

LITERACY PROGRAMMING FOR ADULTS WA PUBLIC LIBRARIES TOOLKIT

The ability to read and write underpins everything we do, every day. A literate community is strong and inclusive, where individuals and families are resilient, aspirational, socially engaged, informed, healthy and connected.

Research from the Australian Productivity Commission outlines the links between literacy skills and education, employment, health, social and community participation, and states that higher levels of literacy are associated with higher educational attainment, greater earning potential, better health outcomes, and increased community participation and personal wellbeing.

In 2017, the State Library of Western Australia launched the [Literacy Matters Literacy Strategy 2017–2027](#) with the goal that all Western Australians:

- Are **aware** of the value of literacy in opening up lifelong potential and learning
- Have the **opportunity** to improve their literacy skills
- Have **access** to literacy learning programs


Libraries have consistently been providers of informal and non-formal learning opportunities for the communities they serve. Most have book clubs and targeted adult literacy collections, and many provide English conversation sessions, and access to online adult literacy programs such as the International English Language Test System (IELTS). Libraries also provide digital literacy sessions to support adults to develop the skills they need to participate safely and effectively in the online world.

This toolkit seeks to assist libraries in the development and delivery of literacy programming for adults.



PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK

The following framework is intended to guide library thinking in relation to the development and delivery of library-based literacy programming for adults. It is not envisioned that every program will address all elements of the framework, rather it provides some key considerations that will help ensure that your programming meets both your library's and your community's needs.

Program Considerations	Questions to Ask	Strategies for Addressing	Examples
Library Outcomes	Is there a clear link between your program and the core business/ key strategic directions of your library?	Ensure that you can articulate how your program supports the strategic planning of your library service.	Our <i>Cyber Safety</i> workshops support our library's key direction of building community digital literacy skills, so that people can participate safely and effectively online.
Literacy Development Outcomes	What literacy outcomes have you built into your program? Are the literacy outcomes explicitly stated? Have you provided links to library collections for those attending?	Make explicit the literacy elements and outcomes of the program. Look for opportunities to introduce participants to elements of your collection that you think will be of interest.	Our <i>English Conversation Sessions</i> support the development of speaking and listening skills for adults with a first language other than English. To create links to our collection, we hold the sessions adjacent to our adult literacy collection and promote these resources to attendees.
Accessibility	Is your program accessible for people with additional needs? Does your program meet the requirements of your Local Government, or in-house, Disability and Inclusion (DAIP) Plan?	Ensure that your program meets DAIP requirements. Alternatively, you might decide to modify and run a similar but separate program to support participation by a specific group in your community.	Our <i>Book Club</i> supports participation by people with additional needs by providing access to content in different formats – including ebooks with accessibility features such as the ability to change the size and type of font, including dyslexic font, and VoiceOver functionality. The sessions are held in an open area of the library that is accessible via the lift and is wheelchair friendly?
Cultural Inclusivity 	Is your program sensitive to the needs of the various cultural groups in your community, and does it celebrate cultural differences?	Use data from sources such as the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to gain an understanding of the cultural diversity of your community.	Our <i>Community Language Teacher</i> Inductions support community language schools in the development and delivery of their programs. They also foster connections between these schools and the library.

