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Developing an evidence base to inform more effective approaches to engage 'hard to reach' learners into pre-accredited courses

Department of Education and Training







Final Report (Draft)

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**Deloitte**  
Access **Economics**

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## Contents

	<b>Executive Summary</b>	<a href="#"><u>3</u></a>		
	<b>Introduction and research framework</b>	<a href="#"><u>8</u></a>		<b>Appendix</b> <a href="#"><u>66</u></a>
	<b>Section 1. Literature analysis</b>	<a href="#"><u>13</u></a>		Appendix 1: Data availability guide <a href="#"><u>66</u></a>
	Perspectives on defining hard to reach	<a href="#"><u>15</u></a>		Appendix 2: Data indicator guide <a href="#"><u>68</u></a>
	Learner characteristics and barriers faced	<a href="#"><u>18</u></a>		
	Outreach and engagement strategies	<a href="#"><u>26</u></a>		
	<b>Section 2. Data analysis and conclusions</b>	<a href="#"><u>31</u></a>		
	Introduction to learner profiles	<a href="#"><u>32</u></a>		
	Learner profiles	<a href="#"><u>34</u></a>		
	Conclusions	<a href="#"><u>45</u></a>		
	<b>Section 3. Stakeholder insights and case studies</b>	<a href="#"><u>47</u></a>		
	Approach to-date	<a href="#"><u>48</u></a>		
	Emerging key insights	<a href="#"><u>51</u></a>		
	<b>Section 4. Key findings</b>	<a href="#"><u>62</u></a>		
	Overview of key findings	<a href="#"><u>63</u></a>		

# Executive summary

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## Executive summary: Project context

Deloitte Access Economics was asked to develop a contemporary evidence base for engaging ‘hard to reach’ learners into Learn Local programs. The early stages of the project highlighted the need to reimagine the project brief, with the work undertaken geared towards supporting the ACFE Board’s strategic and funding decisions amidst budget constraints towards those who are most in need – and may be missing out on – of pre-accredited training.

### Overview

Deloitte Access Economics has been engaged by the Adult Community for Further Education Board (ACFE) at the Victorian Department of Education and Training to develop a contemporary evidence base for locating and engaging ‘hard to reach’ learners, including those identified in First Nations and CALD communities, in Learn Local programs (‘Learn Locals’).

Meeting the scale and complexity of need for this learner cohort represents a challenge for ACFE given the budgetary constraints on the provision of pre-accredited training delivered by Learn Locals. An understanding of how to meet the need most effectively is therefore an imperative for the ACFE Board in deciding how to better allocate and target its investment. This has driven the imperative for research to help to guide ACFE’s strategic and funding decisions amidst budget constraints towards those who are most in need of (and may be missing out on) Learn Locals services.

This study sought out to reveal more insights into a working definition of a ‘hard-to-reach’ learner, who they are and where in Victoria they are located, and the outreach and engagement strategies employed by better practicing providers.

However, the understanding of the research brief was further illuminated by preliminary desktop review of the literature on hard-to-reach learners and stakeholder conversations and subsequently reimagined in line with the following overarching considerations:

- There is an overwhelming caution against framing of learners as ‘hard-to-reach’ as it is conceptualised as individualistic and deficit-based, implicitly positioning learners as ‘difficult’ and questioning why they may not be engaging. Rather, there are preferred alternative approaches to reframe the concept, that aim to understand what it is about the system that may make it difficult for some learners to engage with.

- There are limitations in what current data measurements can achieve in terms of parameterising ‘heard-to-reach’ learners. Any ‘definition’ will need to remain malleable and nuanced to reflect the diversity of populations who are in most need – and possibly do not engage with – Learn Locals. The evidence base may only grow from here by looking beyond existing systems of measurement and cross-agency sharing could support this endeavour.
- Community-based and shared partnerships in delivering effective outreach and engagement strategies to address the needs of ‘hard-to-reach’ learners are essential. Government agencies and community organisations, services or hubs must play a role with and alongside ACFE in this regard.

### Analytical approach

The work undertaken as part of this engagement has largely been exploratory in nature, evolving in understanding of what ACFE could meaningfully achieve and the lines of inquiry to pursue. The study addressed the relevant research questions and priorities through a multi-phased, mixed methods work program.

The findings presented in this report have been developed from a triangulation of desktop research (comprising of a targeted literature scan), analysis of secondary data sources (Australian Bureau of Statistics’ census data, and enrolment data held by ACFE), stakeholder consultations and illustrative ‘better practice’ case studies of effective outreach and engagement strategies to address the needs of ‘hard-to-reach’ learners.

These findings, considering the evidence gathered and drawing on the expertise of a multi-disciplinary subject matter expert group, formed the basis of a broader set of recommendations that are less about targeted strategies for all providers (i.e. handbooks) and more about selecting the providers who are ready to grow models that are already effective in the areas where the opportunities are the greatest.

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## Executive summary: Key findings

The conceptual framing of ‘hard to reach’ needs to be flipped and alternatively framed. In meeting the needs of learners and communities, outreach and engagement approaches must be underpinned by relational and trusted networks and community groups.

Triangulated findings from this project reveal a high degree of consistency in how ‘hard to reach’ learners are most effectively understood, characterised and engaged with – and in particular, the strong characterisation of ‘effective’ practice as one that is grounded in place, relationality, and flexibility to meet learner at their point of need. These are outlined below and in greater detail in [Section 4](#), which sets out the strength of findings as triangulated across the key data sources. These insights help form the basis of subsequent recommendations and actions for the ACFE Board in conceptualising the opportunity to enable and support Learn Locals and other critical community stakeholders in implementing effective identification, outreach and engagement strategies for those members of the Victorian community who currently go underserved in this sense.

### Finding 1

‘Hard to reach’ as a concept or goal can (and should) be alternatively framed as where and how the system must make itself easier to reach for learners who have greater need and face complex intersecting barriers – rather than focusing on characteristics or ‘deficits’ in individual learners.

### Finding 2

The needs of learners are defined by a complex array of histories, relationships and contexts – where there are an array of effective approaches (more than are readily distilled in effective practice toolkits).

### Finding 3

‘Place’ or location is the key frame through which various needs of ‘hard to reach’ learners should be explored.

### Finding 4

To effectively engage learners, course offerings must be relevant – practical, pragmatic and purposeful to their stage of learning, needs and aspirations.

### Finding 5

The relationship between providers, learners and community is critical for identification, outreach, participation in learning, and completion.

### Finding 6

Effective outreach is characterised by the relationality of referrals from family, friends and trusted community organisations and networks.

### Finding 7

Outreach strategies are most likely to be effective when they remain flexible to meet the learner at different stages of their decision making process to embark on an adult learning journey.

### Finding 8

Engagement strategies are most effective when they are co-designed in partnership with community groups, and meet local needs.

### Finding 9

The role of ACFE and Learn Locals needs to be broader than education provision if it is truly to engage ‘hard to reach’ learners and enable them to succeed.

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## Executive summary: Key recommendations Towards a focus on place and uplifting communities

Recommendations for ACFE over immediate and medium-term are represented below, with a view to uplifting the educational attainment within Victoria’s regions, and in direct alignment with other Victorian State Government imperatives. In the short-term, it will be important to **reframe** the conceptualisation of ‘hard to reach’, and **recalibrate the growth model** of ACFE. This includes a focus on identifying **partnership opportunities**, and increased **investment in effective providers** (in a small number of locations), from which ACFE can progressively reinforce best practice at a local community level. In the course of recalibration and growth over time, ACFE must build the evidence base, and through this the assurance and insights necessary to inform a universal approach to meeting the needs of learners and communities.

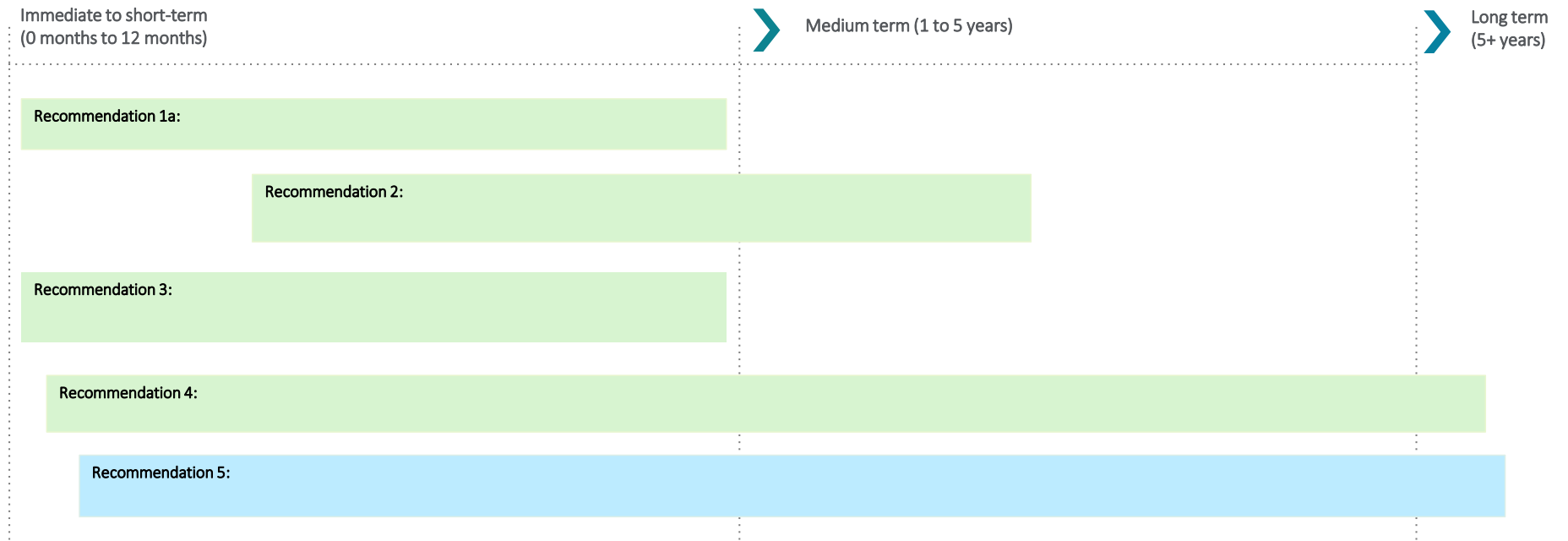


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## Executive summary: Timing and sequencing of key recommendations

Recommendations for ACFE should be implemented in the immediate term, noting that there are overlapping timelines and interdependencies, and the need for ongoing assurance over the longer-term

The below schematic outlines the recommended sequence and indicative timing of the implementation of recommendations, outlining the overlapping timelines and interdependencies between recommendations.



