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2012-13 Annual Report
Tasmanian Adult Literacy Action Plan



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Introduction

As this 2012-13 Annual Report clearly shows, the Tasmanian Adult Literacy Action Plan (Action Plan) is something for which many Tasmanians should feel proud, for their contributions and willingness to take on lifelong learning.

In 2012-13 there have been many significant achievements in adult literacy resulting in:

- nearly 3000 Tasmanians directly benefitting, and many more indirectly, from the full range of services supported through the Action Plan;
- the launch of 26TEN and the 26TEN Network in October 2012;
- the Literacy Coordinator Network being fully operational; and
- all actions under the Action Plan being underway.

26TEN is the public face of the Action Plan, aiming to raise awareness and mobilise Tasmanian business and community to join Government to create a joint response to literacy improvement. The need to raise levels of literacy is such that Government activity alone will not make the change. Improving literacy must be a whole-of-community effort.

A Tasmanian Audit Office compliance audit of the Action Plan was tabled in Parliament in December 2012. The Auditor-General, in his report, concluded: *“there has been a high level of compliance with the Action Plan, resulting in significant activities, including recruitment of staff and volunteers, information sharing, grants provided and strong participation.”*

At the mid-point of the Action Plan, much has been achieved and there are many opportunities to strengthen these early successes through continuing evaluation and community engagement.

In its Future Focus, 2013 National Workforce Development Strategy, the Australian Workforce Productivity Agency stated that literacy:

“...is not a marginal issue. It is a huge challenge for mainstream Australia and it is constraining individual opportunity and economic development. Building literacy and numeracy skills will be critical to increasing labour force participation and transitioning to a more productive, higher skilled economy.”

The 26TEN approach was endorsed in Future Focus, and it was recommended that a similar national campaign be implemented.

Tasmania is leading the nation to drive innovative adult literacy improvement strategies for the long term.

Tasmanians changing their lives



In the community

“I want to get to the top.”

Maree Taylor made a difference to her life by doing something about her reading skills.

And, by talking about that personal challenge publicly as part of the 26TEN awareness campaign, she is making a difference for others by urging them to follow in her footsteps.

Maree turned to LINC for help when she pulled out of a job interview because of embarrassment at her reading skills.

“I wanted to do it for myself and get somewhere in life, to actually prove to myself that I can do it and, I want to get a good job and to walk in there confident and think, I can fill out this form, no problems,” she says.

Like Maree, many Tasmanians are turning to their local LINC for literacy support.

Some are taking the first steps as an adult to learn to read a letter from a loved one or write a reply.

Others are seeking to build on the skills needed to enrol in and successfully complete a training course in community services, or construction.

There are also those, like Maree, who want to develop their skills and confidence in their local community.

They want to learn informally in a way that is relevant to their everyday lives. They want to improve their quality of life, their social connections and their ability to seize employment, education and training opportunities as they arise.



One of the biggest personal challenges for LINC literacy clients is that they place a low value on their ability to learn.

The key to overcoming that is the close bond of trust and support from a one-to-one volunteer tutor.

That relationship provides the stability, reassurance and long-term support needed to turn around a low self-concept.

As Maree says, the time it will take is less important than the positive direction she is heading in:

“I’m getting there. I’m not down here anymore... but I want to get up the top. It might take me six, twelve months... but I don’t care. As long as I get to where I want to go.”

“I just decided that I can’t bluff anymore. I’ve got to the stage in my life where I want... to read and write and do things for myself without other people helping me.”

In the workplace

One hour a week, that's all it can take.

What happens when your employer becomes a state-wide entity with national reporting responsibilities, licensing obligations and with a need to comply with increasingly complex workplace safety legislation and regulations?

How do you keep pace with a world where few plant and equipment manuals come in hardcopy? The majority of your clients and colleagues want to communicate with you via email and SMS, not always face-to-face. You need to complete a qualification to stay relevant in the job you've always done but, even there, there are forms to fill and workbooks to complete.



Todd Willing

A year ago Todd Willing and Matt Roberts, two employees of the southern water and sewerage service provider, TasWater (South), faced this very scenario.

What they did have, however, was an employer committed to the task of raising skills, including literacy

skills, and an active member of the 26TEN network.

Todd, a maintenance worker, wanted to do a plumbing apprenticeship but knew that the written component would be a challenge. Southern Water, as it was then called, in cooperation with TasTAFE, was happy to support Todd through his plumbing training, but that still left him needing support with workplace documents and information.

Initially Todd attended Kingston LINC in his lunchbreak for assistance but this proved difficult due to the nature of his work. However, funding through the 26TEN grants program has meant that he can now do this in work time, one hour a week.

Before all this he could only read the footy scores in the back of the newspaper. Now he uses email and reads equipment manuals and, in his home life, he can now enjoy some online shopping.



Matt Roberts

His Support Officer has encouraged him to develop his skills further through journaling and proof reading. Todd says, "When I have children I'd like to read to them, it's something I missed out on."

Matt (right) has nearly completed a Certificate III in Water Industry which supports his work dealing with chlorine, the treatment plant and sewage pumps. This, and his training in confined spaces and the use of breathing apparatus, has been supported with funding from Skills Tasmania's Skills Fund program. Before this Matt hadn't undertaken formal training. Not overly fond of his school years, he'd mostly completed practical subjects and left as soon as he could, at the end of Year 10. He'd always got by with the skills he had, his good nature and his practical abilities used in his maintenance work, but knew that was not enough if he was going to build a career.

Now he's developing his literacy skills, one hour in work time, one hour in his own, thanks to funding provided by the 26TEN grants program. Not only has this meant he could complete his training but it has also given him confidence in his work and home life. On a practical level he is now comfortable reading pump maintenance manuals, keeping records and filling in forms. He also looks forward to reading to his children in the future, an experience he missed out on. "What it's really given me is confidence," Matt said.

Both men have shown courage in recognising, and being open about, their needs. The support and respect from their colleagues and TasWater (South) has been critical in helping them achieve their goals.

Training for the future

Success Pathways

“Success Pathways provides workplace literacy skills training for apprentices and trainees, it’s to ensure they have the skills to remain employed and continue to progress.”

Not all apprentices require the same level or type of workplace literacy support.

An automotive apprentice may require writing skills to complete a mechanical report, a business trainee may need telephone skills and be able to write an accurate phone message, a carpenter may require numeracy skills, to measure and select timber for a job. Some participants require a single specific skill developed, while others require more long-term assistance. One size does not fit all.

Success Pathways provides that tailored help to apprentices to ensure they have the skills to progress in their chosen trade.

One participant in the program is Daniel, who received assistance to improve his writing and computer skills to complete assignments as part of a Certificate III in Agriculture. Daniel’s employer has been really positive about the workplace literacy program. “The support received from Harry has been an essential component of our trainee’s skill development and crucial to his success.” Daniel’s literacy skills have developed through 2013 and he is ready to complete his apprenticeship before the end of the year.

Success Pathways has provided workplace literacy skills training to more than 50 apprentices and trainees in the past year.

The project, delivered by Group Training Australia’s Adult Literacy Support Officers, is funded by both the Workplace English Language and Literacy Program and the 26TEN Grants Program.

Getting There

“It’s about getting the core skills; it’s about getting into an apprenticeship or traineeship.”

There are skills you need just to apply for a job before you even start building the skills for your chosen career.

And, as Jacob found when unsuccessfully applying for an apprenticeship, without the basics it can be extremely tough clearing the first hurdle.

He was not confident in answering interview questions and his resume didn’t give a full representation of his past experiences and training.

However, that changed when Jacob joined the Getting There program, which offers job applicants at group training organisations the opportunity to increase their literacy skills to be able to gain employment in their chosen career path.

Jacob developed a new resume and the confidence to answer interview questions and show his enthusiasm through words. When he applied for a new apprenticeship he impressed the interviewers with his confidence and passion.



Although unsuccessful in his first choice, the interviewers chose to employ him in a different position and he is now completing his Certificate II and III in Horticulture.

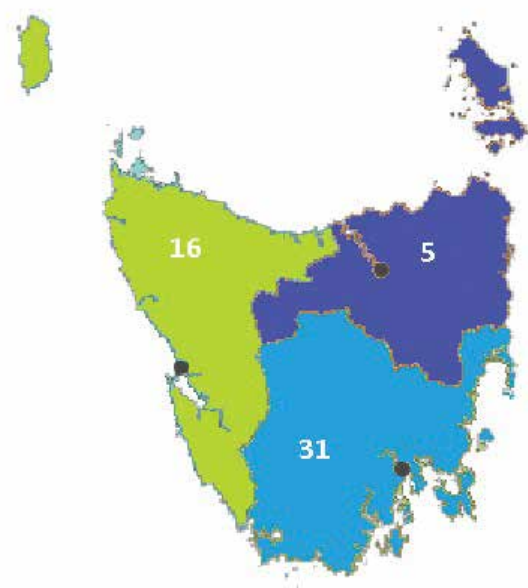
Getting There has provided one-to-one training to 157 participants during the past 10 months and is delivered by Group Training Australia’s Adult Literacy Support Officers.

