



Lifting literacy
Lifting Tasmania

Final Report to Government: Lifting Literacy

May 2023

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Acknowledgement of Country

In recognition of the deep history and culture of Tasmania, the Literacy Advisory Panel acknowledges and pays respect to all Tasmanian Aboriginal people, the past and present custodians of this island. We further acknowledge and pay respect to Tasmanian Aboriginal Elders, past and present. We respect and celebrate Tasmanian Aboriginal language and recognise its significance to Aboriginal identity, connections to Country, its vital role in learning and education and the passing on of unique cultural experiences and knowledge over many thousands of years.

Executive summary

In March 2021, the Tasmanian Government announced the establishment of the Literacy Advisory Panel (The Panel) to oversee the development of a Community-wide Framework to achieve a Literate Tasmania.

The Panel was appointed in August 2021. The Government provided the Panel with Terms of Reference which can be viewed at: https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/literacy/literacy_advisory_panel_tor.

The Panel has undertaken a significant amount of work over the last 18 months to fulfil its Terms of Reference. The Panel has met 16 times since September 2021. 14 meetings were held online (3 hours per meeting) and 2 in-person workshops in Hobart were held in 2023. Through these meetings the Panel has been informed by a range of sources including expertise of Panel members, community and organisational leaders, presentations to the Panel, academic articles, and research, three rounds of community consultation, and a variety of information gathered that specifically responds to the Terms of Reference.

The Panel has made it a priority to consult with Tasmanians about how to lift literacy in Tasmania. The Panel sought input, through meetings and community consultation processes, to inform the development of the recommendations to the Premier.

In addition to the recommendations required by the Terms of Reference across the Early Years, School Years, Adult Years and Whole of Community, the Panel has also included other important areas to consider in achieving the aspirational goal of 100 per cent functional literacy. These include:

Ecological Model

During its considerations, the Panel recognised and discussed the importance of understanding the contextual environment within which learning (including developing literacy) occurs. These contextual factors, although outside the specific terms of reference, need to be recognised to ensure learners have the greatest opportunity to thrive. Learning does not happen in isolation – the wellbeing needs of individuals can act as barriers or enablers to engaging in learning.

Principles for the Framework

The Panel developed the following overarching principles to guide development of the Community-wide Framework and its recommendations. The Panel developed these principles to communicate the fundamental values and beliefs to guide the Framework and decision making. It is anticipated that any approach to improving literacy in Tasmania will be underpinned by these core principles.

Equity:

- All Tasmanians have opportunities to access the support they need to develop literacy skills.

Consistency:

- There is evidence-based structured (systematic and explicit) literacy teaching from early years to adulthood.

Individual at the centre:

- Educators put their learners at the centre by understanding and responding to the ecological contexts of those they teach.

Underpinned by evidence-based research:

- Approaches to teaching literacy are underpinned by the large body of cognitive research on how our brain learns to read and write.

Recommendations

In considering the large number of suggested recommendations from community consultation, the Panel considered it important to prioritise the recommendations it considers will make the most difference to lifting literacy in Tasmania.

The Panel recommends the following suite of actions for immediate implementation, within three years, and the suite of additional suggested recommendations are included in Appendix 1 for future implementation.

Valuing Literacy

Principle: A community-wide approach to literacy requires collaboration of many stakeholders, including families, educators, local organisations, and government to promote literacy development and improve literacy outcomes for all members of the community.

1. Develop a single portal which brings together relevant evidence-based, information and advice about literacy, including literacy resources and supports, tools and other supports. It should also include resources for community hubs and public outdoor spaces.
2. Initiate a community-wide campaign to lift literacy in Tasmania. This should build on existing work and aim to lift literacy aspirations, address stigma, and encourage all Tasmanians, no matter their age, to further develop their literacy knowledge, understanding, and skills.

Families

Principle: Family involvement is critical in supporting a child's age-appropriate language and literacy development. By creating a supportive environment at home that promotes reading, writing, speaking, and listening, families can support children to develop important literacy skills, and foster a love of learning.

3. Support the B4 Coalition to continue to develop and raise awareness of resources to support families to fulfill their foundational and ongoing influence on their child's language and literacy development. This includes the importance of early oral language development, and positive social and emotional wellbeing.

Early Years

Principles:

- **The first 1,000 days are critical in setting a foundation for language and literacy learning.**
 - **Early intervention provides families with resources, supports and information to enhance their child's communication skills.**
 - **All Tasmanian children at risk of not meeting developmental milestones, regardless of geographical location, should have timely referral and access to intensive support or resources where needed.**
4. Develop a consistent state-wide phonological awareness screening program/process to be administered to all children any time before the end of term one in Kindergarten to identify children who would benefit from additional language and literacy support and ensure priority access to support for those children.
 5. Increase the frequency of child health assessments by adding an 18-month child health assessment by CHaPS for all children, update other checks to 2.5 and 3.5 years and increase the frequency of child health assessments offered to vulnerable families to support continued engagement.

Minimum Schooling Guarantee

Principle: Learning to read is recognised and positioned as foundational to all other literacy learning.

6. That the Government adopt the following minimum guarantee for literacy and monitor systems to ensure the approach is being followed:
 - A) All education systems will:
 - provide a systemic approach to the teaching of literacy, including reading and writing which meets the requirements of the Early Years Learning Framework, the Australian Curriculum, and the Australian Core Skills Framework. The systemic approach should be structured (systematic and explicit), include scopes and sequences quality assured by AERO and should emphasise the reciprocity of reading and writing. For secondary and senior secondary settings there needs to be increasing emphasis on disciplinary literacy and developing literacy skills in all subject areas,
 - set expectations with accountabilities for Principals/Leaders to lead whole school implementation of the systemic requirements and report progress, and
 - discontinue all current policies, programs and practices which do not align with the five elements of the minimum guarantee.
 - B) When teaching reading in Tier 1 educators will, at a minimum, use practices aligned to the science of reading evidence base and align instruction to the Australian Curriculum by including the Big Six: Oral Language, Vocabulary, Phonological Awareness, Letter sound knowledge (phonics), Comprehension, and Fluency, in accordance with the systemic and whole school requirements. This includes for those students in secondary and senior secondary schools who are still developing foundational literacy skills and/or require more time on the content/strategies to acquire the necessary skill.

- C) All schools will be required to implement the National Year 1 Phonics Check during Year 1, in Term 3, with the results from the Check being utilised to target future school-based intervention. This implementation will include provision of evidence-based professional development in systematic phonics instruction, administering the Check, data collection and analysis of the Check and developing an intervention plan for students not meeting expected progress.
- D) All students are taught the same concepts through a structured approach to teaching literacy utilising a multi-tiered system of support that recognises that some will require more time on the content/strategies to acquire the necessary skill. Tier 1 instruction should be aligned to the science of reading evidence base and supported by accredited professional development.
- E) Decisions about the level of support required for students who are not meeting expected progress in literacy will be based on robust curriculum-based assessment data. Learners in need of additional support beyond Tier 1 instruction will receive Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, with the goal to return the student to Tier 1 instruction as soon as possible. Regular assessments and progress monitoring using evidence-based practices should be used to determine which students receive Tier 2 and 3 interventions. Systems will develop a list of recommended evidence-based interventions based on the criteria outlined by the Dyslexia-SPELD Foundation and other sources that have been adopted at a system level.

This minimum guarantee is the core expectation and recognises that literacy instruction should include additional opportunities for developing rich literacy environments.¹

Workforce

Principle: Teaching aligns with contemporary peer-reviewed evidence, including cognitive research, and is explicit and systematic.

- 7. Work with tertiary education providers in Tasmania to ensure graduates are skilled to deliver quality structured literacy instruction that is structured (systematic and explicit) and evidence-based.
- 8. The Tasmanian Education System should ensure that every educator engages in focused professional development in literacy every year appropriate for their teaching role and that providers are drawn from a quality assured list of service providers who deliver professional development aligned to the science of reading evidence base and is periodically reviewed at a system level. First year teachers should receive initial targeted professional development aligned to the Tasmanian minimum guarantee to ensure preparation to teach literacy. This would be done preferably before the start of the school year but should be no later than the end of their fifth week after commencing at the school.
- 9. Facilitate and incentivise the adult and early childhood education and care (ECEC) literacy workforce (including volunteers) to participate in professional development aligned to the science of reading evidence base, and a community of practice.
- 10. Develop a Tasmanian Literacy Workforce Attraction and Retention Strategy that is supported by research to understand unmet need and workforce gaps, with a view to increasing access to Allied Health Professionals across the continuum of literacy learning.

¹ See for example: The Literacy Hub (n.d). <https://www.literacyhub.edu.au/>

Targeted support

Principle: In keeping with the individual at the centre, all learners irrespective of background, ethnicity, language spoken at home and other social factors are supported.

11. Ensure that students whose learning plans identify a need for literacy development have access to assessments for language and learning difficulties. Students identified as needing referrals to health or allied health professionals for literacy support should receive priority access.
12. Provide guidelines for education providers on how to support CALD learners across all ages and provide resources for individuals and families. These resources should include accurate and translated information appropriate to life events, for literacy supports they or their family may require.
13. Government engages with and is led by Tasmanian Aboriginal people and Aboriginal service providers to develop a culturally appropriate Literacy Strategy for Tasmanian Aboriginal people that is aligned to and is consistent with relevant Closing the Gap targets.

Libraries

Principle: Position libraries as pivotal community centres for supporting literacy development for Tasmanians of all ages

14. Libraries Tasmania should continue their work in providing families of young children not yet at school, with the services to support early language and literacy development including providing play-based learning opportunities.
15. Initiate in-service and short courses in evidence-based professional development in literacy, aligned to the minimum requirements for systems for upskilling the library workforce across the state.
16. Develop and establish partnerships between Libraries Tasmania and all schools without qualified librarians or with limited collections to provide professional development, resources and just-in-time support.
17. Investigate the potential benefit of introducing mobile library support for schools that cannot support a quality collection or communities that struggle to maintain adequate library collection due to location, funding, or size.

