



Ensuring Access to Foundation Skills Training

More Australian adults will have the opportunity to develop literacy and numeracy skills

What is the Ensuring Access to Foundation Skills Training initiative

Through the National Skills Agreement, the Australian Government is partnering with states and territories to support Australians who are facing foundation skills challenges to access the quality training they need to participate in further education and training, employment, and the broader community.

This initiative complements the Australian Government's other investments in foundation skills training, including the [Skills for Education and Employment \(SEE\) Program](#), which delivers free language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills training to eligible Australians.

What are the benefits of the initiative?

Foundation skills (language, literacy, digital literacy, numeracy, and employability skills¹) are the competencies that underpin workforce participation, productivity, and social inclusion.

These are core 'learning to learn' skills, necessary to provide people with access to an education system from which follows opportunities to develop careers, participate in lifelong learning and support social engagement.

Foundation skills training must better serve the 1 in 5 Australian adults – around 3 million – who have literacy and/or numeracy gaps. This initiative provides Australians with unmet foundation skills needs who have left school, with opportunities to enhance their skills.

What does it mean for the VET system?

The initiative takes an approach that delivers a 'no wrong door' experience for learners.

¹ Employability skills are a set of non-technical skills, knowledge and understandings that underpin successful participation in work.

To ensure access to foundation skills training for learners with an assessed need, the Australian Government is supporting states and territories to provide no or low-fee access to training through their VET and/or Adult and Community Education (ACE) or equivalent providers.

Funding for the ACE sector recognises its key role in supporting the most disadvantaged Australians, who may find it difficult to engage with mainstream education and prefer to learn in a more informal local community environment.

The [National Foundation Skills Strategy 2025–2035](#) has been established through this initiative to strengthen the quality and sustainability of the sector. The Strategy sets a shared direction for all governments for adult foundation skills nationally over the next decade and reflects Skills Ministers' shared commitment to build foundation skills levels among Australian adults. Skills Ministers have agreed a range of actions to support implementation of the Strategy.

How much funding has been allocated?

The Australian Government is investing \$142 million over 5 years to improve foundation skills training quality and access. This includes \$77 million for foundation skills training through the Adult and Community Education sector, or equivalent.

Where can I find further information?

The Australian Government has worked collaboratively with states and territories to agree on implementation arrangements to deliver improved access to foundation skills training, including through the ACE sector. Further details are available in the published Foundation Skills [implementation plans](#) on the Federal Financial Relations (FFR) website.

The National Foundation Skills Strategy 2025–2035, including an Easy Read version, is available at: www.dewr.gov.au/national-skills-agreement/national-foundation-skills-strategy-2025-2035

