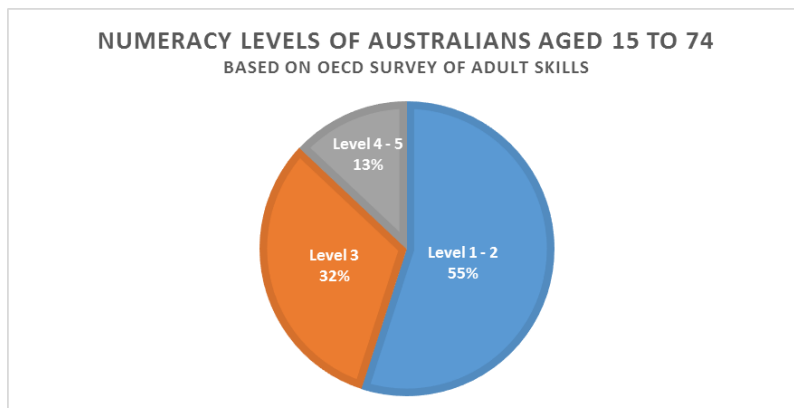


Figure 2: *The Numeracy level of Australians aged 15-74, based on the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (2012).*



In Australia, a Certificate III qualification is required for most entry level occupations. Certificate III qualifications require a person to be working at ACSF level 3 or higher. The low levels of Literacy and Numeracy skills shown in Figures 1 and 2 indicate that approximately half of Australia's adult population would find it difficult to study at Certificate III level or higher, without significant support, if at all.

### **Adult Cohorts and their LLND needs**

Adult learners require contextualised training to support a social or economic need – for work, for personal reasons or to more actively participate in society.

No training is effective without student engagement. For adults to engage in education they need to be motivated. Motivation comes as part of the recognition that something is necessary, desired, and useful or serves a clear purpose. So, for adults to engage in education, the relevance and benefits need to be clear.

The following is an overview of TAFE Queensland's experience in working with key adult learner cohorts, their circumstances and training needs.

### **Migrant cohorts**

In order to achieve a successful settlement into Australia, newly arrived migrants require LLND skill development. The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs and provides eligible visa holders with up to 510 hours of free English language tuition. (Australian Government, 2021a).

The Australian Government has recently announced major reforms to be implemented within the AMEP, which are supported by the *Immigration (Education) Amendment (Expanding Access to English Tuition) Bill 2020*.

When the bill commences, it will:

- remove the current 510-hour limit on free English tuition
- extend eligibility from functional English to vocational English
- remove the time limits for enrolling, commencing and completing English tuition for eligible visa holders who were in Australia on or before 1 October 2020

These changes mean migrants will be able to access continued English tuition, without time limits, to reach a higher level of proficiency. The reforms will also ensure that students participating in the AMEP are provided with a level of training that more adequately supports their settlement in Australia and facilitates their economic participation. TAFE Queensland welcomes the reforms to the AMEP.

Part of the success of the AMEP model is that it supports newly arrived migrants with free childcare to encourage their participation. For many adults, caring responsibilities present as a barrier to participating in training.

## Youth

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011), the level of participation in education and the labour market are key indicators of the wellbeing of young people. Young people who are not fully engaged in education or work are at a greater risk of unemployment, underemployment or low paying jobs.

Since the Global Financial Crisis, youth unemployment has steadily increased. This rate has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Queensland Government statistics, youth unemployment in December 2020 averaged 15.8% in the Wide Bay region, 21% in Brisbane East and was highest in rural and remote areas with youth unemployment reaching close to 28% in the QLD Outback. (Queensland Government, 2020).

Overall, apparent retention rates for students in Years 10 – 12 in Australia was approximately 82% in 2019. At the same time, the retention rate for the First Nations cohort was 60%, i.e., 40% attrition (ACARA, 2021).