# Introduction and research framework



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## Overview of this engagement

Deloitte Access Economics was asked to develop a contemporary evidence base for locating and engaging ‘hard to reach’ learners, including those identified in First Nations and CALD communities, in Learn Local programs.

### Introduction

Deloitte Access Economics has been engaged by the Adult Community for Further Education Board (ACFE) at the Victorian Department of Education and Training, to develop a contemporary evidence base for locating and engaging ‘hard to reach’ learners, including those identified in First Nations and CALD communities, in Learn Local programs (‘Learn Locals’).

Learn Locals includes short courses which are offered at low or no cost to eligible people living in Victoria, supporting them with building core skills which are deemed to be necessary for success in study, work and life in Victoria.<sup>1</sup>

The development of core skills include assisting individuals with undertaking pre-employment courses to find a job, improving digital literacy and computer skills, improving reading, writing and maths skills, accessing English language classes, improving financial literacy skills, and gaining a new qualification (LLNED skills, see Figure i to the right).

In this context, ACFE’s starting working definition of ‘hard to reach’ learners are those who are post-school age, stand to benefit from Learn Local courses (in developing core skills), and yet are least likely to access these offerings (due to a myriad of factors).

The impetus of this engagement (further described on page 10) is therefore to develop a more comprehensive understanding (‘evidence base’) of who ‘hard to reach’ learners are, by further defining the subset of learners within the starting definition. The work is also intended to provide understandings of where these learners are located, as well as identifying identify targeted strategies that can effectively engage and retain learners in Learn Local offerings.

This work represents part of the first stage of a broader ACFE Board funded initiative, that aims to better locate, engage and retain these learners.

### Overarching aims of ACFE

ACFE’s mission to lead LLNED skills training and education in Victoria. In addition to playing a strategic policy role, ACFE also engages with learners directly through the provision of learning and development opportunities.

A focus of ACFE’s strategy includes driving investment from the Victorian Government towards five core skills, namely language, literacy, numeracy, employability, and digital skills.

Figure i. Core skills listed within ACFE’s strategy



**Language:** A proficiency of English or English as an Additional Language (EAL) is required to engage with work in Victoria.



**Literacy** refers to the ability to read, write and speak in order to understand and construct meaning.



**Numeracy** includes the behaviours, dispositions, knowledge and skills which are required to use mathematics in various workplace situations.



**Employability** refers to a range of skills including communication, learning skills and technology, initiative and enterprise, planning and organising, problem solving, self management and teamwork.



**Digital** skills refer to an individual’s digital capability for employment. Digital capability includes competencies such as digital literacy skills for specific industries, digital readiness and general digital skills for job search.

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## Research motivation and the initial brief

The objective is to support the ACFE Board's strategic and funding decisions amidst budget constraints, towards those who are most in need of – and may be missing out on – Learn Locals services.

### The impetus

Over time, Victoria has observed a persistent number of adults with low literacy and/or low numeracy skills. Previous research by Deloitte Access Economics has also estimated that the average number of unique individuals with LLNED skills needs, who could benefit from enrolling an ACFE course is 1.2 million, reinforcing the need for provision of foundational skills training.

Previous research (including by Deloitte Access Economics) has found that the Learn Local network has been shown to be effective in developing the foundation skills of working age Victorians, delivering benefits to individuals, communities and the economy.

However, the level of need in Victoria has not declined over time (indicated by data held by ACFE), presenting further compelling evidence that more Victorians in-need must be enabled to access and successfully participate in training, and furthermore, that ACFE may not be currently reaching the people who are most in need of LLNED courses.

In other words, this cohort represents the 'hard to reach' learners. At the same time, as Learn Locals enrolments remain high (approximately 29,703 in 2019, 19,126 in 2020, and 20,661 in 2021),<sup>1</sup> suggesting that ACFE is not 'gatekeeping' or applying a stringent selection criteria to learners who are enrolling in the sources, for example to ensure that learners most in need of core skills training are being reached.

*For instance, ACFE has observed that some migrants may seek Learn Local services who otherwise may have been eligible for Federal Government funded services such as AMES.*

This represents a challenge for ACFE, given there is a limited budget to deliver Learn Locals courses. The identification of 'hard to reach' learners who have these skills needs, is therefore an imperative for the ACFE Board in deciding how to better allocate and target its investment (in terms of courses and to learners). There is also a need to better understand

<sup>1</sup> ACFE enrolment data (2019-21)

In addition, CALD and First Nations learners are two of the Victorian Government's identified 'priority cohorts'. Although CALD cohorts are well-represented in Learn Local courses (comprising of 48% of enrolments in 2021), there is the imperative to ensure ACFE is engaging with these communities, particularly with learners who have greater need and who face barriers to access – for example, recent humanitarian migrants in Victoria who require bespoke outreach and engagement strategies.

In this context, ACFE is also considering how to identify, locate and engage these learners in Learn Locals. As a result, these learners form part of the focus for this project brief.

### The brief

The above context has driven the need for this research, and subsequently the brief to develop a nuanced evidence base intended to help to guide ACFE's strategic and funding decisions amidst budget constraints, towards those who are most in need of (and may be missing out on) Learn Locals services.

The below components of this work are intended to reveal more insights about who and where Victorians disengaged in study and work are, to inform funding decisions and better targeting.

- A working definition of 'hard to reach'
- Where 'hard to reach' learners are located, with a focus on CALD and First Nations learners
- Strategies for outreach to, and engagement of 'hard to reach' learners
- Illustrative case studies of better practice, through connecting with Learn Local providers who have been successful in engaging learners to understand the strategies that have been employed.

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## Evolving understandings and considerations for this work

Undertaking the exploratory desktop review and early stakeholder conversations early in the project highlighted the need to reimagine the project brief and the nature of deliverables.

In the early stages of this engagement, the understanding of the research brief was further illuminated by preliminary desktop review of the literature on hard to reach learners and stakeholder conversations and subsequently reimaged in line with the following considerations.

### The framing of 'hard to reach'

Stakeholder perspectives, in addition to a field of literature, caution against this framing of learners as it is conceptualised as individualistic and deficit-based, implicitly positioning learners as 'difficult' and questioning why they may not be engaging. Rather, there are preferred alternative approaches reframe this term, that aim to understand what it is about the system that may make it difficult for some learners to engage with.

### Developing a working definition

Conceptually, developing a definition for a subset of learners who are least likely to engage in a Learn Local offering is an inherently complex task, particularly given the diversity of learner communities that are present. There are also challenges in representing attitudes and aspiration toward learning – which are varied – as well as potential risks of narrowing or 'profiling' these learners. Findings emerging from a literature scan and stakeholder consultations suggest an alternative framing or perspective towards 'hard to reach', one which moves towards individual decisions, attitudes aspirations – and what the system could do to engage at the point of need.

### Profiling 'hard to reach'

Practically, while the research undertaken in this project is able to identify the broad parameters for a 'hard to reach' learner definition, there are limitations in what this type of inquiry can reveal. It is likely that any 'definition' will need to remain malleable and nuanced to reflect the diversity of populations who stand to benefit from Learn Local courses, but do not engage. It is understood that this definition should serve the purpose of supporting a data-driven approach to identifying these learners (through the use of appropriate variables in datasets such as the Census); however, it is possible ACFE may need to look beyond existing systems of measurement and cross-agency sharing could support this endeavour.

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### Developing learner profiles

The focus on specific language or cultural groups must be better nuanced. 'Hard to reach' learners are diverse in their histories, contexts and demographics, as well as in the barriers they face. The positioning of the term 'profiles' therefore may result in 'bucketing' learners, and a narrow definition that may lead towards a one-size-fits-all approach.

### Focusing on 'locating', and to a lesser extent, 'engaging'

The project brief states that this work must focus on 'locating' and 'engaging' learners, leaving retention strategies to a future workstream. However, emerging findings from the desktop review and stakeholder conversations suggest these strategies cannot be separated in practice. The strategies that will effectively engage diverse cohorts of learners in learning are likely to be those that are holistic in their approach, and take an equal focus on retention (i.e. course completion). As such, the project may need to consider all aspects.

### Identifying characteristics of effective strategies for ACFE

Stakeholder consultations emphasised the importance of community-based and shared partnerships in delivering effective outreach and engagement strategies. Many community organisations, services or hubs (to name a few) have an important role to play in this regard and in the referral process; as such it is likely that this work will need to define the role of ACFE in this space and define - through discussions - the role it is willing and best positioned to play.

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## Approach to this work

This project employed a mixed-methods and multi-phase approach to developing an evidence base for ACFE, comprising conceptualisations of ‘hard to reach’, detailed learner profiles and illustrative case studies.

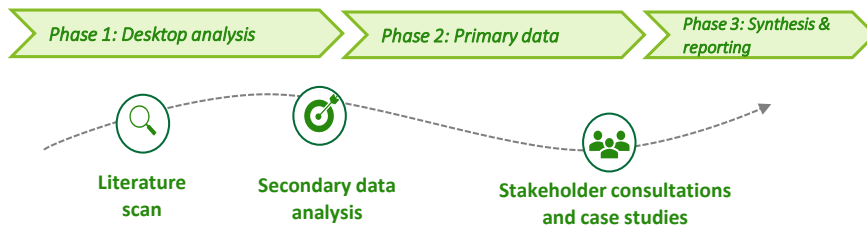
### Our approach

The work undertaken as part of this engagement has largely been exploratory in nature, evolving in understanding and lines of inquiry, while addressing the relevant research questions and priorities as set out in the project brief and the analytical plan submitted to ACFE.

The work program comprised of a targeted literature scan (drawing upon a selection of key sources, including existing strategies and reports, previously commissioned reports, and seminal research from pre-accredited and vocational education sectors), analysis of secondary data (including the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ Census data and ACFE’s program enrolment data, and a stakeholder consultation program which involves engaging with numerous stakeholder groups, ranging from providers, to representative bodies, experts and other Departmental agencies.

A number of illustrative ‘better practice’ case studies of effective providers and organisations were also conducted to generate learnings for the evidence base.

An overview of the approach is represented below.



### This report

The remainder of this report represents the outputs from the analytical program undertaken as part of this engagement and presents:

- an overview of this engagement and the impetus of this work ([Introduction](#))
- discussion on the conceptualisation of a ‘hard to reach’ learner, including characteristics, barriers faced and engagement strategies drawing on the literature ([Section 1](#))
- detailed learner profiles highlighting where learner need is most prevalent drawing on literature, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ (ABS) Census data ([Section 2](#))
- insights from stakeholder consultations and illustrative case studies of better practice relevant to the ACFE context ([Section 3](#))
- A triangulation of findings from the evidence sources on how ‘hard to reach’ learners are understood, characterised and engaged with ([Section 4](#))

# Section 1. Literature analysis

## Working definition of 'hard to reach'

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## Overview of literature analysis

A scan of literature was undertaken to answer the key lines of inquiry for this project.

