



**Background** **Paper**

*July* *2024*

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# Introduction

In 2015, Tasmania launched its 26TEN Tasmania Strategy for adult literacy and numeracy, a ten- year initiative designed to enhance the skills of adults across the state. This strategy was an extension of the State's ﬁrst Adult Literacy Action Plan, which concluded in 2015. As the only long-term, statewide program using a collective impact approach to enhance literacy, 26TEN is notable for its long-term vision, ambitious course of action and cross-sector collaboration.

The strategy is now in its scheduled review phase, which will precede the formulation of the next strategy. This review process coincides with the Department of Premier and Cabinet’s recent development of the Lifting Literacy implementation plan 2024-2026. This plan, introduced in February 2024, aims to address the recommendations of the independent Literacy Advisory Panel and sets a goal of achieving 100 per cent literacy in Tasmania (1).

In preparation for the next phase of this initiative, this background brieﬁng paper has been developed to serve as a foundation for discussions regarding the development and implementation of a new 26TEN Strategy. This background brief provides an evidence-based analysis of the current state of adult literacy and numeracy in Tasmania, including an assessment of the 26TEN Strategy's achievements and areas for improvement. The key explorations covered in this document include:

1. The remit of the current 26Ten Strategy, its evolution, the context in which it has been operating, and evidence of impacts and outcomes.
2. The current status of adult literacy and numeracy in Tasmania, including insights from the Lifting literacy Lifting Tasmania report.
3. A summary of the ﬁndings and recommendations drawn from the Literacy Advisory Panel in Lifting Literacy Lifting Tasmania.
4. Considerations for the new 26TEN Strategy, including potential goals, implementation methods and scope.
5. An analysis of what elements of the current strategy should be retained, modiﬁed, or eliminated, including the potential new partnerships and stakeholders that could contribute to the Strategy's success.

This background paper will be a critical tool for the 26Ten Coalition and other stakeholders, providing a factual and objective basis for decision-making as they work towards improving adult literacy and numeracy in Tasmania. It aims to help to ensure that the new strategy is informed by the most current data and aligned with the broader policy and government plan goals ultimately striving for a more literate and numerate society.

**3P ADVISORY**

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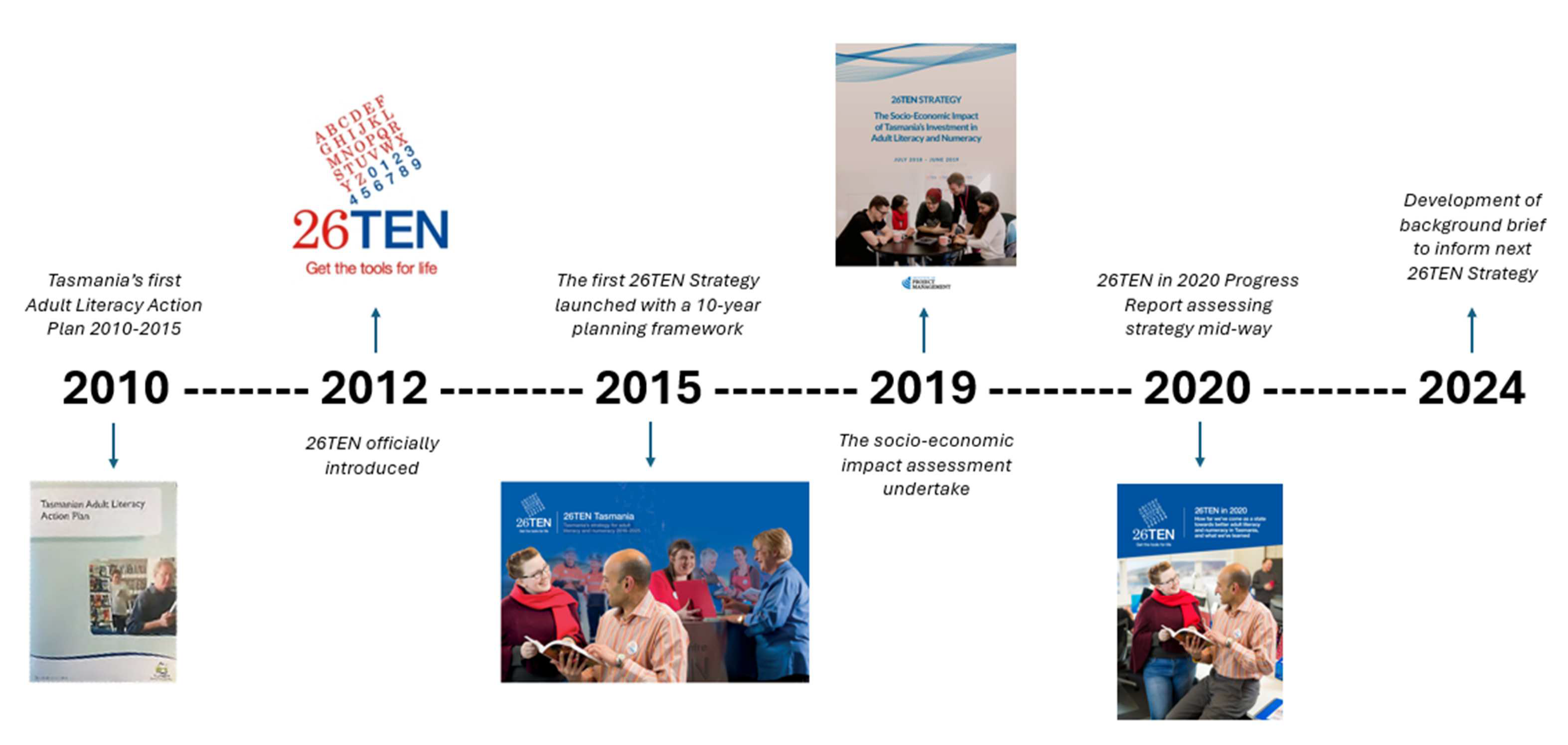
PEOPLE·PLACE· PURPOSE

Section One:

Setting the Scene

## The Establishment and Evolution of 26TEN





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### Tasmanian Adult Literacy Action Plan 2010-2015

In response to the ﬁndings of the 2006 Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALLS), the Tasmanian government recognised the need to address the literacy challenges faced by adults in the state. To tackle this issue, the Tasmanian Adult Literacy Action Plan 2010-2015 (2) was developed and implemented by Libraries Tasmania (formally LINC Tasmania), a division of the former Department of Education (3).

The primary goal of the plan was to ensure that both young people and adults in Tasmania have the literacy skills necessary to participate fully in various aspects of life, including family, community, learning, and employment. The plan included three core strategies to achieve this aim:

1. The establishment of an informal community and workplace network of adult literacy support.
2. The creation of a statewide team of coordinators supported by a pool of trained literacy volunteers to drive the Adult Literacy Network.
3. The development of key indicators to measure improvements in adult literacy support and outcomes.

The implementation of the plan led to the formation of the Literacy Network, which provided individualised learning plans and support strategies, including one-to-one support services and regular small group activities. The network also focused on programs tailored to local needs and fostered collaboration with various organisations at regional levels. A client satisfaction survey in 2015 indicated high levels of satisfaction among participants, with 96 per cent expressing some level of satisfaction and 74 per cent being very satisﬁed. Satisfaction was largely attributed clients achieving goals, improving skills, and experiencing a supportive environment (3).

The plan's achievements from 2010-2015 included the establishment of the 26TEN initiative to mobilise collective action in 2012 and the impressive recruitment and training of over 1,100 volunteer tutors, and the provision of direct support to over 7,000 Tasmanian adults in ﬁve years. It also fostered a community of practice for adult literacy and numeracy teachers, initiated the 26TEN grants program, and raised awareness about the importance of clear communication (3).

The plan's implementation provided valuable insights into the nature of adult literacy challenges and the effectiveness of various strategies. Key lessons learned included the necessity of long- term commitment, openness about the problem, the critical role of numeracy, the diversity of learners' needs and motivations, the importance of an expert adult literacy workforce, the need for better ways to measure progress, and the ripple effect of raising one person's skills. It also highlighted the importance of improving parents' literacy and numeracy skills for their children's educational success and the need for a collective community effort (3). The Tasmanian Adult Literacy Action Plan 2010-2015 played a crucial role in setting the scene for adult literacy in Tasmania by providing a comprehensive framework to address the literacy challenges faced by adults in the state.

### 26TEN Tasmania’s Strategy for Adult Literacy and Numeracy 2016-2025

The development of the 2016-2025 26TEN strategy was a process that drew upon the experiences and outcomes of the initial 2010-2015 plan. It was informed by what had been learned over the ﬁrst ﬁve years, as well as by local and international research. The 26TEN Coalition recognised the need for a long-term commitment to improving literacy and numeracy levels, the importance of addressing both literacy and numeracy equally, and the diverse needs and motivations of individuals with low skills. The new strategy aimed to build on the successes of the past, such as raising awareness and providing direct support to adults, while also addressing any shortcomings identiﬁed during the initial phase (4).

The 2016-2025 26TEN plan was structured around three core goals. The ﬁrst goal was to ensure that everyone is aware of adult literacy and numeracy issues, which was to be achieved by promoting the 26TEN brand as a stigma-free way to discuss the topic, providing resources to businesses and organisations, and expanding the network of supporters. The second goal was to support individuals in improving their skills and helping others, which involved making it easy for people to ﬁnd support, providing tailored learning opportunities, and strengthening partnerships between LINC Tasmania and other sectors. The third goal was to encourage clear communication, particularly the use of plain English in official documents, to reduce barriers for people with low literacy. This was to be achieved by working with government and service sectors to promote clearer communication and by providing guidelines and training (4).

The 26TEN Strategy adopted a dual approach to measuring success and capturing outcomes. One component relied on statistical data to track progress against speciﬁc targets, such as the percentage of adult Tasmanians with literacy and numeracy skills at or above OECD Level 3.

Baseline data from 2011 and targets for 2025 were established, and regular reports were prepared by LINC Tasmania to monitor progress. The strategy also emphasised the importance of storytelling to illustrate the impact of improved literacy and numeracy on individuals' lives. The plan aimed to collect and share success stories on the 26TEN website, putting a human face on the progress made and demonstrating the broader impact of the strategy beyond just numerical improvements (4).

### 26TEN in 2020

A ﬁve-year progress report was developed in 2020, detailing the progress and achievements to date in enhancing adult literacy and numeracy skills. Movement towards the target of a population-wide increase in adult literacy and numeracy levels was expected to be slow, given the time needed for individual learners to improve their skills. The employer grants program and workplace train the trainer model were successful, delivering targeted training in Tasmanian workplaces and boosting safety and productivity. The Strategy has also successfully rolled out tailored plain-English workshops for speciﬁc needs, including helping parents understand school paperwork and providing training for teachers on report writing and newsletters (5).

The progress report highlighted the need for better data collection and sharing among literacy providers to measure statewide progress effectively. It was also suggested that new locally generated measures may be needed in the long term. The Strategy led collaboration between literacy practitioners to develop new ways to measure progress within one level of the Australian

Core Skills Framework (ACSF), showing that more learners make gains within a level than were reported as gaining a whole level (5). The qualitative measures of success have been captured in the stories of personal change, giving a face and a name to the statistics and demonstrating how improving literacy transforms lives, families, workplaces, and communities.

A return-on-investment study commissioned as part of the ﬁve-year review evidenced signiﬁcant beneﬁt arising from 26TEN, with suggestions for future research and longitudinal studies of learners. There was also evidence from the independent economic analysis of the program showing it is a valuable ongoing investment for the state. A survey from Libraries Tasmania evidenced the 26TEN strategy has changed the lives of learners for the better, with over 90 per cent of adults surveyed reporting improved opportunities for employment and further education, as well as an improved quality of life due to enhanced functional literacy.

## Key Roles and Enabling Partnerships

The collective impact approach to 26TEN has seen the involvement of a wide network of organisations, community groups, educational providers and industry sectors, supported by the 26TEN Coalition and team. The Strategy’s three interrelating goals: raising awareness, supporting skill improvement, and promoting clear communication, have been achieved by the key roles each of these contributors have played in facilitating access to and delivering 26TEN initiatives as well as the governing and partnering with 26TEN.

### Governance and Advocacy

The 26TEN Coalition stands as the backbone of the initiative, comprising a diverse group of inﬂuential Tasmanians who volunteer their time and expertise. Representing sectors such as health, government, law, media, industry, education, and community services, these members provide high-level direction and advocacy. Their role is crucial in supporting the Minister for Education and ensuring that the initiative remains aligned with its strategic goals. The Coalition's diversity not only broadens its reach but also enriches its perspective (6).

At the heart of the operational framework is the 26TEN Team, a dedicated group of staff members within Libraries Tasmania. This team is responsible for servicing and administering the statewide 26TEN Network and the Coalition. They play a critical role in implementing action plans, coordinating efforts, and ensuring that the initiative's goals are met. Their work is the glue that holds the various components of 26TEN together, facilitating seamless collaboration and execution (7).

### Delivery and Support

Libraries Tasmania is a cornerstone of the 26TEN initiative, providing essential adult literacy services and supporting evidence-based workforce development for the Tasmanian literacy workforce. This is also supported by TasTAFE who deliver online education for Adult Literacy tutoring. 26TEN’s workforce development in consultation with Libraries Tasmania and TasTAFE ensures that there is a robust infrastructure to support adult learners and literacy practitioners. By offering resources, training, and a supportive environment, 26TEN helps to create a sustainable model for literacy improvement (5).