According to the *OECD Skills Outlook 2015: Youth, Skills and Employability*, young people require a wide range of skills to be successful in all facets of life. A holistic approach is required to ensure that young people can engage in education, are employable and resilient to economic changes. Education and training providers, parents, communities and industry must work together to support young people to develop life-long learning skills. For example,

- Education providers must incorporate a strong focus on employability skills within their training.
- Parents and local communities, including employers, trade unions, voluntary organisations, cultural institutions and social services can also contribute to these skills as they are often acquired both inside and outside the education system.
- Parents, educators and other stakeholders should help young people build a capacity for **life-long learning** so that they can adapt to rapidly changing demands for skills.
- Workplaces can provide suitable environments for practical training with the newest relevant technologies, as well as allow young people to use their cognitive skills, problem-solving and emotional skills

For younger students attending specialised programs instead of school, residual issues continue to prevent focus on training. Many students have other problems such as housing, mental health or drug addiction which they need to resolve or manage before they are ready to continue study.

The following case study from Gympie in Queensland illustrates the effect that inter-generational unemployment can have on young people in training.



### **Case Study: SEE student – aged 15 – Gympie**

*A 15-year-old young man left school half-way through Year 10 as he was 'always behind'. He just couldn't manage reading and writing from an early age and started to act out when teachers disciplined him for not paying attention. He was later diagnosed with Dyslexia but by this time he had missed most of the foundational skills at school and created a wall of behavioural issues to deflect attention away from his 'deficits'.*

*After being told to leave school, he was referred to the SEE Program at the TAFE Queensland Gympie site. He started in SEE as a very young fifteen year old with low self-esteem and a negatively formed picture of himself as a learner. Once in the program at TAFE Queensland the expectation was to operate in an adult learning program, despite his need for intensive training to 'learn how to learn' with solid 1:1 support and targeted dyslexia training strategies. If his parents or support services had recognised that he had a specific learning need as a child, he may have received the support he needed in school.*

*Despite the first few bumpy weeks in the SEE Program, including his struggle with printed and online materials, he started to build trust in the process and appreciated his teachers treating him like an adult. However, he soon found that he was unable to meet his required minimum attendance of 10.5 hours per week to stay in the program... Some days, he could not attend training as no-one seemed to have phone credit or money to buy petrol which meant he often didn't have transport to get to SEE classes. In addition, his mother would often ask him to stay home as she needed his emotional support due to her own mental health needs. If she was feeling unwell, she would ask him to skip class and keep her company. His education was not a priority to his mother as it wasn't something that she had experienced positively in her life.*

*While he was offered support in SEE, he needed to overcome his Dyslexia challenges and learn strategies to cope with formal VET training programs that rely on functional reading and writing skills. He found he could 'learn by doing' but with Certificate II level training too challenging he saw his window of opportunity slowly closing.*

Ideally, this young man would be in a much better position if he had been able to access intensive support prior to undertaking VET training. TAFE Queensland believes that wrap around support helps to avoid attrition and assists educators to focus on students who are ready to learn. When young people are fully supported through a variety of stakeholders, other societal and economic impacts may be minimised.

Young adults, when fully engaged, can develop a sense of independence, self-confidence and access pathways for careers and employment goals. For example, the Transition to Success (Queensland Government, 2021d) is an example of one program which provides extensive wrap around support to their students. The program is funded by the Queensland Department of Youth Justice, and developed in collaboration with TAFE Queensland. The program seeks to re-engage Youth Justice clients in education and the development of their foundation skills, to set them on a positive pathway.

Apart from their legal issues, most of these clients face socio-economic barriers to learning – housing, domestic violence, transport, childcare, the incarceration of parents

and other family members and generally the lack of a safe and stable environment to support them. For these young people to participate successfully in this program, wrap around support is needed to deal with behavioural, social, financial, legal and mental health problems impacting their lives.

To provide this support the program is funded to incorporate:

- preliminary team-based activities to build self-esteem, trust and a positive social connection
- pre-training assessment to identify individual LLND skill levels and needs
- specialist educators to deliver foundation skills training at an appropriate level
- access to counsellors, psychologists and mentors
- support personal in class to help students with daily non-educational issues as they arise
- transport to and from the training site if needed
- shorter training days to acknowledge the challenge many face in a training environment
- a safe and inclusive learning environment

In 2018 an evaluation of the program was conducted by Deloitte Access Economics (2018) which reported that Transition to Success graduates:

- were less likely to reoffend after completing the program
- spent less time in custody per month after completing the program
- went on to further engagement with education, employment and training, or a job active provider
- A cost benefit analysis of the program showed that for every \$1 spent on the program resulted in \$2.13 of benefits. These benefits included avoided costs to government and society associated with reductions in reoffending (e.g. avoided costs of crime, custody and supervision).

