

Reading Writing Hotline Evaluation Final Report

Prepared by Social Equity Works for
TAFE NSW Sydney Institute

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Reading Writing Hotline
1300 6 555 06



A free national referral service for adults.

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SOCIAL RESEARCH | POLICY | PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key Findings

Over the three years of the evaluation there have been 568 contacts with stakeholders. 50 callers to the Hotline were tracked over the evaluation period via phone interviews to determine the positive outcomes from referrals and identify any significant barriers to callers 'taking the next step in their literacy journey.'

'I feel more confident just knowing that I can do this. I can do other things. I started off slow in life but I am developing an understanding of life now. I had a bad experience at school. I was in special classes but they didn't suit me - too slow, I didn't like it. I am now good at work. I can hold down a job. I can do something like this.'
(Caller to the Hotline – 2016 sample)

Overall Success

The evaluation has found that the Reading Writing Hotline has been successful against the three service domains that were the remit of this evaluation; efficiency, quality and effectiveness. These three domains are defined as follows:

1. Efficiency is the provision of service and support to callers in a way that utilises resources and meets agreed target numbers of callers without exceeding budget and in a timely manner,
2. Quality is the adoption of a continuous improvement cycle to the provision in both service to callers and processes and practices, and
3. Effectiveness is ensuring that callers are provided with referrals that meet their specific and individual needs and that led, where ever, possible to positive outcomes and in addition that the Hotline has provided support / resource or related service to other key stakeholders in including successful delivery of the Strategic Improvement Projects.

As set out on the Program Logic (see Appendix 1) the evaluation has looked at the interconnectedness of the domains of efficiency, quality and effectiveness in considering the overarching success of the Hotline in addressing its purpose and meeting the process and impact evaluation indicators.

Efficiency

Efficiency has been measured by the balance between inputs (financial, in-kind, infrastructure, governance and human resources) and outputs (calls taken, new staffing, promotional activities, and systems revisions including ongoing website review and upgrades to the database and phone system) indicates that the Hotline maintains its level of overall efficiency.

In addition, the Hotline has produced resources to support learners and home tutors and has worked with industry and ATSI peak bodies to develop outputs specifically for these key stakeholder groups.

Call numbers continue to increase.

Year	Call Number	Target	Status
2015/2016	3683	n/a	n/a
2016/2017	4082	3866	+ 6%
2017/2018	4283	4059	+ 5.5%

Table 1: Call Numbers by Target by Year

Quality

Several measures have been used to determine the quality of the service both externally (as it is perceived by stakeholders) and internally as the evaluators evidenced the service applying a continuous improvement framework. The perceived 'quality' of the call as reported by the caller determined by:

- the quality or accuracy of the referral,
- the quality of the service they received (timely, responsive, easy to understand and accurate information), and
- whether or not they would recommend the service to others.

The other measure of quality has been the continuous improvement approach taken by the service from the Manager through to the staff. This is evidenced in numerous ways including regular staff improvement meetings where issues such as culturally sensitive awareness training for ATSI callers, accessing resources and making changes to the database have been workshopped and developed, debriefing difficult or sensitive calls with other staff and/or the Manager to ensure effective referrals and follow-up and regular reports to the Steering Committee relating to both the evaluation and the implementation of quality processes.

The evaluation has also found that there has been a significant shift in the quality of the diagnostic / tutoring work undertaken by the teachers who staff the Hotline. While an average call is between five – fifteen minutes teachers can spend up to 45 minutes with complex, high need callers. This includes:

- Hearing their story
- Determining their issue / need
- Discussing the range of options available to them
- Commencing some initial tutoring with them over the phone
- Identifying the best referral information for them and whether enrolling in training is appropriate

They can also, where necessary, provide them with ongoing support and assistance with navigating provider enrolment and follow up calls to services.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the service has been evaluated by reviewing the intersection of a number of key elements including:

- the management processes relating to governance and quality improvement work
- analysing the feedback from callers and about the results of the referrals and / or other outcomes of calls
- feedback from other key stakeholders including training and service providers, Steering Committee members and
- the outcomes of quality improvement projects (funded separately under the deed)

The results of management processes, governance and quality have been outstanding, as has the completion rate of, and outcomes from, quality improvement projects (see discussion below). Feedback from key stakeholders including training and other service providers and employers has been positive as has the general feedback from callers with literacy need.

It should be noted that the evaluation does not provide a metric for the number of 'successful' referrals over time as it was beyond the resources of this project to conduct a large-scale phone survey of past callers. It is also predicated on an assumption that successful referrals result in enrolments which is not always the case and only one measure of success.

Evidence from the small caller samples indicates that around one third of callers (individuals calling on behalf of self) used the referral within 6 – 12 weeks and it led to successful follow up action. While this successful follow up action may include enrolment this was not the sole indicator. It could also include: attendance at an informal program run by a community provider, linking to a literacy tutor, downloading self-paced resources or receiving and using other follow-up material posted by staff at the Hotline.

In the course of conducting this evaluation the evaluator has revised the definition of success as some callers reported that 'telling someone about their individual circumstances' and 'being heard and taken seriously' led to a positive increase in self confidence with or without taking an additional step.

Callers with Complex Needs

The evaluator also notes that some callers have high and complex needs. These callers, including Aboriginal callers living remotely, report having difficulty negotiating formal educational environments. The Hotline staff have increased their outputs to provide additional support and linkages for callers with complex needs including calling training providers directly to negotiate additional support and pathways for enrolment, delivering phone-based tutoring and identifying and sending appropriate resources.

Area for Improvement

Apart from the diagnostic adult literacy skills of the teachers who staff the Hotline the provider database is the engine room of the service. There are currently 1114 providers in 1566 locations listed on the Hotline database.

Updating provider information is ongoing and time-consuming work that is vital to the success (effectiveness) of the service. The accuracy of the referral is critical to the success of the outcome for callers especially where there has been a negative past experience of education and training (see discussion below).

There are a number of factors that impact on this area of service provision including:

- Ongoing changes to the provision of programs / courses and services by training and other service providers at the local level which are not conveyed to the Hotline
- Changes in staffing at training and other service providers level leading to a loss of continuity and relationship with the Hotline
- Loss of funding for literacy programs in States and Territories depending on shifts in literacy and foundation skills policy
- Lack of incentive for training and other service providers to update their course offering entry on the Hotline database

The Hotline has made considerable improvements to enable training and other service providers to update their own course information and also conduct phone follow up and online survey to any identify changes and update the database accordingly. That said, feedback from phone interviews with callers indicates that this is an area that impacts on the perception of the effectiveness of the service and the ability of callers to find courses that suit their needs.

There is also a gap between a caller's experience of the Hotline teaching staff which is diagnostic and sensitive to the callers needs and the subsequent experience they have in calling training and other service providers where their call may be answered by an administration or customer service staff member who has little or no training in assisting disadvantaged adult learners and/or those with literacy and numeracy needs.

The Hotline management has prioritised strengthening performance in a range of key areas including:

- Customer experience and quality of call provision which has incorporated:
 - Support for the educational diagnostic work of teachers,

- Data base accuracy of training and other provider offerings and useability of the database for the Hotline teachers,
- Website accessibility to ensure alignment with universal design principles, and
- The provision of literacy resources on the site.

The Hotline management has identified the following areas of improvement for additional work:

- The need for more low level literacy resources for adult learners
- The need for more literacy resources for First Nations people in language to assist with literacy

The Hotline has produced a number of resources to support this provision that are provided to the caller when appropriate. This work is ongoing.

Outcomes

Positive Feedback about the Hotline from Callers

The evaluation (see Progress Reports 1 and 2) has shown that the initial call to the Hotline is predominantly a positive experience for the caller. For both the caller samples at the two to three-month mark callers interviewed predominantly reported that 'calling the Hotline had been a positive experience'. This was largely due to:

- The care taken by the staff member in understanding the callers needs (effective literacy diagnosis)
- Feeling heard and understood – this may be the first time the person has had an in-depth conversation about their literacy needs and it may elicit feelings of embarrassment and shame
- The clarity and accuracy of the referral information given
- The call leading to a positive outcome

Ninety (90) % of those interviewed in 2016 and ninety-five (95) % of those interviewed in 2017 agreed that they would recommend the Hotline to others. Callers in both samples who 'took action as a result of the referral information provided' demonstrated an increase in 'their ability to act' and their self-reported levels of confidence.

It is important here to distinguish between those callers who took follow up action and those who did not. Some respondents were still unable to follow up on the referral information they were given for a range of reasons including:

- Change in personal circumstances – i.e. moved away, changed employment, became ill
- Lack in self confidence
- Inability to negotiate the training provider system appropriately

Callers in both samples who 'took action as a result of the referral information provided by the Hotline' but who 'had unsuccessful interactions with the follow up calls they made to providers' were the least positive respondents in interviews. Some were able to distinguish between the support provided by the Hotline staff and the poor outcomes of their follow up calls to training providers while others conflated the two calls and associated poor enrolment outcomes with the service given by the Hotline.

In the final call sample (May – June 2018) six callers from Sample 2 indicated that they had either completed the course they had enrolled in or used the skills they had learnt to identify an appropriate program to meet their needs. One caller who had been negative about their outcomes in 2017 had moved interstate and started attending literacy courses at their local library.

It is also worth noting that for many callers their call to the Hotline is the first time they may have spoken with someone about their literacy needs and that the act of taking this step alone can have a considerable positive impact on callers.

The following factors have been identified as negatively impacting on positive outcomes for callers:

- Inaccuracy of the referral information provided to callers (10% callers)
 - the ability of the Hotline to stay up to date with these changes (accuracy of the data available to them about Training Provider offerings),
- The capacity of the caller to act on the referral information without additional assistance,
- Cost, timing and inappropriate level of tuition for course, and
- The poor customer service or student enrolment interface offered by some training provider

People who called on behalf of family, friend or client reported that they were able to pass on the information to their contact however that it was up to each individual to 'take the next step.' The majority of these callers reported that they had a better understanding of the 'possible next steps' for their family member, friend or client and/or would recommend the Hotline to someone else including colleagues.

Employers who were interviewed in 2018 also indicated that they found the service offered to them by the Hotline 'positive', it either resulted in them following up with a number of providers for the delivery of customised inhouse training, providing course information to staff member/s and/or passing on the relevant material to the appropriate member of their organisation for follow up.

It is still the opinion of the evaluator ¹that the positive feedback about the service reflects the role and quality of the service provided by the Hotline teachers and the accuracy of the initial diagnostic work that they do with each caller. This quality of service is led by the Hotline Manager who acts as a champion of quality educational service provision for adults with literacy needs.

Key findings from callers include:

- 90 % of callers in 2016 and 95 % of caller in 2017 who answered the question on confidence reported feeling 'more confident' about taking the next step in relation to their literacy needs as a result of calling the Hotline.
- There is ongoing confusion for a proportion of callers about the role of the Hotline – while over half the callers in both samples understood that the Hotline is a referral service, a little fewer than half of the people contacted were confused about the distinction between the Hotline and training or service providers.
- There are a number of barriers to engaging successfully with some providers that meant that the referrals did not lead to outcomes including:
 - Providers failing to contact the caller back,
 - Providers course offerings changing and not offering the 'exact' course available to meet the caller's needs,
 - The complexity of online or hard copy application forms which meant that callers were unable to complete their enrolment without assistance, and
 - The location, cost and timing issues that mean that the courses available were unsuitable to the caller's needs.
- Where there was an unsuccessful outcome with providers callers did not know 'what to do next' and did not call the Hotline back for additional referral or support

¹ See 2017 Evaluation Progress Report 2.

For callers who have experienced a sense of shame or low self-esteem in relation to their literacy it was apparent that any unforeseen barrier to enrolment or taking the next step could lead to poorer outcomes. If the referral information provided by the Hotline was not 'spot on' in meeting the callers needs this group became easily discouraged. It was also observed that some callers faced significant challenges including learning disabilities and mental health issues that made it difficult for them to both approach adult learning with confidence and also act on information provided by the Hotline.

It should be noted that negative perspectives about the training provider 'intensified' over time. At the 12 month and six-month mark those callers who had been unsuccessful in accessing a course or program, reported more negative responses about the training provider and by extension, for some callers, the Hotline itself than at the initial two-month interview.

This raises again the importance of the intersecting factors of the quality and capacity of the Hotline teachers to provide expert nuanced responses and support to individuals depending on their specific needs and also the critical importance of the accuracy of the database information. It also reinforces the need for some form of follow up process or further encouragement for callers to ring back with the referral is unsatisfactory.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Funding

The shift to a two-year funding agreement has enabled the Hotline to plan and deliver this national service more effectively than the 12-monthly funding cycle.

It is recommended that:

1. the two-year funding cycle is maintained (as a minimum)
 - a. this recommendation is borne out by the findings of this and an earlier evaluation (2011) conducted by another external evaluator and supported by the Steering Committee.
2. funding for staffing be increased if call target increases are maintained and/or to implement ongoing improvements as set out below including database accuracy and / caller follow up (see Rec. 5)
3. funding be made available for ongoing literacy resource development (see Rec. 15)

Management and Leadership

The position of the Hotline Manager provides valuable leadership and linkages across the literacy community and is vital to the ongoing success of the service

It is recommended that:

4. The position of Manager is maintained as a high priority.

Staffing

The employment of skilled adult literacy teachers is essential to the quality of the calls and the potential for positive outcomes which can include referral to a provider and also the provision of tutoring/resource support for callers at time of call

5. The employment of skilled adult literacy teachers should be maintained at current levels as a minimum or increased slightly if the recommendations regarding call target increases, database accuracy and/or caller follow up are adopted

Call Targets

The service is already extremely efficient and can do little else to increase call rates without increasing staffing, increasing the spend on promotion or compromising quality

It is recommended that:

6. Call targets should be maintained at current level and the focus of the service should be on the quality of the outcomes rather than the quantity of the calls received.
7. If call targets continue to increase then corresponding funds should be made available to increase staffing numbers and / or the promotional budget

Referral Accuracy

Referral accuracy can only be increased by constant updating of the provider information on the database.

It is recommended that:

8. The Steering Committee identify strategies to encourage training and other service providers in their jurisdictions to up-date the accuracy of their provider information.
9. A part time position (up to 2 days per week) is funded / established to undertake this work on an ongoing basis and liaise directly with the database manager. This position would require an increase in funding.