Adult Learners

Principle: Ensure adult learners have access to adult literacy trainers who provide literacy education that is evidence-based, learner focused, purposeful, authentic, and considerate of the barriers that adults face to learning.

18. The Tasmanian Government should seek advice on the Federal Government's intentions to progress the recommendations from the Inquiry Into Adult Literacy and in particular recommendation 13 that recommends that the Australian Government work with the state and territory governments to develop and implement a national strategy to renew the adult language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy education workforce.

Measures and Targets

Principle: Develop clear and measurable literacy targets that enable reporting of progress against Lifting Literacy: The Community-wide Framework.

19. By 2026, all schools must demonstrate that they are implementing the elements of evidence-based literacy instruction as described in the Minimum Schooling Guarantee recommended by the Panel. Progress towards this goal should be monitored independently and reported on publicly.
20. Establish a state-wide repository for collecting, and reporting upon, data that will measure progress against targets and assist in evaluation of initiatives and inform resourcing decisions. The following assessments and collections will be required in all school systems in Tasmania without exception and include:
 - AEDC
 - Year 1 Phonics Check
 - NAPLAN
 - TCE
 - Attendance
21. Consider the state-wide application and reporting of other accredited assessment and screening tools (including GAPS, KDC and PAT).
22. 26TEN Coalition should be commissioned to lead and advise on adult literacy data collections and provide recommendations on the potential development of a Tasmanian Adult Literacy Survey in alignment with the Australian Government's National Study on Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Skills to support measurement and reporting against Lifting Literacy: The Community-wide Framework.
23. From the data sets available the Panel recommends the measures and targets on page 34 - 35 be considered in evaluating and monitoring Tasmanian literacy rates.



Co-chairs foreword

This report is underpinned by an aspirational and inclusive vision: to lift literacy so that, no matter their age, background, post code, or circumstances, all Tasmanians can grasp any or all the opportunities to develop or improve their literacy skills.

Being literate is fundamental to how we navigate our world. It can change lives.

Improving literacy outcomes for Tasmanians is a whole-of-community issue that goes beyond the school gate. It must be a whole-of-government and community-wide effort. Being literate has a direct impact on individuals' success in life, health and wellbeing as well as being crucial to economic growth and productivity.

The purpose of this report is to provide the Premier with recommendations and a Community-wide Framework (the Framework) that responds to the Panel's Terms of Reference. The Panel has been working since August 2021 on the development of recommendations and a Framework that will support all Tasmanians. Additionally, many valuable recommendations were proposed through community consultation. The Panel comprehensively considered all recommendations and realised the importance of an initial focus on those recommendations which are most important to lifting literacy across Tasmania. This report therefore recommends a set of priority actions for implementation. Additional suggested recommendations are provided in Appendix 1 for consideration in future years.

There is substantial work underway to improve literacy in Tasmania in early learning, schools, and adult learning environments. There are numerous organisations, advocacy groups, strategies and policies that operate in Tasmania across all stages of life.

In meeting its Terms of Reference, the Panel has made a distinction between the provision of a Community-wide Framework and specific recommendations to government.

The set of recommendations provided to government are detailed and specific actions the Panel's research has shown are needed to assist in meeting an aspirational goal of 100 per cent functional literacy. In contrast the Community-wide Framework does not of itself contain recommendations. It provides core concepts to improve literacy to which any individual or organisation interested in improving literacy can align their work to e.g. incorporating evaluation as part of any literacy initiative or program.

The Panel has developed a broad Framework that can last over a period of years (nominally ten years). The intent is that anyone in any education system or sector (primary, secondary, tertiary, public and independent schools), community organisations, and individuals can align their work to the Framework. This will enable the community to be moving in the same direction toward achieving a literate Tasmania.

The discussions on how to improve literacy are not unique to Tasmania. They are occurring nationally and internationally and are characterised by deep passion on preferred approaches. They are informed by neuroscience of how the brain learns to read and the expert knowledge of our teachers on what works in the varied complexity of classroom settings. Advocacy on approaches is so strongly held that it has been referred to as the reading wars.²

2 Cambourne, B. (2021). *A Brief History of 'The Reading Wars'*. <https://www.aare.edu.au/blog/?p=9488PrimarypaletteSecondarypalette>



This divergence was apparent through our consultations and in our panel discussions.

We thank the Panel members for their time, experience, expertise, and advice. We acknowledge there was not consensus among panel members for all matters discussed, but there is however a deep and resounding commitment and desire for doing what is best for all Tasmanians. We thank the Panel members for their time, experience, expertise, and advice.

Thank you

The Panel appreciates the input of all who participated in the consultation processes to date. Participants have willingly provided their time, thoughts, experiences, and expertise to assist us in lifting literacy. This input has been invaluable. The Panel especially thanks the people with lived experience who have shared their stories. We appreciate your insights and bravery to share your experiences.

We, as co-chairs, also give our significant appreciation to all the Literacy Advisory Panel members. You have provided your time free of charge and have provided us with insights based on your significant research, knowledge, and rich experience.

We'd also like to thank our secretariat in the Department of Premier and Cabinet for supporting us in our work: Sue Kennedy, Pip Shirley, Chelsea Bell, Brittany Gittus, Helen Montgomery, Vanessa Morris, and Martin Gibson.

Signed

Natalie Brown

Jenny Gale

Introduction – background

In March 2021, the Tasmanian Government announced the establishment of the Literacy Advisory Panel to oversee the development of a Community-wide Framework to achieve a Literate Tasmania. The Panel was appointed in August 2021 after a public expressions of interest process. The Panel was tasked to develop a Community-wide Framework to achieve a Literate Tasmania and the aspirational goal of 100 per cent functional literacy.

The Government provided the Literacy Advisory Panel with Terms of Reference which can be viewed at: https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/literacy/literacy_advisory_panel_tor.

In summary, the Terms of Reference require a review of the current literacy policies, approaches and supports in place in Tasmania in the early years, schools and adult learning environments, mapping of existing effort, including the organisations, plans and activities that currently support the establishment of a Literate Tasmania and identification of any gaps. The Panel was also asked to consider the efficacy of existing literacy measures and targets, and make specific and targeted recommendations to inform and build upon existing literacy approaches and supports in the early years, schools, and adult learning environments.

The combined expertise of the Panel members was drawn from the following areas (noting that members brought more than one skill set to the task):

- national and international leading expertise in the science of, and evidence-based approaches to, language and reading,
- skills in literacy acquisition (and barriers to acquisition) in the community from birth to adulthood (including the current educational context with curriculum, assessment, and pedagogical knowledge of literacy development),
- teachers or educational leaders experienced in the change process of implementing an explicit, systematic approach to literacy,
- clinical and allied health professionals, including speech pathologists and/or educational psychologists with experience in neuroscience and cognitive development, language, literacy and specific learning disabilities,
- education specialists with experience in instructional practices which meet the needs of all learners, including classroom structures, routines, and the role of assessment in their instructional decision-making,
- experience with organisational and delivery skills to facilitate major social change, and
- individuals who have a lived experience of literacy challenges.

The expert Panel comprised eight members (including one ex-officio) and was co-chaired by:

- the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Jenny Gale, and
- the Director of the Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment, Professor Natalie Brown.

Panel members included:

- Anne Bayetto
- Jane Bovill
- Kate de Bruin
- Courtney Dunbabin
- Brendan Gill
- Sally Rowlands
- Lucy Whitehead
- Jodee Wilson (ex-officio)

For more information on the Panel and members, visit www.dpac.tas.gov.au/literacy.

This is the Panel's Report to the Premier that responds to its Terms of Reference.

What is literacy?

The Literacy Advisory Panel's definition of literacy combines definitions from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)³ and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).⁴

"Literacy involves listening, reading, viewing, speaking, writing, creating texts, and using language for different purposes in a range of contexts. Literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills needed to access, understand, analyse, and evaluate information, make meaning, express thoughts and emotions, present ideas, opinions and interact with others. It involves a continuum of learning to enable individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society."

When the word 'literacy' is used in this paper, it refers to the full breadth of literacy encompassed in this definition, not just reading and writing.