For some students, it is the first taste of educational success, reinforcing a belief that they can improve and go on to other training options.

## **First Nations People**

According to the ABS (2011), “educational attainment has long been recognised as being correlated with a range of indicators of social wellbeing.” In the ABS Report, *Australian Social Trends 4102.0* (2011), attainment of Year 10 or basic vocational qualifications was more likely to occur with younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults aged 18-24 years of age, than mature aged adults. This educational attainment is also more prevalent in metropolitan areas compared to regional and remote areas in Australia.

In the Prime Minister’s *Closing the Gap Report 2020*, the target to halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade by 2018 was not met. In Queensland, targets were met in Year 5, and Year 12 or equivalent attainment has increased from 2008-2019. The *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015* was developed to build on the actions of *Closing the Gap* and set out a commitment to

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. The key principles for literacy and numeracy tuition for children is to use “proven, culturally inclusive, responsive and personalised approaches to learning, such as English as an additional language or dialect, in order to improve their educational attainment, life choices and options.” Unfortunately, this policy did not extend to the needs of adults in an older age group with literacy and numeracy needs, or young people who have disengaged from schooling.

TAFE Queensland has developed an Indigenous Education Strategy for VET and Higher Education (2020-2023) as part of our Reconciliation Action Plan. The strategy sets forth initiatives to ensure First Nations’ knowledge, cultures and values are reflected within Education and Training at TAFE Queensland, as well as to ensure success, retention and completion rates. TAFE Queensland recommends that any LLND training for First Nations Peoples must be culturally appropriate.

A successful model of educational delivery is the bespoke Indigenous Development Program offered at the Great Barrier Reef Marine College based in Cairns, helping First Nations people to achieve a Year 10 level (approximately ACSF Level 3) in English and Maths. This LLND training program is aimed at helping to close the gap, as well as provide a pathway to the RAN, and has been delivered for over 8 years.

The program is targeted at male and female Indigenous Australians from regional and remote communities who are keen to join the RAN. TAFE Queensland supports the RAN in identifying suitable recruits for the Navy, using appropriate LLND testing tools. Those candidates who are not taken immediately into the Recruit School are accepted into the Development Program. The 19 week program consists of four days per week of contextualised and accredited LLND training and one day per week of training in Certificate I Maritime Operations, with intensive mentoring provided by RAN staff.

For the duration of the program, students are provided with accommodation, meals, support and a suitable environment to focus on their study. They wear full navy uniform during training and formal graduation. TAFE Queensland educators monitor individual students closely and liaise with RAN to discuss and manage individual issues and barriers. Psychologists also help to monitor mental wellbeing.

Two programs are run each year, catering to up to 21 students per intake. LLND training is from selected accredited units aligned to Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA) to ensure Year 10 alignment. Additionally, to maximise relevance and engagement for this cohort, the learning materials incorporate Indigenous authors and works.

The longevity of this program reflects its consistent success. Attendance rates are high, with 99% of students completing the course successfully, and approximately 60% of graduates progressing to the RAN Recruit School, or joining the Army recruit school.

## **Mature Aged**

According to a Jobs Queensland (February 2019), participation rates for mature aged workers are expected to increase, due to improved health as well as the changing nature of work, retirement and financial considerations. The National Foundation Skills Strategy (Australian Government, 2012) has focussed on those aged 15 - 64 years old and does not address life-long learning needs of the 65+ age group who must still work and whom PIAAC (2013) deemed to have the lowest literacy among the adult population. Only one quarter of this group had level 3 literacy skills or above (Golding and Thompson, 2014).

“Unskilled” jobs do not exist in the Australian economy. Entry-level jobs require skills in digital technology and often involve complex processes. Due to injury, health issues or industry downturn, mature aged jobseekers find themselves requiring higher levels of LLN with digital literacy training in order to re-enter the workforce.

To support mature aged jobseekers, our TAFE Queensland site in Warwick offered a digital literacy program so participants could learn how to conduct an internet search, apply for jobs online, develop resumes, create email accounts and develop their skills and knowledge of basic software. Participants were also able to visit workplaces to see how digital technologies were used in the workplace.