Caller Follow Up

Maintaining positive outcomes for callers is an important area for ongoing work. The evaluation has found that many callers value follow up contact from the Hotline and with support would be willing to take further steps. Teachers currently recommend that all callers phone back if they do not get the result they require or there is a problem with the accuracy of the referral information. This has had an impact on the number of repeat callers (see Appendix 4) however there is still scope for additional follow up.

It is recommended that:

10. Staffing should be increased either through increased hours for existing staff or the employment of an additional part time resource/s to provide a follow up service to callers at the one to two month point (post initial call) to find out how the referral has gone and if anything, else is required to support the caller's goals

Promotion/Communication

It is recommended that:

11. The well-known television advertising (and radio) campaign be maintained and funding increased as all stakeholders report that these channels lead to high brand recognition and call numbers for the Hotline.
12. Communication and messaging highlight the Hotline's role as one 'step on the pathway' towards literacy and that the pathway may involve multiple attempts and a range of literacy strategies. It is important to clearly differentiate between the Hotline's role in referral and the providers role in literacy provision.
13. The Manager continue to present at relevant conferences and fora and conduct radio and other media interviews as required

Training Providers

14. The Hotline maintains its positive engagement with training providers via Literacy Links and other key strategies.

Provision of Literacy Resources

The provision of literacy resources for adults to use in a self paced mode is a valuable addition to the Hotline delivery. The resources fill identified gaps in service delivery and were developed as a needs based response. i.e. for people who have no provision available, those with very low levels of literacy which may prevent them access to classes, those with no digital literacy skills and those with no internet access.

It is recommended that:

15. Funding be made available to continue to develop literacy resources for specific purposes to support the goals and objectives of the Hotline and service its key stakeholder groups.

OVERVIEW OF THE READING WRITING HOTLINE

The Reading Writing Hotline (the Hotline) has been delivering services for 24 years. It was established in 1994 to help its callers access adult literacy and numeracy assistance. It is a national service funded by the Federal Government and administered by TAFE NSW.

The Hotline is Australia's national 1300 number telephone adult literacy and numeracy referral service. Since its establishment, the Reading Writing Hotline has responded to 160 760 calls.

The Reading Writing Hotline is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training (DET). The Funding Agreement for the Reading Writing Hotline is between DET and TAFE NSW who manage the service for all States and Territories. The funding agreement between the Commonwealth and TAFE NSW at the time of this evaluation was for a two-year period commencing September 2016. Historically funding has been allocated on an annual basis, however this evaluation and an earlier evaluation conducted in 2011–2012 both recommended a triennial funding agreement to enable the Hotline to plan and deliver services more effectively. This increase in the agreement period was supported by the Steering Committee.

The Hotline has been managed by TAFE NSW since its inception when it was managed by the Adult Literacy Information Office (ALIO). It is currently managed by the Special Projects directorate Sydney Institute of TAFE NSW – Ultimo Campus.

The core business of the service is the provision of advice and referral to adult Australians with literacy and numeracy needs. The service has two phone-lines answered by trained adult literacy teachers who work with the caller to determine need and relevant support strategies, which can include:

- referral to a registered training or community-based provider, including distance education options,
- referral to a literacy tutor or other literacy program (non-RTO), and/or
- provision of resources or specific strategies to support adult learners with special needs.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This is the final report of the three year evaluation of the Reading Writing Hotline. It builds on the findings from Progress Report 1 (2016) and Progress Report 2 (2017). It forms the third part of a suite of three reports that have been presented in over the life of the evaluation.

For this report the evaluators have reviewed:

- the inputs (funding, staffing, in-kind, training) and
- outputs (calls received, training, advertising) of the service and
- also gathered data on outcomes from callers and feedback from other key stakeholders.
 - Online surveys were conducted with Steering Committee and Training Providers and conducted follow up phone surveys with callers from the Second Caller Sample (2017 and 2018).

The report includes an analysis of:

- inputs—funding and in-kind support etc.
- outputs and activities of the Hotline including:
 - call numbers and demography
 - training provider engagement
 - governance
 - promotion
 - Strategic Improvement Projects
- outcomes of the Hotline effort, based upon the findings from interviews with callers
- Case studies of the typical caller and the level of intervention required
- An analysis of activity of teachers across four sessions to map the process of caller diagnostics

Some of the content in this report has been reported in earlier Progress Reports as the content and analysis is still relevant to an in-depth understanding of the feedback provided by stakeholders' overtime. This is particularly true for caller interviews. Follow up interviews with callers were only conducted with Sample 2 in 2018 which adds only a small additional component to this element of the evaluation. The key findings for callers reported in 2017 remain true in 2018.

Formative Evaluation

It is also important to highlight the role the evaluation has played in ongoing improvements (formative/ process) to the Hotline including ongoing improvements to the database. Improvements were:

- Recording of all resources provided to callers
- Recording of all outgoing communication to track effort expended in assisting callers
- Ability to record callers who identify as having a disability
- Inclusion of workplace trainer category to assist industry calls
- Changes to delivery mode to update with current provider field.

The evaluation findings also led to teachers reinforcing with callers that they can call the Hotline again if they were unable to progress their referral or need additional information or support. This has led to an increase in follow up calls to the Hotline.

The report also makes a number of recommendations based on the evidence from the evaluation.

Background to the Evaluation

The longitudinal evaluation of the Reading Writing Hotline (the Hotline) commenced in late 2015, however the data-gathering process began in early 2016. The evaluation has been both formative and summative. It provides the Hotline management with feedback from stakeholders that can improve the process and inform strategy (formative) and measure, through a range of agreed indicators, the impact of the outputs of the Hotline over time.² The study has been funded for 2016-2018 which will support identifying longer-term outcomes of the program. The Program Logic model, explaining the approach underpinning the evaluation, can be reviewed at Appendix 1.

The evaluation is being conducted by Social Equity Works, reporting to the Manager of the Reading Writing Hotline, TAFE NSW Sydney region. The evaluation is being supported by an internal advisory group that included the Assistant Director of the Student Learning and Community Engagement, Sydney Institute of TAFE NSW, and the project officers with literacy expertise who have been employed to support the implementation of the Strategic Directions for the Hotline. The development of the evaluation framework and outputs and findings of the evaluation have been reviewed by the Reading Writing Hotline Steering Committee as required.

Over the three years of the evaluation 608 contacts have been made with key stakeholders including phone interviews with callers (50 callers over multiple engagements), online surveys with providers and Steering Committee members and focus groups and observations with teachers and staff of the Hotline.

Aim of the Evaluation

The aim of the evaluation is to determine the efficiency, quality and effectiveness of the Hotline to its key stakeholders. This has involved a review of the inputs, outputs and call outcomes of the Hotline.

The primary focus of the evaluation is to assess the value of the Hotline to its callers: to determine the Hotline's impact on their literacy journey in the short and medium term, that is, two months and approximately six months after their initial call to the Hotline.

In addition, the evaluation has gathered feedback from other key stakeholders³, including:

- training providers, to consider the output of training provider engagement,
- the Steering Committee, and
- the staff.

See Appendix 2 for an outline of the stakeholders included in this evaluation and the method of contact. Key stakeholder groups have each illuminated different elements relating to the efficiency, quality and effectiveness of the Reading Writing Hotline. Individual callers have made useful observations about the value and quality of the call (such as the service dimensions/information and advice provided), as well as the tangible and intangible outcomes of that call for the caller (or the person on whose behalf the call was made).

The evaluation commenced in early 2016, with caller recruitment and development of relevant survey instruments for callers, a Steering Committee online survey and a Training Provider online survey. There has been a subsequent (second) collection of feedback from callers and two focus groups with the teachers who staff the Hotline. There was further follow-

² See Appendix 3, the Reading Writing Hotline Evaluation Stakeholder Mapping and Methodology agreed with the Steering Committee in December 2015.

³ Industry Stakeholders have been included in the methodology, however the Industry Promotions Project is still being implemented so it was agreed that it was too soon to target this group for feedback. The evaluators will focus on this group in data gathering in 2018.

up with all stakeholders in 2018 and a new cohort of callers commenced in 2017 with follow up calls in 2018.

Methodology

The evaluation methodology is based upon a Program Logic model. This logic model—created through a workshop with the Hotline management and reviewed by the Steering Committee—identifies the major inputs, outputs (activities) and outcomes (impacts) of the Hotline. The outputs and outcomes all have identified indicators and these are reviewed through a combination of primary and secondary data-gathering methods.

Primary evaluation research included:

- phone interviews with callers to the RWH,⁴
- online surveys with service and training providers,
- online surveys with members of the Steering Committee, and
- focus groups with the staff of the Hotline.

The central method for measurement of impact is a longitudinal study with callers—both those calling for themselves and those calling on behalf of others (e.g. family members, friends, employers and service providers). The current funding for the study is for the timeframe from September 2015 to 30 August 2016; however, the intense data-collection period for stakeholder feedback was January to July 2016. The period from September to December 2015 was used to design the evaluation framework and data-gathering tools.

Stakeholder	2016	2017	2018	Method
2016 Caller Sample 1 2 phone interviews in 2016 and 1 in 2017	30 X 1 24 x 1	12 x 1	-	Phone interviews
2017 Caller Sample 2	-	20 X 1	14 x 1	Phone interviews
Training providers and other service providers	146	202	102	Online survey
Steering Committee	9	14	7	Online survey
Staff	6	7	-	Focus group
Manager	-	1	-	Interview
Feedback workshop	4	6	-	Workshop
Staff observation	-	2	2	Observation
Total sample contact size per year	219 ⁵	264	125	
Total sample contact size over 3 years	608			

Table 2: Sample of stakeholders by method and number

The secondary research has consisted of a review of key documents addressing the Reading Writing Hotline's governance, projects, staffing and budget.

⁴ A total of 60 calls were made to the caller sample. Thirty calls were conducted in April-May, and there were follow-up calls to this cohort in August 2016 to review the longer-term impact of calls to the Hotline.

⁵ Sample 1 Callers were interviewed twice in 2016 so the total of sample contacts for 2016 were 219.

FINDINGS

Inputs

Inputs that support the effective operation of the Hotline for the purposes of evaluation include; funding, staffing, infrastructure and in-kind support. This section describes these inputs and considers any areas of improvement or significance in relation to Hotline service provision.

Financial

The funding agreement has been extended from 12 to 24 months and the extension has netted significant benefits by enabling the Hotline to 'settle' into a more established planning and continuous improvement process.

The funding agreement between the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training covers operational funding and, since 2014–2015, has included an additional amount for strategic improvement projects. The table below outlines the funding to the Hotline since 2011 including the break down in funding by operational costs and strategic improvements costs since 2015.

Operational Cost	Strategic Improvement Cost	Total cost	% Increase
2017–2018			
\$508,000	\$130,000	\$638,000	N/A
2016–2017			
\$508,000	\$130,000	\$638,000	+6.2 %
2015–2016			
\$468,000	\$130,000	\$598,000 ⁶	+16%
2014–2015			
\$378,000	\$125,000	\$503,000	N/A

Table 3 Reading Writing Hotline program funding, 2014–2018

Over the three years of the evaluation there was a cumulative increase in funding of 11.2%. This was recorded in the first two financial years 2015-2016 (+5%) and 2016-2017 (+6.2). Funding was static between the financial year 2016-2-17 and 2017-2018 and no growth aligned to an increase in the Consumer Price Index. There was a \$41,000 increase in overall budget from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017 which is a 6% increase. This increase was, appropriately, for the operational costs of salaries and the development of a communication strategy. This amount was maintained for 2017-2018 with no additional increase.

TAFE NSW continues to receive a 4% management fee (increased from 3% last financial year). This fee covers the over-arching management of the service by the Assistant Director of Student Learning and Community Engagement. This role oversees:

- All significant expenditure and recruitment,
- Accommodation and infrastructure
- Chairing and executive support for the national Steering Committee, and
- Guidance and strategy.

⁶ In 2015–2016, funding increased 16 per cent overall on the previous year's budget.

The management fee also covers accommodation, finance, human resources and IT support for the service within the Institute. (see Appendix III for operational budget details).

Restructure

The complete restructure including relocation of the service occurred in 2015 and included the following changes:

- the relocation of the Hotline, including all infrastructure, from Petersham campus to Ultimo campus,
- major staffing changes, with the unanimous support of the Steering Committee, including hiring a manager and moving from customer service staff to trained adult literacy teachers, as originally intended for the Hotline,
- comprehensive training and support for the ten part-time qualified literacy teachers to staff the phones,
- provision of expert papers and advice to the industry via presentations and workshops as required and the production of articles and media releases to support adult literacy issues,
- provision of project expertise for the Industry Promotions Project and the ATSI adult learner project, and
- support for the review of the Hotline database through the Business Mapping project.

In-kind

TAFE NSW continues to provide a range of in-kind supports to the Hotline including management support, accommodation, access to specialised assistance including finance, IT, marketing, legal, and human resources.

Key documents including the funding agreement are reviewed where necessary by Institute senior executive.

All relocation costs for the Hotline from Petersham to Ultimo in 2015 were met through in-kind support.

The shift of the Hotline from an educational management stream (Assistant Director Student Learning and Community Engagement) to Special Projects Directorate could potentially disrupt some of the support for the adult learning approach and this should be monitored over the next 12-24 months to ensure the ongoing educational quality of the service.

Infrastructure

During the period of this evaluation the major infrastructure changes have included:

- Relocation from Petersham to Ultimo campus
- Office accommodation and admin support for 10 part time teachers and 1 Manager
- dispensing with the Vodafone Messaging Service in January 2017
- Changing service providers for the management of the Database

The Hotline continues to be accommodated in three offices on level 7 in Building D, Ultimo College, TAFE NSW Sydney Institute. The service has an appropriate range of office infrastructure, including three phone lines for the 1300 service, and desks, computers and a database.

The Hotline dispensed with the Vodafone message service in 2017 replacing it with a local voicemail system with a carefully crafted voice message. This system is more direct, easier to quality control and has removed the concern about lack of training of Vodafone call centre staff to support clients with literacy needs.

Human Resources

Appropriately salaries continue to be the largest component of the budget. As already stated this is in line with industry research that indicates that typical expenditure for service

provision is 'between 40 to 80 per cent of gross revenues on employee salaries and benefits combined'.⁷

Hotline staffing increased in 2015 to 14 staff including ten teachers on a part time roster. There is a Manager and administrative assistance 1 day per week. A series of project officers have been employed to work off site on specific projects including the Aboriginal Strategy, Business Intelligence Mapping, the resource development work and process improvement.