The approach and structure of the literature scan – including the research questions, terminology, and sources informing the analysis – are outlined below. It is important to note that the scope of this review is a literature scan, rather than being systematic in nature. Therefore, it considers a selection of key sources of relevant literature, including existing strategies and reports, previously commissioned reports, and seminal research from pre-accredited and vocational education sectors in Victoria – to draw together the relevant findings and implications for this work.

Method		
Research questions	Key sources of literature	Out of scope for this literature scan
<p>Research questions which have been considered as a part of this literature can include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does the term ‘hard to reach’ learner mean in adult learning?</li> <li>• What it makes it hard to engage a ‘hard to reach’ in adult learning?</li> <li>• What are the barriers to engage in adult learning?</li> <li>• What are the barriers faced by learners to engage in adult learning (including for CALD and First Nations learners)?</li> <li>• What are the barriers faced by learners to engage in adult education (including for CALD and First Nations learners)?</li> <li>• What are the characteristics of effective outreach and engagement for CALD and First Nations learners?</li> </ul>	<p>The key sources of literature and evidence drawn upon to answer the research questions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key existing resources and strategies (i.e. the Ministerial Statement on the Future of ACE in Victoria)</li> <li>• Past research conducted by Deloitte Access Economics</li> <li>• Government publications in state (Victoria) and federal government</li> <li>• Academic journals</li> </ul> <p>In addition to the pre-accredited and vocational education sectors, the research considered evidence from the aged care and health sectors.</p> <p>The majority of the evidence was sourced from Government documentation, past commissioned research and reports. To supplement this, a scan of academic literature was conducted by examining relevant publications in journals (Australian Journal of Adult Learning, Australian Journal of Teacher Education, Journal of Educational Innovation Partnership and Change), and databases (ERIC, Google Scholar).</p>	<p>Given the scope for this literature scan (as determined with ACFE), it does not set out provide a comprehensive overview of past research in this field.</p> <p>Research questions and terms that were deemed to be out of scope for this research are outlined below. More detailed exploration of the following questions could provide useful nuance to the findings provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How characteristics may differ across specific CALD communities (for example, migrant or refugee or specific language groups).</li> <li>• How characteristics of effective engagement strategies might differ by age group, for CaLD and First Nations learners.</li> <li>• The interaction between First Nations and CaLD communities (for example, through migration and settlement patterns), and resulting implications for needs and characteristics.</li> </ul>

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## Working definition of ‘hard to reach’ learners – traditional view

Building on the starting point provided by ACFE, the literature scan provides a working definition that is further defined. The following represents the traditional view of ‘hard to reach’, and as applied to ACFE’s context

The traditional view of a ‘hard to reach’ learner is presented below. Starting with a theoretical lens, this is further specified in ACFE’s context and its starting point for this work. The subset of hard to reach learners is further specified in the table below, in support of future data-driven identification of learners, and the use of appropriate variables in existing datasets such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ Census (see Section 2).

### Definition of ‘hard to reach’ learner in research<sup>2</sup>

Theoretical  
Lens



Historically, research on ‘hard to reach learners’ dates back to 1980. While more contemporary research has been undertaken to understand the characteristics of these learners, historically this has not been defined adequately in adult education research, thus driving the need to develop a clearer understanding and evidence base for this learner type.

A **theoretical lens** of ‘hard to reach’ is provided by Darkenwald (1980)<sup>1</sup> who suggests that “...(*‘hard to reach’ learners*) are adults who are underrepresented in continuing education, and also those which a particular agency (in this case, ACFE) is having difficulty in recruiting.”

Further, the exceptions to the traditional approaches of promotion and publicity of an agency are the ones who are deemed to be ‘hard to reach’. Pittham (2009)<sup>2</sup> adds that in general terms, “...(*‘hard to reach’ learners*) are those who do not self-refer or readily seek to engage in adult learning programs or courses. They are difficult to recruit, to the extent, that if there are softer targets available locally, little effort is made to make contact and connect with the hard to reach and thus their voices can remain unheard and their needs and wants are largely ignored.”

### In ACFE’s context, ‘hard to reach’ can be understood to mean the following:

ACFE’s  
initial  
definition



In the ACFE context, a broad definition of ‘hard to reach’ learners are individuals who are post-school age, have low prior educational attainment, and are likely to benefit from participating in Learn Local programs (with a core skill need), yet who face barriers to engaging in education, training and employment.

<b>‘Post-school age’</b>	Age brackets range from 15 (post Year 10 age) to 79, as aligned with the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ Census age brackets.
<b>‘Low prior educational attainment’ meaning in this context</b>	Learner did not attend or complete secondary school (Year 10 or below).
<b>‘Likely to benefit from participating in pre-accredited Learn Local programs’</b>	The learner has core LLNED skills needs, and who - following participation in pre-accredited Learn Local programs - can increase their chances to find employment and/or participate actively and confidently in daily life.
<b>What barriers are they likely to face?</b>	Various factors that stem beyond age, educational attainment and core LLNED (foundational skills) need which may render adults less likely to connect with Learn Local. These factors can compound and intersect (for example, including experiences of disability and/or living in a remote area amongst others), signalling that a broader definition of what a hard-to-reach learner means. Barriers that learners face when interacting with Learn Local can be categorised in four ways relating to (1) access, (2) achievement, (3) aspiration and (4) application <sup>5</sup> .

<sup>1</sup> Darkenwald, G., *Continuing Education and the Hard-to-Reach Adult*, 1980, <<https://ur.booksc.me/book/11709127/1c1db6>>

<sup>2</sup> Pittham P. (2009), cited in ACFE, *Hard to reach learners: What works in reaching and keeping them*, 2010, <<https://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv%3A46741>>

<sup>3</sup> ACFE, *Hard to reach learners: What works in reaching and keeping them*, 2010, <<https://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv%3A46741>>

<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Age Standard*, 2014, <<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/age-standard/latest-release>>

<sup>5</sup> Davies M, Lamb S, Doecke E, *Strategic review of effective re-engagement models for disengaged learners*, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Victoria), 2011, <<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/documents/about/research/revreengage.pdf>>

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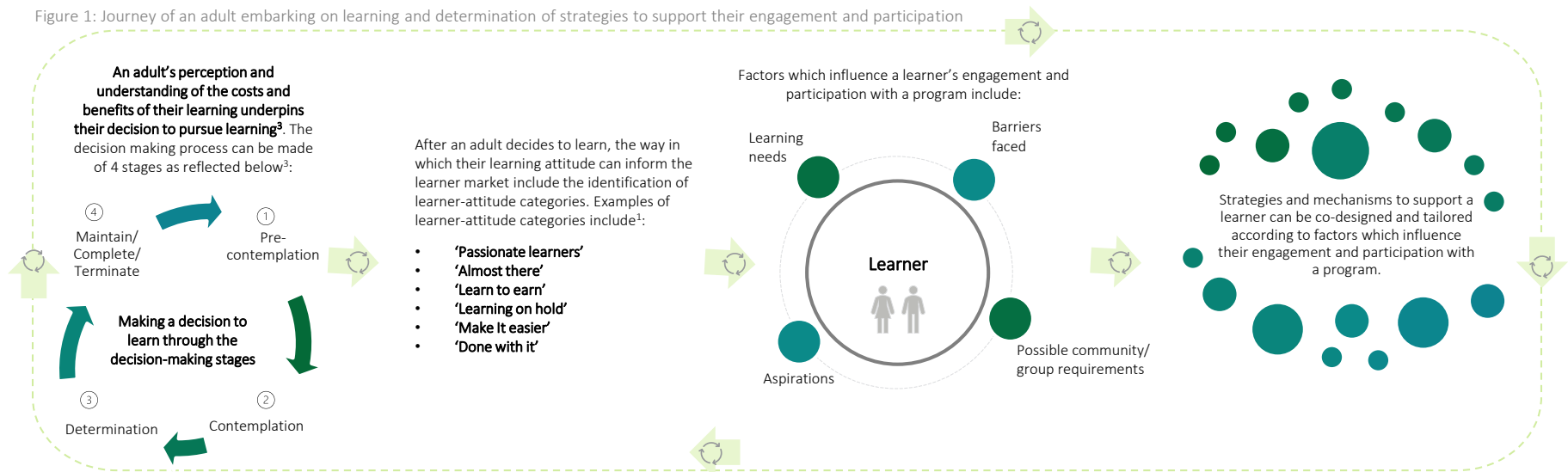
## Working definition of ‘hard to reach learners’: an alternative perspective

Another way to look at defining a ‘hard to reach’ learner is by considering (1) how and why they decide to learn, (2) their attitudes to learning and (3) their learning needs at different stages of their learning journey.

Research indicates that literacy and numeracy skills development needs are observed in various cohorts and socio-economic groups, including those such as native English speakers<sup>2</sup>. Pursuing approaches such as a cohort-based view (i.e. preselecting cohorts) to identify and determine outreach and engagement strategies may only provide a partial understanding of why an individual learner might be ‘hard to reach’.

To ensure appropriate outreach and engagement, recommended best practices for education providers include identifying and understanding what influences a learner’s decision to engage in education first, and then positioning the learner at the centre of each stage of the journey to determine a holistic response that is directly centred in their learning needs, community/group requirements and barriers they may face<sup>1</sup>. In addition to understanding what motivates adult learners to engage, this journey also helps to consider at which points ACFE could ‘work harder’ to reach out to learners who experience a greater degree of need. The journey map is reflected in Figure 1 below, and explored in further detail overleaf.

Figure 1: Journey of an adult embarking on learning and determination of strategies to support their engagement and participation



<sup>1</sup>ACFE, Hard to reach learners: What works in reaching and keeping them, 2010. <<https://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngb%3A46741>>

<sup>2</sup>The Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL), Submission to the Parliament of Australia, Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training Inquiry into Adult Literacy and its Importance, 2021. <<https://acal.edu.au/acals-submission-to-the-parliamentary-inquiry-into-adult-literacy-and-its-importance/>>

<sup>3</sup>Kantar Public and Learning and Work Institute, Decisions of Adult Learners, 2018. <<https://learningandwork.org.uk/resources/research-and-reports/decision-making-of-adult-learners/>>



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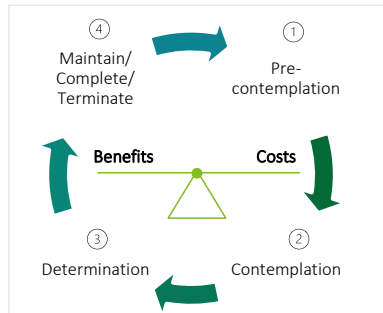


## Working definition of ‘hard to reach learners’: an alternative perspective

‘Hard to reach’ learners may not engage as the perceived cost of pursuing learning (which includes LLNED skills) outweighs the benefits they could gain, which in turn impacts their decision to engage in learning.