3 Australia Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. (n.d.). *Literacy (Version 8.4)*. <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/literacy/>

4 UNESCO. (n.d.). *What you need to know about literacy?* <https://www.unesco.org/en/literacy/need-know#:~:text=Literacy%20is%20a%20continuum%20of,well%20as%20job%2Dspecific%20skills>



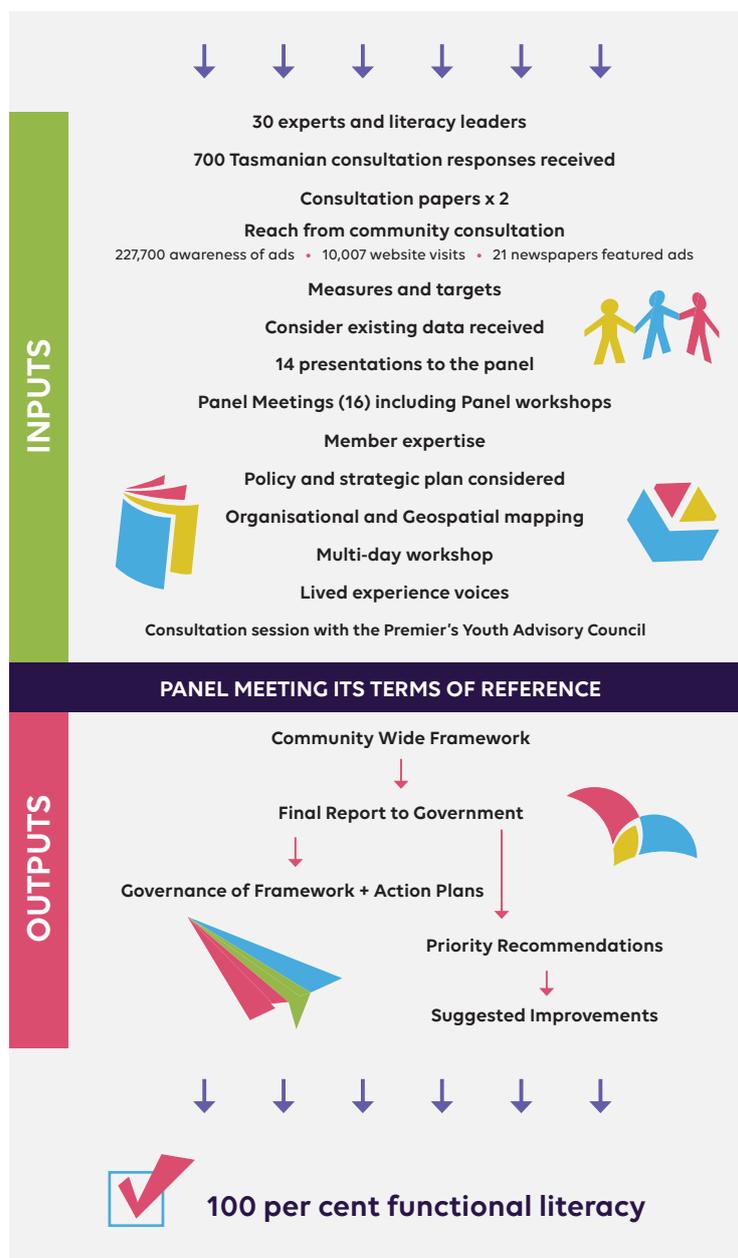
The Panel's approach to fulfilling its Terms of Reference

In developing the Framework, the Panel was tasked to consider some specific areas which formed part of the Panel's considerations. Through its Terms of Reference, it was asked to:

- 1) Review current literacy policies, approaches and supports in place in Tasmania in the early years, schools, and adult learning environments,
- 2) Map existing effort, including the organisations, plans and activities that currently support the establishment of a Literate Tasmania and identify any gaps. These may include evidence-to-practice gaps, and/or program, cohort, or skills-gaps,
- 3) Consider the efficacy of existing literacy measures and targets, and
- 4) Make specific and targeted recommendations to inform and build upon existing literacy approaches and supports in the early years, schools, and adult learning environments.

The Panel has undertaken a significant amount of work over the last 18 months to fulfil its Terms of Reference. The Panel has met 16 times since September 2021. 14 meetings were held online (3 hours per meeting) and 2 in-person workshops in Hobart were held in 2023. Through these meetings the Panel has been informed by a range of sources including expertise of Panel members, community and organisational leaders, presentations to the Panel, academic articles, and research, three rounds of community consultation, and a variety of information gathered that specifically responds to the Terms of Reference. These inputs into the Panel's work are demonstrated through the Figure on the following page.

Our consultation approach



Additionally, the Panel considered a range of literacy approaches and supports in the early years, schools, and adult learning environments. The Panel had access to more than 78 articles (Appendix 1) covering Early Years (21 articles), School Years (43 articles), Adult Learning Environments (12 articles) and Community-wide settings (2 articles). These readings have provided panel members the opportunity to consider a diverse range of perspectives and inform their thinking, discussions, and decisions.

There is currently no comprehensive literature review on literacy approaches that covers the breadth of areas the Panel had to consider. The Panel considered the benefits of conducting an academic review for its work and concluded it limited as it would need to be adapted to the Tasmanian specific context. Instead, the Panel focussed its efforts on being informed by literature and through its other consultation approaches.

Approach to consultation

In fulfilling its Terms of Reference, the Panel has made it a priority to consult with Tasmanians, and all who have suggestions for how to lift literacy in Tasmania. The Panel sought input, through meetings and the community consultation processes, to inform the development of the recommendations to the Premier.

The Panel invited written submissions from 30 experts to inform its early thinking. This advice informed how the Panel should consult with Tasmanians, including hard-to-reach groups that are often not represented in the government consultation processes. The Panel partnered with organisations around the state, including Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania, Early Childhood Australia Tasmania Branch, 26TEN, Libraries Tasmania, TasCOSS and Child and Family Learning Centres (CFLCs). These partners were engaged because of their established relationships with Tasmanians, including those who may have found it difficult to submit a written response to the community consultation process due to literacy challenges.

The Panel's undertook three rounds of community consultation. One broad round of community consultation in response to Paper One: *Setting the Scene* (Appendix 3), and a second targeted consultation round that focused on Tasmanians with lived experience of low literacy. The final round of community consultation was in response to the *Final Consultation Report for the Development of Tasmania's Community-wide Framework* (Appendix 4). The Panel received a collective total of 702 responses. Analysis reports to the consultation rounds can be found in (Appendix 5, 6).

The Panel had 14 presentations at its regular meetings, from invited organisations and individuals to inform its work. These presentations covered topics across the early years, school years, adult years, prison, tertiary education and evidence and data in school systems. A list of presentations to the Panel is attached at Appendix 7.

Review of current literacy policies, approaches and supports

The Panel was asked to review the current literacy policies, approaches and supports in place in Tasmania in the early years, schools, and adult learning environments, including but not limited to consideration of the following policies and initiatives:

- Adult Learning Strategy – Skills for Work and Life 2020 – 2023,
- Tasmania’s Strategy for Adult Literacy and Numeracy 2016 – 2025,
- Literacy Framework and Plan for Action 2019-2022 (including a focus on each of the early years, middle years, and upper secondary cohorts and the achievement of the Government commitment that all young people will meet an expected reading standard that is above the national minimum by no later than 2030), and
- The Health Literacy Action Plan 2019-2024.

To meet this term of reference, the Panel reviewed the listed policies and initiatives and undertook a desktop analysis of further policies, approaches, and supports across Tasmania. This exercise provided a detailed overview on the policies and supports available to Tasmanians in the early years, schools, and adult learning environments. In addition to this, the Panel, through its first consultation paper, asked for community input into what was missing. Respondents to the consultation paper were asked:

1. What is currently working well to improve literacy?
2. Do you know a program or activity that supports literacy development in Tasmania that is not listed in this document?
 - The name of the program/activity
 - Who runs the program?
 - Details of the program
 - Location (where it runs, e.g., name the suburbs, towns, or regions)
 - Eligibility details to access the program
 - Whether the program been evaluated. If so, please provide details and a copy of the evaluation, if available.
3. Considering the organisational map:
 - What do you think the gaps are?
 - What opportunities are there?
 - What supports need to be in place?

This process revealed there was significant effort underway to lift literacy across Tasmania. In addition to the policies, approaches and supports put forward in Paper One, 75 respondents listed a program (48 of which were suggested additions and not used across the system). Of these programs, very few had evaluation that could be reported against. This is outlined in the full consultation report ‘Paper Two: What we heard’ (Appendix 5) which provides an in-depth analysis of the submissions.

The Panel also considered the specific strategies as identified in its Terms of Reference (listed above).

From the qualitative information available, all strategies listed above appeared to show successful outcomes. However, it was not possible to make any other observation without formal evaluation processes incorporated in the strategies/policies from commencement. The Panel acknowledge the important benefit that has been achieved because of these strategies and will recommend evaluation is embedded in all government funded programs and initiatives related to literacy. The Panel recognises the government is developing a culture of evaluation and more formal evaluation processes as part of its ongoing work under the Tasmanian State Service Review.

Through consideration of all the activities (listed in Appendix 8), it was not possible to draw any specific conclusions about the efficacy of policies, approaches and supports for government and non-government services. Given the extensive number of activities and responses, the Panel used this information to undertake a mapping exercise.

Mapping of existing efforts

The Panel was asked to map existing effort, including the organisations, plans and activity that currently support the establishment of a Literate Tasmania and identifies any gaps, including evidence-to-practice gaps, and/or program, cohort, or skills-gaps.

The Panels information for mapping of existing efforts was derived from consultation rounds and a desktop mapping exercise (Appendix 8). The Panel took multiple approaches to mapping to show the organisations, plans and activities already underway to support the establishment of a Literate Tasmania.

Community consultation gave the Panel more information on the breadth of services that couldn't be found through a desktop mapping exercise. By using a range of mapping tools, the Panel was able to identify gaps and opportunities. As identified earlier, it was not possible to analyse evidence-to-practice gaps due to limited evaluation.

Organisational mapping

This mapping revealed 115 distinct activities, organisations or plans across the early years (0-4 years of age), school years (5-17 years of age) and adult learning environments (18 + years of age). Once desktop analysis was complete, the Panel undertook a gap analysis of these efforts to understand the spread of efforts across life stages.

This gap analysis, in the form of an organisational matrix (Appendix 9), revealed that while there is a large amount of work currently being done in Tasmania to support literacy, there is a concentration of efforts in the school years and there could be more supports for adults to improve their literacy. The gap analysis also showed that efforts to lift literacy are often siloed within age ranges or stages of life (e.g., early years, school years). There are few efforts that support a learner throughout their whole life.

Geospatial mapping

Through consultation, the Panel heard that where a person lives has the potential to impact what literacy supports, they can access. To understand this, the Panel undertook a geospatial mapping exercise to visually represent the spread of services throughout Tasmania available in the early years, school years and adult years. This exercise demonstrated there is a concentration of services in major population centres (i.e., Hobart, Launceston, and Devonport) and less services in regional Tasmania across all ages.