This staffing has been steady during 2016-2018: 1 x full-time manager, 1 x part-time admin assistant and ten part-time adult literacy teachers who staff the phone-lines.

Governance

Governance is identified as an input for the Hotline. There are currently 19 members on the Hotline national Steering Committee. This is an increase from 16 members in 2016. The Committee meets approximately four times per year for its national teleconference and the Hotline team based in Sydney provides executive support for the Committee including agenda, minute, logistics and background papers. A key focus of the Hotline team in 2015 was the reinvigoration of the governance including a revised Terms of Reference and expanded membership. The Committee includes representatives from:

- State Training Authorities (or equivalent agency) in each State and Territory,
- peak agencies including Australian Council of Adult Literacy (ACAL), Adult Learning Australia and Community Colleges Australia (CCA),
- Hotline Manager,
- Chair TAFE NSW, and
- representatives from the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training.

Outputs

The output indicators from the evaluation framework have been successfully met and include:

- call rates
- strategic improvement projects
- training provider engagement including Literacy Links
- steering committee engagement and meetings
- other activities see attached report by Hotline Manager (Attachment 3)

Call Rates

The Hotline call rates per contract period have continued to increase and exceed the 5% target set by the Commonwealth. The total number of calls to the Hotline in the 2016/17 contract period was 4082 and in the 2017/18 period was 4283. This represents an 5% increase on the number of calls from 2016/17 to 2017/18 and an 11% increase in calls since 2015/16. The call target as set out in the Grant Agreement is to increase the number of callers to the Hotline by a minimum of 5% each year. The call target set in 2016/17 was 3866 calls and was exceeded by 6%. The call target set in 2017/18 was 4059 calls and was exceeded by 5.5%.

Year	Call Number	Target	Status
2015/2016	3683	n/a	n/a
2016/2017	4082	3866	+ 6%
2017/2018	4283	4059	+ 5.5%

Table 4: Call Rates and Commonwealth Targets 2015/16 – 2017/18

⁷ <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/percent-business-budget-salary-14254.html>

A number of factors, already identified in Progress reports, have led to the steady increase in call numbers including:

- continuity of management both at the senior level and in the establishment of the position of Manager of the Hotline who can take carriage of the literacy promotional and networking work required to increase the reach of the service
- igniting the quality processes underpinning the Hotline, including recruitment of adult literacy teachers to staff the Hotline, and
- reinvigorating the Hotline's national Steering Committee which now has 19 members from all states and territories and key provider peaks and ACAL.

While the Hotline is monitored on a contract period of September 1 – August 31 and call rates for these periods have increased and exceeded targets the longer term trend in calendar year call rates is also steadily increasing.⁸

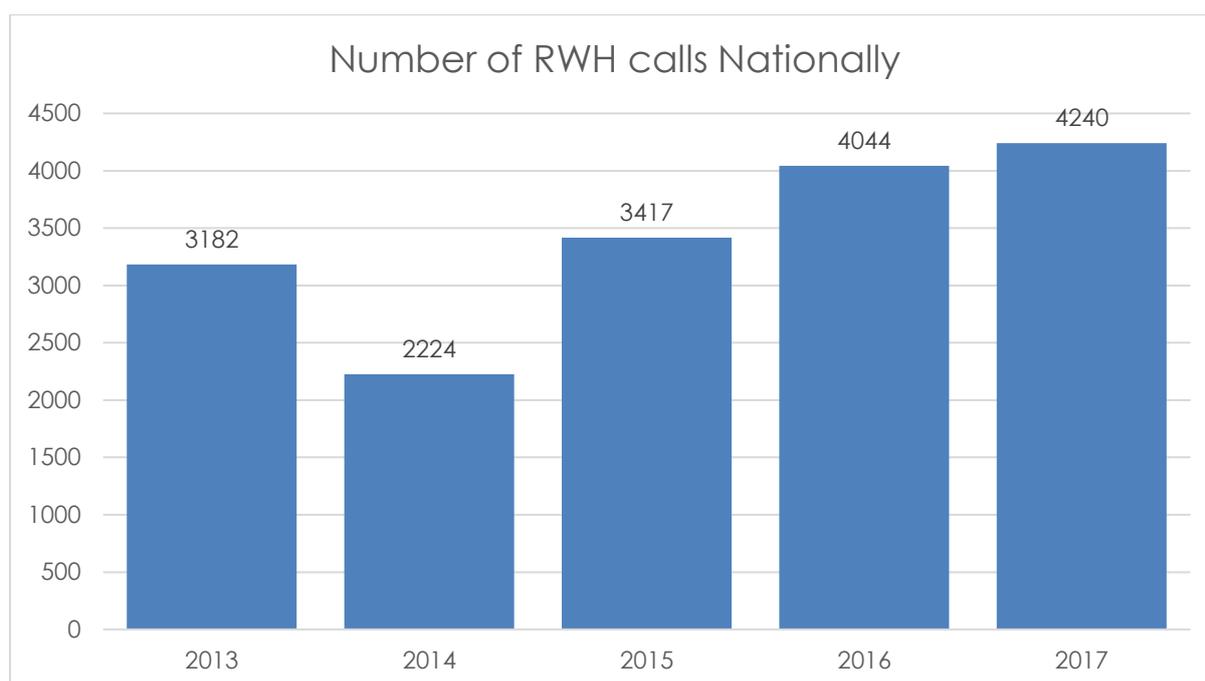


Figure 1: Annual Call Data – 2013-2017 - Reading Writing Hotline

The significant dip in calls in 2014 (while outside the timeframe for the evaluation) has been attributed to the fact that the management of the Hotline was in flux during that period and the 'Life. Be in it.' advertising campaigns did not go ahead. The advertising campaigns both commercial and community service lead to a significant increase in calls received.

The Hotline has effectively met the remainder of outputs identified in the Program Logic Model⁹ that relate to the provision of a call centre service, promotion, training provider engagement, governance and special projects.

Service users and stakeholders have reported that the Hotline provides a quality service and there are indicators that the service is effective in meeting the needs of callers.

Strategic Improvement Projects

Strategic improvement projects reviewed over the past two and half years have been implemented effectively.

⁸ Call data for 2018 is incomplete and can be provided in the next progress report.

⁹ See Appendix 2

1. Business Intelligence Mapping—training provider accuracy on the database is a key element of quality assurance and a crucial aspect of the referral service. As reported by the management in the latest progress report 'The Business Intelligence Mapping project continues to be the Hotline's main priority. In August 2018 the updated Business Mapping report was redistributed to all Steering Committee members for feedback and no changes were made as a result'.

2. Website review and redesign - Digital Accessibility

Digital accessibility for learners is a core requirement for the Hotline. A report detailing the Hotline's website's compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and WC3 requirements, was completed and submitted to the Department in March 2017 and September 2018. (complete)

Website review is an ongoing process to ensure that resources, new projects and relevant weblinks maintain their accuracy. This is important as it ties into the provision of accurate support for adults with literacy needs.

3. Literacy Links newsletter—training and service provider engagement

This was a new initiative in 2014-2015 and has proved a successful strategy for informing key stakeholders about projects, outputs and outcomes and key information sharing for the sector. It is now produced in-house and managed efficiently via mailchimp linked to the updated provider database. It is distributed to all providers on the database and members of the Steering Committee. Archive copies are available on the Hotline website. The Provider surveys (2016/2017 and 2018) have all reported high levels of interest from providers in receiving Literacy Links. In general, it is well received. Improvements recommended by providers include more information on available literacy resources, funding opportunities for providers and state specific material.

4. Quality Improvement Project

Supporting teachers to improve the quality of support and referral to callers has been identified through this evaluation process as a key element to the success of the service. Teachers work on the phones is critical to the success of the outcomes. For this reason, greater effort has been spent on support the teachers to assist callers through the following quality improvements:

- Updating the database
- Developing a suite of suitable low level literacy resources and identifying and compiling links to existing resources
 - An annotated collection of online resources across a range of categories is now available through the Hotline website for callers with digital access.
- Literacy resources for First Nations people in language
- Paper based resources
- Resource lists for tutors and libraries
- Training for teaching staff

Training for staff over the last two years has included:

- Support for industry and employers who call for advice
- Changes to SEE and AMEP programs and what it means for clients
- How to enquire sensitively about age, disability, Aboriginality with callers
- Handling prank calls appropriately
- Handling enquiries from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander callers including geographical and historical factors, linguistic issues, and cultural sensitivities and

protocols, enabling Hotline teachers to better analyse and meet callers' requirements.

- Implementation of the NDIS, and
- The role of linkers and agencies in negotiating literacy provision for callers living with a disability to assist Hotline teachers' ability to meet the needs of NDIS clients and their families.
- How to accurately record effort in outgoing/advocacy calls to providers
- Use of Symphonia text messaging system
- Making accurate and consistent allocations to categories in provider database
- Collaborative review of database design to improve functionality and accuracy of data collection
- New and updated learning resource

Hotline staff have also attended and presented at relevant conferences and industry events including VET LLN Victoria, VET LLN Western Australia, and the national ACAL conference.

The Hotline has introduced a customized text messaging (SMS) system. Texts are now able to display the Hotline's number and details to any missed calls to let them know that the Hotline had rung them. This improves the ability of Hotline staff to contact callers as those with smart phones do not always have voicemail. This had been an identified barrier to contacting callers back. Text messaging provides a private and accessible way of sending brief call-back details and easy one-touch call back and text reply option.

5. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement ¹⁰

This project has been a significant area of effort for the Hotline team. Initial research and consultation led to increased linkages with key peak agencies, providers in remote communities including from the Northern Territories and a general increase in calls from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Highlights include a specific page on the Hotline website and the production of literacy resources in First Nations languages.

This project has also led to targeted inclusive promotional strategies:

- An advertising campaign on the National Indigenous Television Network (NITN) including customized Indigenous-voiced advertisements for community service slots
- versions of the radio community-service announcements with an Indigenous voice
- images and themes relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the website and a page on the website dedicated to resources and First Nations language links and Facebook page.

6. Improved industry promotions

The industry promotion work has led to significant outputs including:

- 2 industry / workplace targeted videos featuring Kate Carnell and an adult literacy expert
- Kate Carnell who championed the Reading Writing Hotline in 2017 and her office developed a joint Media Release and worked to support the workplace literacy objectives of the Hotline
- the development of a joint statement on workplace literacy via the literacy alliance partnership between Australian Industry Group (AiG), Australian Council of Adult

¹⁰ Note, this project was initiated as a parenting and ATSI strategy however it has changed over the last two years to focus solely on support for ATSI adults at all life stages.

Literacy (ACAL), Adult Learning Australian (ALA) and Community Colleges Australia (CCA) which has produced a going statement on workplace literacy

Recently, there has been a noticeable increase in calls from employers seeking group training options. Whether this is attributable to the effort in this Strategic Improvement area is unclear at this stage however it should be monitoring in the longer term as this may be a positive outcome for this effort.

7. Evaluation

The three-year evaluation of the Reading Writing Hotline is complete. The final stage of the work has involved the following. A review of:

- the inputs (funding, staffing, in-kind support, training) and
- outputs and activities of the Hotline including:
 - call numbers and demography
 - training
 - advertising and promotion
 - training provider engagement
 - governance
 - Strategic Improvement Projects

The evaluation also looked at outcomes of the Hotline effort, based upon the findings from interviews with callers. Data was gathered on outcomes from callers and feedback from other key stakeholders. Online surveys were conducted with Steering Committee and Training Providers and conducted follow up phone surveys with callers from the Second Caller Sample (2017 and 2018).

To more deeply explore the domain of quality the evaluation has also highlighted case studies of the typical caller (2017 progress report) and the level of intervention required and an analysis of activity of teachers across four sessions to map the process of caller diagnostics. The evaluation has produced two progress reports (2016 and 2017) in addition to this final report with recommendations.

8. Statistical Analysis

This project researched the trends in the Hotline's valuable historical demographic data over a 12-year period from 2005 - 2017. A research plan and literature review were submitted by the project in March 2018. A final report detailing the outcomes of the statistical analysis and research project were submitted to the final report for 2017-2018.

Data from this review is consistent with the findings from the three years of this evaluation that 'there has been remarkably little variation in the demographic patterns of callers over the past 12 years'. For example, over this whole period:

- the proportion of male: female callers has remained at an average of 60% males to 40% females;
- the largest age category has consistently been the 25 – 44 age group, followed by the 45 – 64 age group;
- the proportion of unemployed callers has remained at an average of 17%, whilst an average of 69% are non- jobseekers, i.e., they are either employed, self-employed or not looking for work.

In short, the average caller to the Hotline has consistently been male, aged between 25 to 44, left school in Years 7 – 9, is employed or not looking for work and is from an English-speaking background.

Diagnostic Approach of Teachers

Call numbers to the Hotline tell only one part of the story and are a very simplistic metric of success. Hotline teachers expend considerable effort supporting callers to take the next step including in the case of more complex calls making multiple follow up phone calls and tracking down available useful resources which are posted or emailed to callers.

For this reason, the evaluator undertook a series of observations of Hotline activity in the 'call centre' over four sessions in November and December 2017 and February 2018.