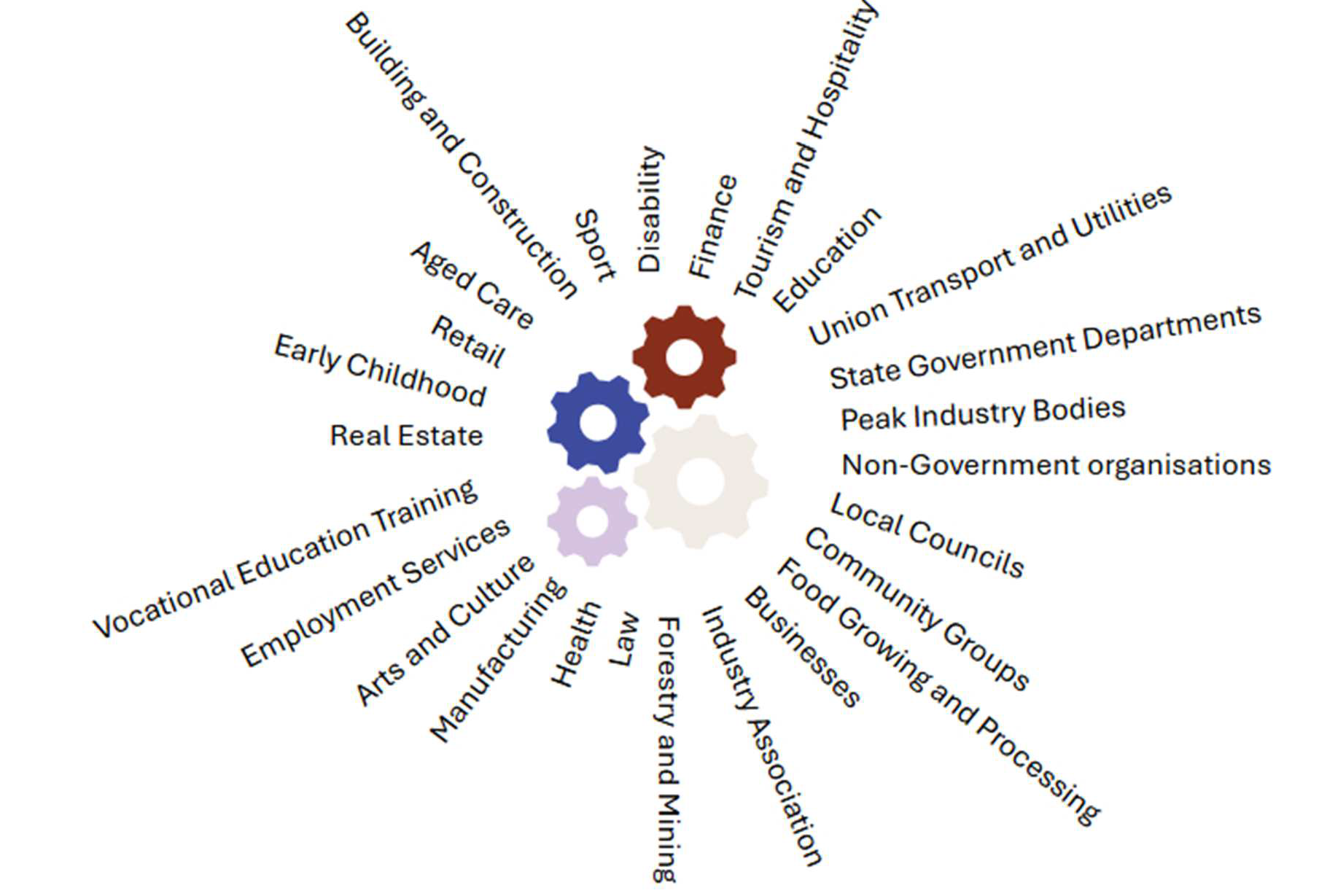
The success of 26TEN is also enabled by the commitment of various community and business organisations. These include community groups, local councils, businesses, and state government departments. Each of these entities plays a role in raising awareness about literacy issues, building the skills of their employees and community members, and improving the clarity of communication. Their actions are integral to creating a literate and numerate society, demonstrating that literacy is a shared responsibility (8).

### Partnerships

The 26TEN Network is a diverse collective of organisational members and individual supporters who work together to support Tasmanians in improving their literacy and numeracy skills. This network embodies the spirit of collective impact, where each member contributes in their unique way to the overarching goals of 26TEN. The network's strength lies in its diversity and the shared commitment to making a difference (5). Members of 26TEN work with the team to develop organisation-speciﬁc action plans that focus on practical skill building that align with the organisations needs.

The 26TEN Workplace Grants Program is a vital component that empowers organisations to take tangible actions. By providing funding, the program enables organisations to upskill their staff, make their services more accessible, and implement innovative solutions to literacy challenges. This ﬁnancial support is crucial in driving grassroots action and ensuring that the initiative's impact is felt across various sectors and communities (5).

#### Sectors and industries with a Role in 26TEN



### Reﬂections

In the move towards the next iteration of 26TEN, it is important to reﬂect on the roles that have been key to the success of 26TEN, and the strength and momentum that comes with the commitment to these roles. It is evident that the initiative thrives on collaboration and shared responsibility. The governance and advocacy provided by the Coalition and the 26TEN Team ensure that the initiative remains focused and effective. The delivery and support from Libraries Tasmania and various community and business organisations create a strong foundation for literacy improvement. Meanwhile, the partnerships fostered through the 26TEN Network and the Grants Program amplify the initiative's reach and impact in all settings.

The current state and growth of 26TEN is a testament to the power of collective impact action. By bringing together diverse stakeholders and leveraging their unique strengths and perspectives, 26TEN has created a robust framework for addressing literacy challenges in Tasmania. The initiative's success is not just measured in numbers but in the stories of individuals whose lives have been transformed through improved literacy and numeracy skills. As the initiative moves forward, it is essential to continue building on this foundation, fostering new partnerships and maintaining the existing of all involved.

## How 26TEN has been Delivered in Various Settings and to a Range of Target Populations

The 26TEN initiative exempliﬁes the power of a collective impact approach, effectively bringing together diverse services and members under a uniﬁed agenda. While 26TEN does not directly deliver services, it serves as the backbone organisation, facilitating collaboration through mutually reinforcing activities, shared measurement, and continuous communication. This coordinated effort has been life-changing for many Tasmanians, offering tailored literacy and numeracy support across diverse settings and to a wide array of target populations. This section explores the multifaceted delivery mechanisms and the speciﬁc groups that have beneﬁted from the program.

### Workplaces

The 26TEN Strategy has effectively embedded targeted actions and initiatives for adult literacy and numeracy in workplaces through its Workplace Grants program. This program delivers literacy and numeracy support directly to employees within their workplace, addressing the speciﬁc needs of both the business and the learners. The Strategy recognises the workplace as a fertile location for building these essential skills, as it provides a context where the newly acquired abilities can be immediately applied and reinforced, leading to increased conﬁdence and proﬁciency (5).

For example, Duggans, a Tasmanian civil construction ﬁrm, used a 26TEN grant to transition its operations online, ensuring that employees had the necessary reading, writing, maths skills, and digital literacy to use their new devices effectively. This initiative not only improved the company's competitiveness but also enhanced the personal lives of the staff. The project required skilled literacy practitioners to work onsite, often during business operations and in an atmosphere that encouraged learners to seek help. This approach ensured that the training is

practical, relevant, and conducive to learning. The success of Duggans’ 26TEN workplace project is evident in the improvements reported, such as reduced errors in paperwork, increased compliance with safety regulations, and a more positive staff attitude (9).

Another example of how 26TEN has been effectively delivered in the workplace is through its partnership with Huon Aquaculture, one of Tasmania’s seafood/salmon companies. Huon Aquaculture recognised the importance of literacy and numeracy skills in its workforce and sought to improve these skills to enhance productivity and employee engagement. This is attributed to the Manager of People and Culture having previously managed 26TEN Workplace Grants, demonstrating the reach and inﬂuence of collective impact. The 26TEN Workplace Grant program funded an initiative that was designed to be ﬂexible, allowing it to ﬁt around the busy schedules of the workers. The impact of this initiative was signiﬁcant with employees reportedly applying their new skills immediately in their daily tasks, leading to increased efficiency and productivity. The program boosted employee morale and job satisfaction, as workers felt supported and valued by their employer. The initiative also fostered a culture of continuous learning and development within the company, which is beneﬁcial for both the employees and the organisation's long-term success. Huon Aquaculture have continued to fund the Adult Literacy Trainer onsite, beyond the life of the Workplace Grant, demonstrating ongoing value. (10).

These two case studies demonstrate the effectiveness of delivering literacy and numeracy projects in the workplace. By addressing the speciﬁc needs of the workforce and providing practical, hands-on learning opportunities, 26TEN has made a tangible difference in the lives of employees and the operations of these companies. The 26TEN team and its members, including TasTAFE and other registered training organisations, have supported these employers by providing literacy practitioners who are trained to work within the unique environment of the workplace. This tailored support is crucial for meeting the local demand for literacy skills and ensuring that the initiatives are sustainable and effective in the long term (10).

### Educational Institutions

TasTAFE, a member of 26Ten, is the public vocational education and training provider in Tasmania, has been instrumental in delivering the 26TEN program within an educational institutional setting. TasTAFE has worked with 26TEN to build adult literacy and numeracy skills in Tasmania, offering services in Foundation Skills for students that are tailored to learning needs. 26TEN supports TasTAFE with literacy awareness and plain English for their workplace with both organisations also partnering with Libraries Tasmania to develop a free evidence- informed, online course for training volunteer adult literacy tutors. These courses are designed to cater to the speciﬁc needs of adults who may be returning to education after a signiﬁcant period or who require additional support to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. TasTAFE trainers also support Workplace Grant projects around the state (10).

26TEN member, Libraries Tasmania, delivers adult literacy and numeracy support through their Adult Literacy Service. The library system has leveraged its network of branches across the state to offer personalised support through one-on-one tutoring and small group sessions. This community-based approach ensures that learners can access support in a familiar and non- intimidating environment. The program has facilitated a supportive learning community where

adults can develop their literacy and numeracy skills at their own pace. The library setting has also been conducive to fostering a love for learning and reading, with many participants reporting increased conﬁdence and a renewed interest in educational pursuits. Additionally, the program has strengthened the role of libraries as community hubs for learning and personal development (10).

In both examples, the delivery of the 26TEN program within educational institutional settings has been characterised by formalised, high-quality instruction, a commitment to meeting the individual needs of learners, and a focus on creating supportive and inclusive learning environments. The impact has been far-reaching, not only improving the skills of participants but also contributing to a more literate and engaged community in Tasmania.

### Community Based

26TENhas been effective in fs delivery of adult literacy and numeracy programs in community settings, including rural libraries, volunteer-led community organisations, Child and Family Learning Centres and Neighbourhood Houses. These community-based settings are crucial for reaching individuals who may not have the means or conﬁdence to seek help in more formal environments. By embedding literacy programs within the community, 26TEN fosters trust and encourages participation. These community-based centres often serve as the ﬁrst point of contact for many learners, providing not just educational support but also a network of social connections and resources. They also offer literacy mediation and informal literacy work such as ﬁlling in forms, responding to letters and getting online, helping those who may not have the means or conﬁdence to seek help in more formal education environments.

One example of this delivery model is the partnership between 26TEN and the Launceston Northern Suburbs Community, which operates in Neighbourhood Houses in Mowbray, Newnham, and Ravenswood. This community initiative is part of the 26TEN Communities program, which aims to build capacity within communities to make a lasting difference in adult literacy and numeracy skills where people live and work (11).

The reach and impact of 26TEN in these neighbourhood houses has been multifaceted:

* Accessibility: By embedding literacy programs within the community, 26TEN has made support services more accessible to residents. Neighbourhood Houses are familiar and welcoming spaces, reducing the barriers that many adults face when considering education.
* Personalised Support: The program offers personalised support through one-on-one tutoring and small group sessions, tailored to the speciﬁc needs of the participants. This approach has been particularly efective in addressing the diverse learning requirements within the community.
* Community Engagement: The initiative has fostered a sense of community ownership and participation. Local businesses and organisations have been encouraged to contribute to the program, creating a collaborative effort that strengthens the social fabric of the neighbourhood.
* Holistic Development: Beyond just literacy and numeracy skills, the program has facilitated holistic personal development. Participants have reported increased

conﬁdence, improved social connections, and a renewed sense of purpose, all of which contribute to their overall well-being.

* Sustainable Learning: By joining community groups of representatives from various sectors and services ensures that the program is sustainable and responsive to the evolving needs of the community.
* Cultural Sensitivity: The program has been sensitive to the cultural diversity of the community, ensuring that materials and approaches are inclusive and respectful of different backgrounds. The effectiveness of 26TEN in Neighbourhood Houses has been profound, as evidenced by the positive feedback from participants and the observable improvements in their skills and conﬁdence (11). The program has not only enhanced the literacy and numeracy levels of individuals but has also contributed to the vibrancy and cohesion of the community as a whole. By providing a safe and supportive environment for learning, 26TEN has empowered adults to take control of their educational journeys and to actively participate in their community's development.