### **Case Study: Craig – aged 61 – Warwick**

*One example from the mature-aged job seekers in this program is Craig, who worked hard all his life and possessed an impressive array of work skills to offer potential employers. Despite this, the 61 year old struggled to find work after losing his job when his employer downsized in 2015. Craig has little experience working with computer in the workforce. In today’s digital world, computers presented a barrier to his future employment.*

*Craig participated in the digital literacy program at Warwick, which enabled an improved confidence in the use of a computer and as a result was able to secure a job locally on the completion of his training.*

Craig’s story demonstrates that Australians require life-long learning opportunities to re-train or upgrade their skills when circumstances change in their lives. His story also supports the findings that those participating in formal education and training or workplace training at more mature ages achieved better labour market outcomes. (Buddelmeyer and Polidano, 2016).

## Recommendations

1. As recommended by Joyce (2019), life-long learning opportunities should be made available to **all** Australians whose LLND skills levels are measured at ACSF Level 2 or lower.
2. The National Foundation Skills Strategy should be extended and reviewed to support all age groups, and to incorporate the Productivity Commission and Joyce Review recommendations.
3. A multi-agency, wrap around approach is implemented to reduce the barriers that impact or prevent an individual from undertaking critical LLND training.

## **The effect that literacy and numeracy skills have on an individual's labour force participation and wages.**

### **LLND needs and ability to cope with change over an adult's lifetime**

People with low levels of literacy and numeracy are less likely to be employed or underemployed, or are more likely to be employed in low-skilled insecure work where they are at greater risk of unemployment. The impact of COVID-19 has exacerbated that problem, particularly for casual employees working in industries such as Hospitality. According to the OECD, better-educated individuals have higher rates of participation in the labour force, lower unemployment and higher earnings than those with low qualifications (McKenzie and Wurzburg 1998). Those with low literacy skills are also more than twice as likely to be unemployed (Skilled for Life 2013).

When circumstances change in a workplace – such as has occurred with COVID-19 – or if a personal situation requires a change of direction, the ability for those with low level LLND skills to find alternative employment that may be outside of their current skill set is impeded without adequate training and support.

For example, filling in a paper-based or digital form to receive government assistance can present a significant challenge for those with low levels of LLND. For those receiving welfare payments, including those with disabilities and the long-term unemployed, there are mutual obligation requirements which include looking for at least part-time work. The measures assume that those on welfare have the necessary skills to participate in the workforce, as well as possess the LLND skills required to search and apply for jobs, and report the evidence of their job search. Many native English speakers are unlikely to admit they have any LLND skill deficits. Consequently adults with LLND issues have difficulty staying compliant, especially with the obligation to apply for jobs online and to report their activities via MyGov.

With the recommencement of mutual obligation requirements and a move to online service provision, jobseekers are required to self-manage. For jobseekers with limited LLND skills, complying with requirements that demand a level of LLND reduces the individual's ability to effectively report on their activities, leaving them more vulnerable to financial penalties.

The effect that LLND skills have on an individual's labour force participation is undeniable. An example of its impact is illustrated by a young student enrolled in a literacy/numeracy course through TAFE Queensland. This student has had significant educational disruption and exited mainstream schooling around Year 8-9. Currently he has literacy and numeracy skills at ACSF Pre-Level 1 for Numeracy and Exit Level 2 for Literacy. ACSF Pre-Level 1 in Numeracy indicates that this student is still learning numbers up to 100 and is not yet able to add or subtract beyond single digit numbers. So far, he has been unable to find employment and is unable to engage in his desired career path to work as an apprentice mechanic due to low literacy and numeracy skills. Without training, long term employment prospects for this student are bleak.

The Australian economy is becoming increasingly skills based; the importance of a qualified workforce becomes important in securing a job. Those who have

disadvantaged educational backgrounds will remain excluded in society and the workforce (Buddelmeyer and Polidano, 2016).

The positive impact and effectiveness of supported LLND training in changing people's lives is obvious. For the unemployed it provides hope and the empowerment to have choices. For those employed, it provides safety, greater productivity, job security and the potential to progress.