The observations showed that teachers undertake a nuanced diagnostic process for each caller. The observational review found that this needs identification process determines the length of call but not the quality of the outcome. Calls were identified as falling in to three categories:

- Simple calls for people with low needs – 5-10 minutes per call
- Average calls for people with medium needs – 10-15 minutes per call
- Complex calls for people with high or complex needs – up to an over 30 minutes per call

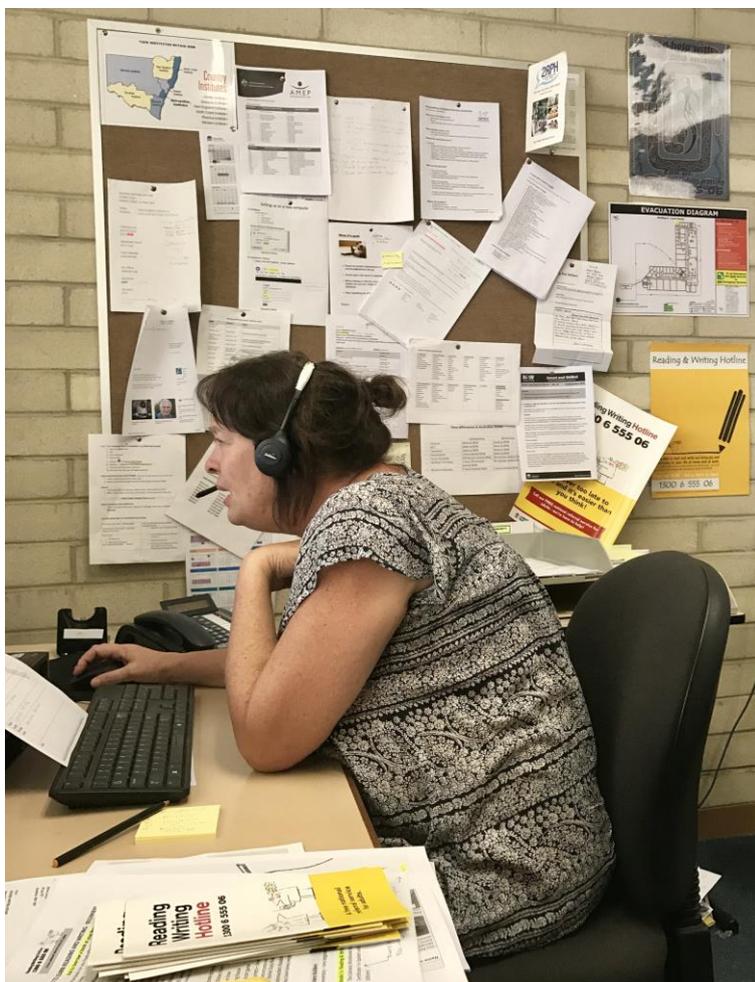


Photo 1: Teacher working with a complex caller. Print resources in the foreground (February 2018)

While the majority of calls to the Hotline fall into the simple / average call length there is an increasing number of callers who require additional support. The complexity of need can be impacted by a range of factors such as:

- remoteness,
- poor past experience of education

- early school leaving
- low self confidence
- being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background
- being of non-English speaking background,
- having a disability

For some callers it may be the first time they have spoken to anyone about their literacy needs and they wish to discuss their background and experience in some detail.

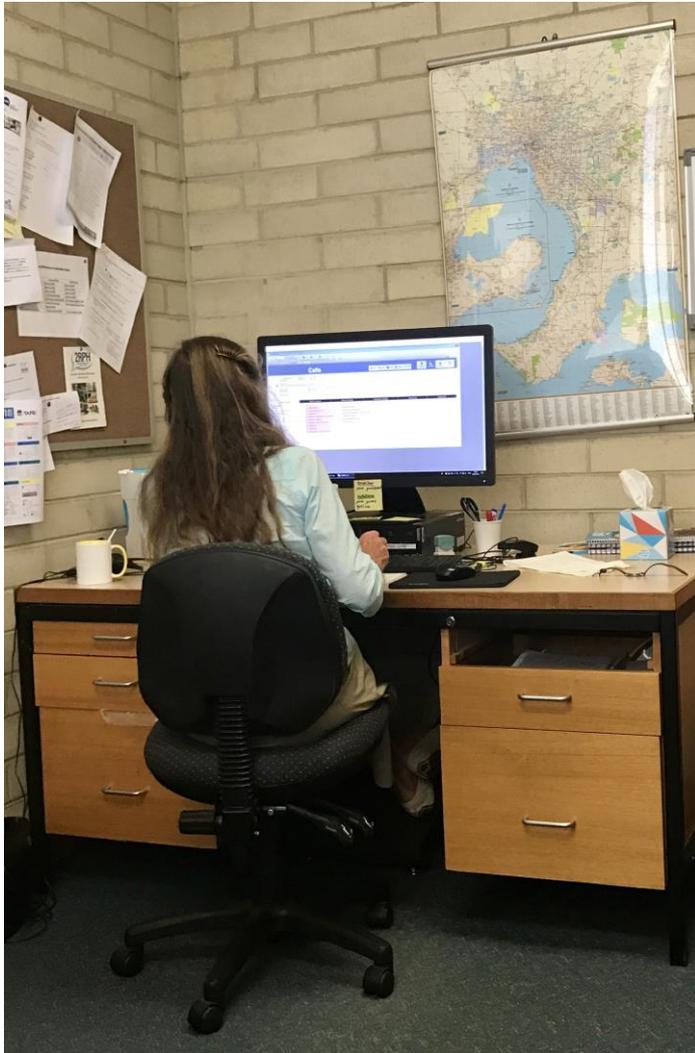


Photo 2: Teacher using the Hotline Database to assist with call referral (February 2018)

All calls are supported with the following:

- Identifying appropriate providers in close proximity using the provider database,
- Identifying any barriers to callers following up with providers,
- Assistance with tutoring advice including spelling and reading strategies, and
- Identifying if they need additional resources – links to materials or print based resources emailed or posted to them.

If the caller is identified as having complex needs then some effort is taken to establish if the caller needs any additional support to negotiate engaging with a provider. Hotline teachers can and do assist callers with follow up to providers where there is a high risk that the referral will not be followed up on. This is the case for many Aboriginal learners and those people who have had limited exposure to post compulsory educational opportunities.

Where there are no courses or providers in the caller's location the Hotline staff identify if the caller is appropriate to undertake a course via distance or online learning. Care is taken in this area as successful engagement with distance education and / or online learning requires a reasonably high level of literacy and learner engagement which may not be appropriate to the level of ability of the caller.

Prior to the Hotline being staffed by adult literacy teachers there was an over reliance on referral to distance education providers by the call centre staff as this was the easiest referral option available to them at the time. Teachers, however, are able to make appropriate diagnosis and identify low level and introductory literacy resources that may be more appropriate to the caller's needs.

Where there are no providers available and the caller is unlikely to benefit from distance or online learning the teachers discuss the range of literacy resources available that can be emailed or sent to the caller. The teacher needs to determine the following:

- Is the caller able to negotiate the Hotline website by themselves?
 - If so, the caller can be directed to the resources available online
 - If not, then the caller can be sent material at the appropriate level
- Does the caller have access to family or friends who could support them to use literacy resources at home?
 - If so, then the caller can be sent a range of resources that can be used in an informal tutoring situation
 - If not, the caller needs to be sent self paced resources that they can step through themselves.

These questions need to be addressed to ensure that the Hotline is able to support the caller in the most effective way possible.

Post call follow up work can include multiple calls to training providers to identify suitable supports for students with special needs who may have difficulty in navigating the enrolment process. This is the case for some Aboriginal callers, callers with past poor experience of formal education and other callers with high needs. It can also include locating relevant tutorial support and other literacy material that will support learners achieve their literacy goals.

Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

A decision was made by the Hotline management in consultation with the Department of Education and Training, and endorsed by the Steering Committee, that there should be a focus on increasing the call rate from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people. There was a consistently low call rate from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people over time (2012: 44, 2013: 31, 2014: 28, 2015: 43).

This project was initiated in the 2015/16 Grant Agreement period. This project will continue in the 2018-2020 grant agreement. The main objective is to consult widely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations as to what kinds of information are useful for the community and how best to disseminate them.

The Strategic Improvement Project for ATSI callers was initiated in 2015 and commenced with consultation with key stakeholders and providers. It has led to a number of significant improvements including:

- Extensive networking and research on language literacy and numeracy needs in communities
- Revoicing of advertising with Aboriginal voices
- Creation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander section of the website including both English and First Nations Language resources
- Promotional activities at Aboriginal community events
- Building relationships with Bachelor Institute, Walpiri Youth Development Education Corporation, Charles Darwin University, First Languages Australia and Indigenous Literacy Foundation
- Liaison initiated with Community Services workplace resource developers to encourage and identify areas for literacy resource development which would bridge gaps to study in these vocational areas
- Development of beginner English literacy learning workbooks, relevant to First Nations learners from communities isolated from literacy provision
- Collaboration with video/animation company iTalk studios based in the Northern Territory to repurpose short animated video stories as adult literacy readers to be published by the Hotline and distributed to libraries and callers.
- Professional development for Hotline teachers in ways to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander callers
- Inclusion of First Nations Language as a reportable field within the Language Background category on the data base
- Development of Hotline website page for information on First Nations language courses, resources and websites

There was a sharp, almost threefold increase in calls with the commencement of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders strategic improvement project in 2016 to 110 calls. In 2017 this increase to 161 recorded calls from people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Year to date figures for 2018 sees this figure almost double to 216 calls.

The initial project including mapping service provision and liaison with key literacy providers in areas where there are high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders populations. This liaison enabled the Hotline to increase its linkages with key community providers and lift the profile of the Hotline with this important community group.

While the actual numbers of calls from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people remains small, this represents approximately 5 %¹¹ of the total number of callers it is a higher percentage rate than their population share from the 2016 Census of 2.8% which is a positive outcome.

¹¹ This is a 1% increase on last year's percentage from 4%.

This increase has meant that Hotline teachers have required training to ensure they have the skills to support for this important community group. As discussed earlier training has been provided this year including an understanding of geographical and historical factors underpinning communities and their needs, linguistic issues, support for First Language literacy and cultural sensitivities and protocols, enabling Hotline teachers to better analyse and met callers' requirements.

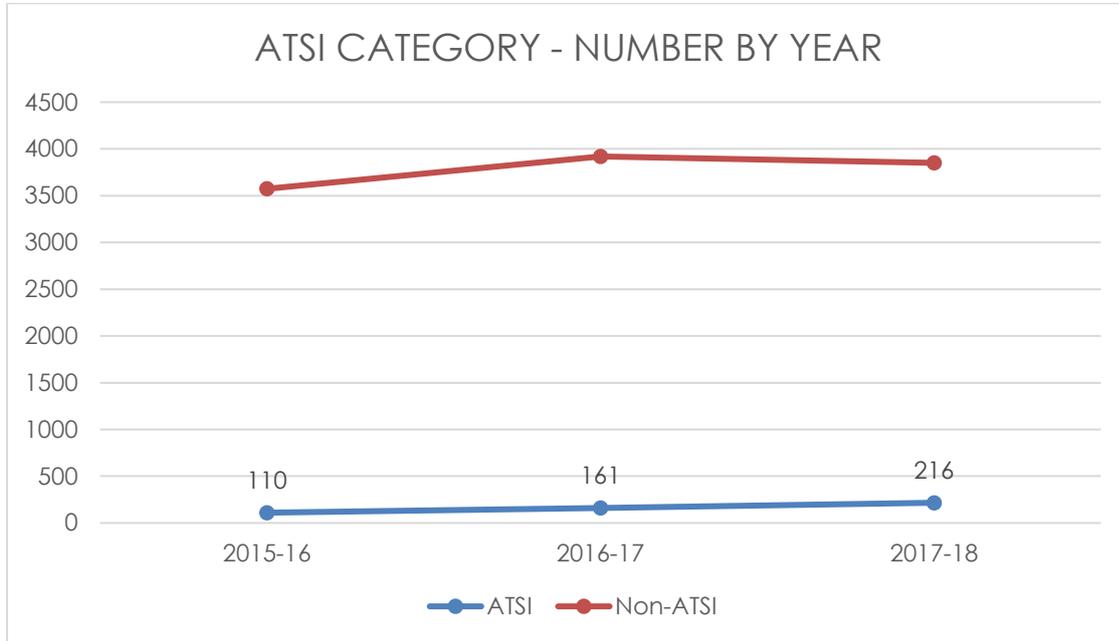


Figure 2: Number of Calls - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders 2015/16 – 2017/18

Training Provider and Other Service Provider Engagement

Having accurate referral information from providers is central to the success of the Hotline. Training and other service provider engagement strategies continue to be prioritised by Hotline management and endorsed by the Steering Committee as being of high importance. It is critical for the overall effectiveness of the Hotline that providers are registered on the database and also that provider details are as accurate and up-to-date as possible. The Hotline has developed engagement strategies for providers including:

- Inclusion of training provider peaks bodies CCA and ALA on the Steering Committee
- Regular Literacy Links e-newsletter and state by state statistical snapshots
- Targeted promotional material for providers including brochures and posters
- Presentations at key literacy events (ACAL and state-based conferences)
- Improving the intuitive navigation of the provider portal
- Increasing the range of literacy resources available on the website
- Business Intelligence Mapping and Evaluation surveys

A component of this evaluation has been an annual survey of Training Providers and it is recommended that this be adopted as an ongoing engagement and evaluation strategy post external funding. The response rate from providers was lower this year 2018 (102) than in the two previous years; 2017 (202) or 2016 (146). While this could be seen as reduced level of engagement the responses provided were in-depth and valuable. It is likely that the timing of the survey deployment, just prior to Easter and the Term 1 school holidays, is the most likely reason for the lower response rate.

The Manager has used the responses to the survey in past years to contact providers with specific needs to provide follow-up. A number of the providers (11) indicated that the survey had prompted them to go to the Hotline website and review the resources as they were either unaware that they were available or had been aware previously but had forgotten that the website was a good source of resources. This has been a positive unintended consequence of the evaluation survey and one of the reasons that the evaluation recommends continuing an annual survey of providers.

Provider Respondent Location

State and Territory	Response Rate and Number
ACT	1.00% ¹² 1
NSW	30.00% 30
NT	1.00% 1
QLD	16.00% 16
SA	8.00% 8
TAS	3.00% 3
VIC	29.00% 29
WA	12.00% 12
TOTAL	100

Table 5: Provider Respondents by State and Territory

¹² Percentage rate relates to the number of respondents who answer each question.

In line with the responses from the 2016 and 2017 surveys the majority of respondents were from NSW and Victoria followed by Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia. There were low responses from Tasmania, ACT and the Northern Territories in both earlier years.

Provider Respondent Type

Again, the strongest response to the survey was from public training providers, followed by community service providers and private training providers.

The Hotline has prioritised an engagement strategy with Public Libraries which offer valuable community-based support and resources to many adult Australians including recent migrants and refugee groups.

Students with Significant Literacy Levels

Providers were asked 'how many of your students have significant literacy needs (by this we mean needs that have an impact on their learning or course outcomes)?'

The responses were as follows:

Percentage of Enrolled Students with Significant Literacy Needs	2017 Response Rate and Number	2018 Response Rate and Number
Under 10 %	6.06% 6	7.07% 7
Between 10 % - 35 %	17.17% 17	15.15% 15
Between 35 and 50 %	17.17% 17	18.18% 18
Between 50 % - 75 %	12%.2 12	13.13% 13
Between 75 % - 99%	16.16% 16	13.13% 13
100 %	17.17% 17	13.13% 13
Not applicable my organisation does not enrol students	12%.2 12	14.14% 14
Other (please specify)	2% 2	6.06% 6
Total Respondents Answering Question	99	99

Table 6: Students with Significant Literacy Needs

40 % of providers in 2018 reported that over 50% of their students had significant literacy and numeracy needs. This is down from 46% in 2017 however still a significant proportion of providers.