The outcomes of training include:

- improvements in participant's literacy skills
- 52 participants gained employment
- 14 participants undertook VET courses, and
- 8 participants returned to school.

A further 270 jobseekers have received literacy support while studying in the Australian Apprenticeship Access Program. This Program provides job seekers who are experiencing difficulties getting work with pre-vocational training – helping to become 'job ready'.

The map shows the locations where 52 'Getting There' participants have gained employment in the past 10 months from October 2012. Even if people haven't got a job many of the participants have an improved quality of life through increased skills gained from 'Getting There'.



Additional Tutorial Assistance Program

Skills Tasmania, under its Additional Tutorial Assistance Program, funds TasTAFE (formerly the Skills Institute) to help lift literacy, numeracy and study skills of any apprentice or trainee studying in Tasmania. This support occurs when learners are at risk of not completing the course of study.

In the 2012 calendar year, 124 apprentices and trainees received assistance through this program, 116 from the TasTAFE and eight from private registered training organisations. The total number of contact hours was 2,457, with an average of 20 hours per student.

Of the students supported:

- 57 required literacy support
- 97 required numeracy support
- 20 required support in study skills
- 41 required both literacy and numeracy support, and
- 14 required support in all three areas.

Students were supported state-wide, with:

- 46 students in the north
- 62 student in the south, and
- 16 students in the north-west.

In 2011 the Skills Institute provided support for 120 apprentices and provided 1,805 hours of funded support. While the number of apprentices receiving assistance has only increased marginally, the number of hours has increased by over 36%. This supports teachers' observations that learners are requiring more support.

This program has been highly successful with 91% of all students who participated in the program in 2012 either completing their qualification or continuing their training into 2013.

The power of many

Building literacy friendly workplaces and communities

The 26TEN campaign lives and breathes because everyone is working towards the same goal, with the same purpose.

Whether it's the tutor working one-to-one with a client or an international company determined to make a difference for its employees, there is a growing list of individuals and organisations in the 26TEN Members Network adding to the weight of the campaign to improve skills in Tasmania.

A typical example of corporate enthusiasm for the task is the work being done by Serco Global Services Australia, one of the biggest employers on the North-West Coast.

Glen Patten, the company's training leader at its Burnie headquarters, sums it up:

“Serco are very excited to be part of such an excellent initiative to not only identify language literacy and numeracy issues within the business and to support staff, but to also be recognised as an innovative, forward-thinking company that wants to break down literacy and numeracy challenges or issues. We see that this will assist in removing any stigma attached to language, literacy and numeracy challenges.”

The challenges are also being tackled at regional levels with new partnerships being forged.

The Burnie region is the test bed for a demonstration 26TEN Community that brings local government, state government, community organisations and business together. It will both raise awareness of the campaign, share knowledge and deliver plain-English workshops for businesses and agencies.

In the Circular Head district, the Circular Head Education and Training Consultative Committee has identified adult literacy as a significant local issue. Thanks to a 26TEN grant, it will develop a community learning plan ranging across a person's whole life from pre-school to late adulthood. This is grassroots action.

Members of the 26TEN network also help their staff and clients improve their own skills using the programs available. That can mean joining a plain-English workshop, and simplifying documents and signage. These are all small, easily achievable steps that can have a big impact.

Being a 26TEN Community means everyone knows about 26TEN, everyone is supported to improve their skills, and everyone communicates clearly.

To that end, 18 literacy awareness workshops were delivered from January to June 2013 with 296 people participating, and 61 people attended six plain-English workshops.

As well as spreading the word across the 26TEN network, there have been initiatives to keep the campaign in the wider public eye.

Following the successful launch in October 2012, there was an intensive advertising campaign on television and the strategic placement of stories in mainstream media.

These initiatives led up to the first anniversary of 26TEN in October 2013, where organisations across Tasmania flew the colours of 26TEN.

Already several innovative new projects have been highlighted in media following the awarding of grants and others with a record of success are now able to continue and grow.

International expert on adult literacy, Dr Bob Boughton, who spoke on the subject in Hobart in May, received wide media coverage and is a passionate advocate for 26TEN.

“It’s the first state in Australia to adopt a coordinated strategy to deal with this issue. The campaign model has been proven to work around the world. When it’s not just government agencies, when it’s the whole community, it’s worked in India, Tanzania, Costa Rica, Cuba, Argentina and Brazil,” he told The Mercury in Hobart.

The latest communications initiative, the 26TEN Facebook page, is used to share news on the campaign as it happens, point the audience to new information on adult literacy, alert people to upcoming events, and encourage ideas and initiatives to share around the network.

The Facebook page adds to the community conversation and creates another way of making 26TEN and adult literacy everyone’s business.



The 26TEN Coalition

The 26TEN Coalition (Coalition) is the Tasmanian Government’s community advocate for adult literacy. Established by the Minister of Education, it has a central role to play in mobilising and unifying the Tasmanian community in its efforts to ensure that young people and adults have the literacy skills they need to fully participate in their family life, the community, learning and employment. The community status of the Coalition best positions it to champion the cause of literacy in Tasmania, particularly by developing the 26TEN Network and supporting members.

The members of the Coalition for 2012 – 13 were:

Lee Prince (Convenor), Ron Ward, Jo Crothers, Garry Bailey, Rodney Dillon, and Olivia Adams. Jenny Rayner and Chrissie Berryman represented the Department.

The Coalition met four times during the year and members were very active in the community promoting adult literacy, particularly 26TEN leading up to, and after its launch, on 24 October 2012.

Why 26TEN is everybody's business



The 26TEN strategy is all about opening a door of opportunity for people, by changing their lives for the better. And when you make changes for the better for one person, you make changes for the better for their families, their community and their state.

The focus is on the individual, but the results in the years ahead will benefit Tasmania. Because at the heart of the 26TEN strategy, we need to tear away the stigma associated with adult literacy and numeracy. The simple message is - that literacy is everyone's business.

This ambitious strategy is a first in Australia in the way that it embraces government, business and the community with one goal in mind. Right across that spectrum partnerships are being forged because of the belief that literacy is EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS.

The 26TEN strategy is a key initiative of the Tasmanian Government's Adult Literacy Action Plan 2010-2015 and was launched on October 24, 2012, with compelling messages of the experiences of those who had stepped forward to tackle the literacy and numeracy problems that held them back in their everyday lives.

The launch at Parliament House in Hobart by the Premier, The Hon Lara Giddings MP, and the Minister for Education and Skills, The Hon Nick McKim MP, was

attended by a wide range of supporters of 26TEN, many of them leading Tasmanians in their field.

But the star of the day was a man called Nathan.

“There's just a whole big broad spectrum of things that I didn't know existed because I kind of hid from them. I made up excuses and lies, to myself, to not move ahead.”

Nathan has struggled with the basics of reading and writing. It got him into trouble because he couldn't fill in the forms to get a driver's licence.

His short description of how his life had changed was a deeply moving experience for everyone in the audience. Many went to shake his hand for showing the courage to tell his story. It distilled the essence of what 26TEN is about.

The 26TEN launch resulted in a significant lift in enquiries about adult literacy and numeracy courses.

There are many others who are lifting their skills, like Mark the factory worker who could not help his children with their homework. Thanks to a literacy course, he can be the dad he wants to be. And new opportunities have opened up at work with the support of his colleagues and his employer. This is an example of everybody's business coming into play again.

The key to spreading the word about 26TEN and what it can do for the individual is reaching the most difficult audience: those who struggle with literacy and numeracy,



who might be embarrassed about it, who don't talk about it, who don't see a way of changing things.

That's why a whole-of-government, whole-of-community ethos is behind the campaign. Employers, friends, families, community groups, sporting clubs, state, federal and local government agencies are often the first contact point, the bridge.

And the bridge is growing... and it will need to safely and comfortably move people into the welcoming embrace of more than 100 adult literacy teachers and support officers, 23 coordinators and 684 volunteer tutors across the state. That's a skilled army of highly committed people wanting to make a difference.