With the ongoing changes in industry, the workplace, society, education and technology, it is necessary for people to upgrade and update their skills throughout their life. The proposal by the Joyce Review (2019) of ensuring that all Australians receive fee-free LLND training until they are exit ACSF 2 is an excellent strategy to further support adult learners.

## **Recommendations**

1. As previously noted, life-long learning opportunities should be made available to **all** Australians whose LLND skills levels are measured at ACSF Level 2 or lower. Labour force participation is reliant on adequate LLND skills to be adaptable to changes in workforce requirements.
2. Compliance requirements for jobseekers need to adequately take into consideration the LLND skills to ensure that individuals with low levels of LLND aren't being penalised because they are unable to navigate online systems.

## Summary of Recommendations

1. As recommended by Joyce (2019), life-long learning opportunities should be made available to **all** Australians whose LLND skills levels are measured at ACSF Level 2 or lower.
2. The National Foundation Skills Strategy should be extended and reviewed to support all age groups, and to incorporate the Productivity Commission and Joyce Review recommendations.
3. A multi-agency, wrap around approach is implemented to reduce the barriers that impact or prevent an individual from undertaking critical LLND training.
4. As previously noted, life-long learning opportunities should be made available to all Australians whose LLND skills levels are measured at ACSF Level 2 or lower. Labour force participation is reliant on adequate LLND skills to be adaptable to changes in workforce requirements.
5. Compliance requirements for jobseekers need to adequately take into consideration LLND skills of individuals to ensure that those with low levels of LLND aren't disadvantaged because they are unable to navigate online systems and reporting requirements.



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## Appendix

Description of proficiency skills levels for the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIACC) and approximate alignment to the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF).

PIACC Level	ACSF Level	Literacy	Numeracy
Below level 1	Pre-level B to 1	Read brief texts on familiar topics to locate a single piece of specific information	Explicit content with little or no text or distractors. Concrete familiar context. Simple processes such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• counting and sorting</li> <li>• performing basic arithmetic operations with whole numbers or money</li> </ul>
Level 1	Level 1 to 2	Read short texts to locate a single piece of information that is identical to the information given in the question	Explicit content with little text and minimal distractors. Common concrete contexts. One-step simple processes involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• counting and sorting</li> <li>• performing basic arithmetic operations;</li> <li>• understanding simple percentages (50%)</li> <li>• identifying elements of simple graphical representations</li> </ul>
Level 2	Level 2 to 3	Make matches between text and information which may require paraphrasing or low-level inferences	Fairly explicit or visual content with few distractors. Common contexts. Processes of two or more steps involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• calculation with whole numbers and common decimals, percentages and fractions</li> <li>• simple measurement and spatial representation</li> <li>• estimation</li> <li>• interpretation of simple data and graphs</li> </ul>
Level 3	Level 3 to 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify, interpret or evaluate one or more pieces of information (multiple pages of text), requiring varying levels of inference.</li> <li>• Perform multi-step operations to construct meaning and formulate responses.</li> </ul>	Embedded content in less familiar contexts. Multi-step processes involving choice of problem-solving strategies requiring the application of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number and spatial sense</li> <li>• mathematical relationships and patterns</li> <li>• proportion</li> <li>• basic analysis of data, statistics and graphs</li> </ul>
Level 4	Level 4 to 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate, interpret, or synthesise information from complex or lengthy texts.</li> <li>• Identify and understand specific non-central ideas in text to interpret or evaluate subtle evidence claim or persuasive discourse relationships.</li> </ul>	Complex, abstract or embedded content in unfamiliar contexts. Multi-step processes involving choice of problem-solving strategies requiring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analysis of quantities and data</li> <li>• statistics and chance</li> <li>• spatial relationships</li> <li>• change, proportion and formulas</li> <li>• well-reasoned explanations for answers</li> </ul>
Level 5	ACSF does not exceed level 5. This would be over level 5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search for and integrate information across multiple dense texts.</li> <li>• Construct syntheses of similar and contrasting ideas.</li> <li>• Evaluate evidence-based arguments and reliability of evidentiary sources.</li> </ul>	Complex, abstract, formal mathematical and statistical ideas embedded in complex texts. Integration of information requiring translation or interpretation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• draw inferences</li> <li>• develop or work with mathematical arguments or models</li> <li>• justify, evaluate and critically reflect on solutions and choices</li> </ul>