Contact with the Hotline

72% of providers indicated that they had had contact with the Hotline in the past year. The largest contact group were those who had received Literacy Links (62%). As with previous years, most found respondents reported that their contact with the Hotline a positive experience, and found that the service provides a high-quality phone service to callers.

'Referrals approaching via the Hotline - thank you!' (2018 Private Literacy and Numeracy Service, NSW)

'Saw presentation at ACAL Conference Darwin 2017.' (2018 Public Provider, Far Western NSW)

'Referrals to my workplace from R&W hotline have always said how great they were on the phone and follow up.' (2018 Provider, Victoria)

'The Reading Writing Hotline is a perfect first point for anyone seeking assistance in LLN. I also refer Volunteer English Tutors to your site as a source of materials for their sessions.' (2017 Victoria, ACE Providers)

'I think that not only do potential students get great support but the resources for volunteer tutors is excellent.' (2017 Queensland, Private Training Provider)

These comments build on similar comments from the 2016 survey where training provider reported:

'Where to start to find help can be daunting for anyone. The Hotline is an excellent non-judgemental first step.' (2016 Provider, Queensland)

While most respondents had a positive engagement with the Hotline there is still a small proportion of providers who do not know or are unaware of whether or not the Hotline is referring students to them as this information is lost in the enrolment process or has not come to light.

Type of Contact	2017 Response Rate and Number	2018 Response Rate and Number
I received a Literacy Links e-newsletter from the Hotline	59.04% 49	62.20% 51
Someone from the Hotline contacted me to update my provider contact details	63.86% 53	41.46% 34
Someone from the Hotline contacted me for some other reason	16.87% 14	24.39% 20
I responded to the Hotline evaluation survey in 2016 OR 2017	24.10% 20	29.27% 24
I contacted the Hotline to update my training provider details	15.66% 13	13.41% 11
I contacted the Hotline for information	10.84% 9	7.32% 6
Total Respondents	83	82

Table 7: Contact with the Hotline in the past 12 months

Feedback from providers

Over time the provider survey has provided useful feedback on the following key topics:

- Levels of literacy need for students
- Literacy Links
- quality of the Hotline service
- issues for providers in supporting students
- value of the promotional material
- any other issues for providers

Feedback from providers about Literacy Links continues to be positive. Of the 73 respondents who gave feedback about the newsletter 64.5% said that it provided them with useful information, 74% said that they were interested to read it when it arrived and 59% of respondents said that the statistical information was valuable to them. Feedback from providers included:

'It's great to keep in touch with what is happening at such an important level. Gives me a feel for client needs and the range of services that are out there.'

'It's a valuable way to get information and I pass it on to my staff.'

Improvements that providers identified were:

'I would like more evidence based research findings and information about evidence based programs.'

'Info on professional development opportunities.'

'More information on things in my state (Queensland).'

'A list of tutors in my area (Western Sydney).'

Governance

Steering Committee Feedback

19 members of the national Steering Committee were invited to complete the online evaluation survey in 2018. Only 7 response were received. This is a significant reduction in response rate from 2017 when 14 of 17 members responded to the survey.

Again, several members indicated that they would not be completing the survey because they were new members who didn't feel they were able to comment at that time.

This is a response rate of 37% compared to an 82 % response rate in 2017 and a 56 % response rate in 2016.

Of the seven respondents four indicated that they either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement 'The Steering Committee is an effective governance mechanism for the Hotline' with two neutral. Five indicated that they 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement 'That Steering Committee meetings are timely and well-focused', and six indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'That the Terms of Reference reflect the nature of the work of the committee.

Several respondents provided a 'neutral' response to these questions.

In 2018 there were two suggested improvements to the Hotline governance or operation one relating to timing of marketing and the other relating to the use of Aboriginal language in advertisements.

'Marketing occurs at the wrong time. Usually a week or two prior to the end of semester. Too late for intake into the program. By the time the next class starts the enquirer has moved on or given up.' (2018 Steering Committee member)

'Use Aboriginal languages on radio where possible.' (2018 Steering Committee member)

In earlier years governance improvements have included:

'States need to nominate reps who have both a strategic and a practical view about how the Hotline links into their systems and what is needed to make it work.' (2017 Steering Committee member)

'Inclusion of Indigenous reps important and perhaps should be mandatory.' (2017 Steering Committee member)

Strategic Priorities for the Hotline

When asked about strategic priorities for the Hotline 'support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders callers' and 'support for Industry and Employers Groups' were the two most important priorities identified by the small sample of members who responded. This was

followed by ongoing engagement with providers through a mechanism like Literacy Links. These priorities were identified in both the 2018 and 2017 surveys.

The promotion of the Hotline via TV and radio advertisements was identified by members as the most effective promotional channel with posters also having a high brand recognition. In past years the accessibility of the website has also been rated highly by members.

In this survey as it is the last for the formal external evaluation members were asked to comment on the value of moving from a call centre model to employing trained literacy teachers.

Comments included:

'[This is] ... A definite improvement. When the state can't offer help a trained person on the phone can provide useful advice.'

'This appears to have added value to the hotline and enabled better/targeted assistance.'

'I believe this is a valuable addition. In Queensland, there are challenges in accessing literacy and numeracy support in regional and remote areas. Adult literacy teachers are a welcome additional resource.'

From the early work on this evaluation in late 2015 it was apparent from conversations with the then Director with responsibility for the Hotline that 'reinvigorating' the Steering Committee was a priority. While there has been a drop off in response to this evaluation process there has been a definite increase in membership numbers and the scope of the committee has broadened to include provider representatives and peaks including ALA and CCA. There are two representatives from some states and territories which is another indicator of engagement. The past Director of the Hotline reported that:

'The Hotline has developed into a national literacy information centre. With the sector so fragmented delivery-wise the Hotline has become more than a referral agency it is a literacy information resource centre due to a lack of coherent national policy and delivery strategy. Its national reach and engagement of providers, callers and representatives on the Steering Committee is evidence of this.' (2018 past Director TAFE NSW)

The minutes, agendas and follow up actions produced by the Hotline team as executive officer/ support on behalf of the Steering Committee have been reviewed as part of this evaluation. Committee papers reviewed were found to be clearly documented and produced and distributed to members in a timely manner.¹³ Action items are clearly described and follow up action reported on at each meeting. There is a standing report from all States and Territories and information sharing about foundation studies and adult literacy support programs is valuable to national members. It should be noted that the terminology and content of the discussion that occur at the meetings is at a fairly high level and note taking by administrative staff can be challenging for those who do not work in the adult literacy field or who may be unfamiliar with VET specific discourse. Support is required to assist administrative staff to be able to maintain the accuracy of minutes recorded.

¹³ Steering Committee members were asked to comment on this aspect of the governance in their responses to the online evaluation survey and the majority either agreed or strongly agreed that the meetings were timely and well-focused.

Outcomes

The outcomes for the Hotline are being measured by an analysis of feedback from callers to the Hotline who were contacted over the three-year period via phone. This method was time consuming to set up with repeated calls made to contact the respondents however once the caller had been contacted the feedback was valuable.

Sampling and Response Rates

There were two caller samples. Caller Sample 1 and Caller Sample 2. Caller Sample 1 were interviewed three times in:

- April–May 2016,
- early August 2016, and
- June-July 2017.

Caller Sample 2 were interviewed two times in:

- June-July 2017, and
- May – June 2018.

There was a considerable drop off rate in responses to the phone survey overtime. The response rate from Sample 1 began at 30 in 2016 (first call), reduced to 24 at the point of the second call (2016) and was halved down to 12 by the time the final (third call) was made in 2017. This was the same for Sample 2 which had 20 respondents in 2017 but reduced down to 14 respondents in 2018. Callers took considerable effort to track down, many were no longer on the number given, the number was no longer in service or the person failed to respond to multiple messages.

This experience reflects the feedback from staff in focus groups who reported that contacting callers who leave messages with the Hotline is time consuming and can often lead to no result. The shift to an SMS service for smart phones is a positive strategy to reduce poor call back rates as it allows the caller to know that it is the Hotline calling them back.

Reason for Call

Most people in both samples (1 and 2) called to get assistance with both reading and writing. The Other category were callers who were calling on behalf of someone else. Other issues that were identified by callers as areas where they needed support were:

- support with higher level business writing or writing reports for work
- spelling
- support with academic writing
- writing and responding to emails

Over the three years of the evaluation people who call on behalf of someone else included:

- Parent
- Partner / spouse
- Neighbour and old family friend
- Friend calling for a recent widower who was unable to fill in forms following the death of their spouse
- Life skills Support Worker at Uniting Care - client with a disability
- Mentor/tutor for young Aboriginal teenager
- Youth worker in a refuge
- Social worker in older aged mental health
- Employment service
- Employer / manager / supervisor

Caller Outcomes

Outcomes for callers that have been measured for this evaluation are articulated in the Program Logic (Appendix I). They include increased confidence and ability to act on referral, engagement in program and continuation / completion of program, and increased capacity and wellbeing linked to improved confidence. The evaluator and Hotline Management have agreed to review the outcomes in the logic model on the basis of the findings of this evaluation. There are a range of other positive outcomes including accessing self-paced resources, support from the Hotline in navigating the provider enrolment or learning environment (an important shift in delivery approach) and ongoing improvements in caller confidence that may be more appropriate measures of success. An outcomes workshop will be scheduled for key staff as a follow up to this evaluation to confirm ongoing outcomes and indicators to enable the Hotline to self-monitor its achievements post evaluation.

Given the drop off rate in respondents being contacted for follow-up interviews the data on progress to completion of courses and wellbeing linked to outcomes has been hard to track. What can be reported based on the evidence is:

- An increase in confidence for those callers who act on the referral information
- An increase in ability to act for those callers who do so immediately following the referral call
- Positive outcomes relating to improved literacy through enrolment in courses, attendance at community programs, engagement with a tutor or utilising the resources made available by the Hotline

This is not the case for all callers and the barriers to outcomes is discussed below.

During phone interviews callers spoke positively about the initial calls they made to the Hotline. Evidence from caller interviews across the three years of the evaluation indicates that, due to the nature of the Hotline as a referral service, the positive feedback spikes early. People who act quickly on the information provided and get a positive outcome from their actions (including enrolment or other support) tend to feel more positive about the Hotline and report feeling well supported. These people may be more highly intrinsically motivated and able to act on the information and/or the referral information provided was accurate and the subsequent call to the provider was successful. These callers generally reported finding the subsequent call to the provider either 'a positive experience' or at least that they 'experienced no apparent barrier to enrolment'.

In 2016 and 2017 both Sample 1 and Sample 2 the majority of callers interviewed at the two to three month mark reported that 'calling the Hotline had been a positive experience'. Ninety percent of those interviewed in 2016 and ninety-five percent of those interviewed in 2017 agreed that they felt more confident as a result of their call and would recommend the Hotline to others.

'I feel more confident just knowing that I can do this. I can do other things. I started off slow in life but I am developing an understanding of life now. I had a bad experience at school. I was in special classes but they didn't suit me - too slow, I didn't like it. I am now good at work. I can hold down a job. I can do something like this.'

The majority of callers regardless of their follow up experience with providers reported that the Hotline staff were 'clear and easy to understand', 'took time to listen' and 'understand their needs'.

Callers in both samples who 'took action as a result of the call information provided' reported an increase in their ability to act and their confidence. People who called on behalf of family, friend or client reported that they were able to pass on the information to their contact however that it was up to each individual to 'take the next step.' The majority

of these callers reported that they had a better understanding of the 'possible next steps' for their family member, friend or client and/or would recommend the Hotline to someone else including colleagues. A number of callers from community service organisations reported that they were better able to support other clients with literacy needs as a result of their initial call to the Hotline and had used the information, strategies or processes with other clients.

'The service was really good. The teacher was really, really helpful.' (Caller 2018)

'The teacher was really helpful and took a lot of time. They rang and followed up for me.' (Caller 2017)

'Very positive experience. It is a very good service.' (Caller 2017)

'It was really helpful with all the information they had. I got direct information with phone numbers and names and even the day the class is running. That level of detail is so helpful. They were really great - thorough. They were really looking hard for the client to make sure every possibility was covered. Their contacts and information was completely up to date which is really important. They have information you can't find on a general google search.' (Caller 2017)

'Very thorough service. The person got back to me a number of times when more information became available. It is an excellent service - I would like to add that.' (Caller 2017)

Positive feedback reflects the role and quality of the service provided by the Hotline teachers and initial diagnostic work that they do with the callers. It also reflects the positive impact of 'taking a positive step' towards overcoming an issue that for some callers has been impacting on their social, economic and emotional wellbeing over time.

34 callers (68%) of Sample 1 and 2 followed up on the information provided to some degree. 12 callers (24%) were unhappy with the referral information or found their contact with the provider unsatisfactory and 4 callers (8%) had not followed up for personal reasons. Follow up from the call to the Hotline included a range of actions such as:

- calling the providers recommended by the Hotline including tutors and informal community-based options
- enrolling in a formal course or program
- using self-paced literacy resources that were sent by the Hotline
- following up on the links and information provided by the Hotline
- passing the information provided by the Hotline on to their client, friend or family member.

Courses enrolments and other outcomes that callers who were interviewed mentioned specifically include:

1. Ongoing literacy and English language programs at local library
2. 6-week program at ACE
3. Reading more
4. Tutor from local community centre providing weekly lessons
5. Blackett Marsh Community College
6. Level 4 English as a second language course
7. TAFE program
8. Distance Education Foundation
9. Self paced resources with support
10. NGO program with free volunteer tutors
11. Karingal - adult literacy course
12. Hurstville Community College

It is worth noting that a significant proportion of callers were unclear about the name of the provider or exact name of the course. This was particularly true for those callers who contacted providers but did not enrol. This may be attributable to the time between the referral and the follow up interview.

For a number of people who were interviewed there were positive comments about the value of the hard copy resources that were sent out by the Hotline.

