

**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: Independent Schools Tasmania**

**Organisation: Independent Schools Tasmania**

**Postcode: 7000**

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

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

We offer the following themes for consideration by the Panel:

- Staff training for childcare workers to ensure they have the skills necessary to support children’s early literacy acquisition.
- Research shows that Oral Language underpins future literacy development, and that adult modelling plays an essential part in this process. Childcare workers for whom English is a second language need to be able to demonstrate a level of English language attainment that models an adequate standard of literacy and language skills for the children in their care.
- Universal access guidelines need to be made mandatory so as not to disadvantage lower SES families who may be perceived as being at risk of not paying their fees, and therefore being denied places in Childcare Centres
- Alignment of the EYLF to the Australian Curriculum.
- Partnerships with organisations within the community that have already developed positive, trusting relationships with low SES/’At Risk’ families as a conduit to delivering literacy education.

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

We offer the following themes for consideration by the Panel:

- The importance of sufficient investment for the recommendations in this report to be realised. This could also include the provision of funding for Allied Healthcare Workers, as they are crucial to the early intervention for our most ‘At Risk’ students.

- Emphasising the importance of the awareness of formative and diagnostic assessment practices that support teachers to identify gaps in student knowledge so they can be addressed in a timely and systematic manner.
- Emphasising the importance of the implementation of consistent assessment practices that align with a structured literacy approach.

### **The Adult Years (18+ years-old)**

The Panel may like to consider:

- Incentivising literacy development (for families and their children)
- Partnering with community organisations such as RAW (Rural Alive and Well) and footy clubs as conduits to promote literacy.

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

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

**We see the following as the three main things to prioritise for the early years:**

1. Attracting and retaining high quality staff.
- 2 Provision of easily accessible, high quality literacy professional learning for both pre-service and currently qualified teachers.
- 3 Alignment of EYLF to AC and KDC Framework update.

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

**We see the following as the three main things to prioritise for the school years:**

- 1 Provision of easily accessible, high quality literacy professional learning for both pre-service and currently qualified teachers.
- 2 We recommend that the Panel facilitate the development of mandated assessment schedules with quality assessment tools which are diagnostic, can be used for benchmarking and progress monitoring.
- 3 Consider facilitating the provision to schools of a choice of evidence-based, high-quality systematic phonics programs/tools to reduce teacher cognitive load and scaffold their own pedagogy.

#### **The Adult Years (18+ years-old)**

**We see the following as the three main things to prioritise for the adult years:**

- 1 Incentivising literacy development (for families and their children).

2 Providing a range of readily accessible, free literacy development resources.

3 Schools providing greater support to parents with low literacy skills to develop their confidence and ability to help their own children's foundational literacy progress.

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

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

**The Panel may like to consider whether:**

- The KDC provides sufficient information to identify children who may be at risk.
- An oral language screener should be included in appointments at Child and Family Health Centres to identify children at risk of Developmental Language Delay.

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

**The Panel may like to consider whether:**

- A 'Phonics Status' screen for all students might be useful. At this stage, the KDC and Year 1 Phonics check are two years apart. Therefore, we invite the Panel to consider ongoing diagnostic assessment screeners so any gaps can be identified and addressed in a timely and systematic manner.
- Literacy screening in the early years of schooling would be useful. This screener would ideally take place three times a year, from Prep onwards to Grade 3 and/or for students who have not yet mastered the code.

**The Adult Years (18+ years-old)**

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

The guidance that might be useful in a community-wide framework would be the inclusion of a self-assessment tool and rubric, specific to each service, to guide future goal setting, resource allocation and priorities.

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

Further comments for consideration:

- We believe that significant gains could be made by ensuring that Systematic Synthetic Phonics, supported by decodables are used in the junior years. This would address the 40% of students who have previously been left behind and would provide a significant, measurable improvement (Young, 2017).
- Please consider developing the data literacy capability in all teachers and leaders to enable the effective interpretation of data sets that will inform future instructional decision-making and therefore improve student outcomes.
- Please consider clarifying the role of school principals, key school and community personnel to optimise student literacy learning. Appropriate training and support for Principals as Literacy Leaders programs would also be useful.
- As teacher assistants (TAs) often build positive and trusting relationships with 'at-risk' students, would the Panel consider upskilling TAs by providing ongoing training to support the improvement of literacy outcomes?
- Please consider adding some guidance around the additional needs of *English as an Additional Language/Dialect* students and their teachers.