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26Ten

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

2024 Annual Progress Report

Improving adult literacy and numeracy skills continues to be critical for Tasmania. People with strong reading, writing and everyday maths skills can take advantage of more opportunities for work, education and wellbeing. Better skills strengthen families, our workplaces and communities.

The Tasmanian Government's *Lifting Literacy Framework* provides a clear vision for improving literacy at all ages. The *Department for Education, Children and Young People Lifting Literacy Action Plan 2024–2026* (the Plan) sets out practical steps to achieve this vision, with a focus on supporting children, young people and adults alike.

26Ten plays a key role in the Plan with key actions aimed at lifting adult literacy. We work with individuals, workplaces and communities to improve adult literacy and numeracy, implementing critical elements of the Plan. Together, we are driving change and creating a future where every Tasmanian has the skills they need to thrive.



This report highlights our progress over the past year. It showcases the partnerships, projects and successes that are helping to lift literacy across the State.

Thank you to everyone involved in this important work. Together, we are making a real difference for all Tasmanians.

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2024 snapshot



10

organisations received a 26Ten Workplace grant, and 5 organisations received a Get Ready grant



\$500k

was allocated to Workplace grants



20

organisations became members of the 26Ten network



265

total number of 26Ten member organisations



33

individuals joined the 26Ten Network for a total of 899 individual supporters



723

people learned about plain English in 58 free plain English workshops



368

people learned about the complex issues surrounding adult literacy and numeracy in 31 free literacy awareness workshops



1020

people engaged in 26Ten Week events at libraries across Tasmania

Everyone knows about adult literacy and numeracy

Over the previous year, 26Ten has continued to raise awareness about adult literacy and numeracy.

Understanding why some Tasmanians missed out on gaining literacy and numeracy skills helps to reduce the stigma that stops people from seeking help, and the embarrassment that may prevent others from offering it.

It is vital that people understand that learning as an adult is possible. With ongoing changes in areas such as technology, workplace safety, education and health, all Tasmanians can benefit from life-long learning.

Our work supports the Department for Education, Children and Young People's (DECYP) renewed focus on literacy and numeracy for all Tasmanians. Launched in 2023, the *DECYP Lifting Literacy Action Plan: 2024–2026* recognises the importance of literacy and numeracy awareness, support and action, and it is pleasing to see adult literacy prominently featured.

26Ten raises awareness about these issues and ensures that adults, their families and friends, service providers and employers know where adult literacy services are available. We achieve this through literacy awareness presentations and workshops and through traditional, social and digital media channels. We support our five 26Ten communities, and members of the 26Ten Network to understand the issues, and to encourage people in their local areas to understand them too. This snowball effect is the critical benefit of 26Ten's collective action approach.

Highlights from the past year include:

- The launch of the new 26Ten website, which delivers improved functionality, accessibility and ease of use
- Continuing to build our online presence through Facebook
- Interviews with ABC Tasmania Afternoons on the importance of clear communication, and the release of the Huon Valley 26Ten Community's book *Lutruwita Love Stories*, which contains love stories, letters and poems written by people in the local community
- 26Ten member, Rural Business Tasmania, sharing information about 26Ten at Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group Ag Innovation Expo at Hagley Farm School, the Bream Creek Show, the Campbell Town Show and Agfest Field Days.



26Ten Week

26Ten Week is our flagship annual event. It is a time when the entire 26Ten Network comes together to promote adult literacy awareness, action and progress.

The week-long celebration includes diverse activities in workplaces, communities and member organisations, and culminates in a reception at Government House.

This year's theme was *Family fun with letters and numbers*, and it highlighted the importance of family literacy. When parents, carers and other family members are confident in their own literacy and numeracy skills, they are better able to support their children's learning.

Members of the 26Ten Network engaged with us on Facebook, posting photos of their events, or using the 26Ten Week resources developed by 26Ten and made available on our website.

Libraries Tasmania and 26Ten Communities around Tasmania hosted games events encouraging families to play and have fun together.



The 'Food and Fun - Family Boardgame Afternoon' at Smithton Library, with Circular Head 26Ten Community.