- In the early years (0 – 4 years of age) – 407 early years services and places were mapped.
- In the school years (5 – 17 years of age) – 335 school years services and places were mapped.
- In the adult years (18+ years of age) – 934 services, supporters, and places were mapped.

Static maps are available at Appendix 10.

Interpretation of all mapping (organisational and geospatial) is subject to the following notes:

- As a desktop exercise, we may not have been able to identify all services that exist in Tasmania. The Panel apologises if your service has not been included for that reason,
- Locations only include places or services that have a physical address and directly work to lift literacy,
- Data was limited to publicly available data, community consultation responses to Paper One and LISTmap data,
- Mapping does not demonstrate demand for or access to services,
- Allied health and related services which have a critical role in supporting literacy are not geospatially mapped,
- Catchment areas for some services can't be shown,
- State-wide services / operations were unable to be geospatially mapped, and
- Individual service locations (such as local schools or libraries) were not represented separately in organisational mapping/gap analysis.

This mapping confirmed the breadth of services available across the State.

Efficacy of existing measures and targets

The Panel was tasked with considering the efficacy of existing literacy measures and targets. The Panel understands the importance that clear, measurable indicators and targets have on improving literacy levels in Tasmania. This is also well recognised at the National level with Education Ministers agreeing on measuring educational outcomes and strengthening accountability and transparency with strong meaningful measures.⁵ The 2019 Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration recognises the importance of good quality data and information for educators, learners, parents and families, the community, and governments to enable better engagement with children's education.

The Panel recognises that there is no single data set collected in Tasmania that would report a whole of Tasmania view of literacy achievement from early years through to adulthood. The Panel reviewed and assessed the following key sources of data and considered a number of proposed targets that would support the monitoring of literacy rates across the Tasmanian community:

- Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) – Prep,
- (Australian) Year 1 Phonics Check,
- National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) – Years 3, 5, 7 & 9,
- Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) – Prep to Year 10,
- Tasmanian Assessment Standards & Certification (TASC) – TCE everyday adult standards,
- National Agreement on Closing the Gap – socio-economic targets,
- Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) – (noting Australia no longer participates in this survey),
- Report on Government Services (RoGS),
- Closing the Gap,
- Australia's Childhood Education and Care Survey,
- ABS Schools Data, and
- International Assessments – Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) targeting 15-year old's and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) undertaken with a sample group of Year 4 students.

There is a deficiency in the collection of 'whole of community' data to understand Tasmania's progress towards achieving the government's aspirational goal of 100 per cent functional literacy. From this review it was clear that the strongest sources of consistently collected data were in the school years (Kindergarten – Year 12). To fully understand the progress to achieving literacy skills, further work will need to be done collecting reliable data in the Early Years and more urgently the Adult Years. Australia no longer participates in the Survey of Adult Skills, conducted by the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), therefore our most recent adult data is over ten years old.

Work needs to be undertaken to investigate new indicators to measure adult literacy. The Panel noted the commitment in the 2022-23 Commonwealth Budget of \$2.6m for a National Study on Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Skills. Further details are yet to be released, however, once the National Study is undertaken, any data that can be validly and reliably reported at a State level should be used to form the baseline for a Tasmanian Adult literacy measure and target.

⁵ Council of Australian Government, Education Council. (2019). Alice Springs (Mparntwe) education declaration. <https://www.education.gov.au/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration/resources/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration>

Some of the complexities and limitations to the current sources and sets of data are:

- relying on externally collected data sets,
- collecting at varying levels of frequency (ranging from annually to every three years or five years),
- collecting for internal use and not reported publicly,
- program specific data,
- inconsistent scale and sample size of cohorts,
- collection methods varying, and
- most data sets not being centrally collected or analysed.

The setting of aspirational targets that support engagement with the Community-wide Framework needs to recognise that the contextual measures of success must reflect the complex and long-term nature of any efforts to raise literacy.

During the consultations the Panel has heard from individuals who have literacy struggles and how this has impacted their lives. The value of storytelling and how capturing an individual's lived experiences, across all ages in literacy development, can be a valuable way to measure the success of a program or initiative. By capturing the voice/perspectives of individuals and sharing these stories can contribute to improving community resilience, better connectedness and overall improvement in prosperity and happiness and will give a fuller picture of impact of a community-wide approach.

Recommendations to achieve 100 per cent functional literacy

The Panel has been tasked with making specific and targeted recommendations to inform and build upon existing literacy approaches and supports in the early years, school years, and adult learning environments.

The recommendations in this Paper have been shaped and informed by evidence-based research and academic literature, Panel expertise, expert advice and by community consultations (including lived experience).

In addition to the recommendations required by the Terms of Reference across the Early Years, School Years, Adult Years and Whole of Community, the Panel has also included other important areas to consider in achieving aspirational goal of 100 per cent functional literacy. These include:

- Ecological Model, and
- Principles for the Framework.





Ecological Model of Learning

During its considerations, the Panel recognised and discussed the importance of understanding the contextual environment within which learning (including developing literacy) occurs. These contextual factors, although outside the specific Terms of Reference, need to be recognised to ensure learners have the greatest opportunity to thrive. Learning does not happen in isolation – the wellbeing needs of individuals can act as barriers or enablers to engaging in learning.

A recent report by the Productivity Commission on the review of the National School Reform Agreement⁶ revealed that 'major reform is required' and notes the current agreement lacks targeted reforms to improve outcomes for students from poor backgrounds, some geographic locations, Indigenous students and students who do not meet the minimum standards for literacy and numeracy.⁷ The Commission found that many children and young people struggle with poor wellbeing because of experiences inside and outside their schools. Teachers need more support to help students to manage these issues and achieve their potential.⁸ The report recommends that a new outcome on student wellbeing should be added to the NSRA as wellbeing is both a desired outcome of schooling, and a means of improving learning outcomes.⁹

The Panel recognises that the State Government, through its Keeping Children Safer priority, has a particular focus on vulnerable children. We also know of the wellbeing work being advanced through the Tasmanian Government's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy and Student Wellbeing Survey. The wellbeing survey was initially undertaken through the public school system and is now being adopted by other schools outside that system.

In 2022 the Tasmanian Government announced that it will develop Tasmania's first Wellbeing Framework. Wellbeing may convey different meanings to different people but includes education, economy, social inclusion and connection, and identity and belonging. There is upcoming consultation being conducted on wellbeing that will determine the domains of the Wellbeing Framework for Tasmania.

In April 2023 the Panel ran a consultation session with the Premier's Youth Advisory Council on engagement in the school years and barriers to young people seeking support with their literacy. In this session the Panel spoke to Council members aged 12 - 17 years. Participants in the session raised many ecological factors as determinants for learning. They discussed the impacts of family and peer influence, socioeconomic status, geographic location, wellbeing, and disability on a learner as being important alongside the way they are taught in the classroom.

6 The Productivity Commission. (2023). Review of the National School Reform Agreement: Study report. *Australian Government*. <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/school-agreement/report>

7 The Hon Jason Clare MP. (2023, January 20). Productivity Commission – review of the National School Reform Agreement [Media release]. *Ministers of the Education Portfolio*. <https://ministers.education.gov.au/clare/productivity-commission-review-national-schoolreform-agreement>

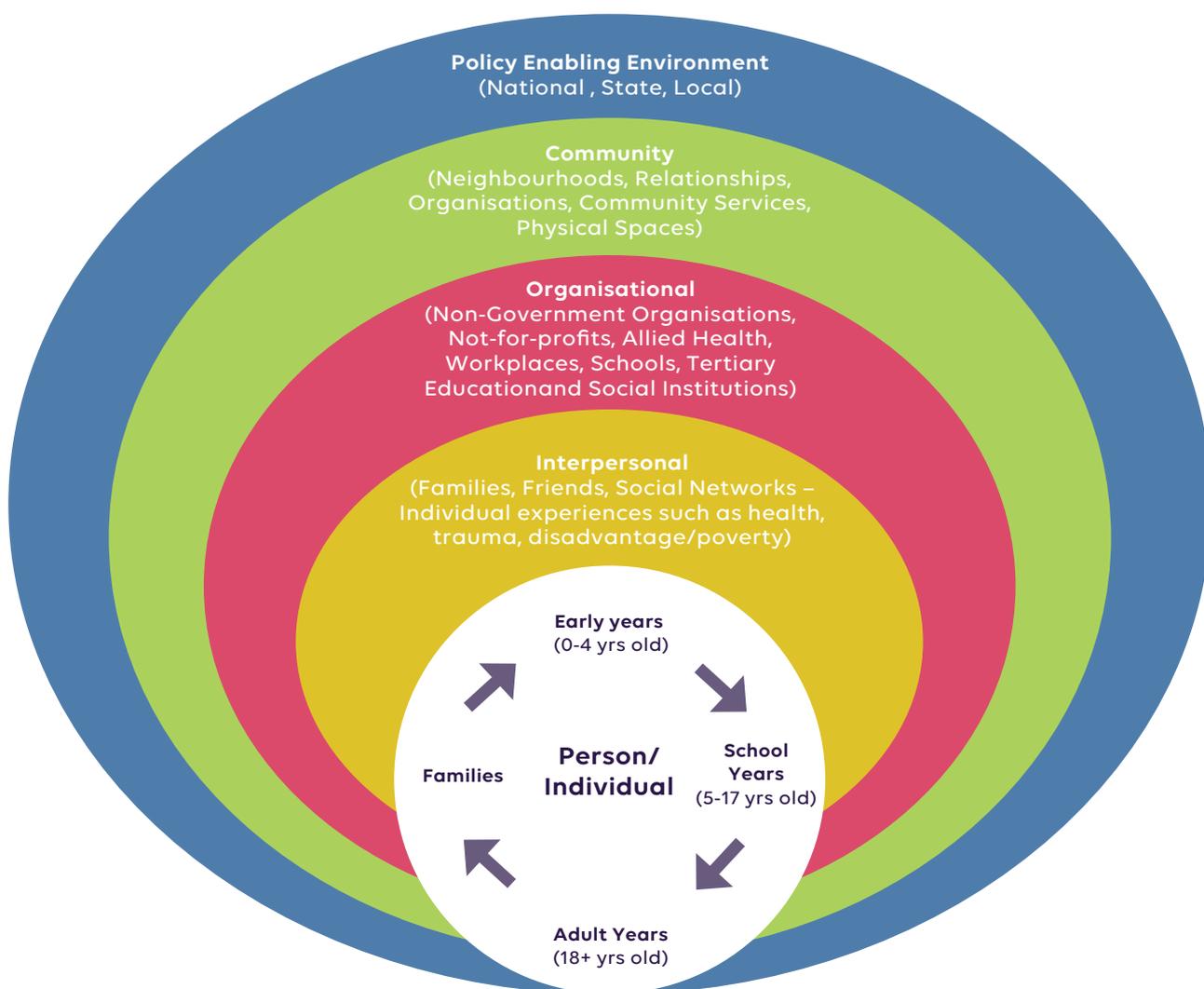
8 The Productivity Commission. (2023). Review of the National School Reform Agreement: Study report. *Australian Government*. <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/school-agreement/report>