### Government

The 26TEN Strategy has also been effective in government settings engaging government agencies including Service Tasmania, Homes Tasmania, Department of Justice and Department of Premier and Cabinet to improve the way they communicate with people who use their services. One notable example is the partnership with the Tasmanian Department of Health, which has been instrumental in addressing health literacy challenges.

The Department of Health, as a key member of the 26TEN Network, has developed the Health Literacy Action Plan 2019-2024. This plan outlines strategies to enhance health literacy within the population, the health workforce, and organisations. By ensuring that health information is accessible and provided in plain English, the Department of Health aims to empower individuals to ﬁnd and understand health information more easily, thereby improving health outcomes and reducing the impact of low literacy on health care (10). 26TEN are currently working with the Department of Health’s Public Health division to develop the next Health Literacy Strategy for Tasmania.

The government setting is crucial for the 26TEN Strategy because it provides a platform for widespread reach and inﬂuence. By engaging with government departments, the Strategy can embed literacy initiatives into policy and practice, ensuring that services are accessible and understandable to all citizens, regardless of their literacy levels.

### Target Populations

The 26TEN initiative has strategically targeted speciﬁc demographic groups to maximise its impact and reach for those most at risk of low literacy. These groups have been identiﬁed based on their literacy need, and their media habits were studied as part of market research commissioned by 26TEN, with the aim of motivating them to seek help challenges and circumstances (5). The key demographic groups targeted by 26TEN include:

* Adults aged 18-30 who would beneﬁt from help with their literacy and numeracy skills: This group is hard to reach, may experience acute shame over their lack of skills and is reluctant to return to education or ask for help.
* Families: Parents and carers for young children often seek to improve their literacy skills to better support their children's education and to enhance their own employment opportunities.
* Vulnerable Populations: 26TEN has made concerted efforts to reach highly vulnerable individuals who may face multiple barriers to accessing literacy support. This includes groups that may experience cultural stigma, trust issues, or logistical challenges. The initiative employs culturally sensitive approaches build trust and make the support more accessible

By focusing on these speciﬁc demographic groups, 26TEN has been able to deliver targeted interventions that are more likely to resonate with the intended audience, leading to higher engagement and better outcomes. This approach also reﬂects the program's commitment to equity and inclusivity, ensuring that support is tailored to the diverse needs of the Tasmanian community**.**

### Reﬂections

The delivery of the 26TEN Strategy across various settings and to diverse target populations underscores its comprehensive and inclusive approach. By embedding literacy support in workplaces, educational institutions, community centres and government settings, the initiative ensures that help is accessible to all who need it. The targeted focus on speciﬁc demographic groups and vulnerable populations highlights the program's commitment to equity and social justice.

As 26TEN looks to the future, it is essential to continue reﬁning these delivery mechanisms and expanding outreach efforts. Building on the successes achieved so far, 26TEN must remain adaptable and responsive to the evolving needs of the Tasmanian community. By doing so, it will continue to pave the way for a more literate, empowered, and prosperous Tasmania.

## What the Evidence Tells Us About Outcomes and Impact of 26TEN

The 26TEN initiative has been a transformative force in Tasmania, delivering substantial economic and social beneﬁts. Its impacts have been felt at individual, family and community levels. This section delves into the evidence of the program's outcomes and impact, highlighting its successes, reported challenges and identifying opportunities from lessons learned.

### Economic Impact

In 2018-19, 26TEN, commissioned a socio-economic impact assessment of Tasmania’s investment in adult literacy and numeracy, evidencing a socio-economic return of 5.2:1, or for every $1 invested, at least $5.20 in beneﬁts were returned to the Tasmanian community (12). The total socio-economic and cultural value of the 26TEN Strategy to Tasmania in 2018-19 was conservatively estimated at $27.2 million (12). The research found that the socio-economic beneﬁts were in the form of productivity gains, with employers experiencing beneﬁts in excess of $22.3 million as numeracy and literacy skills led to increased efficiencies and reduced costs. This was also reﬂected in higher wages, better job prospects for participants and the creation of about 90 new program speciﬁc jobs (12). Civic beneﬁts, valued at $4.9 million, were realised through improvements in the quality of life of individuals and families, including better health outcomes and increased participation in community life (12).

The total cost of the 26TEN Strategy in 2018-19 was estimated at $5.3 million, with the government contributing $4.1 million and community contributions totalling over $1.1 million. The assessment reported a net beneﬁt, considering both productivity and civic beneﬁts, of

$21.95 million at a market discount rate of 7% and $45.57 million at a social discount rate of 3%

(12). While these ﬁndings are limited to one ﬁnancial year, the evidence is clear that the economic beneﬁts are considerable and shared widely.

### Social Impact

The same report commissioned in 2018-19 evidenced positive and far-reaching social impacts. Clients of the Libraries Tasmania program reported high satisfaction with the program, citing improvements in employment prospects, family life, and community participation and engagement. The program's individualised approach and supportive environment are considered key success factors of the social beneﬁts.

Volunteerism play a crucial role in the delivery of the adult literacy program. In 2018-19 volunteers donated nearly 29,000 hours, which translated into a signiﬁcant contribution of $1.3 million in labour costs (12). The volunteer aspect of the 26TEN Strategy is a cornerstone of its social beneﬁts. Volunteers not only provide essential literacy support but also contribute to the social fabric of the community, promoting a culture of learning, support, and engagement. Their dedication and commitment are vital in achieving the long-term goals of the strategy and in ensuring that its positive impacts are felt across the Tasmanian community.

### Evidence of Individual Outcomes

The strategy has had a transformative effect on the lives of adult literacy clients, as evidenced by the following individual outcomes:

* Employment and Education Opportunities: 90 per cent of participants reported improved opportunities for employment and education, indicating a direct link between enhanced literacy skills and better job prospects.
* Quality of Life: 90 per cent of clients stated that their quality of life has improved, suggesting that the program's impact extends beyond economic beneﬁts to encompass personal well-being.
* Personal Development: Clients have achieved personal milestones, such as reading to their children, gaining promotions, and feeling more conﬁdent in their daily activities, which are indicative of the program's success in fostering personal growth.
* Learning Commitment: Clients have shown a high level of commitment to their learning, spending an average of 4.3 hours per week on self-directed learning outside tutor sessions and participating in about 50 literacy sessions.

### Evidence of Community Outcomes

The strategy has also had signiﬁcant civic and cultural beneﬁts at the community level:

* Social Inclusion: By targeting adults with low literacy levels, the Strategy reduces social exclusion, and the stigma associated with low levels of literacy, promoting a more inclusive society.
* Volunteer Engagement: The program has leveraged the support of volunteer tutors, who have donated nearly 29,000 hours of their time, contributing to a sense of community involvement and social cohesion.
* Network Expansion: The 26TEN Network has grown, with members and supporters contributing to the strategy's implementation and promotion, creating a broader base for community engagement.
* Civic Beneﬁts: The strategy has led to an estimated $4.9 million in civic beneﬁts, primarily through improvements in life expectancy and overall quality of life for participants, which has a positive ripple effect on the community.
* Cultural Impact: The program's focus on literacy has likely contributed to a cultural shift towards valuing education and lifelong learning, which can have long-term beneﬁts for the community's intellectual and cultural life.

### Reported Challenges and Recommendations

The 26TEN Strategy in Tasmania has made signiﬁcant strides in improving adult literacy and numeracy, yet there have been reported challenges that require thoughtful consideration as part of the development of the next iteration of 26TEN. One of the key challenges is the extended time required to see meaningful and tangible population outcomes. Unlike short-term initiatives, literacy development in adults is a gradual process that spans years, making it difficult to align with typical government funding cycles (13). This creates another challenge in ensuring long-term funding and support for the continuous improvement of the Strategy. The socio-economic impact assessment report underscores the importance of sustained ﬁnancial

commitment to maintain the momentum and impact of the program (12). Securing ongoing funding can be difficult due to shifting government priorities and budget constraints. To address this, the report recommends framing the strategy as a long-term investment with a focus on its enduring beneﬁts and returns, rather than short-term gains. It also suggests that success stories and positive impacts should be celebrated and shared to build a compelling case for continued ﬁnancial support (12).

Another challenge is the need for more targeted approaches to reach demographic groups most in need of literacy services. The 2018-19 report highlights the necessity of better targeting to ensure that the strategy's beneﬁts are accessible to those who would beneﬁt most. Barriers such as lack of awareness and stigma can impede participation, and the report calls for better integration with local communities to tailor services to speciﬁc literacy challenges. To improve program effectiveness, the report recommends enhanced accountability and reporting mechanisms that clearly demonstrate the strategy's positive impacts to government and stakeholders (12).

In an era where digital skills are increasingly essential, the strategy must also adapt to the growing need for technological literacy. The socio-economic impact report acknowledges the importance of equipping clients with the necessary skills to navigate the digital landscape effectively. It recommends expanding the provision of technological literacy training to meet the demands of the digital age and to prepare clients for the modern job market. The strategy should evolve to incorporate digital learning platforms and resources, making the program more accessible and relevant to the needs of today's learners (12).

Finally, there are signiﬁcant challenges associated with how 26TEN can accurately report on its key indicators reliant on data ﬁndings of the OECD PIAAC, which is a signiﬁcant source of data on adult language, literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy (LLND) skills in Australia. However, the report "Don't Take It As Read" identiﬁes several concerns about the PIAAC survey. These include the long intervals between surveys, which are only conducted once every decade, and the lack of detailed data breakdowns by different cohorts, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, those in very remote locations, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities (14).

### Reﬂections

In summary, the 26TEN initiative has made signiﬁcant strides in improving adult literacy and numeracy in Tasmania. The program's success is evident in its positive economic, social, and cultural impacts. The impressive ROI, job creation, and individual success stories highlight the program's effectiveness and value. However, ongoing efforts and improvements are necessary to sustain and enhance these outcomes. By securing long-term funding, adopting targeted approaches, and increasing technological literacy, the 26TEN program can continue to drive positive change and contribute to a brighter future for all Tasmanians.

Section Two:

Current Context

## Outlining the Population Need and Impact in Tasmania

Tasmania faces unique challenges in addressing literacy needs due to its diverse and dispersed population. The socio-economic impact of low literacy levels is profound, affecting various aspects of life, including employment opportunities, health outcomes, and social inclusion. The *Final* *Report* *to* *Government:* *Lifting* *Literacy* presents a stark picture of the literacy landscape in Tasmania, highlighting the signiﬁcant need to address low literacy levels among the population

(15). The report underscores the multifaceted impact of low literacy on individuals, families, and the broader community, with socioeconomic disadvantage, geographic location, and parental education levels emerging as key factors inﬂuencing literacy rates. This section synthesizes the available evidence regarding the population need for literacy improvement and groups that are considered to be of a high risk of low literacy.

### Demographic and Socio-Economic Context

Tasmania's population is characterised by a mix of urban and rural communities, with signiﬁcant portions living in remote areas. This geographical dispersion poses challenges in delivering consistent and accessible literacy programs. Additionally, Tasmania has an aging population, with a notable percentage of residents over the retirement age. According to the 26TEN socio-economic impact study, 7 per cent of learners in the 26TEN program are over the current retirement age, and nearly 30 per cent reported living with a disability (12).

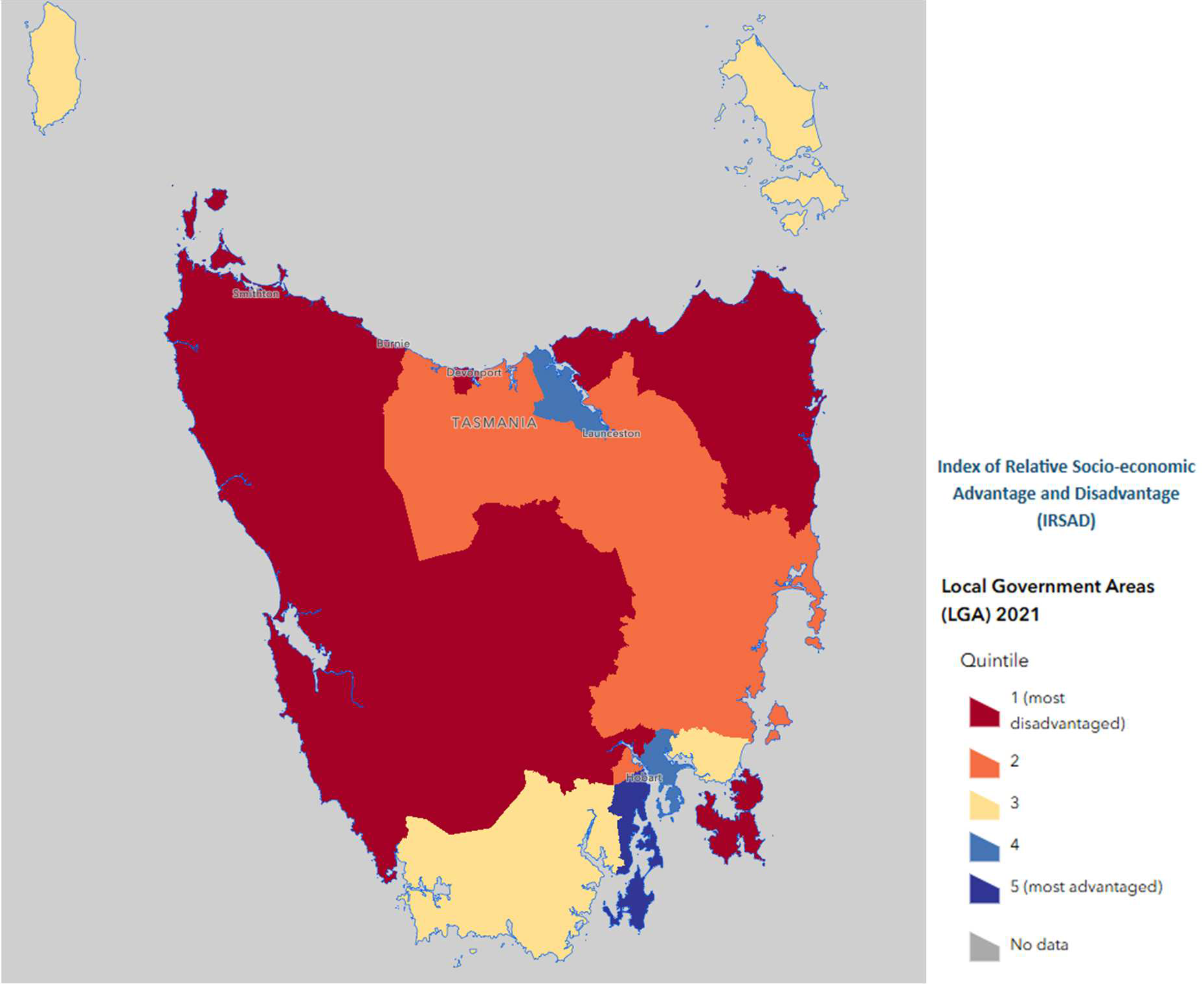
The most recent national data available on adult literacy and numeracy proﬁciency of the population is the 2011-12 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), which measured the skill levels of Australians aged 15 – 74. This OECD report found that 181,500 Tasmanian adults were below Level 3 in reading, and 216,500 were below Level 3 in numeracy (16).