Glenorchy City Council partnered with Metro Tasmania, both members of the 26Ten Network, to host a pop-up event for 150 Metro staff at Metro's Moonah depot.



26Ten learners and their co-workers at St Vincent Industries.

At St Vincent Industries, a 26Ten Workplace Grant recipient, learners and their co-workers celebrated 26Ten Week with some donated t-shirts – sorting them, reading the messages, wearing them and taking some fun photos along the way.

Hosted by Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania, and Emeritus Professor Don Chalmers AO, the 26Ten Week Government House reception was attended by 75 people – Coalition members, member organisations and individual supporters, volunteers, trainers and adult literacy practitioners.



(Left to right): Coalition members Richard Warner, Gail Eaton-Briggs, and Malcolm Wells at Government House.

Everyone is supported to improve their skills and help others

26Ten supports members to provide practical support and information to people who want to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

We achieve this by:

- Building a strong network of organisations and individuals actively supporting implementation of literacy programs in their workplaces and communities
- Creating awareness of literacy issues in Tasmania through our literacy awareness workshops
- Providing seed-funding to communities and workplaces to embed literacy awareness and support services at the local level
- Strengthening the professional skills of paid and volunteer literacy practitioners through coordinated professional development workshops.

26Ten Coalition

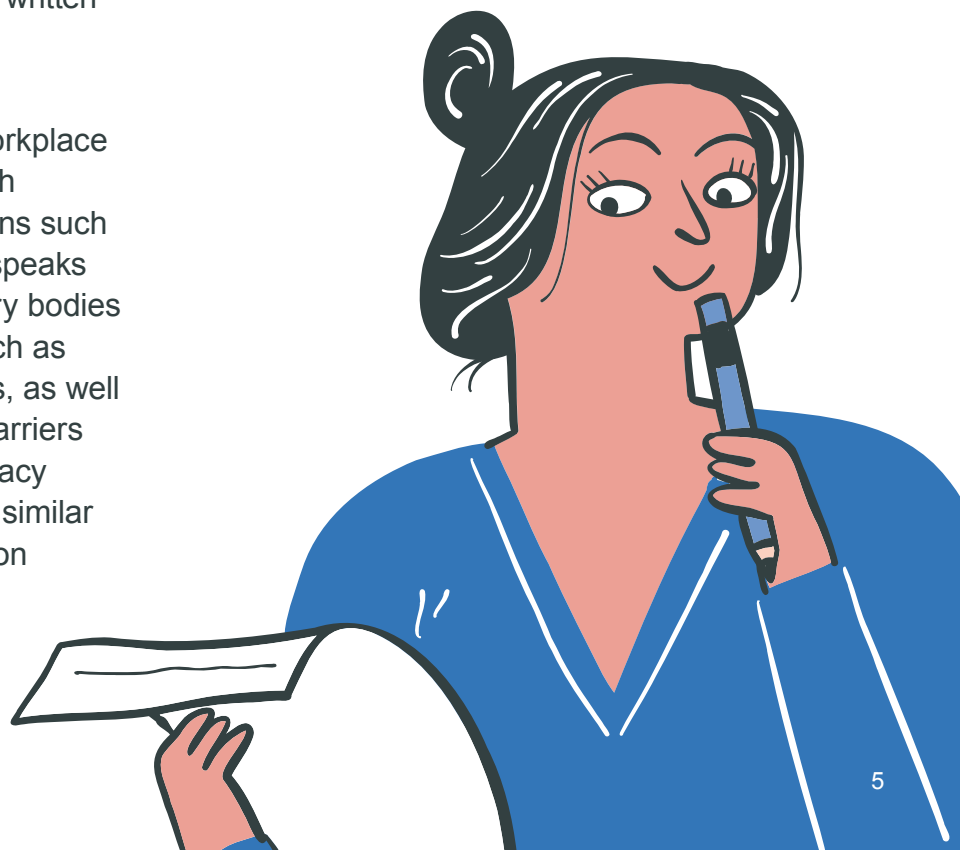
The 26Ten Coalition comprises influential Tasmanians who use their industry networks to promote literacy and drive sector-specific initiatives.