9 Ibid

Additionally, the Panel heard about the association between disadvantage and lower learning outcomes and that in the ABS Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (2016) 18.7% of Tasmanian Statistical Local Area (SA1s)¹⁰ were in the bottom decile. Approximately double that for the whole of Australia (9.7%). The Panel was provided with information, from the Department for Education, Children and Young People, showing the correlation between parents' highest level of education and attendance rates of students. This clearly showed 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. The Department for Education, Children and Young People also provided the Panel with information suggesting that higher attendance rates were correlated with higher levels of academic achievement.

The ecological model of learning applies to learners of across ages, location, socioeconomic status, level of literacy and places of birth. The model describes the systems and relationships that exist outside of an individual that impact their learning. The Panel has made specific recommendations relating to the ecological model of literacy that apply to the school years, however recommendations covering other age groups also factor in the ecological context of learning.

The Panel has developed the following diagram to represent the ecological model of learning:¹¹



10 SA1 is a Statistical Local Area used by the ABS. Level 1 (SA1s) are designed to maximise the spatial detail available for Census data. Most SA1s have a population of between 200 to 800 persons with an average population of approximately 400 persons

11 Adapted from: Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist*, 32(7), 513-531

Principles

The Panel developed the following overarching principles to guide the development of the Community-wide Framework and its recommendations. The Panel developed these principles to communicate the fundamental values and beliefs to guide the Framework and decision making. It is anticipated that any approach to improving literacy in Tasmania will be underpinned by these core principles.

Equity:

- All Tasmanians have opportunities to access the support they need to develop literacy skills.

Consistency:

- There is evidence-based structured (systematic and explicit) literacy teaching from early years to adulthood.

Individual at the centre:

- Educators put their learners at the centre by understanding and responding to the ecological contexts of those they teach.

Underpinned by evidence-based research:

- Approaches to teaching literacy are underpinned by the large body of cognitive research on how our brain learns to read and write.

Foundations for success

The Panel has developed the following foundations for success of the Framework. These foundations for success were selected by the Panel in recognition of their central and crucial roles in achieving the aspirational goal of 100 per cent functional literacy. The Panel understands that support and consideration in these areas is crucial for the Framework to have its fullest impact.

Families:

Establishing or expanding effective initiatives that assist families understand and fulfill the foundational and ongoing influence on their children's literacy.

Workforce:

The literacy workforce is provided with professional learning in evidence-based practices for literacy acquisition and development. Professional learning is underpinned by cognitive neuroscience as well as robust educational research on the most effective instructional practices for improving literacy.

Libraries:

Libraries are positioned as pivotal community centres for providing opportunities and supporting literacy development for Tasmanians of all ages.

Partnerships / Systems:

Trusted partnerships between educators, families, and the community are developed and encouraged for ensuring high quality literacy teaching, and support.

Investment:

Long term investment in evidence-based approaches is required to lift literacy, based on delivering services at a scale and intensity, proportionate to the degree of need.

There are several recommendations made in the following sections to support these foundations for success.

Settings

The settings of the Framework are derived from the Panel's Terms of Reference and cover:

- The Early Years (0-4 years of age),
- The School Years (5-17 years of age),
- Adult Learning Environments (18 years of age and older), and
- Whole of Community.



Priority recommendations for Lifting Literacy: The Community-wide Framework

This report makes a comprehensive set of specific and targeted recommendations that underpin and support, the Framework. The recommendations have been shaped and informed by current evidence-based research, Panel expertise, expert advice, presentations to the Panel and by community consultations (including those with lived experience of literacy difficulties).

In reading the large number of suggested recommendations from community consultation, the Panel decided it was important to prioritise those recommendations that will make the most difference to lifting literacy in Tasmania.

The Panel recommends the following suite of actions for immediate implementation, within three years, and a suite of additional suggestions is included in Appendix 8 for future implementation.

Valuing Literacy

Principle: A community-wide approach to literacy requires collaboration of many stakeholders, including families, educators, local organisations, and government to promote literacy development and improve literacy outcomes for all members of the community.

1. Develop a single portal which brings together relevant evidence-based, information and advice about literacy, including literacy resources and supports, tools and other supports. It should also include resources for community hubs and public outdoor spaces.
2. Initiate a community-wide campaign to lift literacy in Tasmania. This should build on existing work and aim to lift literacy aspirations, address stigma, and encourage all Tasmanians, no matter their age, to further develop their literacy knowledge, understanding, and skills.

Families

Principle: Family involvement is critical in supporting a child's age-appropriate language and literacy development. By creating a supportive environment at home that promotes reading, writing, speaking, and listening, families can support children to develop important literacy skills, and foster a love of learning.

3. Support the B4 Coalition to continue to develop and raise awareness of additional resources to support families to fulfill their foundational and ongoing influence on their child's language and literacy development. This includes the importance of early oral language development, and positive social and emotional wellbeing.

Early Years

Principles:

- **The first 1,000 days are critical in setting a foundation for language and literacy learning.**
 - **Early intervention provides families with resources, supports and information to enhance their child's communication skills.**
 - **All Tasmanian children at risk of not meeting developmental milestones, regardless of geographical location, should have timely referral and access to intensive support or resources where needed.**
4. Develop a consistent state-wide phonological awareness screening program/process to be administered to all children any time before the end of term one in Kindergarten to identify children who would benefit from additional language and literacy support and ensure priority access to support for those children.
 5. Increase the frequency of child health assessments by adding an 18-month child health assessment by CHaPS for all children, update other checks to 2.5 and 3.5 years and increase the frequency of child health assessments offered to vulnerable families to support continued engagement.

Minimum Schooling Guarantee

Principle: Learning to read is recognised and positioned as foundational to all other literacy learning.

6. That the Government adopt the following minimum guarantee for literacy and monitor systems to ensure the approach is being followed:
 - A) All education systems will:
 - provide a systemic approach to the teaching of literacy, including reading and writing which meets the requirements of the Early Years Learning Framework, the Australian Curriculum, and the Australian Core Skills Framework. The systemic approach should be structured (systematic and explicit), include scopes and sequences quality assured by AERO and should emphasise the reciprocity of reading and writing. For secondary and senior secondary settings there needs to be increasing emphasis on disciplinary literacy and developing literacy skills in all subject areas,
 - set expectations with accountabilities for Principals/Leaders to lead whole school implementation of the systemic requirements and report progress, and
 - discontinue all current policies, programs and practices which do not align with the five elements of the minimum guarantee.

- B) When teaching reading in Tier 1 educators will, at a minimum, use practices aligned to the science of reading evidence base and align instruction to the Australian Curriculum by including the Big Six: Oral Language, Vocabulary, Phonological Awareness, Letter sound knowledge (phonics), Comprehension, and Fluency, in accordance with the systemic and whole school requirements. This includes for those students in secondary and senior secondary schools who are still developing foundational literacy skills and/or require more time on the content/strategies to acquire the necessary skill.
- C) All schools will be required to implement the National Year 1 Phonics Check during Year 1, in Term 3, with the results from the Check being utilised to target future school-based intervention. This implementation will include provision of evidence-based professional development in systematic phonics instruction, administering the Check, data collection and analysis of the Check and developing an intervention plan for students not meeting expected progress.
- D) All students are taught the same concepts through a structured approach to teaching literacy utilising a multi-tiered system of support that recognises that some will require more time on the content/strategies to acquire the necessary skill. Tier 1 instruction should be aligned to the science of reading evidence base and supported by accredited professional development.
- E) Decisions about the level of support required for students who are not meeting expected progress in literacy will be based on robust curriculum-based assessment data. Learners in need of additional support beyond Tier 1 instruction will receive Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, with the goal to return the student to Tier 1 instruction as soon as possible. Regular assessments and progress monitoring using evidence-based practices should be used to determine which students receive Tier 2 and 3 interventions. Systems will develop a list of recommended evidence-based interventions based on the criteria outlined by the Dyslexia-SPELD Foundation and other sources that have been adopted at a system level.

This minimum guarantee is the core expectation and recognises that literacy instruction should include additional opportunities for developing rich literacy environments.

Workforce

Principle: Teaching aligns with contemporary peer-reviewed evidence, including cognitive research, and is explicit and systematic.

