

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

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

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

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

Name: Anne Salt

Organisation: Self-employed Adult Literacy Practitioner

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

The Early Years (0-4 years-old)

- There is an opportunity for 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.

How would access issues for families who are isolated and/ or unable to attend the place-based Family Literacy Support Program be addressed?

A model that may meet this need could be based on the Literacy for Life Foundation. This foundation trains Aboriginal people to bring literacy to their communities. They use an innovative, evidence-based, campaign approach that has helped millions around the world and is now delivering results in Australia.

<https://www.lflf.org.au/>

The School Years (5-17 years-old)

Throughout the Consultation Report there are references to the six keys to reading, also known as the Big Six that apply to both primary and secondary students: oral language, phonemic awareness, synthetic phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

Concerningly, there is no mention in the Report that English orthography is a morphophonemic system, or of the interconnection of the three components (morphology, etymology & phonology) of orthography which is central to how our writing system works.

Understanding the English writing system, how words are built, and why they are spelled the way they are, are supported by a wide body of research. Understanding the writing system allows teachers and students to better address spelling errors.

Sue Scibetta Hegland (LearningAboutSpelling.com), author of *Beneath the Surface of Words – What English Spelling Reveals and Why It Matters*, 2021, provides an accurate and easily understood resource on the English writing system that should be incorporated into this Report,

and which should be an essential resource for training literacy teachers and for anyone involved in teaching literacy.

Another resource by the same author is the recent tutorial on Morphemic Awareness and Written Language <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k44ym6hrP28>

Further resources that would better inform this report are:

James, E., Currie, N.K., Tong, S. X., Cain, K. (2021) *The relations between morphological awareness and reading comprehension in beginner readers to young adolescents*. Journal of Research in Reading, ISSN 0141-0423. Volume 44, Issue 1, pp110-130

Caroll, J., Hodges, L., Nash, C., Smith, K., Twyford, T. (2023). *The Effect of SWI on Spelling and Vocabulary in Student Writing in the Middle Years of Primary School*. Literacy Learning: the Middle Years. Volume 31, Number 1. Australian Literacy Educators Association.

The Adult Years (18+ years-old)

The Report states:

- A high achieving literacy system would ideally see the majority of its secondary students needing very little support in phonemic awareness and phonics and most students needing explicit teaching to to (sic) further progress their fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, especially in the subjects being studied.

In a high achieving literacy system this statement should be: A high achieving literacy system would ideally see the majority of its secondary students proficient in understanding the English writing system that includes how words are built and why they are spelled the way they are.

- The Gradual Release of Responsibility model is equally applicable to both the primary and secondary school years. The model is based on the understanding that, as we learn new content, the responsibility shifts from primarily sitting with the teacher as the model or expert, to the responsibility sitting with the student as they acquire the taught skills and take on independence in their application.

This model fits with the Structured Word Inquiry approach to understanding English orthography, as is the subject of the research paper *The Effect of SWI on Spelling and Vocabulary in Student Writing in the Middle Years of Primary School* detailed in the previous section of this report.

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

The Early Years (0-4 years-old)

Ensuring all families have access to support offered, including place-based and services in isolated communities.

Ensuring those providing literacy support to families are proficient in understanding and applying the principles of English orthography.

Access to information in plain English.

The School Years (5-17 years-old)

As detailed above in School Years

The Adult Years (18+ years-old)

As detailed above in Adult Years

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

The Early Years (0-4 years-old)

Unfamiliar to my area of literacy teaching

The School Years (5-17 years-old)

The research paper mentioned above by Carroll, J., Hodges, L., Nash, C., Smith, K., Twyford, T. (2023) identifies data sets used for the research project

The Adult Years (18+ years-old)

As above

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

Guidance on how to implement a high-achieving literacy system which is based on the English writing system, and that incorporates accurate descriptions of how words are built and why they are spelled the way they are.

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

Cognitive research and the Science of Reading

The Report's quote from 1998, "Teaching letter-sound correspondence is essential and is the fastest way to acquire reading and comprehension" does not reflect current reading research.

- The Panel heard from many presenters who provided a significant body of research about the Science of Reading⁴² and the importance of a phonics-based approach to reading in the early years as the foundation of teaching for all children, including those with dyslexia.

It is my understanding that the effectiveness of specific approaches to reading requires more research

- Explicit teaching of alphabetic decoding skills is helpful for all children, harmful for none, and crucial for some.

For the reasons I have stated above about the need to understand the English writing system, how words are built, and why they are spelled the way they are, this mantra appears to be inaccurate in part and wrong.