'We have worked on the resources together. She has come leaps and bounds in her confidence and developed academically. She did have some basic skills but she lacked the confidence. She has now practiced more and it provides structure for when she is trying to write down her ideas. I think with more practice she will learn to love it. '

Barriers to Outcomes

There are a number of barriers to successful outcomes that have been identified over the three years of the evaluation. These barriers are, in no particular order of priority:

- Complex needs of the caller that impede them following up on information and resources provided including geographical or social isolation, disability, mental and / or physical health issues, homelessness, unemployment, poverty
- Many callers experience multiple disadvantage which is further compounded by their low levels of literacy
- Lack of agency of the caller caused by past poor experience of education or early school leaving including low self esteem and low self confidence
- Confusing the role of the Hotline with a provider and expecting that the call would lead directly to an enrolment
- Inaccuracy of the referral information due to changes in provider programs and / or funding
- Timing, cost and location of courses
- Complex enrolment processes and / or documentation required by the training provider
- Difficulty in navigating the training provider environment
- Inability to access or manage distance / online education options
- Inability to manage own self-paced learning with literacy resources
- Inability to get time off work to attend available programs

For callers with complex needs and multiple disadvantage the teachers are able to work carefully through their issues on the phone to determine the most appropriate level of support to meet their needs. They also support callers with strategies to negotiate the training provider environment and make calls to identify key contacts and supports on campus if required. The initial contact with the Hotline is often made by support staff from community service organisations who call on behalf of their clients. They have identified that their client has low levels of literacy which further compound their disadvantage. Several respondents indicated that the client did not act on the information provided because of a lack of readiness or capacity to act caused by their circumstances.

'He [my client] is homeless and transient and has a number of difficult behaviours resulting from that and so he didn't fit with the adult literacy program criteria. There were a few different options explored [based on information from the Hotline] such as the one on one with a volunteer but he was not in a position to go with that.' (2017 Community Service caller)

'My client moved on. She was long term unemployed and had some issues [mental health]. We started to look at options but then she stopped coming [to the service]. I don't know what has happened to her. But I passed on the info.' (2016 Community Service caller)

In both the 2016 and 2017 sample there was confusion for a proportion of callers about the role of the Hotline (around 25%). Some callers did not understand the role of the Hotline as a referral service and this 'perception issue' is still problematic for the service. While over half the callers in both samples understood that the Hotline is a referral service, a little fewer than half of the people contacted were confused about the distinction between the Hotline and training or service providers.

A proportion of callers in the samples had either left school early or had a poor experience or outcomes from schooling. This reflects the overall call data gathered on the caller database. This past experience acts as a significant ongoing barrier for callers.

2016 and 2017 callers at both the two-month and six-month mark identified the following range of problems with providers including:

- failing to call back,
- not having the 'exact' course available to meet the caller's needs,
- difficulty in completing online or hard copy application forms without assistance, and
- location, cost and timing issues that mean that the courses available were unsuitable.

It was evident that these negative perspectives of the training provider were 'intensified' over time. At the 12 month and six-month mark those callers who had been unsuccessful in accessing a course or program, reported more negative responses about the training provider and by extension the Hotline itself than at the initial two-month interview.

In considering lack of successful outcomes for callers to the Hotline it is worth considering a number of extraneous factors that are outside the remit of the Hotline to address including:

- changes to Training Provider and other service provider offerings, offerings are often fluid and depend on funding, student demand and teacher availability,
- the ability of the Hotline to stay up to date with these changes (accuracy of the data available to them about Training Provider offerings),
- the loss of funding for discrete general literacy and numeracy provision, and
- the capacity of the caller to act on the referral information without additional assistance.

'[The] person delivering on the phone [Hotline] was great, courteous and lovely. After that it didn't work for me. I would give the person at the hotline 5/5 and the information I had after 1/5.' (Caller 2017)

It is not possible for Hotline staff to overcome all barriers for callers as training providers will change programs and course details based on demand and/ or funding. These factors can impact on the location, timing and cost of courses and in fact whether courses are able to be run at all.

This raises again the importance of the intersecting factors of the quality and accuracy of the referral. It is clear from the evidence of the evaluation that the teachers diagnostic / tutoring approach to callers is of a high quality and allows them to provide expert nuanced responses to individuals with specific literacy needs. It also highlights the critical importance of the accuracy of the database information. If the person with complex needs is 'able to act' then it is vital that the information is as accurate as possible so they do not become further discouraged. Maintaining the accuracy of the database is a time consuming ongoing piece of work that requires resourcing. Phoning the provider at the time to assist the caller with complex needs with the next step is an option that would require additional resources but would be beneficial.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation has found that the Hotline is successful against the main indicators of efficiency, quality and effectiveness. Over the timeframe of the evaluation and on a comparatively small budget the Hotline has developed its capacity and breadth and offers services more aligned to a national literacy information centre than a simple referral Hotline. In reviewing the last two progress reports from the Hotline to the Commonwealth DET the number of outputs and activities undertaken by the Manager and key staff belies the size of the service.

The governance and management of the service is professionally focused and allows the teaching staff to provide ongoing quality support to callers with literacy needs. In addition, staffing the service with qualified adult literacy teachers has lifted the quality of the service provided to all callers. Observations of the teachers undertaking diagnostic work with callers provided additional evidence about the value of this approach. Callers with complex needs were able to be supported with accurate information, initial tutoring over the phone and strategies to assist them 'take the next step.'

The development and implementation of strategic improvement projects has added greater breadth to the service and allowed it to engage with key market segments including:

- targeted promotional campaigns and support resources and provision to ATSI communities,
- industry and employer bodies,
- training providers, and
- Public Libraries.

That the Hotline has been able to increase calls from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and have developed a range of support resources including First Nations language literacy resources. Also, of particular note are the development of workplace literacy videos with Kate Carnell (the then Small Business Ombudsman) and the Literacy Alliance Joint Statement on Workplace Literacy with key partners the Australian Industry Group (AiG), ACAL, CCA and ALA. These initiatives have been led by the Hotline and have led to increased engagement by both the Aboriginal community and the business community.

Other improvements that have increased the reach and capacity of the service have included:

- the employment of a skilled Manager to oversee operations and delivery,
- the recruitment of trained teachers,
- literacy experts being employed on the management team,
- the redesign of the website including universal accessibility compliance,
- ongoing improvements to the database,
- the development of printed literacy resources and/or the compilation of existing material on the website, and
- expert input from Essential Media for targeted communications and social media support.

The extended funding period from 12 months to 24 months has had ongoing positive effects on the Hotline in the key areas of governance, staffing, strategy and engagement.

The Hotline is generally highly regarded by callers. The Hotline offers clear information, staff who are easy to understand and are reported as 'taking their time' to understand the needs of each caller.

Callers who had a positive experience of the call report an 'increase in their confidence' to 'act on their information provided' as a result of their call to the Hotline. These callers tend to act quickly and follow up on the referral information or use the literacy resources provided. Enrolments as an outcome from the referral while positive and desirable are not the only

positive outcome that should be measured. Positive outcomes include increased confidence, increased ability to act on information, feeling listened to, accessing a tutor, getting support from a friend or family member, using the resources provided by the Hotline or planning to enrol when a suitable program is available.

For a small proportion of callers (around 30 %) there was a negative outcome due to their dissatisfaction with what happened next i.e. their call to the provider failing to lead to positive outcomes. This finding has been constant across the three years of the evaluation. The evaluators also flag the gap that exists between the excellent service provided by the Hotline and the subsequent experience for many callers when they contact the training provider. The disconnect between these two experiences needs to be addressed as it has been evident in all three data collection phases (2016-2018).

The barriers faced by callers can be considerable and can impede their ability to take the next step. The evaluator stands by the findings in both the 2016 and the 2017 reports that for many callers the referral information provided needs to be accurate and aligned to caller needs however the experience that the caller has in following up with the provider, while important to consider is outside the capacity of the Hotline to affect.

The evaluation has also found that *quantity* of calls is a limited measure of success and greater attention should be paid to measuring the ongoing *quality* of calls (the diagnostic / tutoring work undertaken by the teachers who staff the Hotline) and feedback on specific initiatives including support for Aboriginal callers and feedback on the value and effectiveness of literacy resources. The latter is of particular importance for all those callers who are geographically or socially isolated and unable to attend face to face training or succeed in a distance or online learning environment.

In the absence of any proposed increases in funding for literacy and numeracy provision and / or a national policy on adult literacy including workplace literacy the evaluation highlights the importance of the Hotline as an ongoing resource for stakeholders nationally, in particular adult Australians with literacy and numeracy needs.

APPENDICES

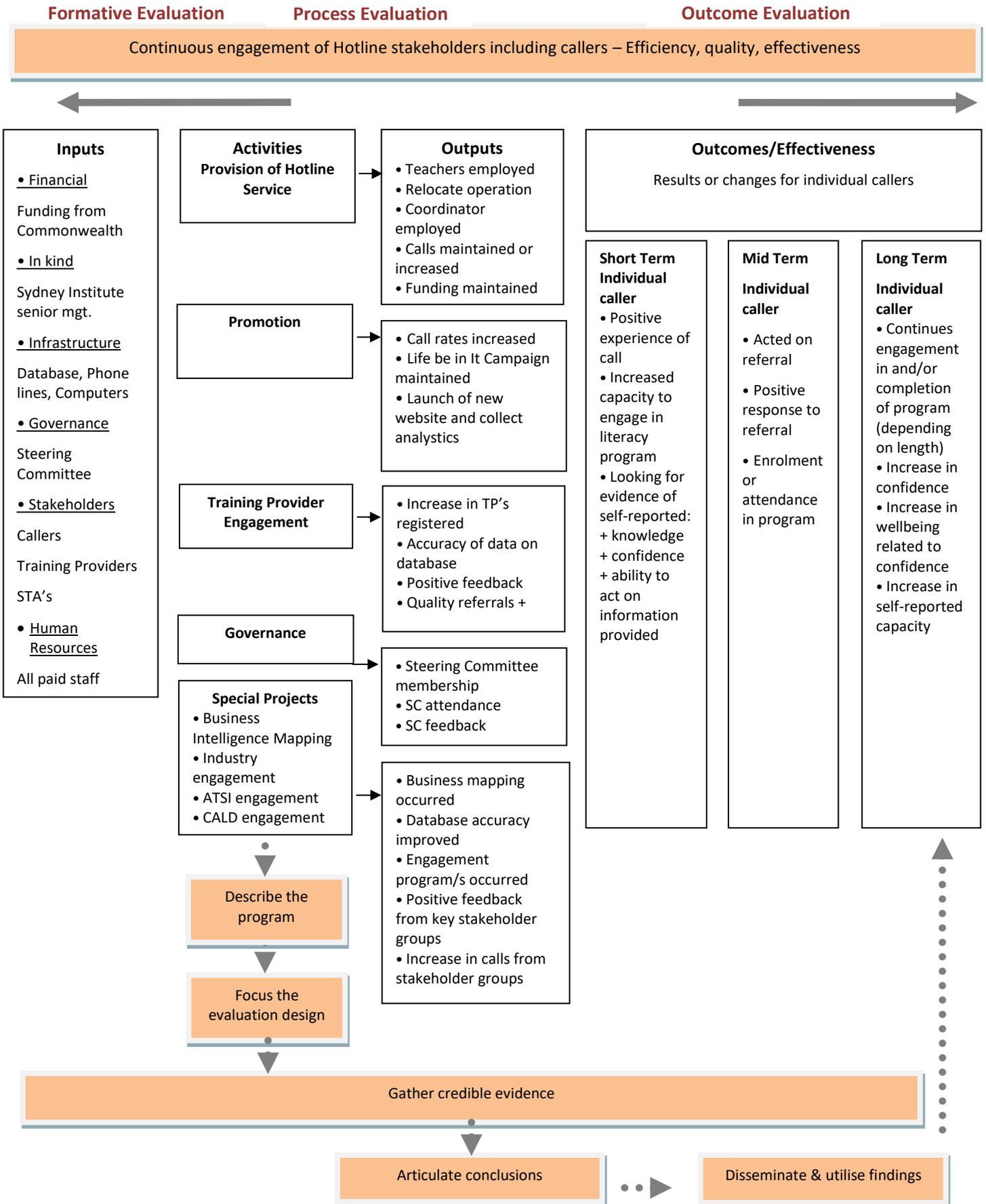
Appendix I: Program Logic Model

Appendix II: Key Stakeholder Mapping and Methodology

Appendix III: Reading Writing Hotline Operational Budget 2015-2018

Appendix IV: Caller Data Trends 2015-2018

APPENDIX I: Program Logic Model – Reading Writing Hotline



APPENDIX II: Key Stakeholder Mapping and Methodology

Stakeholder	Sub category	Method	Timeframe	Indicators
Caller	Individual with literacy need	Phone survey	February 2016, June/July 2016 May – June 2017 May - June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result of call—outcome or action as a result of call • Quality of call • Accuracy of information • Value or impact of the call—in the longer term on caller or change in self-reported levels of knowledge, confidence, agency • Decision to make the call—how the caller found out about the Hotline or what motivated them to call • Feedback on the website (if they have accessed) • Feedback on the promotion material (if they have seen it poster/brochure/radio or TV ad)
	Family member or friend Support agency (NGO) Employer School Other	Phone survey	February 2016, June/July 2016 May – June 2017 May - June 2018	As above
Training provider	Public provider (TAFE etc.)	Online survey	February 2016 May – June 2017 May - June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship to the Hotline • Value of the Hotline • Contact with the Hotline
	Private provider (other RTO)	Online survey	February 2016 May – June 2017 May - June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship to the Hotline • Value of the Hotline • Contact with the Hotline
Industry	Stakeholders engaged through the Promotions project	Online survey and/or phone interview	February 2016 TBD 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship to the Hotline • Value of the Hotline • Contact with the Hotline
Steering Committee		Phone interview	March 2016 May – June 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance effectiveness • Process of supporting the Steering Committee

			May - June 2018	
Staff		Focus group or online survey TBD	March 2016 (and on-going over the life of the service) July 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal efficiency and effectiveness, possible improvements, caller observations

APPENDIX III: Operational Budget Reading Writing Hotline 2015-2018

The following Table shows a breakdown in costs by major line item for the past three financial years.