Although dated, these statistics indicate a signiﬁcant portion of the Tasmanian adult population lacks the functional literacy and numeracy skills needed for everyday tasks and employment.

The Socio-Economic Index for Australia (SEIFA) shows that 18.7 per cent of Tasmanian Statistical Local Areas (SA1s) are in the bottom decile of the ABS Index of Relative Socio- economic Disadvantage, indicating approximately double the rates of socioeconomic disadvantage compared to the national average (15). The available research suggests a strong relationship between literacy levels and socio-economic status, with socio-economic status not only contributing to initial low literacy levels, but low literacy levels perpetuating cycles of socio-economic disadvantage. The nexus between literacy and disadvantage emphasises the need for targeted support for vulnerable populations.

However geospatial mapping exercises undertaken by Department of Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) revealed that the availability of literacy services is concentrated in Tasmania’s major population centres (Hobart, Launceston, and Devonport), with fewer services available in regional areas (15). Considering the higher prevalence of socio-economic disadvantage in regional and rural areas, this evidences that the communities most at risk, are also the communities that have less access to literacy supports.

**2021** **SEIFA** **Map** **(SA1)** (17)



Another concerning data insight identiﬁed in the *Final* *Report* *to* *Government:* *Lifting* *Literacy* is the correlation between parental education levels and student attendance rates. Evidence suggests that while attendance rates of children dropped in the later years of schooling (Years 9 through 12), the lower the level of parental education, the higher the drop in school attendance

(15). Conversely, data insights from DECYP also suggest that higher attendance rates were correlated with higher levels of academic achievement. This intergenerational issue underscores the need for initiatives that support families and address the foundational inﬂuences on children's literacy development.

With the linkages evidenced between vulnerability and risk of low literacy, there is also a need to consider other population groups with unique barriers to accessing and engaging mainstream services. There is much acknowledgement within the sector and within recent reports, that ‘whole of community’ data is lacking, creating a tangible gap in understanding of the progress towards functional literacy and an accurate picture of current population needs. While geospatial mapping of literacy services can highlight gaps in services and programs, The *Final* *Report* *to* *Government:* *Lifting* *Literacy* calls for improved data collection and reporting mechanisms to monitor the ongoing impacts of initiatives and target resources where they are needed most (15).

## Environmental Scan: What is Happening Nationally and Internationally in Contemporary Best Practice

Globally, there has been a signiﬁcant shift towards integrated literacy programs, reﬂecting a broader understanding of what it means to be literate in the 21st century. Integrated literacy programs go beyond traditional reading and writing skills to encompass a wide range of competencies necessary for personal and professional success. These programs integrate various aspects of learning, including digital literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, and problem- solving, ensuring that individuals are well-equipped to navigate the complexities of modern life.

The importance of learning from both national and global literacy initiatives cannot be overstated. By examining successful programs and their methodologies from different regions, policymakers and educators can adopt best practices and tailor them to their unique contexts. This comparative approach allows for the identiﬁcation of innovative strategies that can address speciﬁc literacy challenges, promote lifelong learning, and ultimately lead to more inclusive and effective literacy education systems. Understanding and implementing lessons from diverse initiatives will aid the creation of a robust 26TEN Strategy that can adapt to the evolving needs of Tasmania.

### National Initiatives in Australia

#### Reading Writing Hotline

The Reading Writing Hotline, established over 30 years ago as a phone support service for an educational TV series, has grown into an indispensable and widely recognised asset for adult literacy in Australia (18). It has adapted to the changing needs of its community, developing a national database and a user-friendly website that cater to a wide range of literacy support requests. The Hotline's impact is particularly notable during the COVID-19 pandemic, where it has effectively managed a surge in complex caller issues, offering a unique perspective on the nation's adult literacy demands. Its case studies and statistics have been pivotal in identifying gaps in program availability, geographical reach, and learning support, thereby inﬂuencing policy and program reviews (19).

However, the Hotline's challenges are equally signiﬁcant. It grapples with a rising demand for its services, which has been exacerbated by the pandemic. The complexity of caller needs has increased, reﬂecting a lack of suitable programs for employed individuals and those in remote areas. This has highlighted the need for more informal community-based learning options.

Additionally, the digital divide remains a barrier, with many learners lacking access to digital resources or the skills to use them effectively. The Hotline must also navigate the ever-changing landscape of policy, funding, and program availability, often advocating for those whose voices are not typically heard in policy discussions. Despite these challenges, the Hotline remains committed to innovation, piloting projects to address service gaps and ensuring that the voices of those seeking adult literacy support are heard (19).

#### Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) Program

The Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) Program is an Australian Government initiative aimed at assisting eligible job seekers to enhance their language, literacy, and numeracy (LLN) skills. The SEE program is delivered through a network of registered training organisations (RTOs) across the country, ensuring that the training is accessible to a broad demographic. This includes in Tasmania, through Skills Tasmania. 26TEN have linked in with this program, sharing information and grant funding opportunities for Tasmanian RTOs to participate. It has evolved from the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme (LLNP) in 2013, and is now primarily designed to improve participants' LLN proﬁciency, thereby enabling them to engage more effectively in further education or the labour force. The SEE Program is unique in its national scope and focus on addressing the LLN learning needs of job seekers, with the explicit goal of equipping them with skills sought by employers (20). It has also recently innovated to include a speciﬁc SEE program for First Nations, partnering with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (21).

Evaluations of the SEE Program have identiﬁed several key impacts and successes. The program has been successful in measurably improving participants' skill levels, which has led to increased likelihood of employment, enrolment in further education, and reduced reliance on income support. The program's design, which includes the use of the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) for benchmarking progress, has been effective in tracking participant improvements. However, challenges have been noted, including a tension between the long- term investment in LLN skills and the short-term focus on immediate job outcomes, which can lead to premature exit from the program due to job opportunities. Additionally, there are concerns about the alignment of program objectives with broader government policies, the need for improved referral systems to ensure suitable clients are directed to the program, and the review of teacher qualiﬁcation requirements to balance quality assurance with provider ﬂexibility (22).

#### Adult Migrant English Program

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) offers free English language tuition to eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants, aiding their integration into Australian society. The program’s primary goal is to improve participants’ English language skills, with a focus on practical language needed for everyday life and work. By doing so, it helps migrants and refugees participate more fully in the community and understand Australian culture, laws and systems (23). In Tasmania, AMEP is delivered through TasTAFE, utilising volunteers and English as additional language (EAL) trainers. The program is delivered in Hobart only, and includes after-hours and child care support for participants (24).

A comprehensive longitudinal research study conducted by the Department of Home Affairs and the Telethon Kids Institute has demonstrated the signiﬁcant success of the AMEP. The analysis utilised ABS data and highlighted several positive outcomes for participants. Key ﬁndings include marked improvements in English proﬁciency, particularly among those who engaged in longer periods of study, leading to better labour market outcomes, higher income levels, and a decrease in reliance on public housing and income support. Notably, 79 per cent of eligible migrants participated in the program, indicating a high engagement rate. Additionally,

both male and female participants experienced increased labour force participation and higher incomes (25). This study, supported by the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course, stands as the most extensive investigation into AMEP's effectiveness in its 75-year history. Despite these successes, challenges remain in ensuring continuous and inclusive participation across diverse migrant populations to maximize the program's beneﬁts.

### International Examples

#### Ireland – National Adult Literacy Agency

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is a registered charity and membership organisation in Ireland, established in 1980. It serves as the independent voice of adult literacy, with a mission to ensure that everyone in Ireland has the opportunity to develop their literacy, numeracy, and digital skills to fully participate in society. NALA's remit includes advocating for literacy as a human right, leading in best literacy practices, and supporting organisations to provide literacy-friendly services (26).

NALA's Strategic Plan 2024-2030 is a roadmap for the organisation's goals and actions over a six-year period. It is divided into two phases: the Continuation and Review Phase (2024-2027) and the Conﬁrm and Succeed Phase (2027-2030). The plan addresses the changing landscape

of literacy, which now includes digital skills, and recognises the challenges posed by technology for individuals with unmet literacy needs. It also considers the impact of the Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Strategy launched by the Government of Ireland in 2021, which requires NALA to adapt its approach (26).

The strategy is built around four themes: Advocate, Empower, Enable, and Evolve. Under the Advocate theme, NALA aims to inﬂuence policy and provision for adult literacy. Empower focuses on supporting learners and practitioners, while Enable seeks to make organisations' services accessible to all, especially those with literacy needs. Evolve is about ensuring NALA's own structures, staff, systems, and funding are resilient and effective. By the end of the ﬁrst phase, NALA aims to develop a membership and stakeholder engagement strategy and speciﬁc key strategies and policies to increase their inﬂuence and strengthen learning and development opportunities.

In 2021, Irelands government launched the Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Strategy (27), a 10-year plan to enhance adult literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy skills. This necessitated a realignment of NALA’s strategy, requiring the organisation to:

* Clarify its role within the ALL Strategy framework to avoid duplication and ensure effective coordination.
* Align its goals and actions with those of the ALL Strategy to contribute to a uniﬁed national approach.
* Collaborate with government, public sector, and education and training organizations to support individuals with literacy needs.
* Review and adapt its services, such as learner development and engagement, information services, and professional development opportunities for practitioners, to meet the evolving needs of learners and practitioners.
* Consider resource allocation, including funding, to support its work within the context of the ALL Strategy.
* Monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of the ALL Strategy to make necessary adjustments to its own initiatives.

NALA's response to the ALL Strategy involved a comprehensive review and adaptation process to ensure its continued effectiveness in promoting adult literacy in Ireland. Overall, NALA's Strategic Plan 2024-2030 is a comprehensive and dynamic approach to addressing adult literacy in Ireland, reﬂecting best practices in its focus on inclusivity, adaptability, collaboration, and measurable outcomes.

#### United Kingdom – National Literacy Trust

The National Literacy Trust is a prominent charity in the United Kingdom dedicated to improving literacy levels across the country. While the National Literacy Trust is well-known for its work in early childhood and school-based literacy programs, it also places signiﬁcant emphasis on adult literacy, providing resources, training, and support for adult learners and the organisations that serve them. It collaborates with community groups, employers, and educational institutions to create tailored programs that address the unique needs of adult learners. The Trust employs personalised learning approaches to cater to the varied needs of adult learners, acknowledging that adults come with different experiences, skills, and learning preferences.

Recognising the increasing importance of digital skills, the Trust has embedded digital literacy into its programs, helping adults navigate online platforms, use digital tools effectively, and access online learning resources (26).

One of the National Literacy Trust's most impactful programs is Early Words Together. This initiative is designed to support parents and caregivers in developing their children’s early language and literacy skills. It speciﬁcally targets families in disadvantaged communities, where children are at a higher risk of falling behind in their literacy development. The program involves structured sessions where trained volunteers and literacy professionals work with parents and their children, providing them with the tools and techniques to foster a love for reading and language skills at home. The program’s interactive, play-based sessions engage both parents and children in fun and educational activities, empowering families to take an active role in their child’s education. By offering these sessions in local settings such as schools, libraries, and community centres, the program remains accessible and convenient for participants (27).

