



LOOKING BACK & GOING FORWARD

Reflections on the 26Ten Strategy 2016-2025

Considerations for an Adult Literacy Strategy 2026-2035



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2025, I was commissioned by 26Ten to undertake a project to identify themes and make recommendations to inform development of the next adult literacy strategy. The project has involved consultation, desktop research, analysis, and development of this Report.

My Report is presented in three parts. Part 1 distils key themes from the consultations, telling the stories of people who have professional and lived experience of the current 2016-2025 strategy. Themes were identified against key consultation questions and from analysis looking across the consultations.

Part 2 analyses the themes with key findings from the desktop research to identify strategic considerations for development of the next strategy.

Part 3 provides an Inter-Related Framework for Action, comprising three Strategic Focus Areas: Access, Application, and Accountability.

The consultation comprised 20 stakeholder interviews, 31 online survey responses (18 individuals and 13 organisations), 14 written submissions, three focus group sessions totaling nine learners attending Libraries Tasmania Adult Literary Service (ALS) in three locations, and feedback from a conversation class.

Part 1: Themes

A number of aspects of the Strategy were identified as effective.

- The value of the 26Ten Communities Program and the delivery of place-based literacy services in communities was the strongest theme to emerge although there were some reservations about the limitations of the current model. The program is seen as a vital access point for people wanting help with literacy; respondents wanted funding to continue to the current communities in the Program, and for it to be expanded to other communities.
- Literacy services delivered through workplace grants were well received and retention of the program was supported.
- Practitioners, including community coordinators, volunteer tutors and literacy support officers, were highly regarded by individuals who sought their help, or people who have worked with or observed those who have done so. They were recognised for their professionalism and skill.
- Plain English communication was valued, particularly when viewed through the prism of workplace safety, quality and compliance. Plain English workshops have enabled improved communication among staff, clients and communities.
- The 26Ten brand received mixed reviews, some found it a powerful platform for adult literacy improvement in Tasmania, while others viewed it as still developing and not entirely clear.

A number of opportunities for improvement were identified:

- Increased, scalable, sustainable place-based delivery
- Greater clarity about the roles and responsibilities of the 26Ten organisation
- Increased funding
- Inclusion of digital literacy in the 26Ten consideration set
- Flexibility and adaptability in when and where literacy services are delivered
- Research, and improved data collection and reporting
- Increased recruitment and training of volunteers
- Reframing communication to normalise literacy and learning and harmonising communication across stakeholders.

Key elements of a new strategy that would demonstrate success included improved access, demonstrable improvement in individual and social outcomes, and increased collaboration.

Respondents identified two key areas of interest for the future – a more strategic approach to strategy development and delivery, and a scalable, sustainable communities model. A range of other considerations were canvassed including digital inclusion, retention of plain English and literacy awareness workshops and workplace grants, consideration of technology including AI, an individualised structured approach to delivery and targeted, and culturally responsive learning for different demographics.

The themes that emerged from further analysis of the consultations included:

- What is literacy?
- Alignment with Lifting Literacy
- Role for 26Ten
- 26Ten Coalition
- Role of Libraries Tasmania/Adult Literacy Service
- Other Insights from the Focus Groups

Part 2: Findings and Recommendations

Part 2 suggests a reframing of how adult literacy is approached, evoking the *power* of literacy and consideration of the conditions, organisational arrangements, and partnerships needed for the next strategy. A strategy development process and change model, are provided.

The specific considerations in Part 2 are:

- From a Culture of Shame to a Culture of Reward
- Creating the Conditions – Lifting Literacy as a Springboard for Action
- Adult Literacy Strategy 3.0
- Strategic Partners
- Strategy Development Process

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Explore and agree the framing of the adult literacy conversation in Tasmania and the lens through which adult literacy is seen and communicated as part of strategy development.

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Recommendation 2: Using Lifting Literacy as a springboard, the next adult literacy strategy considers the foundations and conditions needed for relational, transformational learning in non-institutional settings that take greater account of the 'demand side' of adult literacy improvement.

Recommendation 3: Convene a facilitated workshop process with a cross section of key stakeholders (community, government, business, tertiary educators) to develop a Vision, Purpose and Program Logic to provide clarity about 26Ten, the fundamentals for a shared agenda, and a scaffold for strategy development.

Recommendation 4: Undertake a brand development process, potentially with Brand Tasmania, to clarify and advance 26Ten brand relevance and attraction.

Recommendation 5: Consider the leadership role and positioning of the 26Ten Team within government once the Program Logic and adult literacy strategy are developed.

Recommendation 6: Develop fit-for-purpose governance arrangements and implement to achieve effective oversight of the adult literacy strategy.

Recommendation 7: Build on the Organisational Mapping undertaken by the Literacy Advisory Panel and include consideration of Members, Supporters and businesses supporting 26Ten, to create a landscape analysis of the level and type of engagement existing or needed, identify key strategic partners, and effectively deliver a strategy based on collective action.

Recommendation 8: Convene a "coalition for change", including Government, community, business and tertiary educators to lead strategy development and inform implementation.

Part 3: An Inter-Related Framework for Action

The Inter-Related Framework for Action is one way to organise the strategy needed to achieve change in adult literacy. It is not a recommendation, but a starting point for the strategy conversation that captures and applies the learnings from researching this Report. It suggests concrete and practical strategies for achieving change.

The key elements of the framework are:

1. 26Ten is the standard bearer (Brand), enabler, connector, and relationship facilitator of collective action in the next strategy.
2. There are three inter-related Strategic Focus Areas: A1. Access, A2. Application, and A3. Accountability. Strong, measurable Goal Statements will need to be developed for each of these Focus Areas.
3. Key Strategies inform the achievement of each Goal.