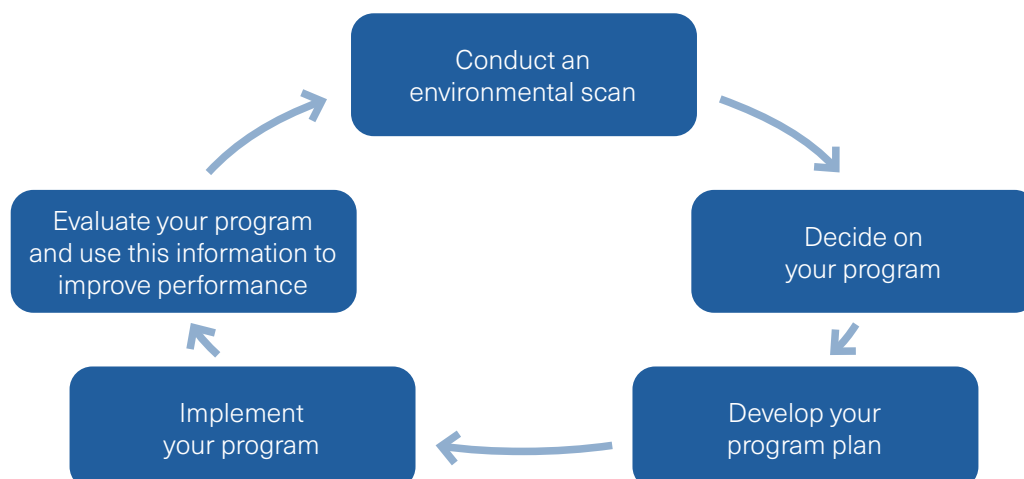
Program Considerations	Questions to Ask	Strategies for Addressing	Examples
Gender Inclusivity	Does your program use gender neutral language to encourage participation by all?	Review program marketing and materials to ensure that this information does not suggest that the program is targeting one specific gender group.	Come along to our weekly <i>Book Club for Adults</i> . All are welcome!
Community	Are any similar programs happening in your community? Who is your target audience for this program and what other services might they be engaging in?	Talk to stakeholders in your community. Research your community.	Our <i>eConnect space</i> supports the development of adults' digital literacy skills in a space where they are assisted to safely navigate the online world to find information and services.
Limitations	What are the space, budget and resource constraints, including staff availability and training needs?	Consider the program within the delivery of the library service.	Participation will be limited to 15 people. Resources will be purchased from the adult literacy program budget, and staff time will come from the staffing budget.

HOW TO GET STARTED?

Tips for planning a program

- Community Mapping. Who will the program be aimed at? Participants may be adults who left school with only a basic level of education, those without ICT skills, people with learning difficulties, with English as an additional language, or those who are in institutions such as prisons. [ABS Community Profiles](#) can help provide an overview of the community and support targeting specific areas or skills in your community. You can also find diversity information and statistics on the [Office of Multicultural Interests](#) website.
- Coming up with an idea for a program can be difficult. Find out about other adult literacy initiatives in Western Australia, Australia and overseas. Talk to other public libraries, adult learning providers, and organisations such as the Western Australian Adult Literacy Council (WAALC). Brainstorm with colleagues, encourage staff to add their thoughts and ideas to a shared space such as large piece of butcher's paper in a staff area or a shared online document, ask possible participants for suggestions – for example via social media or a basic survey.
- Many literacy programs for adults revolve around book clubs, English conversation sessions, and cyber safety. Your library may be able to offer another version of an existing program, for example a book club that uses abridged titles or easy reads, or a digital literacy program that supports the development of the skills needed in the workplace. Think outside the box – use self-guided activities such as the State Library's [Northbridge Walking Trail](#). The trail, which is written in accessible language, and can be done alone or with others, requires walkers to follow directions, read information about key historical places, and encourages discussion.
- Consider having pop-up programs eg for World Poetry Day try Black Out Poetry. Using discard books that have no further use, pull out the pages and leave them on a table with some black markers. Encourage people to black out words to make a poem with the words that remain. An alternative version is Book Spine Poetry. By piling the books in a particular order, participants create a poem with the words on their spines. These could remain displayed or could be photographed and entered in a competition.
- Consider who you can partner with to deliver the program – eg literacy support providers such as Read Write Now, TAFE's Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP), not-for-profit organisations, prisons, and workplaces.
- Ask other libraries running similar projects what has and hasn't worked for them. You can do this via the [Libraries, Learning and Literacy Group](#) (LLLG) or [Public Libraries Online](#) (PLO).
- Consider any limitations to the program eg space, budget, and time. How long will the program run for? Are the sessions at a time that suits the intended participants? Is the space you will use welcoming and comfortable? Do staff need training to deliver the program?
- Consult with appropriate people to discuss plans for access and inclusion (Indigenous Project Officer, Access and Inclusion Project Officer, local networking groups, local service providers).
- Consult the library team on their thoughts and support for the project. Engaging colleagues is more likely to result in a program that they feel confident promoting and supporting.
- Develop a program plan, including how and when you will evaluate, and seek feedback on the plan from appropriate stakeholders.