Each Coalition member addresses key literacy barriers relevant to their sector. For example, John Upcher, in the legal sector and Mat Healy in State Government, have focused on promoting the use of plain English in written communications with the public.

Richard Warner has an excellent understanding of the benefits of Workplace grants for the agriculture sector, with examples of success at organisations such as Houstons and BioMar. Richard speaks with organisations and peak industry bodies about the benefits to the sector, such as improved safety and reduced errors, as well as removing stigma and isolation barriers to improve adult literacy and numeracy skills. Traycee Di Virgilio has had a similar focus in the building and construction

sector, encouraging organisations such as Centacare Evolve Housing to apply for Workplace grants.

In the community and disability sector, Allyson Warrington has ensured participation of the sector in both 26Ten's plain English program and Workplace grants.



26Ten Network

The 26Ten Network is vital to our collective impact approach. Member organisations and individual supporters represent different aspects of how we work together to lift adult literacy and numeracy skills. For example, our key member, Libraries Tasmania, offers the Adult Literacy Service that provides one to one support to adults in libraries around the State. 26Ten Workplace Grant recipients, such as Cameron of Tasmania, work with us to offer literacy and numeracy support to people in the workplace.

Individual supporters also make a difference, such as Honor Marino, who was recently involved in producing a series of podcasts on literacy, and featured 26Ten grant recipient, Hamlet, in an episode.

In 2024, 20 organisations and 33 individuals joined the 26Ten Network. One new member organisation is the Centre for Legal Studies, who want to promote communicating more clearly. In February, 26Ten delivered a plain English workshop to 45 trainees completing the Tasmanian Legal Practice Course.

The workshop included an introduction about literacy in Tasmania, which demonstrates how important our members are in raising awareness in Tasmania.

Brand Tasmania also joined the 26Ten Network in 2024 and is continuing to promote 26Ten and adult literacy through their *Little Tasmanian*¹ initiative, aimed at parents of young children. They share the message 'someone like you did it, and you can do it too'. They have listed 26Ten on their Resources² page.

Other new members in 2024 were:

- Academy of Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Brighton Alive
- Centacare Evolve Housing
- Grace Centre Rokeby
- Greenham Tasmania
- Mission Australia Rosny
- Tasmanian Fire Service

1 <https://littletasmanian.com.au/>

2 <https://littletasmanian.com.au/tasmanian-resources/>



Plain English workshop at Centre for Legal Studies.

26Ten Communities Program

The 26Ten Communities: Local Literacy for Work and Life Program has provided funding to five communities for four years to embed literacy services and support within identified communities.

The 26Ten Communities Program is based on a collective impact model that provides seed funding for each community to employ a 26Ten Community Coordinator to:

- develop an understanding of the communities they serve
- identify existing literacy and numeracy support services and support increased provision
- foster community engagement in those services.

At the end of the funding period, it is intended that these 26Ten Communities will have created relationships between learners and service providers, and embedded literacy support throughout the community to sustain ongoing service delivery in each community.

This year, 26Ten:

- Strengthened the governance of the 26Ten Communities Program, focusing on roles and responsibilities, accountability and enhanced communication processes. This ensures everyone has a clear understanding of what they are responsible for and fosters an environment of continuous improvement and knowledge sharing. This constant assessment also enhances how we support literacy and numeracy in each community.

- Implemented weekly sessions to help people use their digital devices in the Launceston Northern Suburbs and the Clarence Plains 26Ten Communities. This was in collaboration with the Skills Tasmania *Digital Ready for Daily Life* program, offered by the Department of State Growth.



Northern Suburbs Computer Club flier.



Clarence Plains Digital Literacy Trainer, Remus.

- Contributed to the evaluation of the Health Literacy Action Plan and the development of a new Action Plan.
- Published a second *Lutruwita Love Stories*, this time from the Huon Valley. This was an opportunity for improving writers to share what they love about where they live, and to see their stories or poems in print.
- Continued to grow and support local, community-based volunteer tutors in each community, working in close collaboration with the local library.
- Worked with many other local community service providers, such as Neighbourhood Houses, Jobs Hubs, TasTAFE, Child and Family Learning Centres, Troublesmiths, Metro Tasmania, Max Solutions, the Migrant Resource Centres and local councils. Building literacy awareness in these organisations, and partnering to deliver projects to integrate improving reading, writing and everyday maths skills into their programs, is central to the 26Ten Communities Program.