Don, a tutor, says the greatest challenge for individuals in doing something about it is:

“walking through the door, putting their hand up, and saying they have a problem. And it can be tougher in smaller communities where everyone knows everyone,” he says. “So we need to change attitudes because, at the moment, problems with literacy and numeracy are a secretive thing.”

Backing up all that on-the-ground work is the 26TEN website, with easy access – and compelling stories like Nathan's – to explain the campaign and promote the message, and the 1300 00 2610 helpline.

We now have a Facebook page, launched in August, to extend audience reach and get people talking – and thinking – about how they can contribute.

There is a grants program, which distributed almost \$1 million to projects around the state.

Some of these grants, like the partnership between the Ravenswood Heights Primary School, the Ravenswood Child and Family Centre and Willson Training, are an Australian first in lifting the engagement between parents and their school.

We now have over 100 organisations who are working toward becoming official members of the 26TEN Network.

The net is spreading rapidly assisted by a media campaign to highlight individual and community achievements, using both traditional media and social media, and highlighting the voices of those who have agreed to make their story everybody's business.



The hearts and the minds

LINC Tasmania's Literacy Coordinator Network

For adults with low levels of literacy, seeking support is often an act of courage. The fear of failure or hearing the internal voice that says 'You are no good at learning' requires a lot of support to overcome. The courage it takes to become a confident, successful adult literacy learner asks for a special type of support that won't give up when the going gets tough.

LINC Tasmania's statewide network of 23 literacy coordinators and more than 600 trained volunteers operates from major urban and regional centres in Tasmania: from Smithton to Risdon Prison, Queenstown to Burnie, Huonville to St Helens. Across these sites, volunteer tutors gave 19,922 hours of their time in 2012-13, working mainly one-to-one with clients, but increasingly supporting learners in small groups overseen by literacy coordinators.

Many of the 863 Tasmanians who received support from volunteer tutors last year have the lowest levels of core skills. While they are supported with a range of resources, including iPads, computer software and adult reading books, progress is often slow at these levels, marked by periods of dropping out and returning to literacy support. Learners at these levels need frequent reassurance from coordinators and tutors that they are capable of learning and that, with time, they can start to reach their goals.

In 2012-13 the network moved from what you might call infancy into its youthful phase. From crawling and walking to running and sprinting. As the network continues to mature in the coming year, those who take the courageous step of seeking literacy help, and those already on the path, will find a sustainable, long-term commitment and support, creating what one literacy coordinator calls a 'ripple effect'.

Literacy coordinators

“Anything, Anywhere, Anytime!”

Deloraine and Meander Valley literacy coordinator Anne-Marie Loader sees her role as being like a literacy ‘Goodie’: “The literacy service is anything, anywhere, anytime!”

Like the stars of the 1970s comedy TV show, *The Goodies*, Anne-Marie brings an unshakeable sense of fun, enthusiasm and creativity to the serious job of reaching and working with adults in the Deloraine and Meander Valley region.

“I am out there talking to everyone,” says Anne-Marie. “Some days it’s like I’m keeping the local coffee shops in business but taking that time to understand, respect and appreciate people is the beginning of building trust.”

Working in a regional community, Anne-Marie finds that the slow work of nurturing trust opens the door to people’s hopes and ambitions. “Once people start to trust you their deeper reasons for seeking help can come to the surface, like wanting to be a chef or a mechanic,” she says. “That’s when I can really help by showing someone how to break their goals down into realistic, achievable steps.”

Building relationships with key people in other organisations is an important part of Anne-Marie’s role as a literacy coordinator. “People don’t just walk in off the street,” she says. “Much of my time goes into talking to and working with other agencies. Working together to build a network of connections and services so that I can quickly refer a client on to a course or someone can refer a learner to our one-to-one service or into a skills development course.”

Although she sometimes asks her volunteer tutors to be a bit more patient when learners don’t progress as fast as tutors would hope, Anne-Marie is amazed at the levels



of empathy and kindness her volunteer tutors show their learners. “They are so engaged and when we meet at the local deli for a roundtable, it’s very rewarding to see them enthusiastically swapping stories and trading tips.”

Anne-Marie keeps her literacy skills sharp by reading research papers and attending the quarterly literacy coordinator network professional learning workshops. She also draws on the diverse and deep experience within the coordinator network.

The Deloraine literacy service is making a difference in people’s lives “one person at a time,” says Anne-Marie.

“We are part of the lives of Tasmanians who, before us, were out of work, unskilled, going nowhere. Now these people are moving forwards and living up to their true potential.”

Studying, earning money, doing something positive. We follow up and provide that support and encouragement to keep going even, when the going is really tough. We are a hand up in tough times.”

Listen to Anne-Marie talk about her role here:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4lvPny9pjvg>

The hearts and the minds

Literacy coordinators like Anne-Marie and John Richardson, in Launceston, work with clients, volunteers and their communities to provide tailored literacy learning support. This work often involves going out to and drawing in hard to reach clients who, like all literacy clients, are assessed and helped to develop a learning plan.

Volunteers are recruited and trained, undertaking a skill set of units delivered by TasTAFE. Volunteer tutors are then supported and matched with clients, usually in a one-to-one tutoring relationship. Coordinators support and monitor these relationships - encouraging, guiding and motivating the tutor and client, suggesting learning resources and strategies, checking in with how the client is travelling, and discussing opportunities for further education and training.

Coordinators work with their local communities to design and implement short literacy skills development courses, where clients can develop life skills, further their training and increase their employment opportunities. LINC's professional learning program for coordinators provides training to develop skills to work closely with their communities, helping to identify and cater to community literacy and learning needs.

From working with clients, volunteers and their communities, LINC literacy coordinators are at the heart of the action to improve Tasmania's adult literacy levels.

“The biggest reward from my job is seeing people walk in timid and lacking confidence and - after tutoring - watching them find their voice, prepared to stand up and express themselves.”

John Richardson, who works in a team of two literacy coordinators at Launceston LINC, believes that everyone should get more than one chance at learning. “Everyone deserves to feel that their life has possibilities within reach,” says John. “One of the great rewards of this job is seeing

someone who comes to us for help suddenly open their eyes to their own potential. In that moment lives change.’

Like his colleague Anne-Marie, John invests time in building and maintaining relationships. “Putting clients at ease and making them feel at home from the first meeting is important,” says John. “Even after a client is matched with a tutor, the relationship needs to be monitored and fostered. Around 40% of my time goes into supporting these one-to-one relationships.”

John has worked closely with volunteers in several roles for over 12 years. “I instil in the volunteer tutors a sense of being an essential part of the team. I’m here to support them, respond to their issues and share their successes,” he says.

Increasingly, John finds his work takes him out into the community, building relationships with other agencies like Ability Employment, TasTAFE and the Salvation Army. “If an agency is sending us a lot of clients, it’s worth having a chat with them to find out if they are able to do something differently,” he says. “It might not be reflected in our KPIs but if we can help build the literacy support capacity of other agencies, everyone benefits.”

John keeps up to date with developments in the adult literacy field by reading the latest research and by identifying client learning needs that require innovative teaching approaches. “We are having a lot of success with the THRASS and Toe-by-Toe reading systems, which we have trialled and then supported our tutors to feel comfortable using,” he says.

Recently, two new learners came to Launceston LINC seeking help and John asked them if they would like to join a conversation group. “Even though they were amongst new speakers of English, they were able to help and support the others in the group in a way that built their own confidence and skills,” says John. “It was amazing to see new clients benefit from supporting others.”



The volunteer army

“When they see progress they start to feel good about themselves.”

LINC Tasmania’s literacy coordinator network core one-to-one literacy tutoring service relies on trained volunteers who see adult literacy as everybody’s business.

Guided and supported by their local literacy coordinator, these volunteers form strong, rewarding bonds with their learners. Sticking with them while other parts of their lives sometimes fall apart. Helping them develop the confidence to participate in and shape their own lives and the life of their community.

“It is a powerful moment when clients feel good because of their achievements.”

Marina Watts, 60, of Austins Ferry, has been a LINC literacy tutor for the past 12 months after seeking volunteer work following a career in teaching and, later, customer service. She conducts six sessions a week with two clients at Glenorchy LINC. That’s six ‘face to face’ hours and about an hour of preparation for each.

“I was an early-childhood educator and primary school language teacher and literature has always been my passion,” she says. “Plus, I remember well the challenges in learning another language myself. So this role was natural for me.”

Marina says everyone has a right to read, write and communicate with ease and connect with others, and it’s hard to realise the depth of pain and frustration for those who haven’t had that experience.

“To help them achieve that basic right... to see that happen is very uplifting.”

When Dianne Ainslie, 41, of West Moonah, sits in a room with her adult literacy client, there are two winners.