- 7. Work with tertiary education providers in Tasmania to ensure graduates are skilled to deliver quality structured literacy instruction that is structured (systematic and explicit) and evidence-based.
- 8. The Tasmanian Education System should ensure that every educator engages in focused professional development in literacy every year appropriate for their teaching role and that providers are drawn from a quality assured list of service providers who deliver professional development aligned to the science of reading evidence base and is periodically reviewed at a system level. First year teachers should receive initial targeted professional development aligned to the Tasmanian minimum guarantee to ensure preparation to teach literacy. This would be done preferably before the start of the school year but should be no later than the end of their fifth week after commencing at the school.
- 9. Facilitate and incentivise the adult and early childhood education and care (ECEC) literacy workforce (including volunteers) to participate in professional development aligned to the science of reading evidence base, and a community of practice.

10. Develop a Tasmanian Literacy Workforce Attraction and Retention Strategy that is supported by research to understand unmet need and workforce gaps, with a view to increasing access to Allied Health Professionals across the continuum of literacy learning.

Targeted support

Principle: In keeping with the individual at the centre, all learners irrespective of background, ethnicity, language spoken at home and other social factors are supported.

11. Ensure that students whose learning plans identify a need for literacy development have access to assessments for language and learning difficulties. Students identified as needing referrals to health or allied health professionals for literacy support should receive priority access.
12. Provide guidelines for education providers on how to support CALD learners across all ages and provide resources for individuals and families. These resources should include accurate and translated information appropriate to life events, for literacy supports they or their family may require.
13. Government engages with and is led by Tasmanian Aboriginal people and Aboriginal service providers to develop a culturally appropriate Literacy Strategy for Tasmanian Aboriginal people that is aligned to and is consistent with relevant Closing the Gap targets.

Libraries

Principle: Position libraries as pivotal community centres for supporting literacy development for Tasmanians of all ages

14. Libraries Tasmania should continue their work in providing families of young children not yet at school, with the services to support early language and literacy development including providing play-based learning opportunities.
15. Initiate in-service and short courses in evidence-based professional development in literacy, aligned to the minimum requirements for systems for upskilling the library workforce across the state.
16. Develop and establish partnerships between Libraries Tasmania and all schools without qualified librarians or with limited collections to provide professional development, resources and just-in-time support.
17. Investigate the potential benefit of introducing mobile library support for schools that cannot support a quality collection or communities that struggle to maintain adequate library collection due to location, funding, or size.

Adult Learners

Principle: Ensure adult learners have access to adult literacy trainers who provide literacy education that is evidence-based, learner focused, purposeful, authentic, and considerate of the barriers that adults face to learning

18. The Tasmanian Government should seek advice on the Federal Government's intentions to progress the recommendations from the Inquiry Into Adult Literacy and in particular recommendation 13 that recommends that the Australian Government work with the state and territory governments to develop and implement a national strategy to renew the adult language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy education workforce.

Measures and Targets

Principle: Develop clear and measurable literacy targets that enable reporting of progress against Lifting Literacy: The Community-wide Framework.

19. By 2026, all schools must demonstrate that they are implementing the elements of evidence-based literacy instruction as described in the Minimum Schooling Guarantee recommended by the Panel. Progress towards this goal should be monitored independently and reported on publicly.
20. Establish a state-wide repository for collecting, and reporting upon, data that will measure progress against targets and assist in evaluation of initiatives and inform resourcing decisions. The following assessments and collections will be required in all school systems in Tasmania without exception and include:
 - AEDC
 - Year 1 Phonics Check
 - NAPLAN
 - TCE
 - Attendance
21. Consider the state-wide application and reporting of other accredited assessment and screening tools (including GAPS, KDC and PAT).
22. 26TEN Coalition should be commissioned to lead and advise on adult literacy data collections and provide recommendations on the potential development of a Tasmanian Adult Literacy Survey in alignment with the Australian Government's National Study on Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Skills to support measurement and reporting against Lifting Literacy: The Community-wide Framework.
23. From the data sets available the Panel recommends the following measures and targets be considered in evaluating and monitoring Tasmanian literacy rates:

Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)

Measures:	% of children developmentally on track in the communication domain. % of children developmentally on track in the Language and Cognitive Skills Domain.
Proposed Target:	By 2033, the percentage of Tasmanian children developmentally on track in the domains of Communication and Language & Cognitive Skills in the AEDC are equal to/exceeding the Australian average.

Phonics Check

Measures:	Phonics screen conducted in Year 1.
Proposed Target:	% of Tasmanian students are meeting the expected achievement score (28/40 words decoded) in the Year 1 Phonics Check. (Note: Target to be set after the first year of statewide screening to establish a baseline.)

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

Measures:	Proportion of students in years 3, 5, 7 & 9 achieving at the strong or exceeding proficiency level. Proportion of students in years 3, 5, 7 & 9 achieving at the developing proficiency level. Proportion of students in years 3, 5, 7 & 9 at the needing additional support proficiency level.
Proposed Target:	By 2032, all year 3, 5, 7 & 9 students will at or above the national proficiency standards in reading and writing. (Note: this standard will be set in 2023 from the first year of proficiency standard reporting).

Tasmanian Assessment Standards & Certification (TASC)

Measures:	% of students who have attained the Everyday Adult Standard for Reading, Writing and Communication (in English).
	% of students who have attained a Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE).
Proposed Target:	By 2035, all year 12 students attain the Everyday Adult Standard for Reading, Writing and Communication (in English).

Report on Government Services (RoGS)

Measure:	Tasmanian Student attendance rate of 90% or higher in years 1-6.
	Tasmanian Student attendance rate of 90% or higher in years 7-10.
Proposed Target:	No current targets – Tasmania should develop a target.

Closing the Gap (Monitoring the progress against the National Agreement)

Outcome 3:	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years.
Target:	By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Full Time Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95 per cent.
Outcome 4:	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years.
Target:	By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55 per cent.
Outcome 5:	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential.
Target:	By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20-24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96 per cent.

Further to these measures and targets the Panel has considers other possible data sets which are set out in Appendix 11.

The Panel notes that schools undertake many assessments to support and inform teaching practices and data collected from these assessments are not publicly available. Assessments such as Kindergarten Development Check, Year 1 Phonics Check and Progressive Achievement Tests (Early Years – Prep-1) and (years 1-10) are used to assess a student’s learning and identify any gaps.

The Community-wide Framework

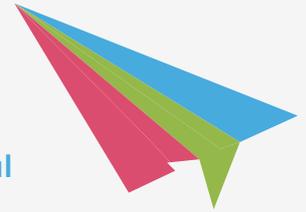
The Panel has been tasked to deliver a Community-wide Framework. The Framework is underpinned by the recommendations put forward in this report. A Community-wide Framework will provide a shared understanding for the whole community, guide decision making and funding, and if implemented well, will help all Tasmanians to improve their literacy skills or the skills of others.

A framework is distinct in purpose from a strategy. A strategy provides direction and sequence towards specific goals, whereas a framework is the overarching structure to which anybody in the community can align their goals and objectives. A framework is not prescriptive or instructional, but it articulates the overarching environment and what is being worked toward. It includes the systems, policies, strategies, plans, enablers, and operating environments.

The Panel has prepared a broad Framework that can last over a period of years (nominally ten years). A visual representation is included below. The intent is that anyone in any education system or sector (primary, secondary, tertiary, public and independent schools), community organisations, and individuals can align their work to the Framework. This enables the community to be moving in the same direction toward achieving a literate Tasmania.



Lifting Literacy Framework



Goal: Lifting Literacy so that all Tasmanians can benefit from the social and economic benefits of literacy.

Overarching Principles



All Tasmanians have access to structured (systematic and explicit) evidence-based literacy education that considers the learners' individual needs.

Early Years 0-4	School Years 5-17	Adult Years 18+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide accessible and practical information to families on how to encourage and support their child's language and literacy development. Maintain and promote a focus on the first 1,000 days of life as a key foundation for future literacy success. Offer place-based early intervention and identification support for families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At all levels of schooling, the workforce is trained and supported to deliver evidence-based, structured (systematic and explicit) literacy instruction, aligned to the Australian Curriculum. Evidence-based structured literacy approaches are adopted and evaluated at classroom, school and sector levels. There is a focus on literacy development from foundational skills (e.g. decoding, spelling) through to higher-level literacy skills (e.g. reading comprehension, written expression). Students who need additional assistance in literacy are identified and supported throughout their school years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers and tertiary education providers are enabled to support employees and learners to acquire or continue to develop their literacy skills. Promote opportunities for training and retention initiatives for the adult volunteer literacy workforce.
Whole of Community		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone has a role in lifting literacy. Strengthen the community focus on the importance of literacy as everyone's business, including addressing stigma around low literacy. Embed evaluation in all initiatives to ensure focus and resources are directed to activities that work. Encourage partnerships between all levels of government, organisations, the literacy workforce, and broader community to align their strategies for better literacy outcomes. Address stigma around literacy and in accessing literacy support. 		

Milestone Targets for literacy achievement against the Framework – Birth to Adulthood

Early Years	School Years	Adult Years
Tasmanian children developmentally on track in the communication and language domains of the AEDC are equal to/ exceed the Australian average.	<p>All students in their Preparatory (Prep) year of schooling will undertake an on-entry assessment to ascertain their literacy proficiency.</p> <p>All students entering year 7 will meet an expected PAT reading standard.</p> <p>All Year 3, 5, 7, and 9 students will achieve at or exceed the 'strong' proficiency standard in NAPLAN.</p>	<p>All Year 12 students attain the Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) or equivalent qualification.*</p> <p>All adults are meeting functional literacy levels.</p>

*Equivalent qualification means Certificate III or higher (as per the Education Act 2016 definition).