Your planning should include the following stages:



PROGRAM PLAN TEMPLATE

Program Title:	<i>Enter the planned name for the program.</i>
Target Audience:	<i>Enter the target audience for the program.</i>
Background:	<i>Enter the relevant background information for the project. For example, where the idea came from and reasoning for delivering the program with support from research if applicable.</i>
Objectives:	Library Outcomes – <i>Links to Library strategic plans or other sources relevant to library service</i> Literacy Outcomes – <i>Reflects the literacy learning outcomes for participants of the program.</i>
Scope:	<i>Enter summary information about when, where, and how often the program will be delivered as well as what will be delivered.</i>
Accessibility Adaptations or Considerations:	<i>Enter any ideas for how to support accessibility.</i> The Accessible Events guide for organisers, developed by the Meetings and Events Industry of Australia and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, is designed to help organisers to ensure that events are accessible for people with disabilities. Also consider the accessibility of any online promotional material – try to conform with W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines .
Cultural Considerations:	<i>Enter any ideas for how to demonstrate cultural respect.</i>
Required Resources:	<i>Enter all resources required to deliver the program.</i>
Budget:	<i>Enter approximate costs required to deliver the program.</i>
Stakeholders:	<i>Enter all people involved in the project, including internal and external stakeholders such as potential partners and participants. If known, outline their involvement in the project.</i>
Promotion:	<i>Enter the methods used to promote the program.</i>
Evaluation:	<i>Enter the methods used to evaluate the program.</i> <i>Consider using short-term evaluation – for attendance figures, feedback from participants etc; and long-term evaluation – for the impact of the program, including changes in behaviour or progress made as a result of participation.</i> <i>Consider how feedback, attendance statistics and any observations will be recorded. Be systematic in collecting and keeping this information.</i> <i>Tips for evaluation are included on page 11 of this toolkit.</i> <i>The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) has a useful step-by-step guide.</i>

EXAMPLE PROGRAM PLAN

Program Title:	English Conversation Sessions
Target Audience:	Adults with English as a second or additional language
Background:	Patrons who have English as a second or additional language have expressed an interest in attending English conversation sessions.
Objectives:	Library Outcomes – The program meets a need in our community and encourages this cohort to use our other resources and services. Literacy Outcomes – Adults with English as a second or additional language develop their speaking and listening skills.
Scope:	Sessions run from 10:30am to 12:00pm on Wednesdays and Fridays during school term times.
Accessibility Adaptations or Considerations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The sessions are held in an open area of the library that is accessible via the lift and is wheelchair friendly. – Online promotional content meets accessibility requirements – and the language used in all promotional material is <i>at a level that is appropriate for the intended audience.</i>
Cultural Considerations:	Opportunities will be sought to discuss topics that celebrate and recognise a variety of cultures.
Required Resources:	1 volunteer facilitator, 2 volunteer ‘chatters’, topics for discussion and supporting resources, chairs, clipboards, paper and pens.
Budget:	<p>Staff time = 1 hour approx. per week: \$35 x 30 weeks = \$1,050</p> <p>Resources = \$200</p> <p>Initial promotion = \$250 (\$150 for printed materials and \$100 for a boosted post)</p> <p>Total budget = \$1,500</p>
Stakeholders:	TAFE’s Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP), Dept. of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, Office of Multicultural Interests, library volunteers.
Promotion:	Website, Social media, Print material – placed at the Welcome Desk, near the adult literacy material, and provided to stakeholders.
Evaluation:	<p>Facilitators will let participants know that they can give feedback at any time – either verbally, or using the feedback forms, if they prefer.</p> <p>The program coordinator will talk to the facilitators to monitor how the sessions are going.</p> <p>At the end of the year, a program review will be undertaken. Feedback will be sought from participants, facilitators and volunteers – and the information gathered will be used to inform future planning.</p>

PLANNING A SESSION

Session Plan Template

Program: <i>Enter title of program</i>	Date: <i>Enter Date</i>	Staff Member: <i>Enter staff member planning session</i>
Topic:	<i>Provide a summary of the focus of the session</i>	
Relevant links if applicable:	<i>Enter any links which might be useful to support delivery of the session</i>	
Learning Outcome:	<i>Outline the learning outcome planned for adults participating in the session</i>	
Access and Inclusion considerations:	<i>Make a note of any considerations to ensure the session is accessible</i>	
Resources:	<i>List all resources required to deliver the session</i>	
Set up:	<i>Make any notes for how the session should be set up</i>	
Introduction:	<i>Describe how the session will be introduced</i>	
Steps:	<i>Outline the steps for the session</i>	
Conclusion:	<i>Describe how the session will be concluded</i>	

