

Note: The sections in the Paper which are headed “What this tells us” will be the basis for the Panel’s recommendations.

Where questions are broken into life stages (early years, school years and adult years), you can provide responses to any or all life stages.

Please indicate clearly at the beginning of any responses you wish to remain confidential.

Unless indicated as confidential, responses will be treated as public information and published on our website. Please see the [Public Submissions Policy](#) for further information.

Name: Peter Brake

Organisation: Libraries Tasmania

Question One: Are there any key themes we have not identified to improve literacy across:

The Early Years (0-4 years-old)

The School Years (5-17 years-old)

The Adult Years (18+ years-old)

There is only an allusion to the potential use and benefits of remote literacy tutoring to assist clients who cannot attend face-to-face sessions during business hours. People who are employed full-time, or who live remotely, could access support via a variety of methods. There are associated challenges in respect to equipment, internet access, data costs etc. which should also be identified and resolved – the benefits would certainly outweigh any costs involved. (26TEN calculated that every \$1 spent on adult literacy has a \$5.20 return...not to mention the personal, intrinsic value to the client).

--

Question Two: What are the three main things we should prioritise doing in:
--

The Early Years (0-4 years-old)
--

The School Years (5-17 years-old)
--

The Adult Years (18+ years-old) <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Awareness raising2) Consistent training of all involved in literacy/numeracy support, which is supported in an on-going way to ensure best-practice is maintained3) Recruitment of volunteers <p>All of these require an appropriate level of Funding!</p>
--

Question Three: Are there any data sets not considered in this paper that should be used to monitor literacy achievement in:

The Early Years (0-4 years-old)
--

The School Years (5-17 years-old)

The Adult Years (18+ years-old)

There seems to be little in the way of longitudinal and qualitative data – how were people’s lives changed? What did their literacy support enable them to achieve?

Question Four: If you are a provider of a service, what kinds of guidance would you hope to see in the Community-wide Framework?

It was good to see the inclusion of Assistive Technology. We have seen how effective it is in our literacy program for assisting clients with acute, immediate literacy issues, in some cases saving their jobs. We are currently extending this program through outreach into the community through 26TEN. I would like to see an even greater expansion of this, state-wide, to enable more people to become functional in the community, being able to access information and communicate more effectively.

Question Five: Are there any other comments you would like to make?

“Any adult wanting to improve their literacy skills should have access to an adult literacy trainer who provides literacy education that is evidence-based, learner focused, purposeful, authentic, and considerate of the barriers adults face.” P.38

While a noble goal, this does not take into consideration people who have complex and compound disabilities which are beyond the scope and training of volunteer tutors, or literacy coordinators, to assist. There needs to be a referral framework to specialists to accommodate such individuals. Volunteers are volunteers and experience has shown they will exit the program if given clients that are beyond their capability to teach, or clients whose literacy level is basically unmovable. We are not disability support workers – “An accessible diagnostic service for learning disabilities in adults would identify the cause of individual challenges with literacy and subsequently inform literacy support.” P.38

Assistive Technology p.41

Some examples: the main features to support clients are Speech-to-Text (writing with the voice), and Text-to-Speech (reading with the ears), features which are in-built in devices and only need activation. It would be good to see these spelled out in the list. One of the main issues with AT is awareness-raising, people generally do not know that they are carrying in their pocket a tool which can help them overcome many of their literacy barriers in day-to-day life. Key theme 3 on p. 39 would be helpful in this respect.

“recognition that English as an Additional Language or Dialect learners require the support of qualified Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) educators”, p.37. Again, while a noble aim, experience has shown that volunteer tutors with little formal training (but appropriate literacy coordinator support), can assist migrants significantly with their functional oral communication, helping them to participate more effectively in daily life in the community.