Volunteer tutor and client

She sees that ‘lightbulb moment’, as she calls it, when a client can see the way forward.

And working in what can be a challenging field has, she confesses, done wonders for her own self-confidence.

“Because of health problems I have not been able to work since 2008, so I have had some challenges myself in not feeling so good about myself from time to time,” Dianne says.

“The motivation for me, in becoming an adult literacy tutor, was to make my days more fulfilling.”

“I have a background in customer service, not teaching. But, when I saw the poster in the library during one of my numerous visits and it asked for volunteer tutors, I thought it was right for me.”

Dianne says the great reward is seeing the improvement in clients.

“You start to see less self-denigration, more confidence,” she says. “When they see progress they start to feel good about themselves.”

Dianne is a passionate advocate for the adult literacy campaign because of its capacity to improve people’s lives in so many ways, particularly their health and wellbeing.

“It’s about a positive experience and, as I have discovered, it has been a wonderfully positive experience for me too,” she says.

The hearts and the minds



Jess Panday (L), Literacy Coordinator at Launceston LINC, with clients

Learning together

For many people, being able to share their learning with others on the same path is pleasurable and supportive. Learning in a small group can also help them reach their goals quicker.

At Launceston LINC three small groups are meeting weekly. One group provides opportunities for Bhutanese women to practise their English conversation skills. Another group meets to develop the skills and knowledge to pass the Driver Knowledge L1 Test. Both groups are supported by volunteer tutors and literacy coordinator, Jess Panday.

The third group is the MyTHRASS Club. This group of five meets for an hour a week to grow their reading and spelling skills. Jess and volunteer tutors support the club learners who have formed close, supportive bonds through tackling reading challenges together. "One learner looks forward to the club so much he sometimes comes an hour early," said Jess.

The Club's name comes from the THRASS (Teaching Handwriting and Spelling Skills) program. Club members use the THRASS chart to navigate and learn the connections between the 44 sounds and 26 letters of the alphabet.

Adult Literacy Support Officers

Another group that supports the activities of the Action Plan is the Adult Literacy Support Officers (Support Officers). Skills Tasmania maintains a register of people who would like to be informed of opportunities to work as a Support Officer. There are nearly 50 people on the register. To be included on the register a person needs to have a teaching qualification (K-12 or vocational), at least two years' experience in teaching adult literacy and be able to use the Australian Core Skills Framework (the Framework).

The register is helpful to organisations wanting to apply for a grant, or who have been successful and need people to deliver the training.



- ... Louise Stamberg doesn't want people to find her money. So, she
 hides
 remodel
2. When Olga sits in her kitchen and looks up, she doesn't see the case of money. She
 sees only the _____ it. judge
found
3. The kitchen in Mr. Williams' house is old. He wants to paint the kitchen. In the
 ceiling, and buy a new refrigerator. He wants to _____ the kitchen. In the
 kitchen.
4. Mr. Williams asks a carpenter, "Can you remodel my kitchen?"
 hour to do the work." The carpenter says, "Yes, I'll do it."

5. The carpenter finds the money above _____ the carpenter.
 because I _____ the carpenter says, "Yes, I'll do it."
 a _____

3. COMPREHENSION

UNDERSTANDING THE MAIN IDEA

- Answer the questions. Circle a or b.
1. Why does Louise Stamberg hide money?
 a. She is sick and can't go to work.
 b. She doesn't like her house.
 2. Where does Louise Stamberg hide money?
 a. In the kitchen.
 b. In the ceiling.



Making a difference

The Tasmanian Government, through the Adult Literacy Investment Fund, supports projects to develop Tasmanian's literacy and numeracy skills in the workplace and the community. There are two programs: the 26TEN Grants Program and LINC Tasmania's Literacy Skills Development Program.



Making a difference



It's more than reading and writing

One of the projects highlighted by the The Hon Nick McKim MP, Minister for Education and Skills, when announcing the new 26TEN grants, was Barrington Lodge, a home for disadvantaged older Australians run by the Salvation Army in Hobart.

26TEN Grants

The goal of the grants is to boost adult literacy and numeracy levels in Tasmania: to increase the core skills levels of people in the workplace and communities, to build a culture of life-long learning and to make it easier for employees and community groups to access literacy support. In 2012 \$650,000 was allocated and Skills Tasmania contributed an additional \$450,000. Ten workplace and 19 community-based projects were funded – from Circular Head to Geeveston – working with primary manufacturers such as Tamar Valley Dairy and Petuna, to peak employer bodies such as Early Childhood Australia (Tasmania) and a variety of community groups such as the TasDeaf Society, the Migrant Resource Centre and a number of community centres.

The full details of the grants made in 2012-13 are available at the Skills Tasmania website.

In 2012-13 768 workers and 229 members of the community participated in activities funded through the grant program. Many of these projects were about finding different ways to engage people and work with them to improve their skills. Running projects such as these requires imagination, determination and energy from both the people who manage projects and those who participate. The stories below, from Barrington Lodge, Aged and Community Services Tasmania, Southern Water, Steps and Stories and the Clarendon Vale Neighbourhood Centre show this.

The message from employers and industry associations at the funding launch was clear: adult literacy isn't just about generic reading and writing skills, it's also about the industry-specific communication skills that employers rely on for workers to do their jobs well.

According to Aged and Community Services Tasmania's (ACST) Lee Veitch, in aged care, 26TEN adult literacy training is about fostering the literacy, numeracy and computer skills needed in an average day caring for older people.

"That means understanding accreditation requirements, maintaining care and medication charts and communicating effectively with older people and their families," Ms Veitch says.

Workplace literacy is so important in aged care that ACST is now working with its members to roll-out a literacy diagnostic tool for aged care workers. The project is part of 26TEN's grant program and will see 20 facilities and 425 employees receive literacy training through individual plans tailored to meet each employer's specific needs.

Students at Barrington Lodge spoke about how the program has improved their self-confidence and capacity to excel at work.



The team: L-R Clare Jurasovic, Director of Aged Care Tasmania, and Deb Stone, Nurse Educator, both of Barrington Lodge Aged Care Services, and Lee Veitch, Business Partner – Aged Care Community Services & Health Industry Skills Council

Maria Mason, one of Barrington Lodge's 26TEN students, said that workplace literacy training has given her the skills and confidence she needs to nurture and protect her clients' quality of life.

"For me the training has been about increasing residents' choice. It has helped us communicate better as a team and that means the residents get more say in what they do each day," Ms Mason says.

Half of Barrington Lodge's 87 staff members have completed adult literacy training through 26TEN.

"When I see the increased self-esteem it gives people, it leaves no doubt in my mind that adult literacy training changes lives," says Minister McKim.

Looking at the impact of 26TEN at Barrington Lodge shows that the Program has changed the lives of workers, employers and older Tasmanians.

Business takes up the challenge

When Southern Water, now TasWater (South), surveyed its staff of more than 400 on the skills they had and the skills they needed, literacy, numeracy and computer skills emerged as vital elements that impacted on every aspect of the business.

The challenge became even clearer when the company started a comprehensive set of training across the organisation in qualifications such as Certificate III in Water Operations and skills sets for compliance safety training. A number of staff were struggling, not because of

their knowledge or ability, but because their literacy skills weren't up to the task.

Southern Water had already received a Workplace English Language and Literacy grant to increase the field workers' confidence in using computers, and this was having a significant impact on the workforce.

The 26TEN Grant meant that Southern Water could employ a Support Officer to work with the 86 people who needed to improve their skills. Support was delivered mostly in small groups, with some people working one-on-one with the Support Officer. All participants had a training plan specific to their needs, and 57 successfully completed the planned training. The remaining 29 continue to receive the support they need.

The complexity of work-related documentation and the multiple levels of documentation required in the industry has highlighted the need for thorough communication of the tasks undertaken by the workforce across a wide field of activity. This includes day-to-day diaries, work forms, reports, scientific information, management procedures and health and safety information.

A glance at the list of training requirements needing to be regularly upgraded gives an indication of how much information employees need to know. The introduction of computers to service delivery crews also required increased skill in managing data entry and reading online information and communications.

Ian Dunbabin, Executive Manager Service Delivery, says "going to the men in the field and having the learning happening in the workplace is essential."



Rod Welsh and Phil Tuck

Making a difference

“It’s about giving individuals the opportunity to realise their potential, and realising that it is a continuing learning journey – not a one-off event. The culture we want to grow is one of respect and loyalty.”

What it has meant for the workers is told in Todd and Matt’s stories (on page 14).