The four different stages of a decision-making process (introduced on the previous page) that an adult undergoes is detailed in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Making a decision to learn through the decision-making process is determined by the balance between costs and benefits incurred<sup>2</sup>.



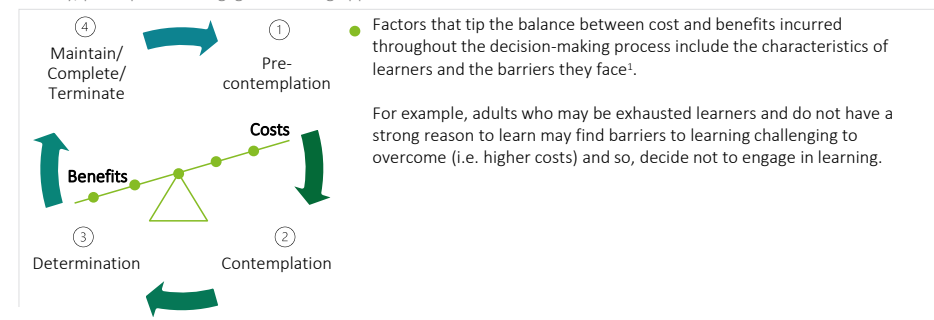
- **Pre-contemplation:** At the stage of pre-contemplation, adults may not be actively seeking to learn as engaging in learning might not be the evident pathway for them to attain their aspirations. Adults at this stage might only be interested in being aware of learning and avenues to consider pursuing learning<sup>1</sup>.
- **Contemplation:** At the stage of contemplating learning, adults are typically considering how learning can benefit them by exploring its potential value.
- **Determination:** At the stage of determination, adults decide to pursue learning if their perception of the gains of learning outweighs the cost and take action such as enrolling onto a course.
- **Maintenance, completion or early withdrawal (Termination):** At this stage of maintenance, completion or termination, adults may be participating in learning yet face multiple barriers, potentially undermining their engagement until completion.

The **cost of engaging in learning for an adult ('cons')** can be financial or non-financial (such as the availability of childcare and flexibility provided by an employer)<sup>1</sup>. The **benefits of engaging in learning for an adult ('pros')** can lead to increased chances to find employment and participate actively and confidently in daily life<sup>1</sup>.

The balance between the costs and benefits of learning (as reflected on Figure 2 on the left) varies throughout the life of an adult's learning journey as the cost and benefits change. For an adult whose costs outweigh the benefits of pursuing learning (as reflected in Figure 3 below, and as introduced on the previous page), they might be positioned 'out of the reach' of organisations such as ACFE. Different characteristics of learners and the barriers they face, all influence an adult's decision to engage in learning to different degrees<sup>1</sup>. These are explored further as a part of the literature scan on from pages 18-24.

**Implications for ACFE's offerings:** For adult learners who are positioned as 'out of the reach' for ACFE, ACFE needs to ensure that the offered training is viewed as practical, pragmatic and purposeful – which in turn enhances the benefits a learner stands to gain. For example, if pursuing a ACFE course can guarantee a job opportunity and enhance an adult's earning power, it might increase the benefits an adult gains thereby tipping the scale to a decision prompting them to pursue learning. **Implications for ACFE's outreach:** Outreach to adult learners at each stage of the decision making would also vary according to the characteristics of learners and barriers they face (factors) which influence the process.

Figure 3: When costs outweigh benefits of learning, adults may opt not to identify, participate and engage in learning opportunities<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Darkenwald, G., Continuing Education and the Hard-to-Reach Adult, 1980, <https://ur.booksc.me/book/11709127/1c1db6>

<sup>2</sup>Kantar Public and Learning and Work Institute, Decisions of Adult Learners, 2018, <https://learningandwork.org.uk/resources/research-and-reports/decision-making-of-adult-learners/>

# Literature analysis

Learner characteristics and barriers faced

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## Section overview: Characteristics of learners and barriers they face

Student populations in any age group consist of learners with range of varied interests in education and characteristics of learning needs which influences their decision and ability to engage with learning opportunities.

### Overview of this section

This section presents the findings of a literature scan surfacing the ‘characteristics’ of learners and the barriers they face.

It should be noted that, for the purpose of this report, characteristics of learners, and the barriers they face are described from the learner’s perspective instead of a service provider’s perspective (i.e. the barriers include the financial considerations that a learner might have (for example, the costs they incurred to invest in a computer to access learning opportunities) instead of the financial considerations that a Learn Local provider has (for example, providing language interpreters to reach out to a learner and/or to strengthen the support mechanism).

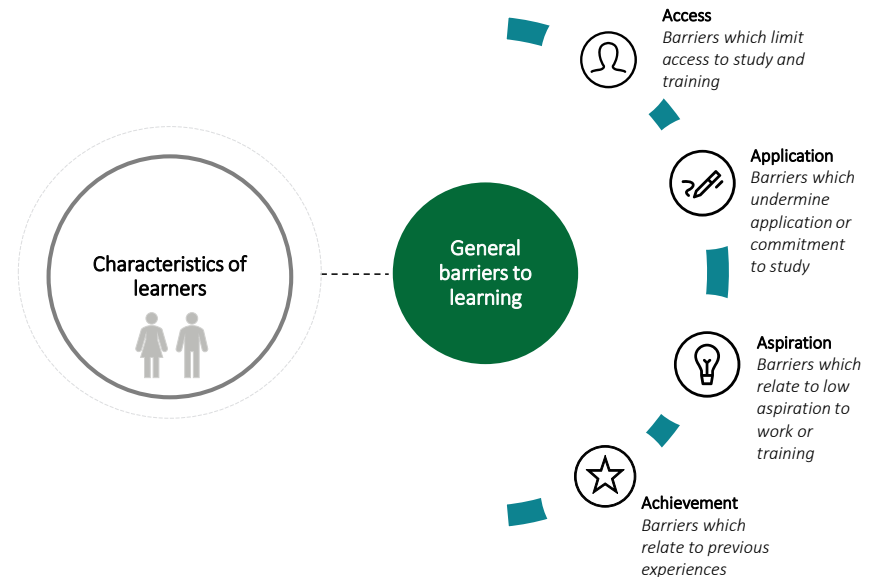
### Framing and focus of this literature analysis

As not all individuals or communities (including those of CaLD/First Nations backgrounds) form the target candidates for ACFE, **this literature analysis focuses on the key consideration which underscores the development of this evidence base - the intersection of learning needs and access to learning opportunities.** The intersection of learning needs and the ways in which learners access learning opportunities provides a needs-based understanding of how the system could reach learners, for example based on the ways that Learn Local providers could identify and locate learners based on severity of need, rather than based on learner characteristics. This provides an opportunity to understand what motivates learners, and assess if program offerings, including the design and curriculum offered, aligns with the learner needs and goals.

For example, if one way which learners access learning opportunities is through the relationships which surround them (i.e. through family, friends and community), these relationships need to be funded and empowered to locate and reach those who may otherwise be disengaged. This could take the form of working with a community group to talk about the programs that are available which in turn promotes the programs run by Learn Local.

However, there are experiences common to CaLD/First Nations communities that can compound the complexities and intersections. These are outlined between pages [19](#) (characteristics of learners) and [24](#) (barriers faced by learners).

Figure: Characteristics intersecting with barriers to obtaining LLNED skills



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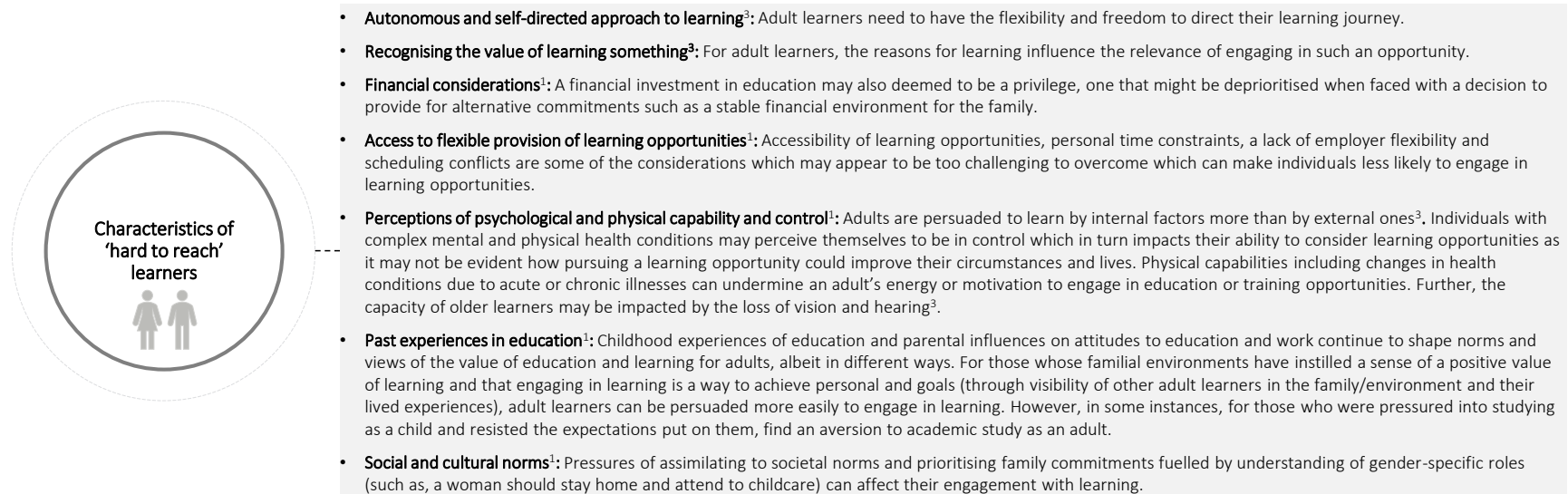


## General characteristics of ‘hard to reach’ learners

Student populations in any age group consist of learners with range of varied interests in education and characteristics of learning needs which influences their decision and ability to engage with learning opportunities.