A distinctive feature of the National Literacy Trust's approach is its cross-sector collaboration, working to integrate literacy programs within schools, libraries and businesses. The National Literacy Trust is also at the forefront of literacy research, continually exploring new methods and technologies to enhance literacy education. One of the latest areas of research is the use of artiﬁcial intelligence (AI) to improve literacy outcomes. The Trust is investigating how AI- powered adaptive learning platforms can personalise literacy instruction for learners, providing

tailored feedback and resources based on individual progress and needs. AI-driven tutoring systems are being explored as a means to offer one-on-one support to learners, particularly in areas where access to human tutors is limited. Additionally, the use of AI in data analytics helps the Trust gather and analyse large sets of data to identify literacy trends, measure program effectiveness, and make informed decisions about future initiatives. AI is also being used to develop interactive and engaging learning materials that motivate learners and make the process of improving literacy skills more enjoyable (28).

#### United States – Pro Literacy

ProLiteracy is the largest adult literacy and basic education membership organisation in the United States and supports a network of over 1,000 member organisations across the world. ProLiteracy’s work is deeply rooted in the belief that literacy is a fundamental human right and a cornerstone for personal and societal development. They are dedicated to addressing the literacy needs of adults, recognising that millions of adults in the United States lack the basic literacy skills needed for employment, health, and active participation in society (29).

ProLiteracy’s approach to adult literacy is contemporary and multifaceted, integrating the latest research, technology, and educational practices to enhance learning outcomes. One key aspect of their approach is the emphasis on digital literacy. ProLiteracy incorporates digital literacy into its programs, helping adults develop the skills needed to use computers, smartphones, and other digital tools effectively. This includes using online learning platforms, accessing digital resources, and developing the ability to evaluate and use information critically.

ProLiteracy is also a world leader in literacy research, contributing to the ﬁeld through its peer- reviewed journal: Adult Literacy Education the International Journal of Literacy, Language and Numeracy. This journal serves as a platform for disseminating the latest research ﬁndings, best practices, and innovative approaches in adult literacy education. It features articles by leading scholars and practitioners, covering a wide range of topics including instructional strategies, program evaluation, policy analysis, and the integration of technology in adult learning. The research published in this journal is instrumental in shaping ProLiteracy’s programs and initiatives (30). For example, recent studies have highlighted the importance of contextualised learning, where literacy instruction is integrated with practical, real-life tasks. This approach not only makes learning more relevant and engaging for adult learners but also improves retention and application of skills. ProLiteracy has incorporated these ﬁndings into its instructional materials and training programs, ensuring that learners receive education that is both meaningful and effective (31).

ProLiteracy is at the forefront of integrating digital technology including AI into adult literacy education. Similarly to the UK, the organisation is exploring the use of AI-powered adaptive learning platforms that personalise instruction based on the individual needs of learners. These platforms use data analytics to monitor learner progress, provide immediate feedback, and adjust instructional content to address speciﬁc learning gaps. This personalised approach ensures that learners receive targeted support, enhancing their learning experience and outcomes. AI-driven educational tools, such as chatbots and virtual tutors, also offer learners additional support outside of traditional classroom settings. These tools can answer questions,

provide practice exercises, and offer encouragement, making learning more interactive and accessible.

#### Canada – ABC Life Literacy

ABC Life Literacy Canada is a national charity dedicated to strengthening organisations that promote adult learning. The organisation provides resources and training to literacy practitioners and develops programs that address the literacy needs of adults. ABC Life Literacy Canada’s approach to adult literacy is contemporary and innovative, integrating modern educational practices and technologies to maximise impact. One key aspect of their work is the emphasis on essential skills that go beyond traditional reading and writing. These essential skills include digital literacy, ﬁnancial literacy, health literacy, and employability skills. Another key aspect of ABC Life Literacy is the prioritisation of accessibility and inclusivity in its programs, recognising that adult learners come from diverse backgrounds with different needs and preferences (32).

One of ABC Life Literacy Canada's ﬂagship programs is UP Skills for Work, which focuses on building essential life skills such as communication, numeracy, and problem-solving. This program is designed to help adults succeed in the workforce by providing them with the skills necessary for job performance and career advancement. UP Skills for Work offers a series of free, downloadable workbooks that cover various topics, including managing stress, teamwork, and adapting to change. These workbooks are used by literacy practitioners across the country to deliver targeted training that is relevant to the needs of both learners and employers (33).

ABC Life Literacy Canada offers a diverse array of other programs that address speciﬁc literacy and numeracy needs across various aspects of life. Their initiatives include the Health

Literacy program, which enhances adults' ability to understand and use health information, crucial for making informed health decisions. The Parenting Literacy program supports parents in developing the skills to foster their children’s literacy and overall development. The Money Matters program focuses on ﬁnancial literacy, equipping adults with essential skills for budgeting, saving, and managing credit. Additionally, ABC Life Literacy provides basic numeracy training tailored to different employment sectors, ensuring that workers have the math skills necessary for their speciﬁc jobs. The organisation also addresses civic engagement through

its Voting Literacy program, which educates adults on the electoral process, enabling them to participate more fully in democratic activities. These varied programs exemplify ABC Life Literacy Canada’s comprehensive approach to addressing the multifaceted literacy and numeracy needs of adults (34).

Like other countries, including Australia, ABC Life Literacy Canada places a strong emphasis on cross-sector collaborations, partnering with businesses, community groups education institutions and government agencies. Similarly, Canada is embracing contemporary practices such as digital literacy and leveraging data analytics, ABC Life Literacy Canada ensures that its programs remain relevant and effective in meeting the evolving needs of learners.

#### New Zealand – Literacy Aotearoa

Literacy Aotearoa is a leading national organisation in New Zealand focused on providing literacy and numeracy education to adults. Established to empower individuals through literacy, the organisation offers free, learner-centred programs tailored to the diverse needs of adult learners. Their contemporary approach includes personalised learning strategies that account for individual backgrounds and learning styles, ensuring each learner receives relevant and effective education. Digital literacy is also a key component of their programs, equipping adults with essential skills to navigate technology and online resources (35).

Literacy Aotearoa has demonstrated a commitment to contemporary best practices in adult literacy education. In recent years, the organisation has made signiﬁcant strides in aligning its services with the evolving needs of learners and the broader educational landscape. One of their notable achievements is the successful transition to a Trust structure, which has contributed to the organisation's ﬁnancial stability and operational efficiency (36).

Another area of excellence is their approach to digital inclusion. Recognising the growing importance of digital literacy in the 21st century, Literacy Aotearoa has invested in online learning platforms and digital devices to support learners who may not have had access to such resources. This initiative not only ensures that learners stay connected but also equips them with essential skills for the digital age (36).

Literacy Aotearoa has also shown leadership in the area of equity, diversity, and inclusion. The organisation has actively worked on embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles into its governance and practices, as well as developing a Disability Action Plan to make its services more accessible to learners with disabilities. They have also pursued the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark, indicating a proactive stance on catering to the needs of learners with speciﬁc learning challenges (36). In terms of strategic partnerships, Literacy Aotearoa has forged strong relationships with industry, government, and community stakeholders. This collaborative approach has led to the co-design of programs that are responsive to the unique needs of different learner groups, such as the Tupu Aotearoa program for Paciﬁc Peoples. These partnerships have also facilitated the development of workplace literacy programs, which are crucial for upskilling the workforce and addressing skill shortages in various sectors (36).

There are many other examples in New Zealand that evidence the success of broader literacy- based policies, practices and programs. One recurring theme is the genuine partnerships and co-design that occurs with New Zealand Indigenous communities, with initiatives tailored to be culturally relevant to different groups and effective to address speciﬁc literacy challenges. For example, the Whānau Literacy Programme is an initiative designed to support Māori adult students and their extended families (whānau) in Aotearoa New Zealand by improving literacy, language, and numeracy skills. The program is tailored to the speciﬁc needs of Māori learners, focusing on cultural relevance and sensitivity to address literacy challenges effectively. It emphasizes holistic wellbeing and educational empowerment, aiming to enhance participants' self-conﬁdence and ability to engage positively with their children's education. The program also encourages the development of culturally safe learning spaces and uses narrative storytelling as a method for assessment and learning. The success of the Whānau Literacy

Programme is evidenced by the positive changes in participants' literacy abilities and the broader impact on their families' wellbeing (37).

#### Finland – A National Strategy

Finland's approach to education has been lauded as one of the most innovative and effective in the world, particularly in the context of adult education and literacy. Finland’s National Literacy Strategy 2030 aims to see Finland the most multiliterate country in the world, with three goals of

1. Creating and strengthening structures for literacy work 2) Strengthening multiliteracy competence and 3) Encouraging reading and diversifying literacy (38). Finland has a well- structured and comprehensive adult education system that includes free access to literacy programs, a well-developed digital learning infrastructure, and strong community support systems.

At the heart of Finland's educational success are its highly trained and respected teachers. The majority hold a master's degree in education, which reﬂects a rigorous and selective teacher training process. This high standard ensures that educators are well-equipped to facilitate adult learning and literacy programs, fostering a culture of lifelong learning (39). There is also culture of prioritising equity over excellence, with equal opportunities offered regardless of background, age or abilities. The absence of standardised testing in Finland's education system is a cornerstone of its success. Instead, students are assessed individually by their teachers, allowing for a more personalized understanding of each learner's progress (40).

Finland's contemporary approach to adult education and literacy offers a model of success that is grounded in equity, respect for the individual, and a focus on holistic learning. By prioritising well-trained teachers, eliminating standardised testing, fostering cooperation, and creating a supportive and relaxed learning environment, Finland has demonstrated that adult education can be both effective and empowering. As the global community seeks to improve educational outcomes and literacy rates, Finland's approach provides a beacon of hope and a roadmap for success (39).

### Key Themes and Trends in Contemporary Best Practice

#### Integrated Literacy Programs

There has been a signiﬁcant shift towards integrated literacy programs, reﬂecting a broader understanding of literacy in the 21st century. These programs go beyond traditional reading and writing skills to encompass a wide range of competencies necessary for personal and professional success. Integrated literacy programs include digital literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, and problem-solving, ensuring individuals are well-equipped to navigate modern life's complexities. This holistic approach acknowledges that being literate today involves much more than the ability to read and write; it includes the capacity to understand and use information across various contexts. The 26TEN Strategy aligns with this approach including these concepts in the deﬁnition of literacy.

Finland's long term multiliterate strategy exempliﬁes integrated literacy best practice by promoting a holistic and comprehensive approach to education. With goals such as strengthening multiliteracy competence and diversifying literacy, Finland has long recognised

that literacy extends beyond traditional reading and writing. The country's well-structured education system, free access to literacy programs, and robust digital learning infrastructure reﬂect its commitment to fostering a broad spectrum of literacies, including digital and critical thinking skills. Finland's history of integrating education holistically serves as a model for creating an inclusive, supportive, and multifaceted learning environment, ensuring that individuals are well-prepared for the complexities of contemporary life.

#### Adaptation and Evolution of Support Services

The Reading Writing Hotline in Australia exempliﬁes how literacy support services have adapted to changing needs over time. Established over 30 years ago as a phone support service and a website, it has evolved into an indispensable national resource. The Hotline developed a comprehensive national database and a user-friendly website to cater to diverse literacy support requests. Its impact was particularly notable during the COVID-19 pandemic, effectively managing a surge in complex caller issues and offering a unique perspective on the nation's adult literacy demands. This adaptability highlights the importance of evolving support services to meet the changing needs of the community.

Canada's ABC Life Literacy Program has signiﬁcantly diversiﬁed its offerings, providing a comprehensive suite of targeted literacy initiatives that go beyond traditional reading and writing. Programs such as Parenting Literacy, Money Matters, and Civic Literacy on how to vote reﬂect an adaptive and evolving approach to literacy education, recognizing the multifaceted nature of literacy in the modern world. By addressing various aspects of daily life—from ﬁnancial management and health information to civic engagement—ABC Life Literacy ensures that adults are equipped with the essential skills needed for personal empowerment and active societal participation. This holistic strategy exempliﬁes the program's commitment to meeting the diverse and ever-changing literacy needs of today's learners.

#### Addressing the Digital Divide

A recurring theme is the persistent digital divide, which remains a signiﬁcant barrier to adult literacy. Many learners lack access to digital resources or the skills to use them effectively. Almost all national and international initiatives explored in this paper have recognised this challenge and invested in digital literacy initiatives, providing online learning platforms and digital devices to support learners. Ensuring equitable access to digital tools and training is crucial for modern literacy programs.

Addressing the digital divide in literacy necessitates an intergenerational approach that acknowledges the diverse spectrum of digital literacy skills across different age groups. Older adults may require foundational digital skills training, while younger generations might need advanced competencies to navigate emerging technologies effectively. Consideration of this approach involves not only providing access to digital resources but also tailoring educational programs to meet the varied needs of learners at different life stages. By fostering digital literacy across generations, all individuals can be afforded the opportunity to be equipped to participate fully in the digital world, bridging the gap and promoting inclusive, lifelong learning.

#### Community-Based Learning and Place-Based Considerations

The complexity of literacy needs, particularly for employed individuals and those in remote areas, has highlighted the necessity for more informal, community-based learning options. Initiatives such as Literacy Aotearoa's Whānau Literacy Programme, which supports Māori adult students and their families, emphasise culturally relevant and community-centred approaches. These programs often involve partnerships with community organisations and local stakeholders to create accessible and relevant educational opportunities.

Addressing the complexity of literacy needs through place-based approaches is effective in supporting communities that are remote or characterised by the presence of speciﬁc industries. By tailoring literacy initiatives to the unique social, economic, and cultural contexts of these communities, they can take ownership of their own literacy outcomes, creating impactful and relevant place-based programs. This localised strategy ensures that literacy efforts are contextually appropriate, addressing the speciﬁc challenges and leveraging the strengths of each community to foster meaningful and sustainable educational outcomes.