Example Session Plan 1

Program: English Conversation Sessions	Date:	Staff Member:
Topic:	Change	
Relevant links if applicable:		
Learning Outcome:	Participants learn new words and phrases, practice known ones, and develop their confidence to speak in English.	
Access and Inclusion considerations:	The session is in an open area of the library that is accessible via the lift and is wheelchair friendly.	
Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Session plan for facilitators and chatters - Clipboards, pens and paper for participants to jot down words - Labels for participants' names - Whiteboard and markers (if required) to demonstrate spelling etc 	
Set up:	Chairs set up in a circle	
Introduction:	Welcome everyone. Introduce yourself and the 'chatters' who will be assisting. Explain that the topic for the session is <i>change</i> , and that we will be doing an ice-breaker activity to get us warmed up, followed by some paired and group chatting.	
Steps:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icebreaker activity: '<i>No repetition, no hesitation</i>' – ask each person in the circle to quickly name a colour without repeating what has already been said. See how long you can keep it going. Note any unusual colours and at the end ask if everyone knows what they are. - It's the Melbourne Cup this week, so talk a little about that – are the participants planning to watch it? Are any of them dressing up? etc. Use this as a segue to introduce the photographs of racegoers from 1900 onwards that will be used for discussion during today's session. - Small group discussion – using the photographs, ask participants to talk about the changes they can see over the years, and what the photographs tell us about 'going to the races' at the times they were taken etc. - Re-group and ask for people's thoughts about the photographs. - Paired discussion – split into pairs and get participants to ask each other some prepared 'change' questions – e.g. Are you someone who likes change? Do you think change is good or bad? If you could change something, what would it be? etc. - Group discussion – talk about the changes that have happened during 2020 	
Conclusion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thank everyone for attending and remind them about next week's sessions. - Tell attendees you are happy to hear any feedback or suggestions. 	

Example Session Plan 2

Program: Quick Reads Adult Book Club	Date:	Staff Member:
Topic:	The Classics: Charles Dickens Depending on reading ability of group: Great Expectations (Stage 2); David Copperfield (Stage 3); or A Tale of Two Cities (Stage 4)	
Relevant links if applicable:		
Learning Outcome:	Participants develop their reading, communication, and social skills by reading together and discussing what they have read.	
Access and Inclusion considerations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants can read the hard copy or ebook versions of titles. - Discussion is casual and no writing is required in the session. - Space is physically accessible. 	
Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Morning/afternoon tea (crackers, vegetable sticks, dip, muffins, water, juice, cups, and plates) - Whiteboard markers - Discussion questions - Copies of books - Devices for those who wish to read online 	
Set up:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chairs set up in a circle with morning/afternoon tea nearby - Books from display on a nearby table 	
Introduction:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Start the session with an icebreaker activity - Introduce this week's book and provide an opportunity for people to briefly share any thoughts or comments about it - Explain that, in pairs, they are going to read a chapter each session and then regroup to discuss what they have read. The facilitator will circulate and assist as needed. 	
Steps:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give everyone a copy of the book. Pair the participants, ask them to move their chairs a little distance from the circle and to take turns reading to each other until they have finished the first chapter. Ask them to think about the characters and the plot as they read, and to discuss any unfamiliar or unusual words. - As pairs finish, they can help themselves to morning/afternoon tea while others continue to read. - Once everyone has finished the first chapter and had some morning/afternoon tea, regroup to discuss the book. Questions to prompt discussion could include: - What are three words you would use to describe the first chapter? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Based on what you have read, would you recommend the book? Why? - What do they notice about the language used in the book? - Why do we read classics such as the novels of Dickens? 	
Conclusion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thank everyone for coming along and tell them that we will read chapter two next week. Participants can borrow the books if they wish, so they can pre-read the next chapter. - Remind everyone there are more books on the display if they would like to check them out, and that they are also available as ebooks. Participants can also borrow other titles/genres if they wish. - Let people know that you would like to hear any feedback or suggestions for future sessions, and that they are welcome to approach you separately if they prefer. - Allow time for the group to talk with each other and to finish the morning/afternoon tea. 	

TIPS FOR PROMOTING PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

- Utilise outreach opportunities – eg community organisations, adult literacy support providers, clubs, community notice boards.
- Promote using engaging social media posts (particularly on Facebook), flyers and brochures.
- Upselling – where the opportunity arises, tell people about the program.
- Send promotional material directly to stakeholders that can be shared via email, newsletters and social media.
- Collaborate with partner organizations in joint publicity efforts.
- Encourage attendees to bring a friend to future sessions.