Budget elements	Agreement cost 2015-2016	Agreement cost 2016-2017	Agreement cost 2017- 2018
Salaries			
Hotline Manager			
Hotline teachers (ten part-time on roster)	\$240,000	\$260,00	\$260,00
Admin Assistant (part-time)			
Promotional activities			
'Life. Be in it.' TV and radio Community service announcement campaign management, including liaison with Starcom	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000
Starcom—paid TV advertising x 2	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
State promotion—mail-outs/posters and brochures	\$ 20,000	N/A	N/A
Communication strategy	N/A	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
Infrastructure and operations			
Telecommunications & Messaging Service	\$25, 000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000
Website maintenance	\$ 12,500	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000
Consumables	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Database management	\$ 12,500	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
TAFE NSW management fee	\$ 18,000	\$ 26,000	\$ 26,000
Strategic Improvement Projects			
1. Business Intelligence Mapping—training provider intel and database content quality assurance	\$ 15,000	\$25,000	\$25,000

2. Website review and redesign (complete)	\$ 18,000	N/A	N/A
2. (2016-2017) Digital Accessibility	N/A	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
3. Literacy Links newsletter—training provider engagement	\$ 12,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000
4. Data monitoring and review	\$ 5,000	N/A	N/A
4. (2016-2017) Quality Improvement Projects	N/A	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
5. Parenting and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander strategy ¹⁴ now called ATSI Implementation	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
6. Improved industry promotions	\$ 25,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000
7. Evaluation framework and implementation, including longitudinal study	\$ 45,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000
Sub-total Strategic Improvements	\$130,000	\$130,000	\$130,000
Total	\$598,000	\$638,000	\$638,000

Table 8 Hotline budget line items three financial years, 2015–2016 + 2016-2017 + 2017-2018

¹⁴ Note, this project changed to focus solely on ATSI rather than parenting.

APPENDIX IV: Call Data 2015 – 2018 Trends

As already discussed the demographics of callers has changed little over time. The greatest change in caller data has been an increase in calls from ATSI people which is discussed in the body of the report. As reported in the Statistical Report attached to the Hotline final report (Sept 2018) these demographics have remained stable from 2005 to current. The average caller to the Hotline is male between 25-44 years old, from an English-speaking background and with lower levels of past education attainment.

Caller data is voluntarily given at the time of call so the data is partial only. The 'no entry' category remains significant and is including in the following graphs.

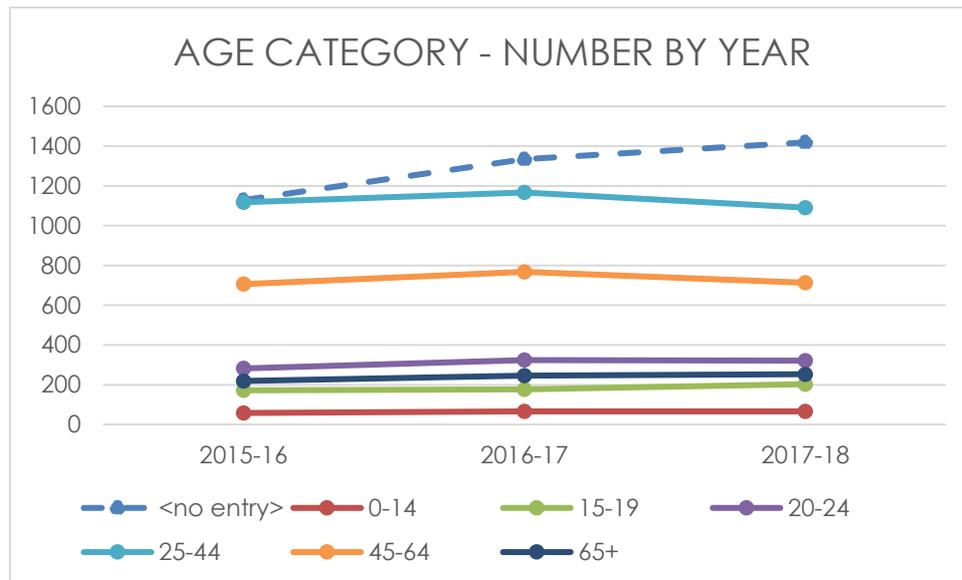


Figure 3: Caller Data by Age by Number of Calls by Year (2015/16 – 2017/18)

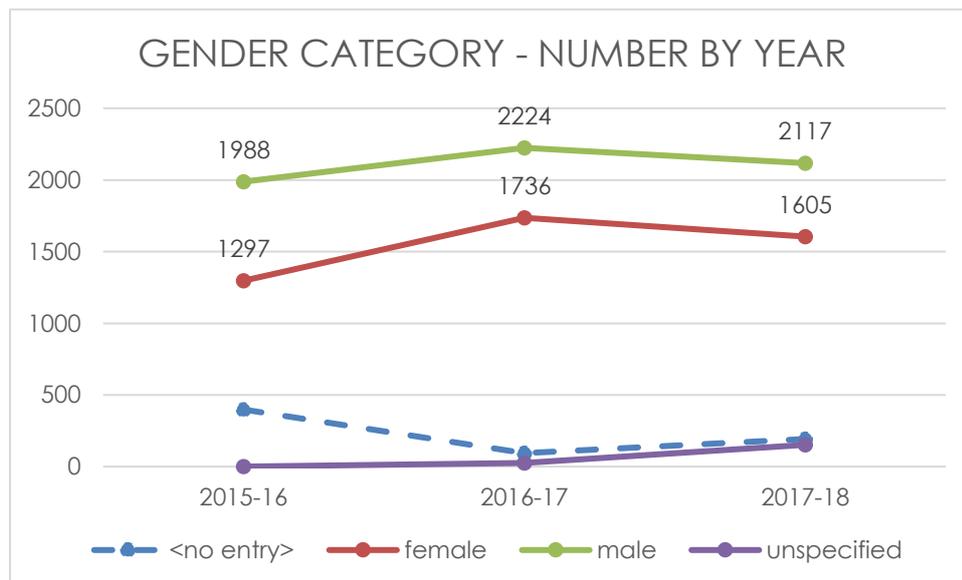


Figure 4: Caller Data by Gender by Number of Calls by Year (2015/16 – 2017/18)

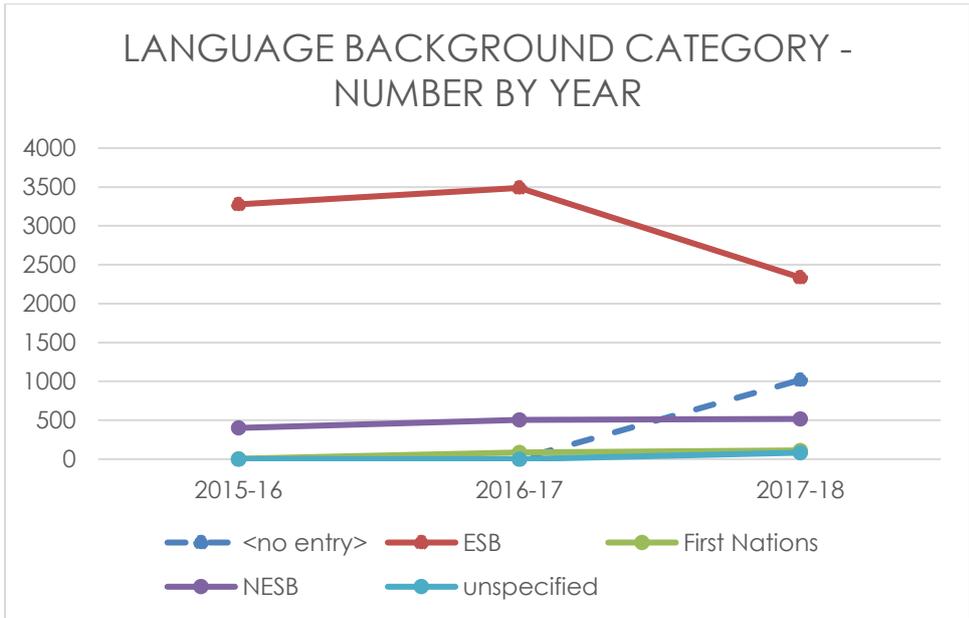


Figure 5: Caller Data by Language Background by Number of Calls by Year (2015/16 – 2017/18)

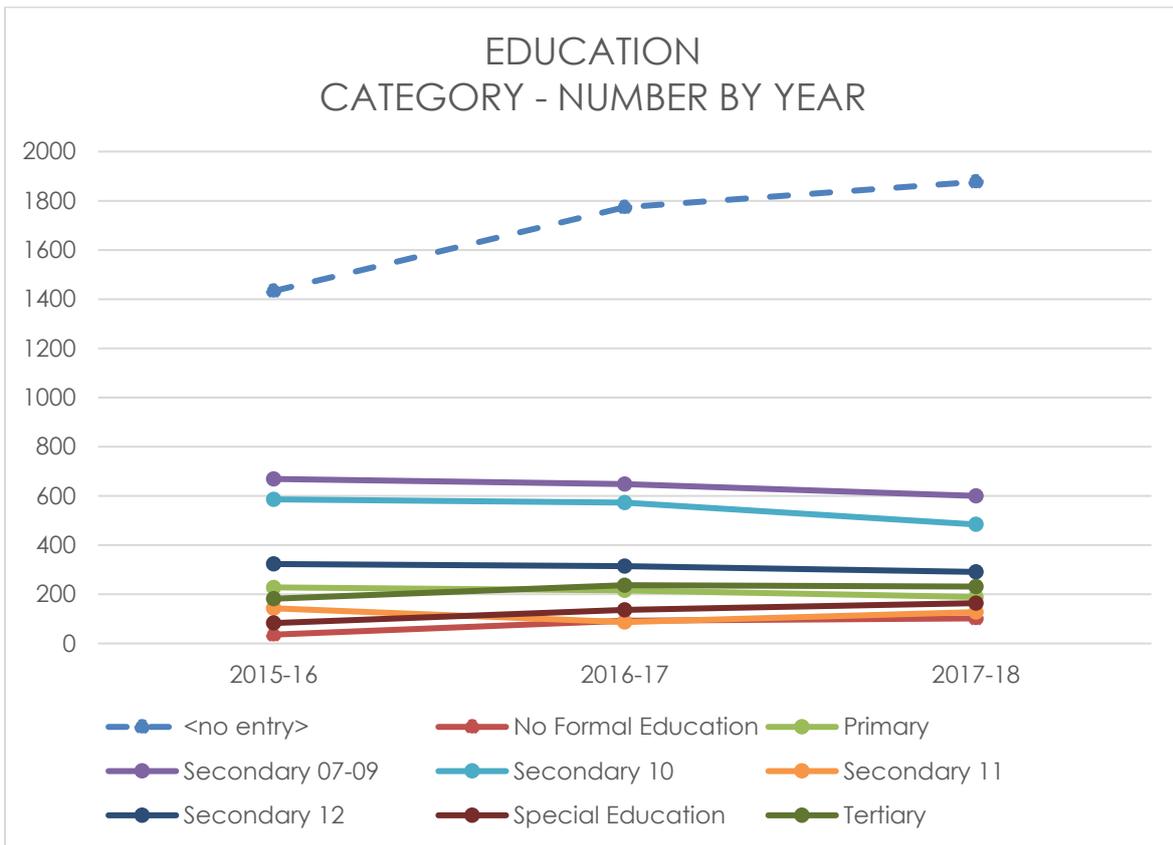


Figure 6: Caller Data by Level of Education by Number of Calls by Year (2015/16 – 2017/18)

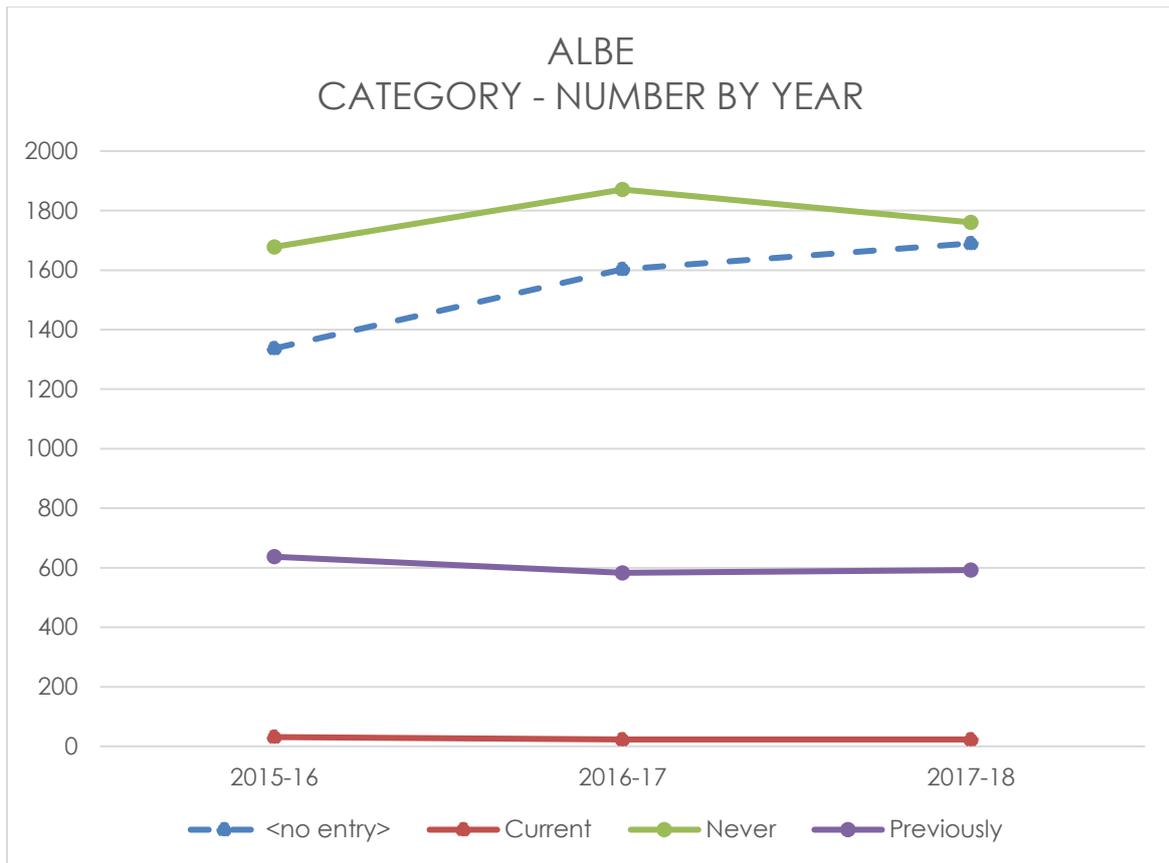


Figure 7: Caller Data by Previous Adult Literacy Programs by Number of Calls by Year (2015/16 – 2017/18)

The majority of callers across the evaluation period reported having no previous experience of adult literacy or adult basic education programs prior to contacting the Hotline.