Engaging the whole organisation was essential to the success of this project – especially building the understanding with managers and coordinators about literacy and numeracy in the workplace – and gaining their support. This included supporting the learners by allowing them to do their study during work time.

Inspiring stories abound from this project – including two people who come to work early, in their own time – one to teach, the other to learn.

For the business, the project has seen gains in efficiency and effectiveness that have improved productivity and service standards, improved compliance and quality of work, better communication across work teams and increased commitment and acceptance of change in a time when TasWater is facing a state-wide organisational re-structure.

Inspiring stories that help others

Stories of Tasmanians changing their lives are a key element in spreading the 26TEN message. They inspire others to make what are often tough and confronting decisions.

These stories are being told across social media, including the 26TEN website and Facebook site, in the press, on radio and on television – and in a book designed specifically for the purpose.



Steps and Stories, funded by a grant to the Tasmanian Council for Adult Literacy (the Council) grew out of the realisation by members that there needed to be stories for learners to read that spoke of their own experiences.

Launched by Council life member and patron, the former Federal MP for Lyons, Dick Adams, in November 2012, Steps and Stories contains nine stories told by Tasmanians of their childhood and school life and the ways in which their adult lives have been affected

by limited literacy and numeracy skills.

They tell of their decision to change this and the steps they took to gain or increase their literacy and numeracy skills. Their stories share the ways in which they are now creating fuller and more autonomous lives, acknowledging those who have helped them along the way and who continue to walk with them on this journey.

Brian Cameron, one of the authors in the booklet, said that, like so many other people struggling with reading, writing and maths, he was told in primary school he was stupid and would never amount to much. However, through encouragement, good adult education teachers and his own goals, he has changed his life.

Terry Whitebeach, who worked with the authors and edited *Steps and Stories* explains: "...these stories speak powerfully of the constricted world into which someone is forced if they do not have the range of literacy and numeracy skills needed to navigate this increasingly complex world of ours. They speak loudly and clearly of the courage it takes to change that situation and will inspire those who have yet to undertake a similar journey, or who are taking the early steps."

Nearly 1500 copies of *Steps and Stories* have been distributed to literacy coordinators, and members of the Council. Veronica Fuentes, Literacy Coordinator at Bridgewater, has made learning resources based around the book which are available for anyone to use.

The booklet can be downloaded free from the Tasmanian Council for Adult Literacy's website (www.tcal.org.au).

The transformative power of creativity

Amanda Innes and Janet Weeden were among nine women who participated in a course called *Creative Expressions* at the Clarendon Vale Neighbourhood Centre in 2012. The course used art and craft as a vehicle to unlock people's ability to write.

A year later Amanda and Janet have gone from transforming their own lives to helping others change theirs. And proving along the way that it's never too late to change.

They have deepened their skills through study at the Tasmanian Polytechnic (now TasTAFE) and are taking their skills back to the Neighbourhood Centre to run more programs of this kind.



Janet Weeden (l) and Amanda Innes (r)

In an example of the philosophy of 26TEN in engaging individuals and organisations in a co-operative endeavour, *Creative Expressions* was funded by a 26TEN community grant. The Tasmanian Polytechnic supplied the teacher, Lou-Anne Barker, and the Neighbourhood Centre provided the venue and marketing.

It was an extremely successful course, achieving its original intent of re-engaging adults in learning. It enabled the development of a cohesive, supportive group who were keen and open to learn and continue learning.

Before taking part in the course all the participants lacked confidence in writing and most had lost their enjoyment of learning. Some of the astounding successes from the course include:

- One participant going on to publish her own book
- All achieving higher literacy levels and confidence
- Engagement in further learning
- Reduction in social isolation
- Reaching out to others in their community
- And they had lots of fun.

The women have continued the *Creative Expression* group by running it themselves. They have become independent learners keen to help others. They have also continued with a book study group and have continued with courses at the Polytechnic, where they play a supportive and mentoring role with each other and other less confident students.

Janet said "it challenges me... how to express something on paper. It forces you to step out of your comfort zone, to try and express abstract things like a rose or how to colour a box." Janet is continuing her learning journey. She says "I want to go, I want to learn."

The extra training that Amanda and Janet undertook this year at the Tasmanian Polytechnic has given them the confidence and skills to continue the initiative at the Neighbourhood House. They charge \$5 a session to help cover materials costs. They are keen to hear from potential corporate sponsors.

LINC Tasmania's Literacy Skills Development Program

LINC Tasmania's literacy coordinator network ran a range of locally tailored Literacy Skills Development programs in 2012-13. These projects offered Tasmanians opportunities to build skills that are practical, engaging, help to grow their communities and often result in, or lead to, accredited training. A total of 1,006 Tasmanians participated in 63 projects that responded to local needs and conditions, developing literacy skills in programs as diverse as getting to know their cars, building chicken coops and becoming more health literate.

The Six Book Challenge

“One student noted that it took her 3 months to read one book. Later after she had done more reading in the challenge, she read the sequel in one week.”

A local version of the successful British reading engagement program, the Six Book Challenge, was run at sites across the state by Hobart LINC's literacy coordinator, Libby Levett. It provided support and incentives for adults to rise to the challenge of reading and reviewing any six books.

People taking the Challenge were supported by literacy tutors, friends and family, and could read in a book group or by themselves. They used a special booklet to write their reviews and ratings of the six books. Certificates of recognition and bookshop vouchers were presented to participants, often at a celebratory ceremony.

The program was rolled out through LINC Tasmania sites across the state, including Risdon prison, as well as the Hobart Women's Shelter, TasTAFE, neighbourhood houses, and at Metro Tasmania.

While some participants were satisfied to have read six new and challenging books, for others the Challenge provided the opportunity and support to read a book for the very first time in their lives. Then five more! After being locked out of the culture of book-reading for much of their adult lives, completing the Challenge boosted the confidence and self-esteem of some participants in ways that have made them ready to keep reading and learning more.

“I didn't used to read books because I just couldn't find right books for me. I was busy too. Then, I end up I don't read books anymore. But this challenge made me interested in reading again. My reading skills improve every time. I can read a book in short time and just getting fun now. I will make time to read books even ten minutes for every day.”

Six Book Challenge participant



Community Blitz

'On the ground where new learning can really take hold'

A group of organisations working in the Bridgewater area came together in mid-2011 to form a program to help improve community and private spaces as well as the work and life prospects of people living in the area.

Based on Backyard Blitz, the popular TV home renovation show, Community Blitz has been operating since June 2012 and has helped to build and grow private and community gardens, install bench seats by the River Derwent, erect picnic table sets and weld wrought-iron fences, among other achievements.

Building and growing the literacy skills of people working in Community Blitz was a need that Bridgewater LINC literacy coordinator Michael Christie noticed.

“People can sometimes have great practical skills but need some help to get up to speed with the maths, reading and writing that will help them get into and finish a certificate course in a trade.”

“Blitz was a great opportunity to provide literacy support on the ground where new learning can really take hold.”

TasTAFE Language, Literacy and Numeracy teacher Geoff Cumberland was contracted, putting together four accredited training units that used Blitz work sites and jobs as the basis for learning activities. Geoff also provided advice and support to Blitz participants, sometimes walking them directly to the local Bridgewater Trade Training Centre where they could enrol or find out about trade courses.



Premier Lara Giddings celebrating the 1st Anniversary of Community Blitz on 3 July 2013 with participants John McMaster (centre) and Lynden Maley

Community Blitz recently celebrated its 1st birthday in style. Having completed the accredited units, Lynden Maley was amongst those awarded a statement of attainment. He spoke from the heart about how the program helped build community spirit and the confidence and skills he had gained from it.

Now in its second year, Community Blitz continues to provide literacy support to help people like Lynden build the skills to change their life.



More people and programs

Many people, many approaches, a big need

More and more people are improving their literacy, numeracy and communication skills in communities and workplaces across Tasmania. There are many excellent programs and services available to help them. The Action Plan – through 26TEN – brings them all together.

The 26TEN website and 1300 00 2610 service helpline point people in the right direction to find assistance. By helping people to find the program or service that's right for them, 26TEN is opening doors to new skills, and work and life opportunities.

A new 26TEN service providers group is also connecting people and programs – helping to join up services and strengthen pathways for learners – and there are communities of practice meeting to share information and participate in learning activities like core skills assessment, validation and moderation.

The Action Plan invests in new programs and services, including LINC Tasmania's literacy coordinator network and projects funded through the 26TEN Grants Program.

But the 26TEN network embraces a much wider range of people and programs that are delivering some great successes. On the following pages are a few examples.