It's different here, and you
So many little Tasmanians
started small and did something
And you

Conclusion – the way forward

Since being tasked in August 2021 with developing a Community-wide Framework to achieve a literate Tasmania, the Panel has worked to ensure that they hear from as many Tasmanians as possible to inform their work. The work has been underpinned by an aspirational and inclusive vision: to lift literacy in Tasmania so that, no matter your age, background, location, or circumstances, you can engage in any or all the opportunities to develop or improve your literacy skills.

It was clear throughout the consultations, presentations, meetings, and discussions that there is a desire and understanding for the need to improve literacy levels to benefit all Tasmanians. After a thorough consultation process, the goal to lift literacy in Tasmania has garnered significant interest and engagement from stakeholders. The feedback received has been invaluable in shaping the final Framework and ensuring that it meets the needs of those it intends to serve.

This report, and its attachments, reflects the diverse perspectives raised during the consultation process. The input from Panel members, educators, experts, and community voices has provided valuable insight into the specific needs of learners at different stages of learning, and in different contexts, with the aim to improve literacy outcomes for all learners.

Looking forward, the Panel recommends the Government adopt all recommendations in this report and commit to the implementation of the Community-wide Framework to reach the Government's aspirational goal of 100 per cent functional literacy.

Action plans

The Government set the aspirational goal of 100 per cent functional literacy for Tasmania. This will require a whole of community effort, beyond the school gate. The Community-wide Framework and recommendations put forward in this report have the potential to create intergenerational transformation in Tasmania. With the implementation of the recommendations and the support of Government and whole of community, we can collectively lift literacy and improve the outcomes for all Tasmanians.

To support the implementation of the Framework, the Panel recommends the Government create and invest in three year rolling action plans. These action plans must provide a clear and structured approach to achieving the goals and objectives of the Framework. In developing action plans, the Government should co-design with relevant organisations/groups wherever practicable.

These plans should include, at a minimum lead: agency, resourcing (Secretariat, investment), timeframe for delivery of actions and outcomes.

Governance

Pursuing 100 per cent functional literacy across Tasmania is not an easy task. Strong governance will be fundamental to the implementation and oversight of the Framework and action plans. There will be substantial work involved in the implementation of the Panel's recommendations. Given the community-wide reach of the recommendations, there is a need for strong commitment and collaboration across all sectors to facilitate their implementation.

Although it is beyond the scope of the Panel's work to recommend a specific form of governance, it has developed a set of features it believes should be considered in the implementation of its recommendations and guide the Government's decision on governance.

- Single line of Ministerial accountability
 - Although the recommendations cover a broad range of Government agencies as well as the non-government and community sector, the Panel suggests that the accountability for delivering the strategy is overseen by a single Minister and that this responsibility is clearly identified.
- Membership and Terms of Reference of the proposed governance structure
 - Representation from both government and non-government sectors across the early years, school years, adults, and whole of community will be vital.
 - Terms of Reference should ensure the staged implementation of recommendations, evaluation, and monitoring of progress.
 - The scope should include an ongoing research function with the ability to recommend adjustments to Government based on this research, outcome monitoring and independent oversight (see further below).
 - Transparency should be ensured through annual reports on progress and outcomes.
- Clear accountability and responsibility for implementing recommendations
 - Responsibility for implementing each recommendation must be clear and made publicly available as well as reporting on the progress of implementation.
 - This is particularly important because many recommendations are community-wide and require cross-system coordination for effective implementation.
- Independent oversight of progress and quality assurance
 - There must be independent oversight of critical recommendations and the minimum guarantee. Consideration could be given to using existing bodies where they are sufficiently independent.
 - Scopes and sequences for all Tasmanian schools across all aspects of literacy, should be quality assured (for instance by Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO)).
- The voice of lived experience
 - Collaboration and engagement with stakeholders and organisations is essential for the success of the Framework and to avoid a siloed approach and structure.
 - It is important that the stories of Tasmanian's experience with literacy is an ongoing and integral component of implementing and determining the success of recommendations.

Glossary

Word	Definition
AERO	Australian Education Research Organisation is Australia’s independent education evidence body.
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse – people with their own cultural heritage, as opposed to the mainstream Anglo-Australian culture, and they make up the culturally and linguistically diverse community.
Carer	Carer does not extend to the definition under the Carers Recognition Act 2023.
Cognitive research	Cognitive research in literacy is a field of study that investigates how people acquire and process reading and writing skills. It aims to understand the cognitive processes involved in reading and writing, such as attention, memory, and comprehension, and how these processes can be improved through instruction and practice. ¹²
Evidence-based	Evidence-based practices are those which have been demonstrated through robust research studies to have a positive impact on student learning. Research evidence is considered robust if the study meets design standards. This means readers can have higher confidence in the findings being reliable and valid. ¹³
Explicit instruction	Explicit instruction is clearly explaining and effectively demonstrating what students need to learn. It involves breaking down what students need to learn into smaller learning outcomes and modelling each step so that students can see what is expected of them. Providing explicit instruction enhances a learner’s ability to process new information more effectively. ¹⁴
Families	From Children Young Persons and Their Families Act: Family means a person’s family and extended family. When the word family is used in this report, it refers to parents, families, and carers.
First 1,000 days	Refers to the time from pregnancy (conception) to 2 years of age.
Functional literacy	The level of literacy necessary for the demands of everyday adult life, and to engage in society both socially and in the workplace. ¹⁵
Learner	A person who is undertaking education at any age.

12 Perfetti, C.A., & Stafura, J.Z. (2014). Word knowledge in a theory of reading comprehension. *Scientific studies of reading*, 18(1), 22-37

13 Australian Education Research Organisation. (2021). *Evidence-based teaching strategies - how often are Australian teachers using them?* <https://www.edresearch.edu.au/articles/evidence-based-teaching-strategies-how-often-are-australian-teachers-using-them>

14 Australian Education Research Organisation. (2023). *Explicit Instruction*. <https://www.edresearch.edu.au/practice-hub/explicit-instruction>

15 Oxford University Press (2023), *Overview: Functional Literacy*. <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095838390;jsessionid=C70E666DDDD65E9D6DDADBE03594EF0C>

Word	Definition
Literacy	<p>"Literacy involves listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing, and creating texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts. Literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills needed to access, understand, analyse, and evaluate information, make meaning, express thoughts and emotions, present ideas, and opinions, interact with others. It involves a continuum of learning to enable individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society."</p> <p>This definition draws on definitions from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2023)¹⁶ and the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA).¹⁷</p>
Literacy workforce	This includes Teachers and Educators, Early Childhood Educators, Tutors, Adult Literacy Coordinators and Literacy Tutors, Education Support Specialists and Teacher Assistants, and Volunteers with adequate support and guidance in the teaching of literacy. Allied Health Professionals include Speech Pathologists and Social Workers, Nurses (to work in schools), Psychologists, and Paediatricians.
Pedagogy	Is the approach that teachers use to support student learning.
Phonemic awareness	Phonemic awareness is a subset of phonological awareness in which listeners are able to hear, identify and manipulate phonemes, the smallest mental units of sound that help to differentiate units of meaning.
Phonics	Phonics is the system of relationships between letters and sounds in a language. Phonics teaches the correspondence between the sounds (phonemes) and the letter patterns which represent these sounds (graphemes). ¹⁸
Phonological awareness	A broad concept that relates to the sounds of spoken language. It includes understanding words, rhyme, and syllables. Phonological awareness refers to understanding the different ways that spoken language can be broken down into smaller parts. ¹⁹

16 UNESCO. (2023). *How Does UNESCO define literacy?* <https://www.unesco.org/en/literacy/need-know#:~:text=Literacy%20is%20a%20continuum%20of>

17 ACARA, n.d. *The Australian Curriculum Information Sheet, English (Foundation to Year 10)*. Retrieved from: https://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/Information_Sheet_English.pdf

18 Australian Curriculum 9.0. (2023). *Literacy Learning Progression*. <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/national-literacy-and-numeracy-learning-progressions/national-literacy-learning-progression/reading-and-viewing/?subElementId=50898&scaleId=0>

19 Australian Curriculum 9.0. (2023). *Literacy. Sub-elements for Reading and viewing*. <https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum.html/general-capabilities/literacy?element=1&sub-element=0>

Word	Definition
Play-based learning	<p>Play based learning: A context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects, and representations.²⁰</p> <p>According to research, play-based learning has been found to have positive effects on children’s development and learning outcomes. It has been linked to improvements in children’s language, literacy, and mathematical skills, as well as their social and emotional development.^{21,22} Play-based learning has also been shown to have long-term benefits, such as increased motivation to learn and improved academic achievement.²³</p>
Science of reading	<p>The science of reading refers to a body of evidence that encompasses multi-disciplinary knowledge from education, linguistics, cognitive psychology, special education, and neuroscience. The science of reading looks at the essential cognitive processes for competent reading and describes how reading develops in both typical and atypical readers. These studies have revealed a great deal about how we learn to read, what goes wrong when students don’t learn, and the instructional strategies that facilitate the cognitive processes required for reading in all learners (Castles, Rastle, & Nation. 2018;²⁴ Ehri, 2005,²⁵ 2014;²⁶ Moats, 2020²⁷).</p>
Scope and sequence	<p>A scope and sequence provides the achievement standards and content descriptions for the learning area of subject areas across F – 10. It is a summary of what is to be taught, the sequence in which it will be taught and the syllabus outcomes that may be addressed in the intended learning. Scope and sequences are flexible and fluid. They provide a brief overview of the key concepts and ideas addressed in learning and teaching programs for an individual stage or year. There will be variations in scope and sequences arising from the differences in school contexts, student cohorts and syllabus requirements.²⁸</p>
SPELD	Specific Educational Learning Difficulties.
Structured literacy	<p>For the purposes of this report, structured literacy refers not to a particular program, but is an umbrella term to refer to elements of the structure of language such as phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondences, syllables, morphology, syntax, and semantics being taught through explicit, systematic, cumulative, and sequential instructional practices. Such practices are all part of high quality tier 1 instructional approaches that benefit all students.²⁹</p>