Lutruwita Love Stories, Huon Valley edition.



26Ten Community Coordinators, Kate and Lucy, with two volumes of *Lutruwita Love Stories*.



Literacy awareness workshops

31 literacy awareness workshops were held across the State in 2024, with 368 participants.

In July, 50 people from Oral Health Tasmania attended a literacy awareness workshop, where they learned about the impact of low literacy on individuals and in the community. Noticing when someone needs help to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, and knowing how to approach that conversation, are key skills in the health sector.

Workplace grants

Evidence shows that requiring individuals with low literacy levels to access education facilities or government buildings can be a barrier to learning. Delivering training in local communities and familiar settings helps remove this obstacle.

Workplace grants provide an opportunity to deliver meaningful learning in local communities and to help employers upskill their staff.

The 26Ten Workplace Grants Program provides funding of up to \$65,000 for organisations to deliver tailored learning to address specific workplace needs. This could include reading safety instructions, reading and comprehending policy documents, or becoming confident users of digital technologies so work can be completed in real time in the field.

The 26Ten Workplace Grants Program has a long history of successfully delivering meaningful training in workplaces right across the State. In the past year, grant recipients have included:

- Burnie Community House / Burnie Child and Family Learning Centre with TasTAFE
- Cameron of Tasmania
- Centacare Evolve Housing
- Civil Contractors Federation with TasTAFE
- Hamlet Inc
- Huon Aquaculture
- Northern Suburbs Community Centre
- NOSS Bluegum Grounds Maintenance with Work & Training
- St Vincent Industries with Work & Training
- Starting Point Neighbourhood House

Case study

Bluegum Grounds Maintenance (workers pictured) provide services for organisations such as TasPorts, Hydro Tasmania, Liberty (Temco) and the West Tamar Council.

This is their second 26Ten Workplace Grant, which will be used to continue lifting the literacy and communication skills of their workforce. This will provide staff with the skills and confidence to take on different roles, to see tasks through to completion and to work more autonomously.

The first-year grant brought much positive change. With improved reading and writing

skills, employees gained the confidence to learn more roles that they could do, making their work more interesting and giving Bluegum more options in deploying their teams. They also worked on their communication skills, and the morale of the workforce improved noticeably.



Get Ready grants

For the second year, 26Ten delivered a preparatory grant program to help workplaces identify literacy needs and to prepare for larger projects. The Get Ready grants provide up to \$5,000 to workplaces to understand their business needs and explore how they can support their workforce.

In 2024, Get Ready grant recipients included:

- Costa Exchange
- Francesca Accessories Pty Ltd
- Greenham Tasmania
- Ta Ann Tasmania
- Tasmanian Building Group Apprenticeship Scheme

Case study

Costa Exchange talks about the significance of the Get Ready grant to their organisation and to their workforce:

Costa Exchange is a Horticulture company who grow, pick and pack fruit, operating in more than 30 rural and regional communities across Australia, China and Morocco.

We are the largest berry producer in the Country, with our Tasmanian region covering a spread of 230 hectares over several locations in Northern parts of the State. Our farms are in Sulphur Creek and Lebrina (Blueberries), East Devonport (Strawberries), Wesley Vale (Raspberries) and Dunorlan (Blackberries). All berries grown and picked in the Tasmanian region are packed and processed through our Distribution Centre located in East Devonport.

We employ approximately 230 employees on a full-time basis to support the year-round operation. Our permanent employees are made up of a diverse

group of individuals who range from Tasmanian born locals as well as a range of cultures and backgrounds. Over the peak season, our workforce increases to approximately 1,500 employees of casual labour.

We have identified several operational challenges that could indicate literacy issues within our workforce such as poor policies comprehension, verbal communication difficulties, incorrectly completing critical paperwork and struggling to adapt to new technologies.