More people and programs

Group Training Australia - Tasmania

The Group Training Australia - Tasmania Adult Literacy Support Officer team provides language, literacy and numeracy skills training and support to meet the specific needs of participants. The team works with individuals who are employed and those who are aiming to become an apprentice or trainee.

Before training delivery, the team identifies the specific needs of participants using interviews, aptitude assessments, literacy testing and employer feedback. Individual training plans are then drawn which document achievable and measurable literacy skills to be developed.

Each team member has a range of skills and expertise and draw on each other's strengths and experiences frequently. For example, they discuss and share resources, teaching experiences, methodologies and strategies. The team is involved in professional development, including accredited training and inter-organisational moderation workshops. The team works together to create the best possible outcomes for program participants including apprentices, trainees and employment seekers as well as employers and registered training organisations.



Tim -

“It makes it worthwhile when I see the change that occurs in participants over a short period of time and how they are able to take control of their career pathway.”

Jo -

“I enjoy the opportunity to assist clients to gain confidence in their job seeking skills. It is wonderful to observe the progress they make.”



Harry -

“These programs offer the opportunity for young people to develop literacy skills to apply for and maintain employment...”

TasTAFE

TasTAFE makes a significant contribution to improving the literacy and numeracy skills of Tasmanians in training and for those wanting to begin training. This support is provided by two units: the Literacy and Numeracy Unit and the Workforce Learning and Development Unit. As well, TasTAFE deliver the Adult Migrant English Program across the state.

TasTAFE also provides support to apprentices and trainees who are at risk of not completing their training because of gaps in their literacy or numeracy. The Additional Tutorial Assistance Program (funded by Skills Tasmania) is available to all apprentices and trainees – not just those enrolled with TasTAFE.

The Literacy and Numeracy teams provide free courses in reading, writing, maths and computer skills. All training is from accredited courses and is nationally recognised. These courses help people improve their skills for work and further study. Students receive a certificate or statement of attainment for successfully completed courses.

The training is both stand-alone and in other situations it is taught alongside vocational courses.

Jane Shepherd, a member of the Literacy and Numeracy team in the North West,



believes that a compassionate and progressive community provides opportunities, without judgment, for people to build skills as and when they need them so they can fully participate in their world.

Jane:- “My typical week is varied. At the moment it includes

- three different sessions where I support students enrolled in Construction and Agriculture courses to build their language, literacy and numeracy skills to satisfy the learning and assessment aspects of their course
- one-day teaching literacy tutors for volunteers at the LINC
- two sessions in community partnerships that build skills and confidence in learning to access community and learning opportunities
- study skills support for individual students seeking help to complete their TasTAFE course
- preparation of session plans, teaching resources and assessments
- liaising with other teachers and partners about the sessions.

For me, building students' confidence in the skills they already have and supporting them to add the skills that are relevant to them right now is of most value to students.

Highlights of my job are when someone does something they didn't realise they could do. Recently students welcomed a government minister and carried out all the official parts of the event. They had the courage to stand in front of a group, say what they had practised, forgive themselves their mistakes and feel justifiably proud.

To maintain current competency in the language, literacy and numeracy area, I read articles, blogs, RSS feeds and do formal training and professional development whenever the opportunity arises. I'm a member of the Australian Council of Adult Literacy and also talk to a variety of people whenever I can, both in the workplace and beyond, to test my ideas, build connections and to build community understanding of literacy.

I'm about to start a UTAS postgraduate business unit, Governance and Partnerships, with a view to developing my understanding of community partnerships and effective learning opportunities.”

More people and programs

Workplace-based literacy is the focus of the Workforce Learning and Development Team (the Team). Based in Burnie, the Team of seven services the whole state.

Team members work in partnership with a variety of enterprises always on location, with the workers in the workplace. They work in collaboration with the enterprise and people within it: this is essential to ensure that the literacy and numeracy skills building is fully aligned to the business' needs. This includes working with a co-assessor from the enterprise.

One of the main roles of the Team is delivering Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) projects. These are funded by the federal government. And now they play an important role in delivering the 26TEN Grants Program in the workplace.

Many of the WELL projects are based around the development of standard operating procedures – using all the things known about making information accessible to workers – plenty of white space, plain English, embedded photos, and clear steps in a process.



Gerry Plunkett, who has been working in this area for 20 years, says this philosophy of workplace literacy is that being literate at work is being literate through work – the skills needed are those that reflect

the job role, and reflecting a 'built-in, not bolted-on' philosophy.

"For example, Certificate III in Boning (Abattoirs) does not require the candidate to be able to read or write (in any language) – so being technically literate is being able to use work tools, machines and equipment safely and according to workplace procedures," Gerry says.

"A core unit in Food Processing at Cert II requires the candidate to be able to record information in a required format, identify and access information to undertake work responsibilities and prepare simple written or verbal

presentations that structure and present information in a logical sequence."

"So literacy and being literate (numerate) is about context. If you don't have to write sentences in your job role, then why would you focus on this as a requirement?"

"If you have to know the difference between 1.01 and 1.1 then understanding significant figures is critical."

Gerry says a typical week involves delivering training on site, and mentoring the co-assessors in the workplace, the associated administrative work, developing assessment tools, working with enterprises to see what projects are possible and developing opportunities for further work.

"What I think brings most value to students is to have their skills described in a qualification," Gerry says. "Some people who have seen themselves as unskilled workers realise they are in fact highly skilled in some areas, and the certificate levels help describe this.

"The interactions with people are a big highlight of my job. I also enjoy being able to assist enterprises with fair dinkum training needs analysis – real skills for the real work."

Gerry maintains current competency in the literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) area with active analysis of LLN requirements in a variety of training packages, mentoring others in developing assessment tools that reflect the LLN requirements of the job role – and seeing them "convince" themselves – and reading online and reading research papers.

Commonwealth Programs

Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) Program at Mission Australia

In Hobart, Mission Australia runs SEE classes for adults to help build skills in learning, reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy so they are able to participate more effectively in training, work and the community.

Before participants start the program they complete a pre-training assessment of their current skills so that they start classes at the appropriate level with an individual training plan to address their learning requirements. In their first 20 hours, students are eligible for small-group training to make a fresh start on their learning pathway, taking into consideration their goals.

The program wants students to feel satisfied with what they are able to achieve in class and positive about the new work and life skills they gain.

SEE has many students from non-English speaking backgrounds whose needs are specific to learning English.

They are able to attend one of seven classes that target their level of skill in English and the certificate level they want to achieve. An important aspect of their learning is improving conversational English and teachers use strategies in the classroom to address this need in combination with literacy and numeracy.

Factors that impact upon the students learning can include prior education, level of literacy, learning experiences, culture, background, age, disability, health issues, trauma and motivation.

WELL Program

The Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) Program is administered by the Department of Industry.

Funding under this program is designed to help workers meet their current and future employment and training



L to R: Zafu, Workay, Hanan, Rebecca and Tubaleke

needs. Project funding is available for organisations that have demonstrated a need for language, literacy and numeracy in the workplace. Projects should target workers who need to improve their language, literacy and numeracy skills in order to remain or progress in employment (including avoiding displacement) and address participants' employment and training needs.

The training is delivered in the workplace and assists employers to see the value of LLN training to achieve business and workplace training goals. The funding is available to all industries. In 2012-13, 474 participants from nine projects completed WELL training. These projects were with a range of employers and industry groups such as water supply, food manufacturing, local government and health services.

A major project funded in 2012 assessed all Australian Apprentices employed by group training organisations that are members of Group Training Australia – Tasmania and provided on-the-job training to 200 apprentices. The training was provided in a variety of occupations in a range of environments including workshops, outdoors on construction sites, in forests, on water craft, in offices, retail environments, dental and medical clinics, restaurants, kitchens and nursing homes. Outcomes from the project included higher rates of completion and retention, safety awareness, responsible work practices, improved communication in the workplace and increased levels of satisfaction in the workplace.

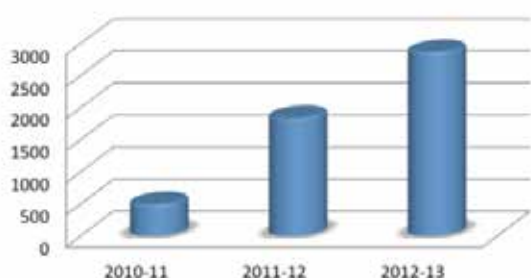
In addition to the completions of 2012, 12 additional projects were funded with 667 employees expecting to complete WELL training in 2014.