- 20 Australian Government Department of Education and Training. (2018). The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf
- 21 Ginsburg, K.R. (2007). The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bonds. *Pediatrics*, 119(1), 182-191
- 22 Whitebread, D., Basilio, M., Kuvajja, M., & Verma, M. (2012). The importance of play: A report on the value of children’s play with a series of policy recommendations. Toy Industries of Europe
- 23 Bohlmann, N.L., & Goldstein, H. (2016). The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bonds. *Pediatrics*, 137(1)
- 24 Castles, D., Rastle, K., & Nation, K. (2018). Ending the reading wars: Reading acquisition from novice to expert. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 19(1), 5-51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100618772271>
- 25 Ehri, L. C. (2005). Learning to read words: Theory, findings, and issues. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 9(2), 167-188. https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532799xssr0902_4
- 26 Ehri, L.C. (2014). Orthographic mapping in the acquisition of sight word reading, spelling, and and vocabulary learning. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 18(1), 5-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888438.2013.819356>
- 27 Moats, L.C., (2020). Teaching reading is rocket science: what expert teachers of reading should know and be able to do. *American Educator*, 44(2). <https://www.aft.org/ae/summer2020/moats>
- 28 Australian Curriculum 9.0. (2023). *National Literacy Learning Progression*. Retrieved from: <https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/downloads/learning-areas#accordion-b71b085f07-item-49001e70bc>
- 29 Colorado Department of Education. (n.d). 4.3 *Structured Literacy*. <https://www.cde.state.co.us/node/45821>

Word	Definition
Student	A person enrolled in education (through school years or tertiary education).
Tasmanian Education System	Refers to all providers of education in Tasmania across sectors: Early Childhood Education and Care, Government Education, Catholic Education, Independent Schools, Home-school Education, and Tertiary Education.
The Big Six	This term is used to describe the six keys to reading and include: oral language; phonological awareness; letter-sound knowledge (phonics); vocabulary; fluency and comprehension. ³⁰
Tiers of Instruction	<p>Multi-tiered frameworks such as Response to Intervention (RtI) generally incorporate three tiers of instruction that progressively increase in intensity. When students receive targeted (Tier 2) or intensive (Tier 3) support in literacy, they receive access to reading or writing instruction that is more frequent or lasts for a longer duration and involves fewer students in the group. Access to Tier 2 and 3 is determined not based on disability or funding status but is determined based on need through robust curriculum-based assessments and data-based decisions. Interventions should be evidence-based and should appropriately target the academic skill deficit of students.³¹</p> <p>Tier 1 – All students have access to Tier 1 instruction which is the foundation of RtI. Instruction at Tier 1 involves the use of evidence-based instructional and assessment practices designed to maximise learning for the most diverse cohort of learners. This should be sufficient for most learners to make satisfactory progress. Student progress is monitored using curriculum-based assessment.</p> <p>Tier 2 – Some students who are achieving somewhat below the level that is expected may need to receive time-limited Tier 2 targeted intervention to close learning gaps. Tier 2 intervention involves more frequent and intensive instruction in core curriculum content using evidence-based practices. Tier2 intervention is typically offered as 30 minutes of additional instruction 3-5 times per week for a finite period e.g. 20 weeks. Tier 2 does not replace Tier 1 but complements it. This may be offered to targeted groups within the general education classroom or at times it may be appropriate to withdraw students. Progress-monitoring is used to ensure the intervention is having the desired impact or adjusted accordingly.</p> <p>Tier 3 – Some students who are achieving substantially below their peers may need intervention that is more individualised and may be more sustained. At Tier 3, intervention is likely to be provided more frequently and for a longer duration than Tier 1 and is usually offered on an individual basis.</p> <p>Tier 3 intervention does not replace Tier 1 core instruction. Progress-monitoring is used to ensure the intervention is having the desired impact or adjusted accordingly.</p>

30 Konza, D. (2014). Teaching reading: Why the "Fab Five" should be the "Big Six". *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(12), 153-169

31 Hughes, C. & Dexter, D. (2011). Response to Intervention: A Research-Based Summary. *Theory Into Practice*, 50. 4-11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2011.534909>

Appendices

1. Suggested Recommendations
2. List of Panel Readings
3. Paper One: Setting the Scene
4. Paper Three: Final Consultation Report for the Development of Tasmania's Community-wide Framework
5. Paper Two: What we heard
6. Analysis of responses to the Final Consultation Report
7. Schedule from Panel meetings/list of presentations
8. Organisational Mapping
9. Organisational Matrix
10. Maps: Geospatial maps, Organisational matrix, matrix map.
11. Measures and Targets considered

Appendix 1: Suggested Recommendations

Suggested Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in addition to the Panel's Priority Recommendations contained in the Final Report. These recommendations should be considered in future years or as part of the three-year action plans.

Recommendations from the Ecological Context of Learning

1. Wellbeing should be a focus for all schools and the Government's focus on wellbeing in Government schools should be continued.
2. The Tasmanian Education System (all sectors) should take a coordinated approach to understanding and overcoming barriers to school attendance. This may include co-funded research.

Recommendations on Foundations of Success

The Panel heard of the importance of groups or factors that are vital to invest in as foundations of success.

Families

3. Not-for-profit literacy tutor programs should be extended for vulnerable students, including those in Out of Home Care.

Workforce

4. A Literacy Capability Framework with clear guidance across the early years, school years and adult years, regarding the knowledge, skills and attributes needed across the literacy workforce to support language and literacy development for all learners in Tasmania.
5. Develop a Workforce Development Strategy for new and existing educators to implement the Literacy Capability Framework.
6. Placements, workshops, or partnerships with high performing schools and educators should be used by Tasmanian tertiary education providers to prepare graduate educators.
7. Educators with high achievement and evidence of improvement in outcomes for students over time in literacy should be actively supported to mentor, model and support the growth of others.
8. Research to understand the barriers to accessing professionals in the early years, school years and adult years should be conducted.

Investment

9. Invest in the long-term, evidence-based approaches that are required to lift literacy, based on delivering services at a scale and intensity, proportionate to the degree of need.³²
10. Formal evaluation should be embedded in all programs where there is investment made to ensure intended outcomes are met.³³

Early years

11. Consider how age-appropriate books and resources can be made available for young vulnerable Tasmanians, including children in out of home care.
12. Consider supporting the B4 Coalition to work in collaboration with 26TEN and community partners to develop a dedicated place-based Family Literacy Support Program focusing initially on the first 1,000 days and which could later extend to older age groups.
13. Research should be undertaken to understand the points of interconnection for families with the multiple organisations and services which impact on the development of literacy in the early years, with a view to making recommendations about best practice approaches for sharing of information across boundaries, data linkage and improving the availability and coordination of resources across the State.
 - This should also include identifying opportunities to work in partnership across services including the early childhood education and care sector, playgroups, B4 Coalition, the Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP), Child and Family Learning Centres (CFLCs) and CHaPS.
14. Produce a guide to early literacy services and supports that are available in all regions of Tasmania and work in partnership with services to maximise access for all families.
15. Work should continue to progress the recommendations of the report "Barriers and enablers to maternal iodine supplement use in Tasmania."³⁴
16. Explore and address barriers to early years practitioners' participation in professional development opportunities that build on their skills to deliver literacy instruction.

32 Covered by inclusion as a Principle in the Framework

33 Covered within the Governance section of the Final Report

34 Nolan, M., Gorsuch, C., Graham, A., Hynes, K., & Reardon, M. (2022). Barriers and enablers to maternal iodine supplement use in Tasmania: Report. Department of Education. <http://ecite.utas.edu.au/150298/2/150298%20-%20Barriers%20and%20enablers%20to%20maternal%20iodine%20supplement%20use%20in%20Tasmania.pdf>

School years

17. Whole of system and whole of school strategies should be developed to address barriers to engagement for secondary students. This should include considering alternative pathways within schools to support transition to further training or employment.

Youth justice

18. Appropriate literacy supports and services for young people in the youth justice system must be considered through the implementation of the Youth Justice Blueprint.

Adult years

19. Ensure adults can access diagnostic services for learning disabilities that would identify the cause of individual challenges with literacy and subsequently inform literacy support.
20. Work in partnership with 26TEN to develop a report to Government, by end of June 2024, on the current challenges and barriers to literacy across the Tasmanian workforce and provide possible solutions for broader consultation.

Prison

21. Any programs or services providing literacy support in Tasmanian prisons should build on the foundational literacy activities to date and ensure they are aligned with best practice and evidence-based teaching. Literacy teaching should be learner focused, as identified as best practice in adult literacy. The Tasmania Prison Service should work in collaboration with any programs or services, including TasTAFE and Libraries Tasmania, to ensure access for learners. Actions from programs and services could include:
 - Strengthening and establishing partnerships between prison-based and community-based literacy services,
 - continuing existing provision of one-on-one or group literacy learning, as appropriate for the person's needs and goals,
 - establishing referral pathways to speech pathology and other allied health services to diagnose and treat speech and language disorders and specific learning differences (SLD) through the Tasmanian Health Service, and
 - investigating models to foster relationships between parents and carers in the justice system and their child's school/s.

Whole of Community

People with disability

22. The Tasmanian Government should provide information to the NDIS Independent Review Panel about the consequences of children with dyslexia being unable to access support services for reading as dyslexia does not qualify as a disability under the NDIS.

Assistive technology

23. Ensure increased awareness, understanding and professional skills in using digital and assistive technologies to support the literacy development for diverse learners alongside mainstream literacy teaching approaches.
24. Ensure that Assistive Technologies are available and accessible for all learners that would benefit from them.