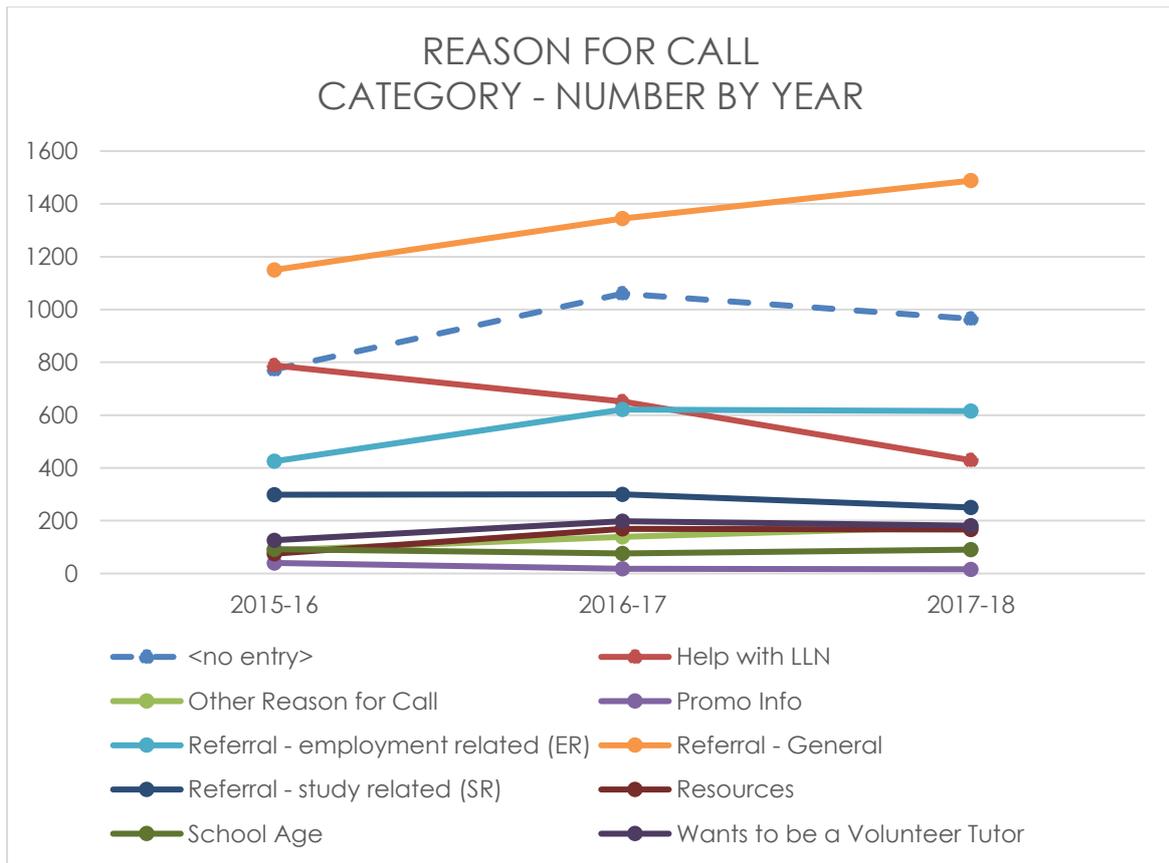


Figure 8: Caller Data by Reason for Call by Number of Calls by Year (2015/16 – 2017/18)

The reason most callers call the Hotline is for a general referral relating to literacy or numeracy. There has been a significant increase in callers seeking a referral related to employment. It is possible that this is due to the increased effort on workplace literacy conducted by the Hotline as part of the Strategic Improvement Project Industry Promotions Project. However, there is no clear evidence for attribution other than this increase in reason for call. The increased promotional activity via Essential Media and the presentations at conferences and via radio interviews by the Hotline Manager may also have played a causal role.

There continues to be only a small proportion of calls seeking promotional material and information and very few calls seeking advice for school age callers or on their behalf.

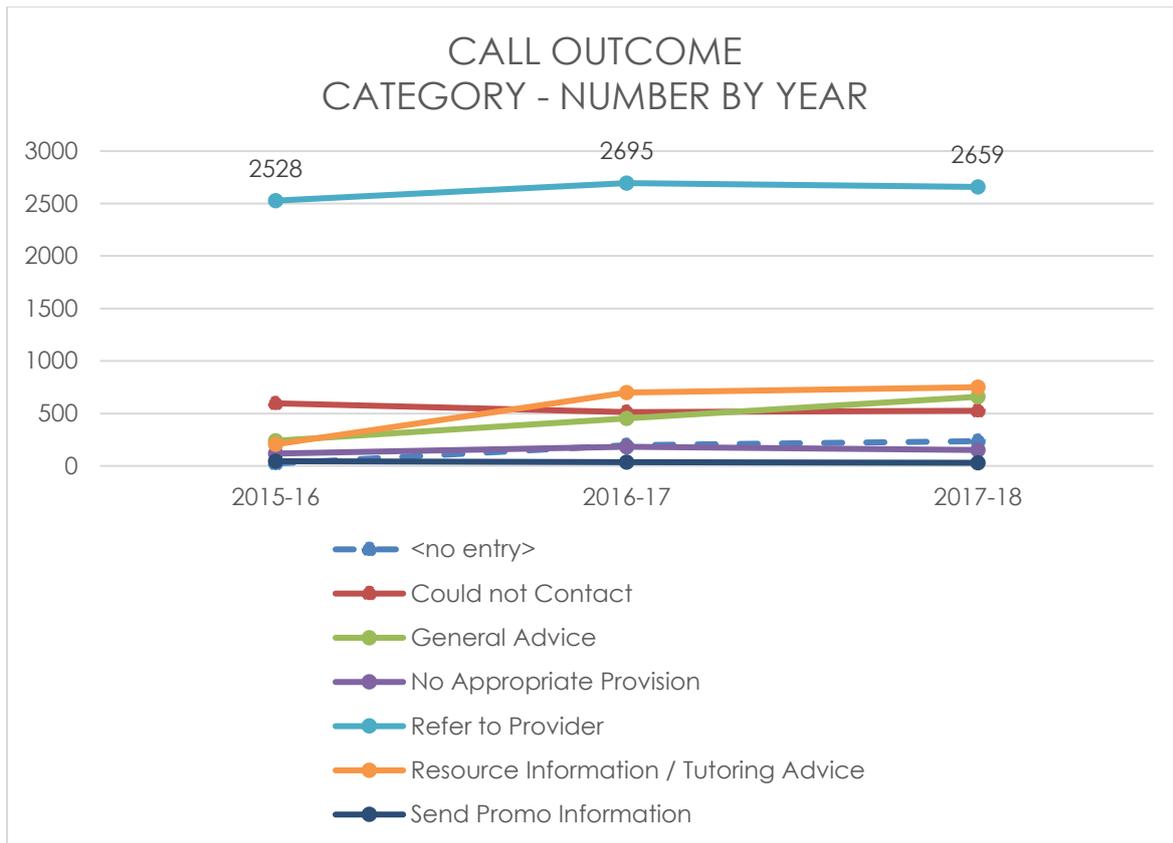


Figure 9: Caller Data by Call Outcome by Number of Calls by Year (2015/16 – 2017/18)

The most common call outcome for all Hotline calls is referral to a provider. The largest number of referrals of callers are to TAFE (see Figure 10 below) which – given TAFE's national presence - is unsurprising however there has been a significant increase in the number of referrals to community providers and to a lesser extent other RTOs. This may reflect changes in the distribution of basic adult education funding away from TAFE and private RTOs to community providers and the ACE sector generally.

Given the effort expended by the Hotline on locating and developing adult literacy resources and providing diagnostic / tutoring to callers over the phone it is encouraging to see an upward trend in Resource Information / Tutoring Advice category as a call outcome.

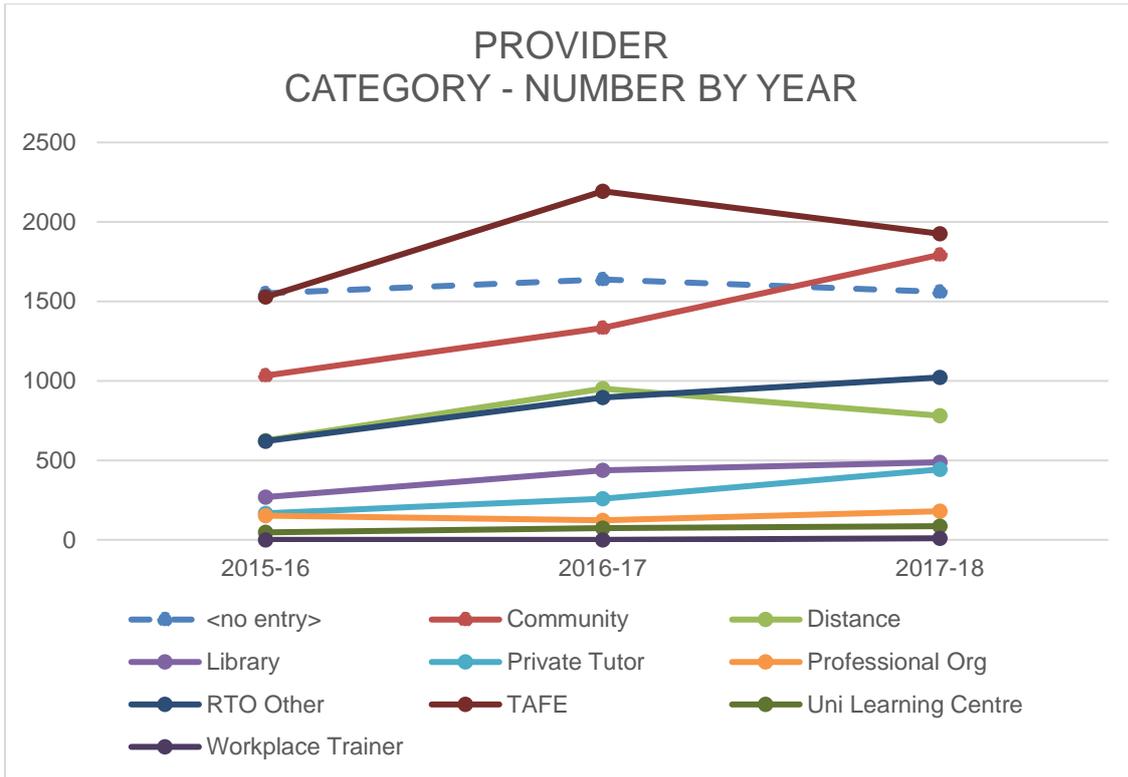


Figure 10: Caller Data by Provider Referral by Number of Calls by Year (2015/16 – 2017/18)

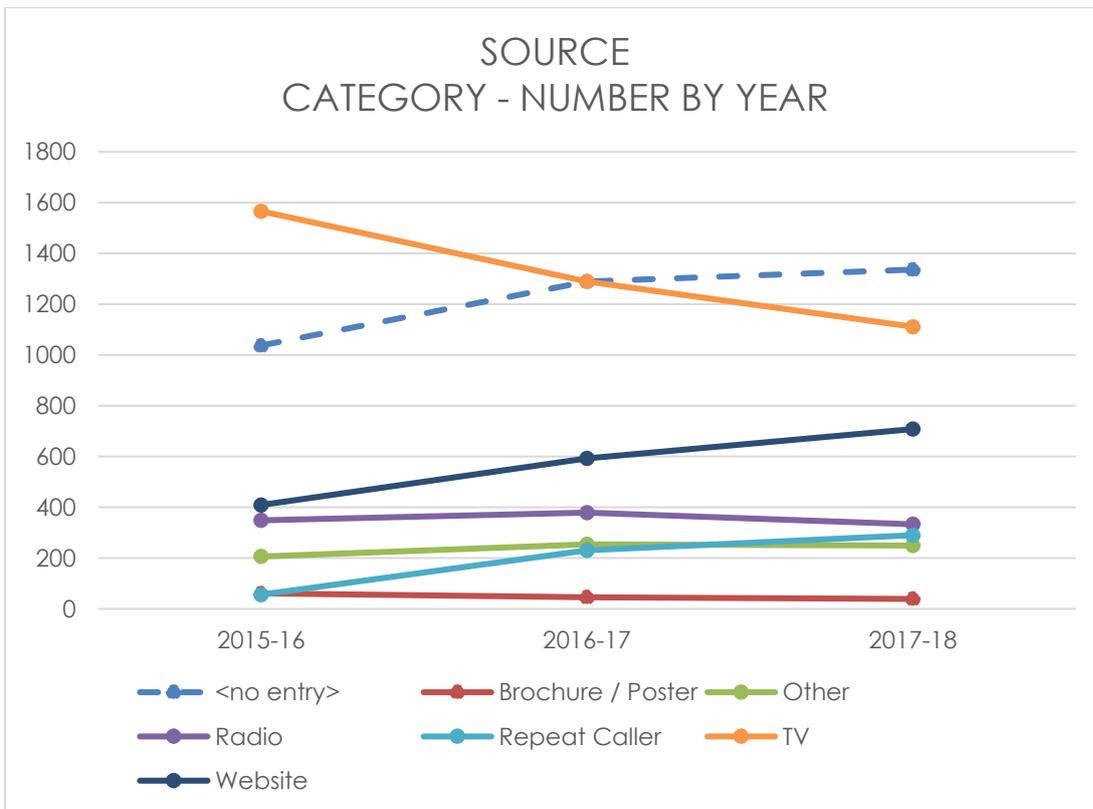


Figure 11: Caller Data by Source (how they came to call the Hotline) by Number of Calls by Year (2015/16 – 2017/18)

The way that callers heard about or came to the Hotline ('source') has changed over time with a significant increase over the evaluation period in the number of callers who found out about the Hotline via the website / a web search. The corresponding decrease in TV advertising as a source is likely due to the TV advertising budget remaining unchanged over time despite increases in advertising costs. This results in less TV advertising visibility.

There has also been a noticeable increase in repeat caller which is a positive outcome of the quality improvement process with teachers encouraging all callers to ring back if there is an issue with the referral information provided. This improvement was in response to the first evaluation report in 2016 where this issue was raised.