The 26Ten Get Ready grant is being used to identify potential literacy and numeracy gaps within workforce, with a view to implementing a literacy and numeracy program to improve the reading, writing, maths, and digital skills for employees and in turn, will enhance their capabilities, talents and ability to contribute to the safety of themselves and others. We aim to empower our workforce to feel capable and competent in their professional roles and together promote a more inclusive and knowledgeable community.

Professional development opportunities

26Ten aligned professional development opportunities this year with DECYP and their focus on numeracy. 26Ten engaged Dr Damon Whitten, a leading expert in adult mathematics education, who delivered nine *Mastering Numeracy Instruction* workshops.

The workshops explored the science behind effective numeracy teaching, offering practical strategies to make instruction clear, engaging and impactful. Dr Whitten, a specialist in adult literacy and numeracy with a PhD in adult learner engagement with mathematics, focused on the development of foundational skills and the progression needed for learners to achieve their goals.

The sessions were aligned with DECYP's *Big Ideas in Numeracy* and supported literacy practitioners in confidently meeting learners at their level, systematically building their skills. Feedback consistently highlighted participants' enthusiasm for adopting new strategies and building on their current practices. Dr Whitten's respectful, approachable and knowledgeable delivery was highly valued.

26Ten also engaged Anne Bayetto, a researcher and lecturer in Special Education at Flinders University, to deliver workshops focused on *The Big Six of Reading*. These workshops explored the six essential skills for reading development: phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and oral language, providing practical strategies for teaching these skills to adults with low literacy.

Anne's sessions emphasised evidence-based approaches and practical techniques for supporting adults to develop these foundational skills, which are often key to improving reading and writing abilities.

With her extensive experience, including her role as the reading expert for the *Principals as Literacy Leaders* program, Anne tailored her expertise to address the needs of adult learners. Feedback from participants reflected the value of her practical, research-informed strategies, which left them feeling confident and prepared to apply these techniques in their work.

The Kate Warner, AC, Literacy Volunteer Bursary

The Kate Warner AC Literacy Volunteer Bursary is an annual bursary offered to an adult literacy and numeracy volunteer in the legal sector, to support their professional development.

In 2024, Teresa Hinton, a volunteer literacy tutor at Risdon Prison, received the bursary. Teresa used the funds to improve her skills and knowledge by completing online courses to further support her tutoring work.



(Left to right): Susan is pictured here with Kate Boatwright from 26Ten, and Allyson Ekin from Libraries Tasmania.

Everyone communicates clearly

The way we use language can be a barrier to taking part in work and everyday life, especially for people with low literacy. Everyone benefits when writing is free of jargon and complicated sentences.

Plain English workshops

The 26Ten plain English workshops help individuals and organisations to develop clear, concise and easily understood written communications.

In June, we launched the third edition of *Communicate Clearly: A guide to plain English from 26Ten*. This guide forms the foundation for our plain English workshops and is a great resource for people wanting to develop effective communications.



(Left to right): Plain English trainers, Heather, Philip and Veronica at the launch of *Communicate Clearly*.

Demand for plain English workshops has increased by 30% over the past 12 months with 58 workshops delivered across the State in 2024.



Participants at the Hydro Tasmania plain English workshop.

Some of the organisations involved in these workshops include Beaconsfield Child and Family Learning Centre, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Hardings Group, Huon (previously Huon Aquaculture), TasCOSS, the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal and Hydro Tasmania.

In 2024, we maintained strong engagement with the legal community by delivering plain English workshops to Tremayne Fay Rheinberger Lawyers, the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (TASCAT), trainees at the Centre for Legal Studies, and Law Honours students at the University of Tasmania. These workshops benefit both the Tasmanian community – by promoting clearer legal documentation – and the participants themselves. For example, a University of Tasmania law student who attended a 26Ten workshop was the successful candidate for an overseas legal position, with their understanding of plain English being a key factor in securing the job.

Libraries Tasmania, a key supporter of our plain English workshops, has also seen a huge surge in demand with 18 workshops delivered to the public around the State.



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