In the context of this document, the characteristics of adult learners is gathered based on findings from desktop research with reference to factors that make individuals more or less likely to want to engage in adult education systems and learning opportunities. Overall, adults’ decisions to engage in learning can be shaped by the personal benefits they gain weighed against the costs incurred<sup>1</sup> which is in turn influenced by factors which prevent, facilitate or motivate the adult as a learner. Some of the characteristics which affect learners are reflected in Figure 4. While these are characteristics attributed to ‘hard to reach’ learners, they look different for CaLD and First Nations learners whose characteristics are explored in subsequent slides.

Figure 4: General characteristics of learners affecting their engagement with learning opportunities



<sup>1</sup>Kantar Public and Learning and Work Institute, Decisions of Adult Learners, 2018, <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED590017.pdf>>

<sup>2</sup>Australian Journal of Adult Learning, Barriers to adult learning: Bridging the gap, 2011, <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ954482.pdf>>

<sup>3</sup>Merriam, S.B., and Caffarella, R.S., Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide (Second edition) (1999) cited in Falasca, M., Australian Journal of Adult Learning (Volume 51, Number 3), Barriers to adult learning; Bridging the gap, 2011 <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ954482.pdf>>

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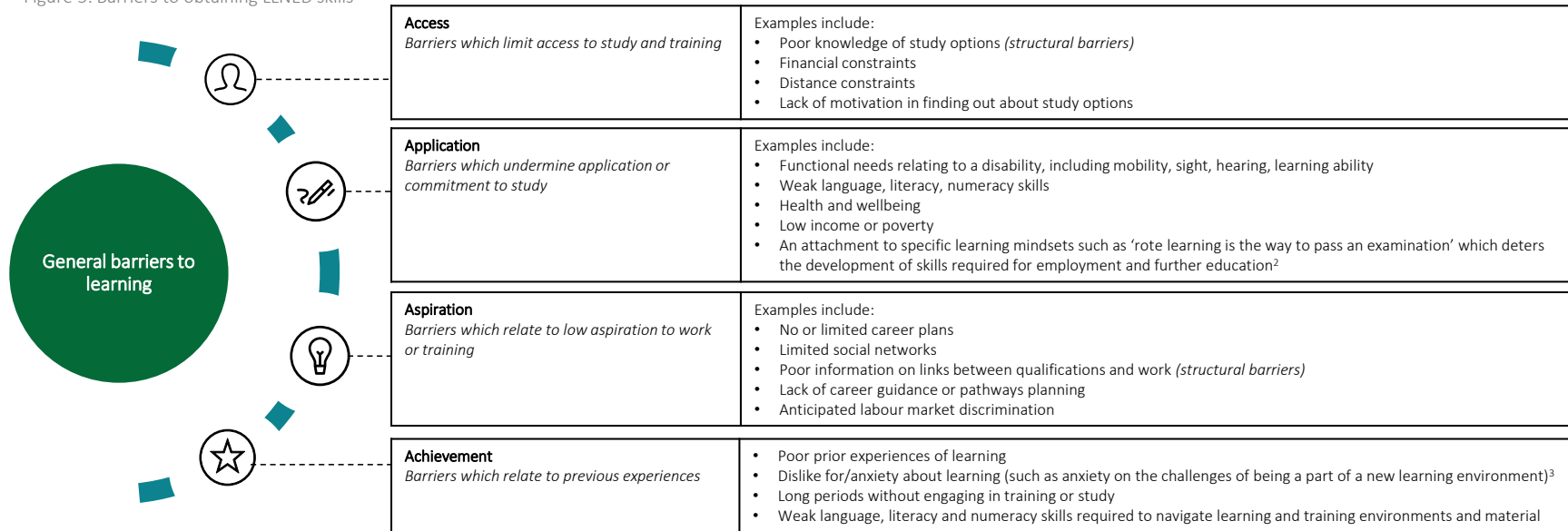


## General barriers faced by ‘hard to reach’ learners

General barriers faced by learners prevent them from participating in and engaging in learning or training to improve their LLNED skills. Davies, Lamb and Doecke (2011) approach the range of barriers faced by learners in VET (a sector of education and training which is most likely to be accessed by ‘hard to reach’ learners) by categorising them under four types of barriers.

The four types of barriers related to access, application, aspiration and achievement are reflected in Figure 5. These prevent access to general education options. The barriers faced by the learners can be also be *compounding and intersecting*. This literature scan considers the barriers faced by learners, while further research could be pursued to identify the *structural* and *service* barriers which prevent engagement by learners. Examples of structural barriers include a lack of information that is shared or marketed appropriately, English language barriers and service barriers include a lack of understanding at the institutional level of needs of learners<sup>1</sup>.

Figure 5: Barriers to obtaining LLNED skills



<sup>1</sup>Source: Davies M, Lamb S, Doecke E (2011). *Strategic review of effective re-engagement models for disengaged learners*. Melbourne: Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Journal of Adult Learning, Barriers to adult learning: Bridging the gap, 2011, <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ954482.pdf>>

<sup>3</sup> Adult, Community and Further Education Board Strategy 2020-25, Learn Local, Skills for Study, Work and Life, <[https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/research/acfepublications/ACFE\\_Board\\_Strategy\\_2020-25.pdf](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/research/acfepublications/ACFE_Board_Strategy_2020-25.pdf)>

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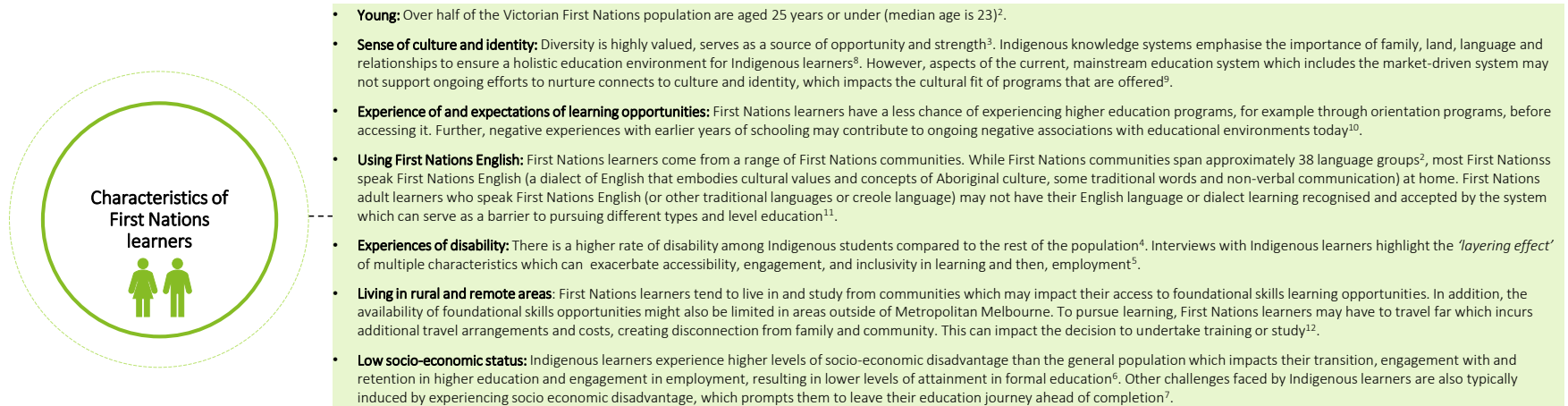


## Characteristics of ‘hard to reach’ First Nations learners

Intersecting characteristics which are unique to First Nations learners’ engagement with education include a strong sense of connection to their culture’s unique spiritual fabric while a common factor with CaLD learners or the general population includes navigating through experiences of added disadvantage such as being associated with poverty.

**Terminology:** In Victoria, First Nations is used to refer to those who identify with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups<sup>1</sup> and is a contemporary collective group term which may not be familiar to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Checking with individual learners, their families and communities on how they refer to themselves and using it to guide the language used when referring to individuals or community will ensure that learners are approached in a respectful way<sup>1</sup>. In place of First Nations, other terms that are typically used in teaching, learning resources and environments include: Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Indigenous and First Nations Peoples<sup>1</sup>. Some intersecting dominant characteristics of First Nations learners are reflected in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Intersecting dominant characteristics of First Nations learners



<sup>1</sup> Victoria State Government, Department of Education and Training, First Nations Education, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, 2022 <<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/First-Nations-education/policy>>

<sup>2</sup> Victoria State Government, Department of Education and Training, Promoting participation and engagement for First Nations learners in VET – Planning for Success, 2022, <<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&ct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwIV-eLdKX6AHXh7zgGHWesC2UQFnoECA0QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fengage.vic.gov.au%2Ffirst-nations-learners-vet&usq=AOVvaw0s...4nx6JvZKHESXpC5D>>

<sup>3</sup> Salkow, H., NCVET, Cultural identity a factor in Indigenous education, 2013, <<https://www.ncvet.edu.au/news-and-events/opinion-pieces/cultural-identity-a-factor-in-indigenous-education>>

<sup>4</sup> Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, First Nations people with disability – Infographic, 2020, <<https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/2020-11/First%20Nations%20people%20with%20disability%20-%20Infographic.pdf>>

<sup>5</sup> The University of Sydney, Royal Commission into the Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability - Employment Issues paper, 2020, <[https://www.sydnev.edu.au/content/dam/corporate/documents/about-us/governance-and-structure/university-policies/2020/20200814-usyd-submission-to-drc-employment-issues-paper-\(no-sig\).pdf](https://www.sydnev.edu.au/content/dam/corporate/documents/about-us/governance-and-structure/university-policies/2020/20200814-usyd-submission-to-drc-employment-issues-paper-(no-sig).pdf)>

<sup>6</sup> Department of Education and Training, National Priorities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Secondary Student Transitions project, 2016, <<http://www.pssw.myskills.gov.au/media/1507/circa-final-report-21-july-2016.pdf>>

<sup>7</sup> Australian Council for Educational Research, Edwards, D & McMillian, J. Completing university in a growing sector: Is equity and issue?, 2015, <[https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1045&context=higher\\_education](https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1045&context=higher_education)>

<sup>8</sup> The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, Red Dirt Thinking on Education: A People-Based System, 2013, <<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/australian-journal-of-indigenous-education/article/abs/red-dirt-thinking-on-education-a-peoplebased-system/D132CBB221C8A1E9749EE7A8553F3BA>>

<sup>9</sup> Fanshawe, M., Abawi, L. A., & Guy, J. The importance of Indigenous cultural perspectives in education (The danger of the single story), Opening Eyes onto Inclusion and Diversity, 2019, <<https://usq.pressbooks.pub/openingeyes/chapter/662/>>

<sup>10</sup> Australians Together, The Stolen Generations, 2022, <<https://australians.together.org.au/discover/australian-history/stolen-generations/>>

