



Community learning in focus

A strategy for Adult and Community Education in Western Australia (2009–2018)



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Education and Training**



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Message from the Minister

I am pleased to introduce *Community learning in focus*, the Government's new strategy for Adult and Community Education in Western Australia (2009–2018).

As a long term advocate of lifelong learning, I appreciate the vital role Adult and Community Education (ACE) plays in expanding people's personal horizons through active participation in their communities and developing a love of learning.

ACE provides a supportive and productive learning environment which promotes skill development and improves access and pathways to further education and training. Other benefits include enhancing learners' self esteem and confidence, contributing to their overall wellbeing and enjoyment of life.

I believe one of the greatest strengths of our education and training system is its diversity and choice. As part of this, ACE providers offer a great variety of learning opportunities which enable Western Australians to reach their individual potential.

The State Government is committed to developing this flexibility and capacity to meet the learning needs of the whole community, with more training places than ever before and a greater range of courses and qualifications to engage adult learners across the State.

I would like to congratulate all those individuals and organisations which are involved in ACE in Western Australia for their highly valued contribution to adult education and training.

Community learning in focus highlights the Government's support and promotion of ACE as an integral part of the State's education and training commitment.

Hon Peter Collier MLC

Minister for Training



Intent

Adult and Community Education (ACE) in Western Australia is community focused learning delivered through a diverse range of programs and activities.



It encompasses learning activities that are non-accredited and non-formal in nature and which contribute to the development of a person's skills and knowledge, and encourage social participation.

From 2009, it also encompasses a range of accredited formal courses for those looking for a pathway to re-enter or re-engage with education, training and employment.

ACE is a vibrant, diverse and vital part of education and training in Western Australia. It provides a variety of options and styles of delivery for Western Australians who want to access learning opportunities, whether for recreation and leisure, personal growth, ongoing skills and career development, or re-entry to further education, training or employment.

Many types of organisations across Western Australia offer ACE, such as TAFE colleges, private registered training organisations, local government, telecentres, community learning and neighbourhood centres, churches, migrant resource centres, adult education centres, seniors' education associations and Aboriginal community organisations.

For TAFE colleges, delivery of ACE is required under the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*.

The State Government is committed to supporting the delivery and growth of ACE to meet the learning needs of Western Australians.



This strategy outlines the State Government's commitment to ACE and aligns with its priorities for training from 2009 to 2018. It has been developed by the Department of Education and Training in consultation with stakeholders in the ACE community as well as others who have a role or interest in providing community focused learning activities.

Principles

The State Government strategy on ACE is underpinned by the following principles:

- ACE is an integral part of the lifelong learning continuum.
- ACE provides accessible and inclusive learning opportunities.
- ACE has broad benefits for work, personal and social development and for health and wellbeing.

The State Government recognises that:

- different learning programs and experiences, including formal, informal and non-formal learning, are needed by individuals at different stages of life
- learning programs can lead to different outcomes for different people
- some benefits and outcomes from ACE may be indirect and therefore not easily measured
- a range of organisations contribute to ACE by providing lifelong learning opportunities
- some ACE and lifelong learning will be self-funded while some will be subsidised by Government to meet strategic priorities for individuals and communities.

Roles

ACE, through the provision of both accredited and non-accredited learning experiences, has a demonstrated ability to:


- increase participation in community and work life through learning activities that foster personal development
- build pathways for adults of all ages into further education, training and/or employment through language, literacy, numeracy and other access programs providing education, self-management and work readiness skills
- provide people who are marginalised or disadvantaged with opportunities to learn and achieve, often with community organisations working together to deliver programs.



The State Government recognises the crucial role ACE plays in contributing to the growth of social and economic capital across Western Australia. ACE has the potential to contribute to the growth of skills, knowledge and qualification levels of people within the community.

The following vision and goals aim to define the way in which the State Government, through the Department of Education and Training, will complement and enhance ACE's contribution to Western Australian communities.

Vision



Western Australians have access to lifelong learning through inclusive and vibrant Adult and Community Education.