The facts and figures

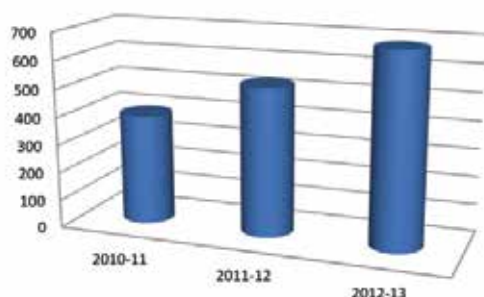
We now have three years of data from the implementation the Action Plan and they show a consistent increase in activity across all actions – with the number of people participating across the Action Plan’s programs have increased by over 470% from 500 in 2010-11 to 2,866 in 2012-13.

Learners



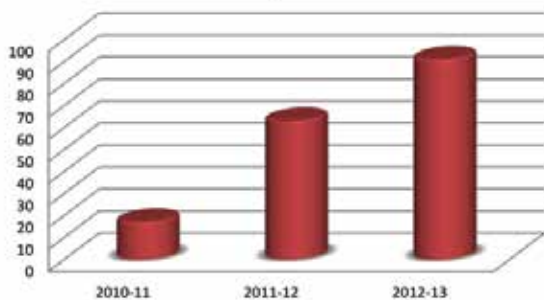
This number is comprised of clients of LINC Tasmania’s literacy coordinator network, and participants in LINC Tasmania’s Literacy Skills Development Program and the 26TEN Grants Program.

Volunteer Tutors



Volunteer tutor numbers have shown a steady increase from 394 to 684, an increase of 74%.

Projects



And the number of projects increased from 17 to 91, an increase of 435%.

These figures reflect the trajectory from initiation to operation, with the strategies and actions set out in the Action Plan being fully underway in 2012-13.



LINC Tasmania's Literacy services

A total of 863 Tasmanians with low literacy skills received individual and personalised learning support through LINC Tasmania's literacy coordinator network in 2012-13. Established on a broad scale in 2011, this statewide network of 23 coordinators and more than 600 volunteers operates from major urban and regional centres in Tasmania.

LINC Tasmania literacy clients have diverse literacy learning needs and requirements and engage in a range of support services and programs, including one-to-one support, small-group activities and skills development programs.

Typically, adults seek literacy learning support through LINC Tasmania because they wish to develop their core skills and confidence in 'informal' contexts that are relevant to their everyday lives – so that their quality of life, their social connections and their capacity to access employment, education and training opportunities are improved.

A large proportion of LINC Tasmania literacy clients (73% in 2012-13) have skill levels assessed at pre-level 1 (25%) or level 1 (48%) in one or more of the five core skills of reading, writing, numeracy, oral communication and learning. The characteristics associated with learners at these levels of the Australian Core Skills Framework (the Framework)¹ include:

- a need for significant learning support
- the capacity to learn in a very restricted range of contexts
- a limited, highly familiar vocabulary
- the capacity to undertake concrete literacy tasks consisting of only one or two steps

- a need for regular prompting and advice, and
- a need for frequent reassurance that they are making progress and that they have the capacity to learn new skills.

A large number of LINC Tasmania clients are also from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, with limited literacy skills in their first language. Many clients also have a learning disability.

These client characteristics can make learner retention in literacy support services and programs problematic and pathways and transitions into employment, education and training difficult. They can also result in slow progress towards the achievement of learner goals and outcomes, and can pose significant challenges for a service network that relies largely on a volunteer workforce to achieve its performance targets.

Successfully addressing the needs and requirements of literacy learners takes time, resources and innovative approaches. It requires a broad understanding and acceptance that there are no quick fixes and that some level of uncertainty around the solutions to the challenges of adult literacy – for individuals and their communities – is to be accepted.

In 2012-13 LINC Tasmania, in supporting 863 adult Tasmanians, reached 52% of its performance target for the financial year. Of these:

- 193 clients (22%) increased at least one level in one skill on the Framework

¹ http://www.innovation.gov.au/Skills/LiteracyAndNumeracy/AustralianCoreSkillsFramework/Documents/ACSF_Document.pdf

The facts and figures

- 206 clients (24%) moved on to further education or training
- 75 (9%) commenced paid employment, and
- 22 (3%) took up volunteer or unpaid work.

LINC Tasmania's capacity to achieve its performance target in 2012-13 was constrained by periods of prolonged sick leave and vacancies in some literacy coordinator roles. A total of 37 months was lost due to absences and vacancies at Queenstown, Scottsdale, New Norfolk, Bridgewater and Community Corrections (North and South), equating to a FTE loss of more than three coordinators for the financial year.

One of the emerging challenges for LINC Tasmania's statewide provision of literacy services is that client engagement in regional areas lags considerably behind levels in urban centres. For example, in 2012-13 LINC Tasmania urban services achieved, on average, 81% of their performance targets, compared with 39% for services in regional areas. This variation supports existing evidence and research showing that adults with low level literacy skills living in regional and remote areas continue to experience significant barriers to literacy learning and are reluctant to seek support.

Client snapshot

52% of LINC Tasmania literacy clients are male and 48% female

62% of clients are between the ages of 20 and 60 years, 12% are 20 years or younger and 6% are aged over 60 (20% of clients did not state their age)

62% of clients are accessing literacy services in urban locations, 35% in regional locations and 3% in the Justice system

47% of clients live in Southern Tasmania, 32% in the North West and 21% in the North

Department of Justice Literacy Services Program

The Department of Justice Tasmanian Prison and Community Corrections literacy services programs have faced some significant challenges this financial year.

The Community Corrections Literacy Coordinator positions in both the North and South of the state have been vacant for more than six months. Some referrals have been made directly from parole and probation officers to community-based literacy coordinators, however the capacity of the program has been reduced due to these vacancies.

In 2012-13, 87 inmates had a learning plan developed by the LINC literacy coordinator at Risdon Prison. This cannot be compared with 2011-12 as in that year there was a significant over-reporting of this figure.

Client confidence and self-esteem

A total of 121 literacy clients demonstrated increased confidence and self-esteem in 2012-13 using an instrument developed to capture this performance measure. This instrument requires all three of the following indicators to be achieved:

1. the client's own assessment that they have increased in confidence and self esteem
2. the coordinators or tutor's assessment that the client has demonstrated increased confidence and self esteem
3. the coordinator's assessment that the client has increased one level, on either of the two performance indicators, on the Framework learning skill.

A further 121 clients self-reported that they had increased in confidence and self-esteem.

LINC Tasmania will review the indicators used to assess this measure in 2013-14.

Volunteer Tutors

A total of 538 volunteer literacy tutors provided literacy services to Tasmanians during 2012-13. A further 146 trained volunteers were registered with LINC Tasmania but inactive during this period. Active volunteer tutors contributed a total of 19,922 hours to LINC Tasmania in the financial year.

Literacy coordinators implement targeted strategies to recruit and maintain tutor involvement with the service, including ensuring appropriate matching with clients, and aligning tutor skill sets with broader service needs and volunteering opportunities.

The logistics associated with managing a volunteer workforce are complex. Coordinators:

- assess potential volunteers and their suitability for the role
- organise and support the initial training of volunteer tutors
- provide tutors with ongoing professional development and support
- assist tutors to respond appropriately to the often complex and multiple needs of low level literacy learners
- deal with the practicalities associated with aligning tutor and client availability, and
- demonstrate high levels of flexibility and creativity when volunteer tutors become unavailable because of holidays, employment, illness and even death.

Literacy Skills Development Program

In 2012-13, LINC Tasmania's Literacy Skills Development Program supported 63 projects that delivered learning opportunities to 1,006 participants – up 129% on last financial year. This significant increase is due largely to projects managed by Hobart, Deloraine and St Helens coordinators which catered for large numbers of participants.

The majority of literacy skills development opportunities across the network are designed either to attract and engage new clients, or to add value to the one-to-one support for existing clients. For example, in Deloraine 196 clients participated in 9 projects during 2012-13, resulting in a marked increase (23%) in the number of clients engaging in one-to-one support.

The Six Book Challenge successfully facilitated by Hobart LINC provided opportunities for clients across the state to build their reading skills, with 160 literacy learners reading more than 960 books targeted at their particular reading level.



Reporting

Audit

In July 2012 the Auditor-General announced a compliance audit of the Action Plan. In December 2012 he tabled the audit in Parliament. The Auditor-General's findings were very positive. He concluded that while the Action Plan is still in its early stages, there had been a high level of compliance with the Action Plan's strategies resulting in significant activities, including recruitment of staff and volunteers, information sharing, grants provided and strong participation. There was one recommendation:

“that the Department of Education ensure that adequate funding is allocated to support actions in all similar future plans.”

The report is available at the Tasmanian Audit Office website.