<sup>11</sup> DET Queensland, Department of Education WA, Northern Territory Government, NSW Government, Capability Framework, Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D learners, <<https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/Capability-framework-teaching-aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-eald-learners.pdf>>

<sup>12</sup> The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, Red Dirt Thinking on Education: A People-Based System, 2013, <<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/australian-journal-of-indigenous-education/article/abs/red-dirt-thinking-on-education-a-peoplebased-system/D132CBB221C8A1E9749EE7A8553F3BA>>

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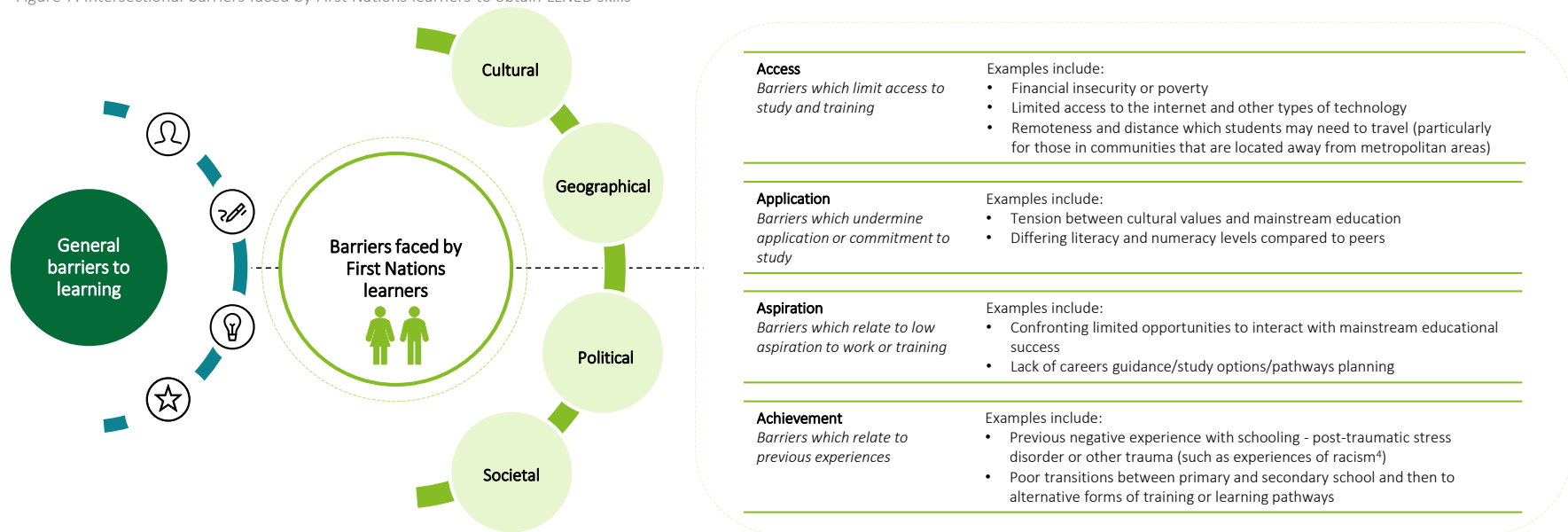


## Barriers faced by ‘hard to reach’ First Nations learners

In addition to facing general barriers to learning, First Nations learners are impacted by a wide range of intersecting factors outside of the education system, which impact their engagement with education. Intersectional barriers which impact First Nations learners can be understood through cultural, geographical, political and social ways.

Historically, parts of the mainstream education system (which are underscored by vestiges of colonialism and engagement with Indigenous people through lenses informed by ‘deficit-discourse’) do not align with the values of Indigenous communities, which undermines the ways in which outreach and engagement can meaningfully occur<sup>1</sup>. An example of a barrier faced by First Nations learners is in navigating the tension between cultural values and mainstream education while coping with a differing literacy and numeracy level compared to peers, which exacerbates ongoing negative experiences in educational settings<sup>2</sup>. Figure 7 below provides a summary of some examples of barriers faced by First Nations learners.

Figure 7: Intersectional barriers faced by First Nations learners to obtain LLNED skills<sup>3</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Fanshawe, M., Abawi, L. A., & Guy, J. The importance of Indigenous cultural perspectives in education (The danger of the single story), *Opening Eyes onto Inclusion and Diversity*, 2019, <<https://usq.pressbooks.pub/openingeyes/chapter/662/>>

<sup>2</sup> Urquhart, B., *Summary of selected social indicators*, Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet (2009), sourced from <<https://www.indigenoushpf.gov.au/measures/2-07-employment#references>>

<sup>3</sup> Davies M, Lamb S., Doecke., Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *Strategic review of effective re-engagement models for disengaged learners*, 2011, <<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/documents/about/research/revreengage.pdf>> and Deloitte Access Economics

<sup>4</sup> Biddle, B. & Priest, N., Racism hits indigenous students' attendance and grades, 2015, <<https://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news/racism-hits-indigenous-students-attendance-and-grades>>

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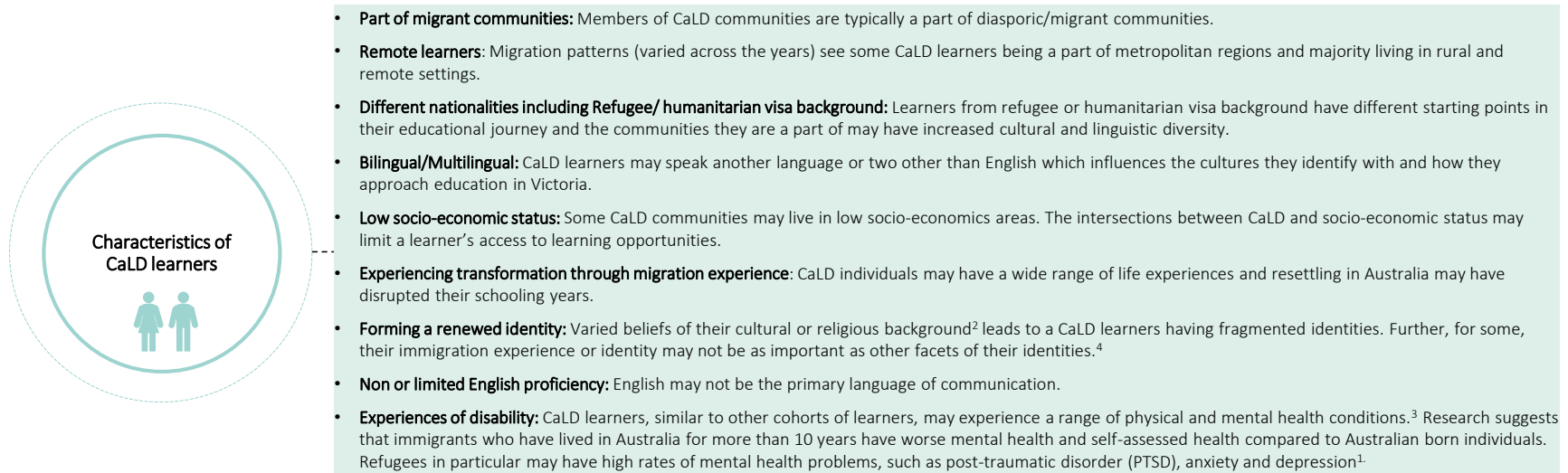


## Characteristics of ‘hard to reach’ CaLD learners

Intersecting characteristics which are unique to a CaLD learner’s engagement in education include forging a fragmented identity to assimilate to life in Australia upon their arrival while a common factor which resonates to First Nations learners include being identified and recognised by their cultural identity.

**Terminology:** While the term CaLD is a term that is used consistently in the public, community and bureaucratic environment, it is a complex concept and often requires different pieces of information such as their country of birth, what language/s they speak and religious affiliation to capture the breadth and scope of characteristics which define those who might be a part of diverse communities. In Australia, CaLD communities include those people who were born overseas (predominantly from non-English speaking or non-Western countries), have a parent born overseas or speak a variety of languages.<sup>1</sup> It can include people seeking asylum seekers, international students, migrants, temporary workers and their families. Some intersecting dominant characteristics of CaLD learners are reflected in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8: Intersecting dominant characteristics of CaLD learners



Deloitte Access Economics, VET Efficient Pricing: Loadings Final Report (commissioned by National Skills Commission), November 2021.

<sup>2</sup>Australian Government, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) adolescents, <<https://aifs.gov.au/resources/practice-guides/working-culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-cald-adolescents>>

<sup>3</sup>Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, The experience of culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability, 2021, <<https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/experiences-culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-people-disability>>

<sup>4</sup>Parliament of Victoria, Engaging Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) Communities in Parliamentary Inquiries Engaging Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) Communities in Parliamentary Inquiries Download Executive Summary, 2018, <<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/publications/research-papers/summary/36-research-papers/13885-engaging-culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-cald-communities-in-parliamentary-inquiries>>



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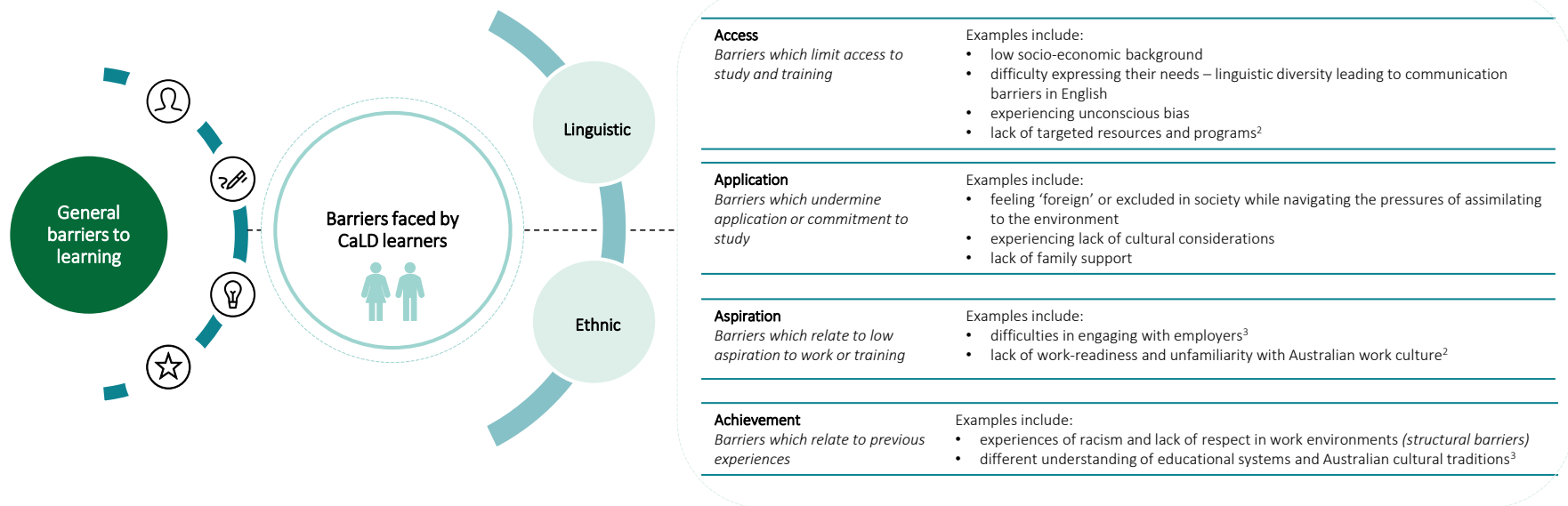


## Barriers faced by ‘hard to reach’ CaLD learners

In the context of this report, First Nations learners are not included explicitly within the definition of CaLD learners. CaLD learners are also a cohort of learners who are impacted by a wide range of intersecting factors outside of the; these include ethnic and linguistic barriers.