The following three goals are designed to realise the above vision.

Goal 1

ACE is an integral part of the broader Western Australian learning and training culture.

Actions

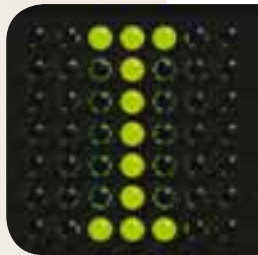
- Recognise ACE courses as important components of the Western Australian learning and training culture.
- Promote, encourage and support lifelong learning pathways into and out of ACE that facilitate personal, educational, training and employment transitions.
- Foster linkages and coordination between ACE and training programs and providers.

Goal 2

Learning outcomes delivered by ACE are valued, promoted and recognised.

Actions

- Promote best practice and benefits of ACE throughout the wider community.
- Encourage and promote skills recognition of non-formal and informal learning.
- Create a central point of access for distributing information about ACE to the wider community.
- Collect qualitative and quantitative data on Department funded ACE in Western Australia that will contribute to national data collection.



These goals and actions will guide the State Government's involvement with ACE provision, building on existing strengths, diversity and vitality. Achieving the best possible learning outcomes from ACE delivers social and economic benefits for the whole Western Australian community.

Goal 3

The capacity of ACE providers is strong and meets the diverse needs of learners.

Actions

- Ensure strategic advice from ACE representatives and community stakeholders is sought and considered by Government.
- Foster effective partnerships that optimise the capacity of ACE to:
 - deliver lifelong learning across the Western Australian community
 - respond to the needs of people who are marginalised and disadvantaged
 - encourage collaborative use of resources, knowledge and expertise between ACE and other providers.
- Support alliances and ACE initiatives that meet community needs and priorities.

Glossary

Accredited/non-accredited

Accredited education and training programs are regulated by the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework and Australian Quality Training Framework and lead to a qualification as defined under the Australian Qualifications Framework. Non-accredited programs are not regulated and do not result in the award of an official qualification.

Adult and Community Education (ACE)

ACE refers to community focused learning programs that enable a person to discover and develop his or her interests and potential. ACE is driven by community determined priorities and includes both non-accredited and non-formal courses as well as a range of formal accredited qualifications.

Community focused learning

Community focused learning responds to the needs and aspirations of people and communities, rather than the needs of industry, Government or any particular enterprise. Communities might be geographic or defined by culture or special interests. The style and content of ACE learning programs is unlimited, varying according to the community and its people. English language, literacy and numeracy courses and other access courses are examples of accredited programs. Some examples of non-accredited programs include art/craft, languages, environmental care and technology.

Formal learning

Formal learning occurs when learning is pursued through a structured program of activities that map to a set of competency areas as specified in a curriculum or training package and lead to a nationally recognised qualification.

Informal learning

Informal learning is learning that occurs outside structured programs, and may be an unintentional or inadvertent by-product of experiences that occur in work or life generally. Skills and knowledge obtained through informal learning may subsequently be mapped against defined competencies through skills recognition processes.

Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning refers to the learning pathway of a person that is initiated at birth, develops through school and other formal, informal and non-formal learning, and continues throughout adult life.

Non-formal learning

Non-formal learning is purposeful learning pursued through a structured program of activities. These are not necessarily mapped to a set of competency areas outlined in a curriculum or training package, and therefore the program does not result in the award of a qualification. Skills and knowledge gained through non-formal learning may subsequently be mapped against defined competencies through skills recognition processes.

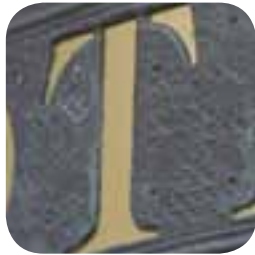
Skills recognition

Recognition of Prior Learning is a formal process used to recognise existing skills and knowledge to get a formal qualification.

Vocational education and training

Training provides knowledge and skills for work. Training courses are offered in a range of locations including TAFE colleges, private registered training organisations, community centres and workplaces.





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