#### Government Policy Support and Cross Sector Collaboration

Government initiatives play a critical role in supporting the reach, engagement and impact of adult literacy initiatives. The Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) Program in Australia is a prime example. This program assists eligible job seekers in enhancing their language, literacy, and numeracy skills through a network of registered training organisations. It has shown measurable success in improving participants' skill levels, leading to increased employment and further education opportunities. However, challenges such as balancing long-term LLN skill investment with immediate job outcomes and aligning program objectives with broader government policies remain.

Cross-sector collaboration is also a recurring theme amongst these literacy initiatives, with all examples recognising the value and achievement associated with partners. The National Literacy Trust's Early Words Together program in the UK involves partnerships with community groups, schools, and libraries to support parents and caregivers in developing their children's early literacy skills. This collaborative approach ensures that programs are comprehensive and address the unique needs of different learner groups.

The role clariﬁcation and adjustments undertaken by NALA in response to the Irish governments Adult Literacy for Life Strategy have been effective in maximising collaboration with the government and other stakeholders. By clearly deﬁning its role within the broader framework of the ALL Strategy, NALA has been able to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure that its initiatives complement and support the national strategy for adult literacy. This alignment has facilitated a more cohesive and coordinated approach to addressing adult literacy needs, which is essential for the efficient allocation of resources and the effective delivery of services. The collaborative effort has allowed NALA to leverage the strengths and expertise of various organisations, leading to a more comprehensive and impactful response to the diverse literacy challenges faced by adults in Ireland.

#### Equity, Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion

Programs like the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) in Australia and ABC Life Literacy Canada emphasise inclusivity and accessibility. AMEP offers free English language tuition to eligible migrants, signiﬁcantly improving their English proﬁciency and integration into society. ABC Life Literacy Canada addresses diverse literacy needs through programs focusing on health, ﬁnancial, and digital literacy, ensuring that adult learners from various backgrounds can access and beneﬁt from these services.

Organisations like Literacy Aotearoa in New Zealand have shown leadership in embedding principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion into their practices. They have developed a Disability Action Plan, pursued the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark, and created programs tailored to the needs of speciﬁc learner groups, such as the Tupu Aotearoa program for Paciﬁc Peoples. These efforts ensure that literacy programs are accessible and effective for all learners, regardless of their background or learning challenges.

#### Use of Technology and AI

The integration of technology and artiﬁcial intelligence (AI) is a growing trend in adult literacy programs. The National Literacy Trust in the UK and ProLiteracy in the US are exploring AI- powered adaptive learning platforms to personalize literacy instruction. These platforms offer tailored feedback and resources based on individual progress, making learning more engaging and effective. AI is also used for data analytics to identify literacy trends, measure program effectiveness, and develop interactive learning materials.

The use of AI in adult education and literacy is still in its infancy with limited empirical research available. However, a recent scoping review found that AI literacy in higher and adult education is a promising ﬁeld with a growing number of publications, particularly from North America, the UK and East Asia. It identiﬁed a lack of consensus on the deﬁnition of AI literacy and the core competencies it should encompass. Most studies focused on curricular developments or speciﬁc courses aimed at fostering AI literacy, with varying approaches to teaching formats and pedagogical structures. The review highlighted the need for more empirical research, a validated scale to measure AI literacy, and a clearer understanding of the competencies required for AI literacy in adult education. It also noted the importance of AI literacy in preparing individuals for a future where AI technologies are increasingly prevalent (41).

#### Evidence-Based Success

Evaluations of programs like the SEE Program and AMEP have provided evidence of their success in improving literacy rates and related outcomes. The SEE Program has led to increased employment and further education opportunities, while AMEP participants have shown marked improvements in English proﬁciency, better labour market outcomes, and higher income levels. These successes highlight the importance of evidence-based approaches in designing and implementing effective literacy programs.

In conclusion, contemporary best practices in adult literacy are characterised by:

* integrated and holistic approaches
* adaptation of support services to meet changing needs
* efforts to bridge the digital divide
* provision of community-based learning options
* strong government and policy support
* the use of technology and AI
* cross-sector collaboration
* a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

These themes and trends reﬂect a comprehensive understanding of what it means to be literate in the 21st century and demonstrate the ongoing evolution of adult literacy initiatives worldwide.

### How is Adult Literacy Funded?

Funding for adult literacy initiatives is a critical component of their sustainability and effectiveness. Internationally, adult literacy programs are funded through a variety of mechanisms, each with its own strengths and challenges. In the UK, both NALA and the National Literacy Trust are funded through a combination of public and private support, including government grants, corporate sponsorships, and philanthropic donations (44). The National Literacy Trust places a signiﬁcant effort on community fundraising while NALA focuses more on corporate sponsorships. Both organisations are also supported by a strong volunteer workforce to deliver adult literacy speciﬁc programs.

In the US, ProLiteracy is funded mainly by publishing revenues and investments, as well as fundraising from corporate partners and grant sponsors. As a membership organisation, it relies on the support of its network of over 1,000 member organisations across the world, including membership payments and attendance at various training and conference events (44).

Similarly, ABC Life Literacy Canada receives funding from various sources, including government grants, corporate sponsorships, and individual donations. It also has an internal fundraising revenue stream through an online sale of advertising space. Both the US and Canadian adult literacy initiatives also partner with businesses, community groups, and educational institutions to deliver its programs.

Literacy Aotearoa is funded by the New Zealand government, along with substantial philanthropic donations and partnerships with community organisations (46). The government's investment in adult literacy is a key component of its education and social services policies.

Similarly, adult literacy in Finland is well-funded by the government, which prioritises education as a key component of its social welfare system just as the National Literacy Strategy is part of the UK’s broader educational framework supported by public funding.

#### Government Funding

Many countries allocate a portion of their public budget to adult literacy initiatives. This funding can be direct, through government departments responsible for education or social services, or indirect, through grants and contracts with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community sector organisations. Government funding is often tied to national strategies and policy priorities, ensuring a degree of stability and alignment with broader societal goals. While Government funding provides stability and alignment with national goals, ensuring ongoing support for adult literacy strategies, it can also be subject to policy changes and budget constraints, affecting program continuity in the long term.

#### Philanthropic Support

Philanthropic organisations and private foundations play a signiﬁcant role in funding adult literacy programs. These contributions can provide ﬂexibility and innovation, allowing programs to experiment with new methodologies and technologies. Philanthropic support often targets speciﬁc populations or geographic areas, addressing gaps in service provision. The main beneﬁt of this funding arrangement is how it encourages innovation and targeted interventions, addressing speciﬁc literacy challenges, but it can be unpredictable, with funding cycles that do not always align with long-term strategies.

#### Corporate Sponsorship

Corporations may fund adult literacy initiatives as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts. This funding can take the form of cash donations, in-kind contributions, or pro bono services. Corporate sponsorships can also involve partnerships where companies provide literacy training for their employees or support community-based programs. Corporate sponsorship leverages private sector resources and expertise, resulting in increased program reach and impact across sectors. However, corporate sponsorships may prioritise short-term gains or public relations over sustained literacy improvements.

#### Fees for Service

Some adult literacy programs generate revenue through fees for service, where participants pay a nominal fee to cover the costs of materials and instruction. This model can be challenging, as it may exclude individuals who cannot afford the fees, but it can also foster a sense of investment and ownership among participants.

#### Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

PPPs are collaborative arrangements between government agencies and private sector entities to fund and deliver adult literacy programs. These partnerships leverage the strengths of both sectors, combining public resources with private expertise and funding. While this appears to be the most accepted model of funding, public-private partnerships require careful negotiation and management to ensure shared goals and effective collaboration.

## The Literacy Policy and Program Landscape in Tasmania

Tasmania's literacy landscape is a multifaceted network of stakeholders and initiatives that work together to improve literacy across the state. This system includes government bodies, educational institutions, businesses, community organisations, and various initiatives that interact in both structured and organic ways. Some activities are intentionally interrelated and complement each other through shared goals and approaches, while others intersect in more organic or opportunistic ways. The following section provides a comprehensive overview of these stakeholders and initiatives, detailing their roles, contributions, and the ways they interconnect to create a robust support system for literacy in Tasmania.

### Intentionally Interrelated Activities

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| **The** **Literacy** **Advisory** **Panel** (42) | |
| **Role** | **Impact** |
| The Literacy Advisory Panel, established by the Tasmanian Government in March 2021, is a group of experts tasked with overseeing the development of a community-wide Framework aimed at achieving a Literate Tasmania. The background context to the panel's establishment is rooted in the recognition of the critical role literacy plays in individual and societal success. The panel, which includes members with diverse expertise in literacy, education, and community engagement, has undertaken extensive consultation and research to inform its recommendations. Its mission is to address the multifaceted challenges of low literacy and to ensure that all Tasmanians have the opportunity to improve their literacy skills, regardless of age, background, or location. | By inﬂuencing policy and practice, the panel helps shape a coherent strategy and community-wide framework for literacy development. The Lifting Literacy Framework, as outlined by the panel, is a strategic blueprint designed to guide the improvement of literacy rates across Tasmania. It is underpinned by overarching principles such as equity, consistency, and evidence-based teaching, and it includes milestone targets for literacy achievement from early childhood to adulthood. The framework's impact is expected to be transformative, as it provides a shared understanding and direction for the whole community, including educators, families, and policymakers. By aligning efforts and resources, the framework aims to create a supportive environment where all learners can thrive, ultimately leading to intergenerational improvements in literacy. |

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| **Libraries** **Tasmania** (43) | |
| **Role** | **Impact** |
| Libraries Tasmania plays a crucial role in supporting literacy development for all ages across the state. They are recognised as pivotal community centres that provide essential services and resources for early  language and literacy development. | Libraries serve as accessible community hubs that facilitate learning and personal growth for individuals of all ages. They offer dynamic environments where individuals of all ages can improve their literacy, numeracy and language  skills. These spaces provide a non-judgmental |

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| Libraries Tasmania facilitates a range of literacy programs and services for adults, families and young children, using a strong volunteer workforce and evidence-based practices such as play-based learning and tailored one-on-one tutoring. | environment where people can seek help, participate in programs, and access resources. Additionally, the library's commitment to professional development ensures that staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to provide effective literacy support. |

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| **TasTAFE** (44) | |
| **Role** | **Impact** |
| TasTAFE, the public vocational education and training provider in Tasmania, integrates literacy and numeracy into vocational training programs, recognising that these foundational skills are essential for workforce readiness and employability.  TasTAFE incorporates literacy and numeracy into its curriculum to ensure that students develop the competencies required for their chosen vocations. This integration is achieved through a variety of strategies, including embedding literacy and numeracy skills within speciﬁc vocational modules, providing additional support to students who may need to improve their skills, and assessing students' literacy and numeracy capabilities as part of their overall vocational training. TasTAFE also deliver the Tutor Adult Literacy Learners (TALL) course, a free and accessible language, literacy and numeracy tutor skill set that trains literacy volunteers. | The impact of integrating literacy and numeracy into vocational training at TasTAFE is multifaceted. Firstly, it enhances students' ability to understand and apply technical information, which is critical for success in many trades and professions. Secondly, it equips students with the communication skills necessary to interact effectively with colleagues, clients, and customers. Thirdly, it ensures that graduates possess the problem- solving and critical thinking skills demanded by employers in today's workforce. By prioritising literacy and numeracy, TasTAFE not only prepares students for the immediate requirements of their vocational roles but also lays the groundwork for ongoing professional development and adaptability in an ever- changing job market. The provision of a dedicated adult literacy trainer course has expanded the capacity of the literacy workforce in Tasmania. |

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| **Community** **Organisations** | |
| **Role** | **Impact** |
| Community organisations such as Child and Family Learning Centres, Neighbourhood Houses, and regional community hubs are instrumental in raising awareness about literacy issues and providing accessible resources and support to community members. These organisations often operate in informal  settings, creating a welcoming and non- | The impact of community organisations reaching underserved and vulnerable populations cannot be understated. By offering tailored programs and involving local people who know each other, these organisations build trust and create a sense of belonging among participants. This approach is particularly effective because it addresses the  speciﬁc needs and barriers to learning that |

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| intimidating environment for individuals who may feel hesitant to engage with formal educational institutions. They offer a range of programs and services designed to cater to the diverse needs of the community, from early childhood literacy initiatives that support parents and caregivers in fostering a love for reading, to adult literacy programs that provide tailored support for individuals looking to improve their skills. By being embedded within the community, these organisations are well-positioned to understand the unique challenges faced by different groups, including low-income families, migrants, and adults with low literacy levels. | these populations may face. For instance, community organisations can provide culturally sensitive literacy programs for migrants, helping them to navigate the language and literacy challenges of a new country. They can also offer ﬂexible learning options for adults with low literacy, recognising that these individuals may have competing responsibilities and require a supportive environment to learn at their own pace.  Through these targeted efforts, community organisations play a vital role in breaking down barriers to literacy and empowering individuals to improve their skills, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and literate society. |