CaLD learners consist of those who are not of Australian cultural background, and includes those who are born overseas, other than those classified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) as ‘main English speaking countries’<sup>1</sup>. In addition to facing general barriers to learning, CaLD adults, especially those who are older, face challenges in accessing and engaging in services and supports<sup>4</sup>. Factors relating to access to services (such as information not being disseminated in a culturally appropriate way) emerging in other sectors (such as aged care) can also contribute to the overall understanding of factors impacting learners in the education sector<sup>4</sup>.

Figure 9: Intersectional barriers faced by CaLD learners to obtain LLNED skills



<sup>1</sup>Victorian Government, Data collection standards - Culturally and linguistically diverse communities, 2022, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-family-violence-data-collection-framework/data-collection-standards-culturally-and>>

<sup>2</sup>Dunwoodie, K, Due, C, Baker, S, Newman & Tran, C, Supporting (or not) the career development of culturally and linguistically diverse migrants and refugees in universities: insights from Australia, 2021, <<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10775-021-09506-y>>

<sup>3</sup>Monloney, R, Saltmarsh, D, ‘Knowing your students’ in the culturally and linguistically diverse classroom, 2016, <<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2887&context=ajte>>

<sup>4</sup>Australia’s ageing Culturally and Linguistically Diverse population, End of Life Directions for Aged Care, 2022, <<https://www.eldac.com.au/tabid/5779/Default.aspx>>

# Literature analysis

Outreach and engagement strategies to engage learners

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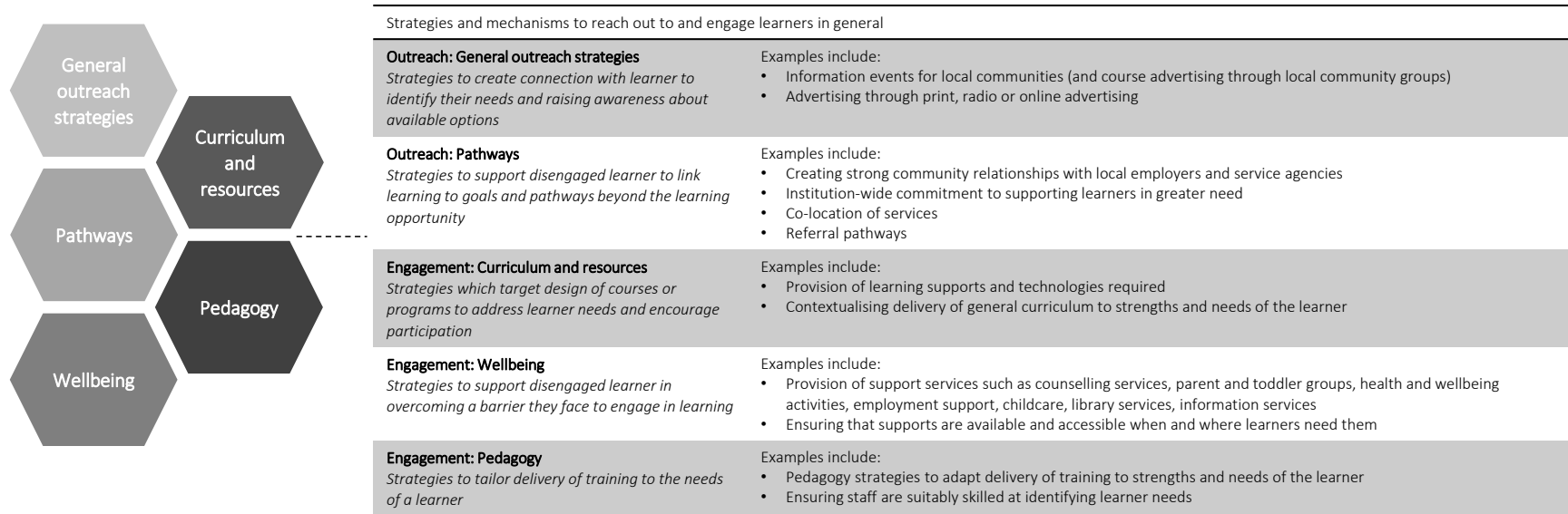


## General outreach and engagement strategies

Providers can implement adjustments and supports to reach and engage adult learners. Davies et al (2011) and Lamb et al (2018), suggest five categories in which outreach and engagement strategies can be organised.

Effective outreach and engagement strategies should vary in approach and intensity, depending on the strengths and the need of a learner. Strategies relating to ‘General outreach’ and ‘Pathways’ impact enrolment by helping to pull the thread to which ‘hard to reach’ learners are connected through the communities, people and networks they belong to, which fulfills some needs that ‘hard to reach’ learners may have. Strategies which impact the education experience of a learner such as ‘Curriculum and resources’, ‘Wellbeing’ and ‘Pedagogy’ can impact learner engagement once they have been enrolled onto a course/program, and are important for the holistic learner experience and completion outcomes.

Figure 9: Outreach strategies and mechanisms for learners in general<sup>1,2</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Davies M, Lamb S, Doecke E, *Strategic review of effective re-engagement models for disengaged learners*, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Victoria), 2011, <<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/documents/about/research/revreengage.pdf>>

<sup>2</sup>Lamb, S et al, 2018, *Improving participation and success in VET for disadvantaged learners*, NCVET, 2018, <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/improving-participation-and-success-in-vet-for-disadvantaged-learners>>

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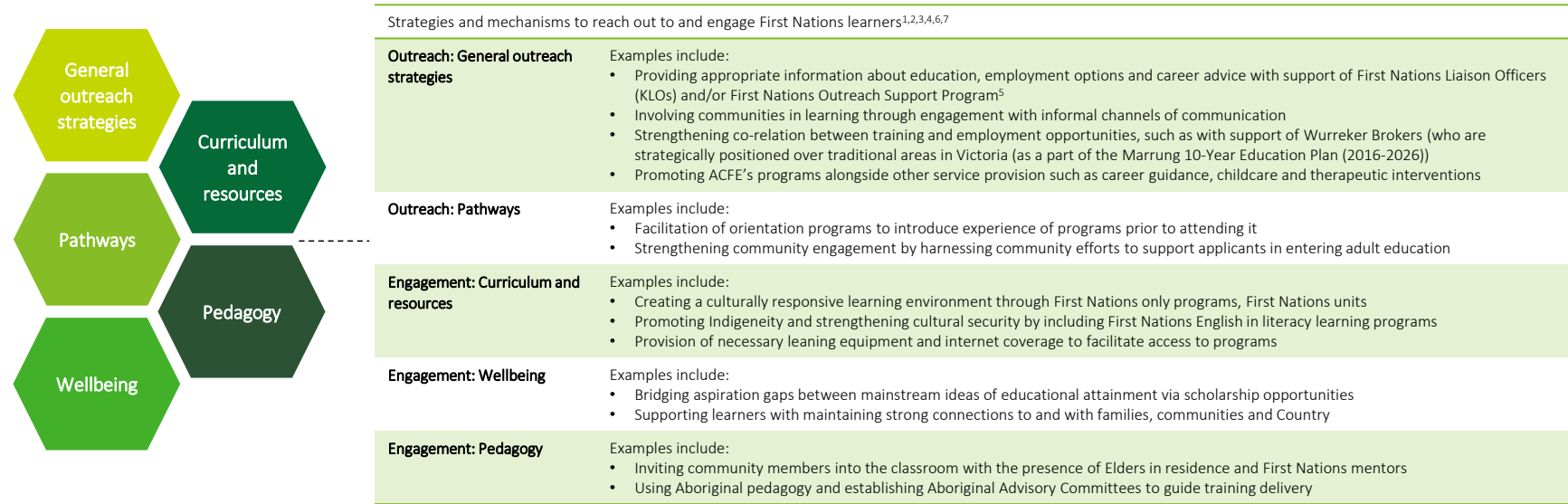


# Outreach and engagement strategies: ‘hard to reach’ First Nations learners

Categories of outreach strategies in a learning environment encompass general outreach strategies and adjustments introduced in pedagogy, curriculum and resources, wellbeing, pathways. A variety of student outreach strategies can be delivered to strengthen the enrolment and engagement of First Nations learners.

As seen previously ([Characteristics of First Nations learners](#) and [Barriers faced by First Nations learners](#)), First Nations learners in Victoria tend to be young adults who face multiple, intersecting barriers compared to other learners. Current research on student outreach or support mechanisms typically speak to Indigenous learners, and are most commonly found in primary and secondary schooling contexts. However, these outreach strategies can be contextualised accordingly to be applied to the adult learning and training sector, to improve participation in learning. Figure 10 below outlines several strategies and mechanisms which can be used to engage First Nations adult learners.