FINDING STAKEHOLDERS

- [Adult Literacy Australia](#) (ALA) is the largest national peak body for adult and community education (ACE)
- [Australian Council for Adult Literacy](#) – promotes adult literacy and numeracy policy and practice
- [Australian Library and Information Association](#) (ALIA)
- [State Library of Western Australia](#)
- If you have a Community Development Officer in your organisation, they may be able to help with networks or groups in the area.
- As contacts build ask them about suggestions for other contacts.
- Local Aboriginal groups and multicultural groups

CELEBRATIONS AND SPECIAL DATES

Every day, week, or month of the year is dedicated to celebrating or recognise something. These can be opportunities to support program and events planning. You may also want to consider local events or dates or significance.

Here are some celebrations you may want to consider when planning for adults:

February 14	Library Lovers' Day
March	Harmony Week
May	Library and Information Week
September	R U OK? Day
September	Adult Learners Week
October	Stay Smart Online Week
October	Dyslexia Awareness Month
November	Australia Reads including the Australian Reading Hour
November	NAIDOC Week

For more events visit the [Our Community Calendar](#) of nationally significant events

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF FUNDING

There are a variety of grants and sources of funding that can support the delivery of programs and events.

Here are some examples:

- [BeConnected](#) – a range of grants are available to community organisations to support older people to develop their digital literacy skills.
- [Lotterywest Building Community](#) grants program aims to create opportunities for communities to come together to enhance community connection, strengthen social capital and encourage community rebuilding from the pandemic.

OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT

- [Adult Learning Australia](#) (ALA) is the largest national peak body for adult and community education (ACE)
- [Adult Migrant Education Program](#) (AMEP) – delivers tuition in the English Language to help eligible adult migrants and refugees settle successfully in Australia.
- [Australian Council for Adult Literacy](#) (ACAL) – promotes adult literacy and numeracy policy and practice
- [Australian Library and Information Association](#) (ALIA)
- [Dept. of Training and Workforce Development – adult literacy team](#) – represents the interests of individuals who may need or want to improve their literacy and numeracy skills
- [Read Write Now](#) – One to one help for adults who want to improve their reading, writing, maths, study or basic computer skills.
- [Western Australian Adult Literacy Council](#) (WAALC) – provides access to literacy information about current issues and promotes community awareness of the issues in adult literacy.
- [Writing WA](#).
- Find Australian author and illustrator websites on the [Literature Centre website](#) through [Fremantle Press](#) or [Paper Bird Speakers Agency](#).

TIPS FOR ENGAGING ADULTS

- Greet people so they feel valued and know they are welcome
- Include an icebreaker activity to encourage the group to talk to and get to know each other. Include yourself in the activity so they can get to know and feel comfortable with you as well
- Ask them for suggestions, they are more likely to attend something they have suggested

TIPS FOR EVALUATION

- As part of your planning, decide how you will evaluate your program.
- Consider using short-term evaluation (eg for attendance figures, feedback – including verbal, written, and from polls or comments on social media) and long-term evaluation (eg for the impact of the program – including progress and changes in behaviour resulting from participation).
- Consider how feedback, attendance statistics and any observations will be recorded. Be systematic in collecting and keeping this information.
- Keep interviews or surveys short and simple – only ask for information that is useful. If using a survey, encourage participants to complete it as part of the program rather than completing it later from home.
- The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) has a useful step-by step guide.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF LINKS

[ABS Census Community Profiles](#)

[ALIA: Ideas for campaigns and events in your library](#) (Library Lovers' Day, Harmony Week, Library and Information Week, National Simultaneous Storytime, International Games Week)

[ALIA: Policies, standards and guidelines](#)

[ATSILIRN Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services](#)

[Australia Reads](#)

[BeConnected](#)

[Business.gov.au: Grants and Programs](#)

[Connections – Toolkit for Western Australian Public Libraries working with culturally diverse communities](#)

[Fremantle Press Authors and Artists Directory](#)

[Government of Western Australia Community Grants Program](#)

[Libraries, Literacy and Learning Group](#)

[Literacy Matters](#)

[Literacy Matters: State Library of Western Australia Literacy Strategy 2017–2027](#)

[The Literature Centre Authors and Illustrators](#)

[NAIDOC Week](#)

[NaNoWriMo](#)

[Office of the eSafety Commissioner](#)

[Our Community Calendar of nationally significant events](#)

[Paper Bird Speakers Agency](#)

[Public Libraries Online](#)

[Read Write Now](#)

[Reading Writing Hotline](#)

[R U OK?](#)

[Tech Savvy Seniors](#)

[Western Australian Literacy Alliance](#)

[Department of Communities Projects](#)