### Organic or Opportunistic Intersections

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| **Healthcare** **Providers** (45) | |
| **Role** | **Impact** |
| Healthcare providers play a role in supporting patients with low literacy by ensuring they can effectively follow medical instructions, understand prescriptions, and manage their health. When encountering patients with low literacy, healthcare providers must adopt strategies to communicate complex medical information in clear and accessible language. This includes using plain language, visual aids, and patient education materials designed for different literacy levels. Providers also need to spend additional time with patients to ensure they fully comprehend their health conditions, treatment options, and how to adhere to medical advice. The Tasmanian Department of Health and Health Consumers Tasmania are involved in leading a number of health literacy initiatives to assist Tasmania’s health workforce and health consumers. | Improved health literacy is directly linked to better health outcomes and reduced hospital admissions. When patients have the necessary literacy skills to understand and engage with health information, they are more likely to follow medical advice, take medications correctly, and adhere to treatment plans. This leads to more effective patient-provider communication, as patients feel more conﬁdent in asking questions and expressing concerns. Consequently, healthcare providers can deliver more targeted care, and patients are empowered to become active participants in their health management, leading to better health outcomes and improved quality of life. The result is a healthcare system that is more responsive to the needs of patients, with improved efficiency and better overall health outcomes. |

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| **Employers** **and** **industry** **groups** (46) | |
| **Role** | **Impact** |
| Employers and industry groups have a signiﬁcant role in upholding the importance of literacy for workplace safety and productivity. They recognise that a literate workforce is essential for understanding safety protocols, operating machinery, and interpreting technical documents. To ensure that employees have the necessary literacy skills, employers play a role in offering literacy training programs as part of their professional development practices.  Industry groups also play an advocacy role for the inclusion of literacy skills in vocational training and work with educational institutions to align curricula with industry needs. In Tasmania this role is evident in the states agriculture and aquaculture industries. | By prioritising literacy, employers and industry groups create a culture of continuous learning and improvement, which is essential for maintaining a competitive edge in the global marketplace. Enhanced literacy skills lead to safer workplaces, higher productivity, and better job performance. Employees with strong literacy skills are better able to comprehend and apply safety guidelines, reducing the risk of accidents and injuries. They can also understand and implement complex instructions, leading to higher productivity and efficiency in task execution. Furthermore, literacy skills enable employees to engage in professional development opportunities, which can lead to career advancement and improved job performance. |

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| **Cultural** **and** **Arts** **Organisations** (47) | |
| **Role** | **Impact** |
| Cultural and arts organisations play a role in offering unique opportunities for engaging with literacy through creative and expressive means. Programs such as storytelling festivals, theatre workshops, language programs and community art projects incorporate literacy activities that attract diverse audiences, demonstrating that literacy is not conﬁned to traditional reading and writing but encompasses a wide range of expressive forms. These organisations recognise the power of storytelling and the arts to captivate and inspire, providing platforms for individuals to explore their creativity and develop their literacy skills in engaging and non-traditional ways.  Examples include the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre’s palawa kani program and Arts Tasmania Story Island Project. | The impact of cultural and arts organisations' initiatives in fostering a love for reading and writing is profound, especially among individuals who may not be reached by traditional literacy programs. These initiatives break down barriers to literacy by offering alternative ways to engage with stories, ideas, and language, making the learning process more accessible and enjoyable. By recognising that there are many alternate ways to learn skills, these organisations cater to different learning styles and preferences, ensuring that literacy is inclusive and that everyone has the opportunity to develop their literacy skills in a manner that resonates with them. Through these efforts, cultural and arts organisations contribute to a vibrant cultural landscape and a literate society, where the joy of reading and writing is shared by all. |

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| **Environmental** **and** **Conservation** **Groups** (48) | |
| **Role** | **Impact** |
| Environmental and conservation groups play a crucial role in understanding the link between literacy and environmental stewardship. They recognise that literacy is not just about reading and writing but also about the ability to understand and engage with complex information, such as environmental issues. Through initiatives like educational components of nature walks, interpretative reading materials, and conservation resources and workshops that include reading and writing about the environment, these groups provide opportunities for people to deepen their understanding of ecological concepts and the importance of conservation.  Organisations like the Tasmanian Conversation Trust provide support to communities on landowner property development and understanding the protection of bio-diversity in Tasmania. | Environmental and conservation groups not only educate the public about the importance of environmental stewardship but also foster a sense of connection and responsibility towards nature. Through their initiatives, these groups reach a wide audience in Tasmania, from school children to adults, and from urban dwellers to rural communities. By making environmental education accessible and engaging, they contribute to a more environmentally literate society, where individuals are equipped with the knowledge and skills to make informed choices and take action to protect the planet. Additionally, agencies like Department of Natural Resources often work in collaboration with schools and walking club groups, extending their reach and inﬂuence and ensuring that environmental literacy is embedded within the broader educational and community landscape. |

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| **Digital** **Inclusion** **Initiatives** (49) | |
| **Role** | **Impact** |
| Digital inclusion initiatives are vital in addressing the digital divide, ensuring that all members of society can beneﬁt from the opportunities afforded by technology. Many organisational, community, and service settings now incorporate digital inclusion considerations into their programs and services, recognising the importance of providing equitable access to technology and teaching digital skills. These initiatives may include offering computer literacy classes, providing access to digital devices, and ensuring digital content is accessible for those with low literacy. The Australian Government has embedded this throughout all service settings and has also launched Be Connected to facilitate every Australian be digitally literate. | Digital literacy has become an essential skill for full participation in modern society. It enables individuals to navigate the digital landscape, access information, communicate effectively, and engage in lifelong learning. In the workplace, digital literacy is often a prerequisite for employment, as many jobs require proﬁciency in using digital tools and platforms. Moreover, digital literacy is critical for civic engagement, allowing citizens to stay informed about current events, participate in democratic processes, and contribute to public discourse. As the world becomes increasingly digital, the ability to leverage technology becomes a fundamental aspect of personal and professional development. |

### Tailored Workshops and Professional Development

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| **26TEN** **Workshops** (10) | |
| **Role** | **Impact** |
| 26TEN Tasmania recognises the importance of tailored literacy workshops and professional development as key components in the Strategy. Tailored literacy workshops have been designed to provide individualised learning opportunities that cater to the diverse needs and motivations of adult learners. These include Plain English workshops and Literacy Awareness workshops aimed to make learning accessible and effective for each participant, whether they needed help with basic skills, digital literacy, or preparing for speciﬁc life or work-related tasks. The Workforce Development Program has been crucial for the adult literacy workforce, including teachers and tutors. It aimed to enhance their skills and expertise, ensuring they could deliver high-quality support tailored to the unique challenges faced by adult learners. | Tailored literacy workshops offer a welcoming and non-stigmatising environment where adults can develop their skills at their own pace, leading to increased conﬁdence and capability in various aspects of life. This not only improves quality of life but also has a positive ripple effect on families, communities, and workplaces. Tailored professional development ensures that the educators are equipped with the latest methodologies and resources to support learners effectively. As a result, the adult literacy workforce has become a dynamic and responsive force, capable of adapting to the evolving needs of the community. Together, these initiatives play a pivotal role in driving the strategic vision of 26TEN forward, making signiﬁcant strides towards a Tasmania where all adults have the literacy and numeracy skills they need for work and life. |

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| **Financial** **Literacy** | |
| **Role** | **Impact** |
| Financial literacy programs play a crucial role in empowering individuals to understand and effectively manage their personal ﬁnances. These programs are designed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed ﬁnancial decisions, such as budgeting, saving, investing, and using credit wisely. By enhancing ﬁnancial literacy, these initiatives contribute to the overall adult literacy landscape by addressing a speciﬁc yet critical area that has a profound impact on individuals' economic well-being and life choices. Many ﬁnancial institutions offer a range of  ﬁnancial literacy resources and programs to customers and also engage with schools to | Improved ﬁnancial literacy leads to better ﬁnancial decisions, which in turn can result in reduced debt and increased economic stability for individuals and communities. When individuals have the skills to manage their money effectively, they are less likely to fall into debt traps and are more capable of saving for current and future needs. This ﬁnancial stability can lead to reduced stress, improved health, and greater participation in social and economic activities. Moreover, at the community level, higher ﬁnancial literacy can contribute to a more resilient economy, as informed consumers and investors make decisions that are beneﬁcial to both themselves and the broader market. |

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| embed ﬁnancial literacy and learning into Tasmania’s younger generations. |  |

### Considerations for 26TEN – Lifting Literacy Implementation Plan

The Lifting Literacy Implementation Plan 2024-2026 (the Plan) presents a comprehensive blueprint for enhancing literacy outcomes across Tasmania, and its principles and recommendations should be carefully considered in the development of a new 26TEN strategy. Importantly, the policy directions of the Plan have been guided and informed by Tasmania’s experts, as well as broad sector consultation which includes the wisdom and expertise of 26TEN stakeholders. As a result of this direct input, there is already signiﬁcant alignment between 26TEN and the Plan, with opportunities to further synergise a new 26TEN strategy, by adopting a similar approach to evidence-based practices, community engagement, and focusing on equity.

#### Principles Alignment

The existing 26TEN Strategy principles of Collaboration, Evidence-Based Practice, and Commitment to Vulnerable Populations are well-aligned with the foundational principles of the Lifting Literacy Implementation Plan 2024-2026, which emphasise equity, consistency, individual-centred education, and evidence-based research. Both frameworks recognise the importance of engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders, using data to drive decision-making, and focusing on those who may face additional barriers to literacy.

To further align with the new implementation plan, 26TEN may consider expanding its principles to include:

* 1. **Equity** **and** **Inclusion**: Building upon the commitment to vulnerable populations, 26TEN could explicitly articulate a principle of equity, ensuring that all adults, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, have equal access to literacy programs and resources.
  2. **Lifelong** **Learning**: Adopting a principle that emphasises the importance of literacy as a lifelong endeavour, not just for school-aged children but for adults at all stages of life, reﬂecting the Lifting Literacy Plan's whole-of-community approach.
  3. **Community** **Empowerment**: Expanding the Collaboration principle to include a focus on empowering communities to take ownership of literacy initiatives, encouraging grassroots efforts that complement institutional programs.
  4. **Systemic** **Change**: Incorporating a principle that addresses systemic barriers to literacy, working with policymakers to create an environment where literacy is a shared responsibility and a core value of society.
  5. **Flexible** **and** **Responsive** **Programs**: Recognising the diversity of adult learners' needs, 26TEN could develop a principle that calls for ﬂexible, responsive, and innovative programs that adapt to the changing needs and circumstances of learners.

By expanding its principles in these ways, 26TEN can ensure that its strategy is fully aligned with the broader goals of the Lifting Literacy Plan, contributing to a cohesive and effective approach to improving adult literacy outcomes in Tasmania. This alignment will not only strengthen the

individual strategies but also create a more uniﬁed front in the collective effort to enhance literacy across the state.

#### Leveraging Collective Impact Approaches

The 26TEN Strategy stands as a testament to the power of community engagement and cross- sector collaboration over time, bringing together a diverse array of stakeholders to tackle adult literacy challenges in Tasmania. Its success is rooted in the establishment of robust partnerships with businesses, community groups, government agencies, and educational institutions, which have enabled a collective impact approach to addressing literacy needs. This collaborative model has not only improved coordination among different sectors but has also ensured that programs are tailored to meet the speciﬁc literacy challenges faced by the community.

As the State Government rolls out its Lifting Literacy Implementation Plan 2024-2026, there is a signiﬁcant opportunity to tap into the collective impact principles that have been instrumental to the success of 26TEN. By integrating the collective impact approach with the structured initiatives of the Lifting Literacy Plan, the state can enhance the effectiveness of its literacy efforts across all demographics. This alignment will not only amplify the impact of existing programs but also pave the way for innovative solutions that capitalize on the combined strengths and resources of community-based organizations and government entities.

The synergy between the 26TEN Strategy's community involvement and the state government's structured approach to literacy offers a compelling model for leveraging collective impact to drive systemic change. By working together, these collaborative efforts can create a more literate and engaged society, where the successes of individual programs are multiplied through shared goals and coordinated action.

#### Workforce and Professional Development

The development of a new 26TEN strategy should maintain a steadfast commitment to professional development and workforce support. By attracting and retaining skilled literacy professionals, providing opportunities for continuous learning, and leveraging the collective strengths of the workforce, the strategy can play a pivotal role in achieving the ambitious goals set forth in the Lifting Literacy Plan. This collaborative approach will not only enhance the effectiveness of individual programs but also ensure that the state's ﬁnite workforce is used to its fullest potential, ultimately contributing to a more literate and engaged society in Tasmania.

There are opportunities to explore mechanisms for sharing and leveraging the existing workforce to achieve shared literacy goals across the state. This could involve the creation of a centralised database or networks that connect literacy professionals, allowing them to collaborate and share best practices. Additionally, there should be a shared focus on building the capacity of the volunteer workforce and supporting organisations who work with a volunteer workforce to bear the cost associated with volunteers. Joint efforts between the State Government and 26TEN in workforce development and support are crucial for maximising the impact of literacy initiatives.

#### Data-Driven Evaluation and Reporting

The alignment between the Lifting Literacy Implementation Plan 2024-2026 and 26TEN in the area of data-driven evaluation and reporting is a critical component for measuring the success and impact of literacy initiatives across Tasmania. Both frameworks recognise the importance of using robust data to inform decision-making, track progress, and ensure accountability.