Research

Two projects were commissioned during the reporting period:

- a research project investigating the possibility of reporting literacy and numeracy skills improvements using finer gradations of the Framework
- a consultancy to advise on refreshing the Action Plan performance indicators and actions now the plan is near the halfway mark.

Both projects are prompted by the challenging question of how to measure improvements in adult literacy that are made during comparatively short projects or interventions, and that are made in ways the current set of reporting measures do not always capture due to the nature or speed of the progression.

As the report into using finer gradations of the Framework outlines, adult literacy progress may be specifically

indicated by a range of outcomes including:

- successful course entry or exit
- gaining a specific qualification such as a white card or a drivers' licence
- enhanced performance in a workplace
- enhanced ability to engage in the community
- enhanced ability to maintain an autonomous and self-directed life
- growth in confidence and self-esteem
- improved performance in, for example, dedicated reading or grammar tests.

While these outcomes may be of enormous benefit to the individual learner and to society, many are difficult to quantify as measurable literacy gains. The picture is made more complex by the diverse range of delivery contexts from which they arise. While literacy interventions may not result in short-term measurable gains, they frequently result in longitudinal changes in literacy practices (e.g. reading the newspaper, reading to children) which result in significant gains over time.

The central finding of the report on performance measures is that the current set of reporting measures is more suited to the implementation phase of the Action Plan than its current operational phase, which calls for more performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the Action Plan rather than the current focus on largely activity measures.

The challenge ahead is to ensure that all Action Plan successes in addressing the complex and even 'wicked problem' of adult literacy improvement are given due account. In evaluating the effectiveness of the Action Plan, additional use of qualitative and longitudinal measures would support this aim. These sorts of measures connect to the anecdotal reports coming from the LINC Literacy Coordinator Network as does recent research which points to the value of measurement accounts drawn from social capital, collective impact, and the capabilities approaches.

The results of these research projects will be available later in 2013.

2010-13 Outcomes Measurements

This is the third year that the outcomes and measures in the Action Plan have been reported.

	Outcome	Measure	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	TOTAL
1	Increased number of adult Tasmanians receiving literacy support (one to one or group)	Number of clients receiving literacy support in the:				
		• 26TEN Grants Program – Employers		310	768	
		• 26TEN Grants Program – Community		108	229	
		• Literacy Skills Development		439	1006	
		• Literacy Coordinator Network ²		988	863 ³	
		Total	500 ⁴	1845	2866	5211
2	Increased number of adult literacy projects funded	Number of projects funded by the:				
		• 26TEN Grants Program – Employers		6	9	
		• 26TEN Grants Program – Community		11	19	
		• Literacy Skills Development		46	63	
		Total		17	63	91
3	Increased literacy skill levels of program participants	Number of clients increasing one level on the Australian Core Skills Framework (Framework):				
		• 26TEN Grants Program – Employers		42	NYA ⁵	
		• 26TEN Grants Program – Community		55	NYA	
		• Literacy Coordinator Network		239	193	
		Total		140	336	NYA
4	Increased levels of participation in education and training by program participants	Number of clients moving on to other education and training programs within three months of receiving support				
		• 26TEN Grants Program – Community		NYA ⁶	NYA	
		• Literacy Coordinator Network		134	206	
		Total		66	NYA	NYA
5	Increased employment outcomes for program participants	Number of clients gaining employment within three months of receiving support				
		• 26TEN Grants Program – Community		NYA	NYA	
		• Literacy Coordinator Network		106	97	
		Total		69	NYA	NYA

² Includes the totals measured for Outcome 9: 'Increased number of prisoners and offenders receiving literacy support (one to one or group)'

³ LINC Tasmania's capacity to achieve its performance target in 2012-13 was constrained by periods of prolonged sick leave and vacancies in some literacy coordinator roles. A total of 37 months was lost due to absences and vacancies at Queenstown, Scottsdale, New Norfolk, Bridgewater and Community Corrections (North and South) - equating to a FTE loss of more than 3 coordinators for the financial year.

⁴ Available figures were aggregated in 2011-12, and some were not yet available (for the Employer Pledge and Community Grants Programs) as the projects run for 12 months or more.

⁵ Not yet available

⁶ Not yet available

The facts and figures

	Outcome	Measure	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	TOTAL
6	Increased confidence and self-esteem levels of program participants	Number of literacy program participants demonstrating increased confidence and self esteem		Collection began in 2012-13	121	121
7	Increased number of literacy practitioners ⁷ with the capacity to provide literacy support to adult Tasmanians	Number of trained literacy volunteers registered with LINC Tasmania	394	529	684	684 ⁸
8	Increased number of apprentices and trainees receiving literacy support	Number of apprentice and trainees accessing additional literacy and numeracy support	201	120 ⁹	124 ¹⁰	445
9	Increased number of prisoners and offenders receiving literacy support (one to one or group)	Number of clients receiving literacy support	Collection will begin in 2011-12	283 ¹¹	87 ¹²	370
10	Increased awareness by Tasmanian State Service employees of barriers and support required by people with low literacy skills	Number of state service employees delivering frontline services who have undertaken diversity training	Collection will begin in 2012-13	Collection will begin in 2012-13	Under review ¹³	
11	Increased use of plain language in public documents	Number of best practice examples of plain language that are promoted throughout the state service	Reviewed in 2012-13	Reviewed in 2012-13	Under review	
12	(New) Increased opportunities for literacy practitioners to share information and resources	Measures for this outcome will be determined in 2012-13.	Reviewed in 2012-13	Reviewed in 2012-13	Under review	
13	(New) Increased community awareness of adult literacy	Measures for this outcome will be determined in 2012-13.	Reviewed in 2012-13	Reviewed in 2012-13	Under review	
14	(New) Increased access to literacy reporting information	Measures for this outcome will be determined in 2012-13.	Reviewed in 2012-13	Reviewed in 2012-13	Under review	

⁷ For the purposes of this report literacy practitioners refers to the literacy volunteers who are members of the Literacy Coordinators Network.

⁸ This is a cumulative figure – listing the number of literacy volunteers registered with LINC Tasmania at the end of the reporting period.

⁹ This figure was incorrectly reported as 202 in 2011-12. While the number of students supported dropped the number of hours support increased by 400.

¹⁰ While the number of students increased slightly, the amount of support increased by 36% from 1805 hours in 2011 to 2457 hours in 2012 (see page 23 for further information).

¹¹ Of this 283, 188 inmates at Risdon Prison had their literacy capabilities assessed against the Framework and learning plans framed. Not all inmates are receiving one-to-one support due to the resources available in 2011-12. LINC Tasmania provided an additional 0.2FTE to Risdon Prison in 2011-12 to go some way towards alleviating this shortfall.

¹² LINC Tasmania's capacity to achieve its performance target in 2012-13 was constrained by periods of prolonged leave and vacancy in the Community Corrections North and South positions.

¹³ These measures are under review as part of the DGR Consultancy report into performance indicators for the Action Plan. DGR Consultancy is a firm that specialises in developing performance measures for the public sector.

Implementation at a Glance

Action	Description	June 2011	June 2012	June 2013
STRATEGY 1: the establishment of a community and workplace network of adult literacy support				
1.1	An Adult Literacy Investment Fund will be established. This fund will provide \$1 million a year over four years to fund programs in workplaces and communities	Established Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing ¹⁴
1.2	Establish a Community of Practice for adult literacy workers and volunteers	Underway	Underway	Established Ongoing
1.3	Provide additional literacy support to apprentices and trainees	Underway	Established Ongoing	Ongoing
1.4	Further collaboration with the Australian Government on Adult Literacy	Established	Ongoing	Ongoing
1.5	Provide diversity training for frontline service staff	Future	Future	Underway
1.6	Raise community awareness of adult literacy	Underway	Underway	Established Ongoing
1.7	Plain language will be promoted	Future	Future	Underway
STRATEGY 2: the establishment of a state wide team of coordinators supported by a pool of trained volunteers to drive the Adult Literacy Network				
2.1	Extend the Adult Literacy Coordinator Network throughout the state	Well progressed	Well progressed	Established Ongoing
2.2	Increase literacy support available to inmates of the Tasmania Prison Service	Future	Established Ongoing	Ongoing
STRATEGY 3: the development of key indicators to measure improvements in adult literacy support and outcomes				
3.1	Consistently and transparently measure progress on improving adult literacy against meaningful indicators	Established Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing

¹⁴ From January 2013, the Minister approved the reallocation of \$200,000 from the Investment Fund to support 26TEN Strategy activities. This came from the 26TEN Grants Program – with \$400,000 now available for employer grants and \$100,000 for community grants.

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