

20 March 2023

Literacy Advisory Panel's Community Consultation  
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Dear Literacy Advisory Panel

***Final Consultation Report for the Development of Tasmania's Community-wide Framework***

TasCOSS welcomes this opportunity to provide further feedback on the development of a Community-wide Framework.

In our submission to *Paper One: Setting the Scene*, TasCOSS made numerous recommendations relating to the social determinants of literacy, public education, lifelong learning and digital inclusion. It is noted that many of the issues TasCOSS raised have been captured in some form through the "key themes" and "what this tell us" sections in the *Final Consultation Report for the Development of Tasmania's Community-wide Framework* (Final Report).

The following further comments are provided in response to the consultation questions in the Final Report.

*Key themes not identified to improve literacy.*

***Food Literacy***

A number of submissions to Paper One raised the issue of food literacy as a key pillar of a literacy framework. Food literacy is not only important for understanding how to plan, manage, access, prepare and eat nutritious food, it is also important for its relationship to a person's body functioning at its best and enabling student learning to their best capacity.

Research shows that health and education are strongly connected. Children who are healthier achieve better educational outcomes, demonstrating that developing and delivering programs aimed at food literacy can benefit literacy more broadly. The Panel is encouraged to recognise this important link between nutrition and learning and include actions addressing food literacy in the final framework.

***Financial Literacy***

TasCOSS considers financial literacy should also be included as a key pillar of a literacy framework. Financial literacy is important for economic wellbeing through the effective use of various money and financial skills, including personal financial management, budgeting and investing. It is also important for understanding, identifying and preventing financial abuse in family and domestic relationships.

The Panel is encouraged to consider including actions promoting financial literacy in the final framework.

***Place-based and Community-led***

The Panel may consider adding a fifth principle or expanding the “placing the learner at the centre” principle, to incorporate place-based/community-led approaches. Place-based approaches are collaborative, long-term approaches delivered in a defined geographic location. They are often used to respond to complex, interrelated or challenging issues—such as to address social issues impacting those experiencing, or at risk of, disadvantage. There are communities in Tasmania where individuals are feeling isolated, powerless and disregarded and are experiencing complex, multi-layered and entrenched disadvantage which is often intergenerational.

Person-centred, place-based approaches in communities, including in the delivery of different forms of literacy education, have the potential to deliver not just improved literacy, but by strengthening the determinants of literacy they can also contribute to better health and wellbeing outcomes for individuals, families and the community.

***Framework main priorities***

TasCOSS welcomes the finding in the Final Report that wellbeing should be a focus for all schools. This reflects the strong associations between literacy and wellbeing. The final framework’s focus on wellbeing should complement the work being advanced through the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy and the Tasmanian Government progressing its own wellbeing framework.

***Family Literacy***

Family literacy is crucial to raising literacy levels in Tasmania. Holistic support provided through family literacy is a key to literacy development in early learning, school years and adult learning.

According to 26TEN, one-in-two adult Tasmanians do not have the literacy skills they need to fully engage with family, community and work, and even more have low numeracy. Many of these are parents or carers—children’s most important educators in their early years.

Parents with low literacy often lack the confidence to help their children, lack the skills to read with their children and to engage with their education during schooling years. As a consequence, children miss out on important foundations for literacy without this early support. A key component of achieving better literacy outcomes in the early years must be to ensure there is a focus on also improving the literacy of parents and carers.

***Social Determinants of Literacy***

The Final Report makes reference to the association between disadvantage and lower learning outcomes, as well as the higher proportion of Tasmanian SA1s in the bottom decile of the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage compared to the rest of Australia. This was also supported by DECYP information that showed the correlation between parents’ highest level of education and attendance rates of students.

The Final Report conceptualised the Ecological Model of Literacy with various elements including the “Interpersonal” sphere, which identified health, trauma, disadvantage and poverty as having an impact on learning. In TasCOSS’ submission, we expanded these interpersonal issues to include inadequate or insecure housing, lack of access to transport and inadequate nutrition, referring to them as the social determinants of literacy.

As these interpersonal factors, or social determinants of literacy, impact on literacy outcomes the final framework should consider how various services, programs and actions can be mobilised to support improved literacy across the lifecycle.

*Other data sets to monitor literacy achievement.*

The Final Report identifies a need to investigate new indicators to measure adult literacy, including digital literacy skills. A valuable data source that exists for measuring and comparing elements of digital inclusion, including digital skills or ability, is the [Australian Digital Inclusion Index \(ADII\)](#), that may be used as a data set to monitor and compare digital literacy achievement.

Yours faithfully



**Dr Charlie Burton**  
**Acting Chief Executive Officer**