The Lifting Literacy Plan's emphasis on establishing clear measures and targets, as well as the creation of an independent Lifting Literacy Outcomes Monitoring Group (LLOMG), provides a structured approach to data collection and analysis. This ensures that the plan's initiatives are evaluated effectively and that the outcomes are reported transparently. 26TEN, with its commitment to evidence-based practice, can leverage this structured approach by tapping into the state government's resourcing and skills in data analytics and reporting. The opportunity for 26TEN to collaborate with the state government in this area is signiﬁcant. By aligning its data collection and reporting processes with those of the Lifting Literacy Plan, 26TEN can contribute to a uniﬁed system of monitoring and evaluation that spans all literacy efforts in Tasmania. This collaboration would not only streamline the evaluation process but also ensure that the data collected is comprehensive, reliable, and comparable across different programs and initiatives.

#### Cultural Dimensions of Literacy

Finally, the inclusion of cultural dimensions in the Lifting Literacy Plan reﬂects a deep understanding that literacy is not a one-size-ﬁts-all endeavour; it is intricately woven into the fabric of cultural identity and expression. Recognising and respecting the diverse backgrounds of learners is crucial for creating an inclusive and supportive environment where all individuals feel seen and valued. This is particularly important in the context of Tasmania, where the rich tapestry of cultural diversity enriches the community and requires a nuanced approach to literacy education.

Incorporating cultural dimensions into all future literacy initiatives ensures that the materials, programs, and resources resonate with the learners' experiences and worldviews. This not only makes the content more relatable and engaging but also acknowledges the importance of cultural literacy—the ability to understand and appreciate one's own and others' cultures—as a vital component of overall literacy. For 26TEN, ensuring that all adult literacy initiatives, programs, and resources are culturally appropriate, inclusive, and respectful of diverse backgrounds is not just a matter of best practice; it is a fundamental principle of effective literacy education. Further consultation, co-design and co-creation with communities from diverse cultural backgrounds will aid in the development of an adult literacy sector that addresses speciﬁc needs and preferences and celebrates cultural and linguistic diversity.

### Considerations for 26TEN – Population Need

#### Gaps in Regional, Rural and Remote Tasmania

As the 26TEN Strategy enters its review phase, it is essential to consider the unique challenges and population needs in Tasmania to ensure that the updated strategy effectively addresses these areas of need. Firstly, the strategy must recognise the diversity and dispersion of Tasmania's population, with signiﬁcant portions living in remote areas. This geographical

dispersion poses challenges in delivering consistent and accessible literacy programs, as evidenced by the misalignment of populations most at risk with where available services and programs are delivered. The new strategy should prioritise reaching these underserved communities by considering expanding services and programs into regional and rural areas. This could involve advocacy for technology infrastructure and online access where there are shortages, delivering online platforms for remote learning and tapping into place-based partnerships with local organisations to co-create community-based literacy hubs.

#### Tackling Socio-Economic Disadvantage

Secondly, the strategy must address the socio-economic disadvantage that is prevalent in Tasmania, as it is closely linked to low literacy levels. With 18.7 per cent of Tasmanian Statistical Local Areas (SA1s) in the bottom decile of the ABS Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage, socio-economic status not only contributes to initial low literacy levels, but low literacy levels perpetuate cycles of socio-economic disadvantage. Targeted initiatives that focus on improving literacy skills among low-income families and individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds will be crucial. This could involve expanding free or subsidized literacy classes, scholarships, and mentorship programs that provide the necessary support to overcome barriers to learning.

#### Supporting Intergenerational Literacy

The correlation between parental education levels and student attendance rates is a critical insight from DECYP. This intergenerational issue underscores the need for initiatives that support families and address the foundational inﬂuences on children's literacy development. 26TEN is well positioned to focus on addressing intergenerational literacy challenges by supporting families and parents as adult learners. Parenting literacy programs that educate and empower parents to foster a love for reading and learning at home can have a lasting impact on children's educational success.

#### Bridging the Digital Divide

Lastly, the new 26TEN strategy should emphasise the importance of digital literacy in the modern world, as the digital divide is evidenced as a signiﬁcant barrier to participation in many aspects of society. This has been a speciﬁc gap identiﬁed consistently throughout the consultation ﬁndings of the Lifting Literacy Plan development. By integrating digital skills training into literacy programs, the strategy can ensure that all Tasmanians have the necessary tools to navigate the digital landscape effectively.

### Considerations for 26TEN – Contemporary Best Practice

There is a genuine opportunity for 26TEN Strategy to be developed in alignment with national and global contemporary best practices by continuing to embed an integrated approach that expands beyond basic literacy to encompass digital literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, and problem-solving, mirroring Finland's multiliterate strategy. This evolution requires adapting support services to meet changing community needs, as demonstrated by some of the longest standing literacy initiatives such as Australia’s Reading Writing Hotline and the UK’s National Literacy Trust.

Addressing the digital divide is also a global priority, necessitating investment in digital literacy initiatives and ensuring access to technology for all learners, especially in remote areas.

Community-based learning is crucial for tailored literacy initiatives, including literacy mediation, that address the complexity of needs for employed individuals and those in remote areas. Government policy support and cross-sector collaboration are essential for enhancing program delivery and resources. Equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion must be embedded in the strategy to ensure that all learners, regardless of background, can access and beneﬁt from literacy programs.

Exploring the use of assistive technology and AI offers personalised learning experiences and presents an opportunity to introduce new levels of efficiency and effectiveness in data analytics and reporting, but the increase in AI integration in adult education presents challenges in ﬁnding and evaluating appropriate tools. By addressing these opportunities and challenges, the 26TEN Strategy can align with contemporary best practices, ensuring its continued success in improving adult literacy and numeracy in Tasmania.

Section Three:

Where to next for 26TEN

This section provides a range of guiding questions to enable stakeholders to consider and inform the development of a new 26TEN strategy. The questions have been designed to enable direct use by 26TEN in its consultations.

## A New 26TEN Strategy – Guiding Questions

1. What could be achieved next? What else needs to be included, and how prescriptive should the new strategy be about its scope?
   1. How can the strategy ensure that its programs are inclusive and sensitive to the needs of speciﬁc learner groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities?
   2. In what ways can the strategy adapt to the changing socio-economic landscape and effectively support individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds?
   3. In what ways can the use of technology and AI be explored to personalise learning and improve the effectiveness of literacy programs within the 26TEN Strategy? What are the perspectives of Tasmanian stakeholders on the potential of AI-driven learning platforms?
   4. How can the strategy support intergenerational literacy, involving families and communities in the learning process?
   5. Will the strategy be broader than adult literacy or should it contain more speciﬁc facets of adult literacy such as: family literacy, digital literacy, school leavers top up literacy, civil literacy and ﬁnancial literacy?
   6. What are the biggest challenges and opportunities associated with the digital divide and how can technology be leveraged to bridge this gap?
2. What needs to stay the same? What needs to change?
   1. Is the vision still relevant and should the vision stay the same? *“all* *Tasmanians* *have* *the* *literacy* *and* *numeracy* *skills* *they* *need* *for* *work* *and* *life”*
   2. Should any of the existing goals remain ongoing in the new strategy?
      1. Everyone knows about adult literacy and numeracy
      2. Everyone is supported to improve their skills and to help others
      3. Everyone communicates clearly
   3. Should the new strategy’s deﬁnition of literacy be expanded or maintain a focus on foundational skills?
   4. Should the statistics and stories approach to tracking progress remain in place and in the same format? What would an alternative but effective approach look like?
   5. How can 26TEN track progress against OECD Level literacy and numeracy indicators without sufficient or regular disaggregated Tasmanian OECD PIAAC assessment data?
   6. How frequently should the 26TEN strategy be formally reviewed and reported on, including milestone progress tracking, general public reporting, good news stories, point in time vs iterative evaluation and socio-economic impact assessments
   7. What is the role/value of 26Ten as a collective impact entity over and above the work undertaken by its member organisations?
   8. Should 26Ten be responsible for program delivery? What is 26Tens’s remit?
   9. What is the relationship between 26Ten and Libraries Tasmania? Does anything need to change on this front?
3. Are there other people or organisations who should be involved?
   1. Community place-based backbone organisations (such as local councils or Neighbourhood Houses)
   2. Community representative peak bodies (such as Multicultural Council of Tasmania or Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre)
   3. New/emerging industries or industries that have not previously been included in adult literacy initiatives and programs including consideration of new or changing jobs (such as renewable energy, technology, disability, aged care, cultural and arts, environmental and conservation sectors)

## Considerations of the Lifting Literacy Plan

1. Role and Scope
   1. What is the role and scope of the Lifting Literacy Plan in comparison to the role and scope of 26TEN?
   2. How can these two strategies / frameworks clearly deﬁne shared and separate responsibilities?
   3. To what extent does the fact that the government has a Lifting Literacy strategy as a priority mean that 26Ten’s advocacy work has largely been achieved already and is it a focus going forward?
2. Governance, funding and engagement
   1. How can 26TEN collaborate with other stakeholders, such as government agencies, community organisations, and educational institutions, to maximise the impact of its literacy initiatives?
   2. How will consultation and engagement duplication be avoided?
   3. What is an appropriate mechanism for shared governance and information sharing between government and 26TEN?
   4. What is the optimum ongoing funding arrangements for 26TEN with respect to the government’s investment in adult literacy?
3. Data and Evaluation
   1. How can 26TEN contribute to the development and implementation of a state- wide repository for collecting and reporting data on adult literacy progress and emerging / evolving population needs?
   2. What steps can 26TEN take to align its reporting and evaluation framework with the outcomes measurement framework established by the Lifting Literacy Outcomes Monitoring Group?

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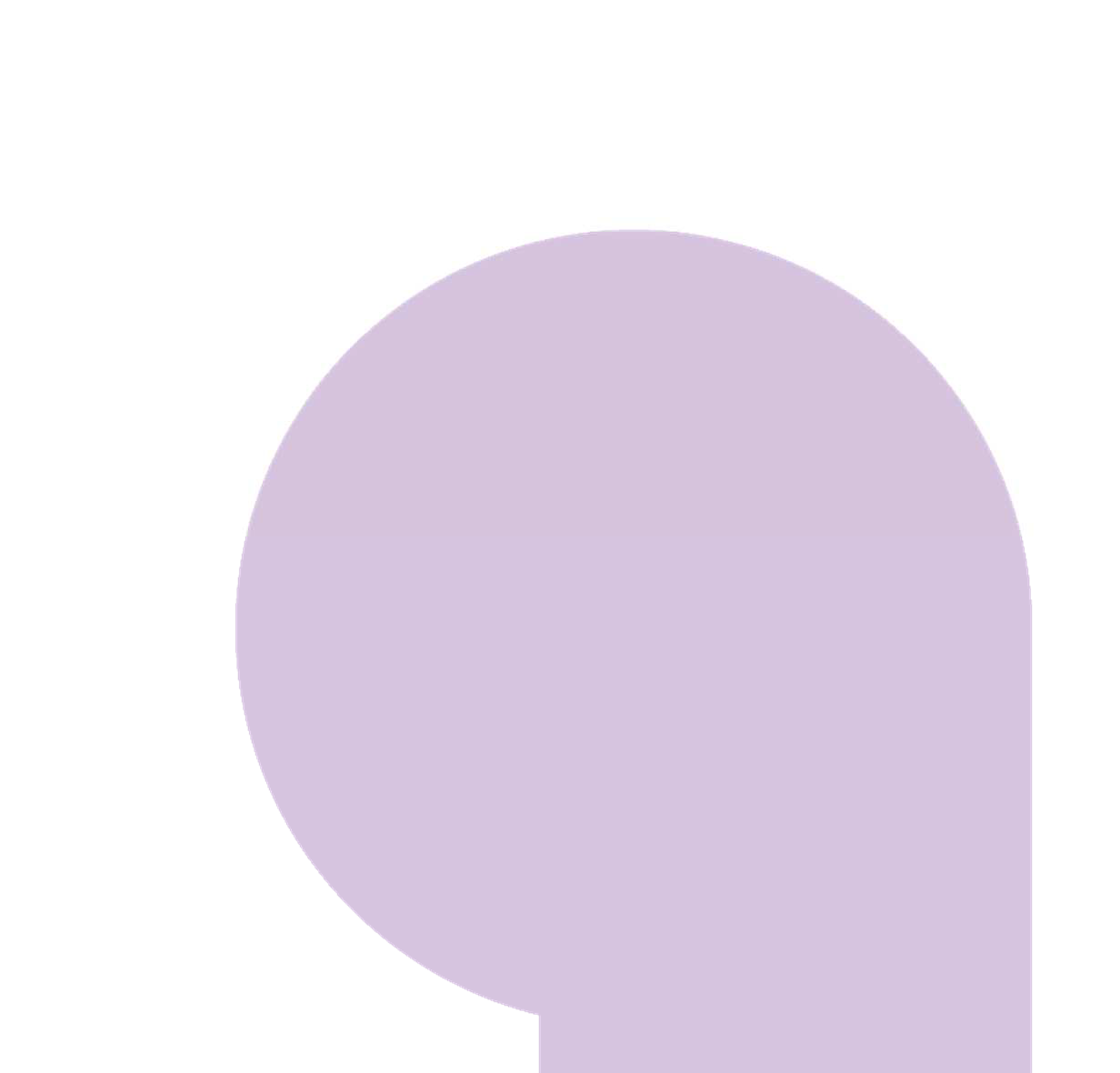
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