Figure 10: Outreach strategies and mechanisms for First Nations learners



<sup>1</sup> NCVET, Indigenous participation in VET: Understanding the research, 2017, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/E0574505.pdf>. NCVET, Enhancing training advantage for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners, 2017, <https://www.ncvet.edu.au/\_data/assets/pdf\_file/0037/497368/Enhancing-training-advantage-for-remote-ATSI-learners.pdf>.  
<sup>2</sup> Creative Spirits, Ways of teaching and engaging Aboriginal students, 2021, <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/education/teaching-aboriginal-students>  
<sup>3</sup> Victoria State Government, Department of Education and Training, Promoting participation and engagement for First Nations learners in VET – Planning for Success, 2022, <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&ct=j&q=&esc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKewJY-eLDkX6AHX7zgGHWesC2UQFnoECA00AQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fengage.vic.gov.au%2Ffirst-nations-learners-vet&usq=AOvVaw0s...4n6idwZ8HESXpCS>  
<sup>4</sup> Wilks, J., Dwyer, A., Wooltorton, S., Guenther, J., National Tertiary Education Union, We got a different way of learning: A message to the sector from Aboriginal students living and studying in remote communities, 2020, <https://www.nteu.org.au/article/%25E2%280%2598We-got-a-different-way-of-learning-%25E2%280%2599-A-message-to-the-sector-from-Aboriginal-students-living-and-studying-in-remote-communities-%2528AUR-62-02%2529-22295>  
<sup>5</sup> Victorian Aboriginal Education Association, First Nations Outreach Support Program, 2020, <https://www.vaeai.org.au/launch-first-nations-outreach-support-program/>  
<sup>6</sup> Davies, M., Lamb, S., Doeckel, E., Strategic review of effective re-engagement models for disengaged learners, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Victoria), 2011, <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/documents/about/research/reengagement.pdf>  
<sup>7</sup> Lamb, S et al., 2018, Improving participation and success in VET for disadvantaged learners, NCVET, 2018, <https://www.ncvet.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/improving-participation-and-success-in-vet-for-disadvantaged-learners>

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## Outreach and engagement strategies: ‘hard to reach’ CaLD learners

Communities in Australia are increasingly multicultural in nature and services must work with a range of different cultural groups. Service providers such as Learn Local providers are in a position to help people feel welcome and willing to engage with ancillary services which can support in assimilating and settling into life in Australia through strategies which are tailored to learners’ needs.

As explored through [characteristics of CaLD learners](#) and [barriers faced by CaLD learners](#), CaLD learners in Victoria may typically be older migrants, facing linguistic and structural barriers in accessing services. Figure 11 below outlines some outreach strategies and mechanisms which can be utilised to engage with CaLD learners.

Figure 11: Outreach strategies and mechanisms for CaLD learners



Strategies and mechanisms to reach out to and engage CaLD learners <sup>1</sup> :	
<b>Outreach: General outreach strategies</b>	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in a community engagement process at the location where communities are at (for example, using International Association for Public Participation Spectrum for Influence (IAP2)) so that members of the respective communities are engaged in the process by providing input and feedback<sup>2</sup></li> <li>Engaging a cultural champion</li> <li>Cultivate peer-to-peer education representation by encouraging past graduates to become program ambassadors<sup>2</sup></li> <li>Take time to nurture trust which are essential to building rapport engagement with informal channels of communication which exist within communities</li> <li>Provide the opportunity to audience to hear the information multiple times<sup>4</sup></li> <li>Co-locating services such as community hubs or neighbourhood houses</li> </ul>
<b>Outreach: Pathways</b>	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with a relevant cultural/religious/peak body such as Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECC) and Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Australia (FECCA) to determine suitable means and channel of communication</li> <li>Partner with local community organisation and connect with key community leaders who can promote programs<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Engagement: Curriculum and resources</b>	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executing a robust translation or transliteration strategy which considers components such as the best way to write names</li> <li>Introduce intercultural/cultural competency learning across the curriculum<sup>3</sup></li> <li>Collaborate with interpreters to deliver training so that it's relayed appropriately, received well and also understood by audience<sup>4</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Engagement: Wellbeing</b>	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed empathy and understanding of CaLD students and suitable teaching strategies in teacher training curriculum<sup>3</sup></li> <li>Maintain curiosity about individual experiences and perspectives of students<sup>4</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Engagement: Pedagogy</b>	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging with pictorial content</li> <li>Introducing videos</li> <li>Delivering courses in plain English language</li> <li>Engage with the potential of students' prior knowledge</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>Nathan,G., Butcher,N., Better Engaging Culturally Diverse Communities During COVID-19, 2020, <<https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/better-engaging-culturally-diverse-communities-during-covid-19>>

<sup>2</sup>Australian Government, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Engaging with multicultural communities to understand and respond to their needs, 2022, <<https://aifs.gov.au/webinars/engaging-multicultural-communities-understand-and-respond-their-needs>>

<sup>3</sup>Monloney,R, Saltmarch,D, 'Knowing your students' in the culturally and linguistically diverse classroom, 2016, <<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2887&context=ajte>>

<sup>4</sup>Central and Eastern Sydney Public Health Network, Engaging culturally and linguistically diverse communities, 2022, <<https://www.cesphn.org.au/news/latest-updates/57-enevs/2171-engaging-culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-communities>>

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## Effective outreach strategies for disengaged adults: other sectors

Lessons from COVID-19 outreach efforts to various communities are relevant for informing effective outreach strategies for ‘hard to reach’ adult learners. These strategies position the individual at the centre, and leverage community hubs as a ‘soft entry’ point to facilitate ease of service access

Examples of effective outreach strategies in engaging First Nations and CaLD communities during the COVID-19 pandemic are outlined below, which are relevant for informing effective outreach for adult learners.

During this time, the imperative to reach these individuals and communities was greater, and often more challenging due to restrictions imposed on typical means of access. To connect with ‘hard to reach’ individuals, Box 3 provides an example on how community hubs can a prime mechanism to engage adults across multiple services, as one way to facilitate access to LLNED courses.

### Outreach strategies for First Nations communities during COVID-19 pandemic

Effective outreach strategies for First Nations communities include (1) disseminating information through consultation with communities and partnerships with the First Nations Youth Council<sup>1</sup> and First Nations Outreach Support<sup>2</sup> programs, (2) leaning into digital communication to remain connected with the community.

### Outreach strategies for CaLD communities during COVID-19 pandemic

Outreach strategies which have been effective to reach out to CaLD communities include (1) partnering with CaLD communities, leaders and the government<sup>3</sup>, (2) designing tailored strategies<sup>3</sup>, (3) keeping the individual at the centre of the strategy journey so that their circumstances and needs are considered at all stages of outreach (and engagement)<sup>3</sup>, (4) disseminating information through multiple mediums (such as audio-visual communication and non-digital formats such as brochures)<sup>4</sup> and (5) coordinating efforts to tailor culturally appropriate communication strategies to avoid repetition and avoid gaps (with descriptive images and shorter texts, ensuring that translations are accurate and readable prior to distribution)<sup>4</sup>.

### Key findings and considerations from the literature scan on outreach strategies

Learning journeys are typically not undertaken alone – collaboration between multiple stakeholders is required to facilitate an environment where adults can map a connection to the opportunities to participate in learning, gain outcomes relevant to their circumstance and embark on a pathway to learning. Commonly cited examples of effective outreach strategies are those that encourage first connecting with individuals via known and trusted informal channels of communication, in order to nurture trust and personalise engagement before learning and training opportunities are extended. Co-location and provision of a suite of support services that corroborate and align with one another (such as parent and toddler groups, health and wellbeing activities and information services) can reduce stigmatisation of engaging in a particular service (such as visiting a service to receive financial counselling only). This also stands to increase their familiarity and confidence in engaging with the service, increasing the perceived benefit of being in such an environment and tipping the scale in favour of ‘going through the gate’ to participate in learning and training. Additional findings from a literature scan on outreach strategies are presented from page 25.

### Community Hubs

Community hubs, which serve as a central location for multiple services, provide ‘soft entry’ points which allows for adults to engage with learning environments with minimal pressure. For example, an adult might visit a community hub to visit a café, and at the same time also engage with a range of other activities such as participating in a literacy program. Developed through partnerships and collaborations with community and presented in a neighbourhood environment, community hubs can provide ‘in reach’ activities which can facilitate networking and relationship building. ‘In reach’ activities are community based events and groups where adults can be engaged in personalised way, paving a way to related and other opportunities<sup>5</sup>.

Community hubs also contribute to supporting individuals such as migrants in gaining vocational supports (such as essential skills, including English language skills and developing job-specific skills), employment opportunities, and increased engagement in the wider communities<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>First Nations Youth Council, COVID-19 Resources, 2022, <<https://firstnationsyouthcouncil.org.au/resources/covid-19-resources/>>

<sup>2</sup>Victorian Aboriginal Education Association (VAEA), First Nations Outreach Support Program – Community Information Sheet, 2022, <[https://www.merndaparkps.vic.edu.au/uploads/9/6/6/5/96659684/information\\_sheet\\_First\\_Nations\\_outreach\\_support\\_program\[3\].pdf](https://www.merndaparkps.vic.edu.au/uploads/9/6/6/5/96659684/information_sheet_First_Nations_outreach_support_program[3].pdf)>

<sup>3</sup>Infoxchange, First Nations Heritage Trust strengthens community through technology during COVID, 2021, <[https://www.infoxchange.org.au/news/2021/06/First\\_Nations-heritage-trust-strengthens-community-through-technology-during-covid](https://www.infoxchange.org.au/news/2021/06/First_Nations-heritage-trust-strengthens-community-through-technology-during-covid)>

<sup>4</sup>Wild, A., Kunstler, B., Goodwin, D., et al., Communicating COVID-19 health information to culturally and linguistically diverse communities: insights from a participatory research collaboration, 2021, <<https://www.phrp.com.au/issues/march-2021-volume-31-issue-1/covid-19-communication-for-cald-communities/>>

<sup>5</sup>Seale, H., Harris-Roxas, B., Heywood, A., et al., Speaking COVID-19: supporting COVID-19 communication and engagement efforts with people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, 2022, <<https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-022-13680-1#citeas>>

<sup>6</sup>Davies M, Lamb S., Doecke., Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *Strategic review of effective re-engagement models for disengaged learners*, 2011, <<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/documents/about/research/revreengage.pdf>>

<sup>7</sup>Deloitte Access Economics, National Community Hubs Program SROI Evaluation Report Final, Community Hubs Australia, 2021, <<https://www.communityhubs.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/NCHP-SROI-Deloitte-Findings-09-21-1.pdf>>

## Section 2. Data analysis and conclusions



## Introduction to the learner profiles

A data driven approach is leveraged to identify where ‘hard to reach’ learners – including priority learners cohorts – are located, and inform a data-driven approach to identifying key local government areas for prioritisation by ACFE.

### Purpose

This section presents three learner profiles, which have been developed to: (1) identify *where* hard to reach learners are located and contribute to the evidence base for ACFE, and (2) inform a data-driven approach to identifying key local government areas (LGAs) for prioritisation by ACFE. The analysis builds on the findings of the previous project undertaken for ACFE titled *Growing Adult Community and Further Education in Victoria*, which estimated demand (individuals in LGAs who could benefit from at least one ACFE course) based on current provision.

It does this by incorporating key variables of ‘hard to reach’ in addition to low educational attainment, and indicators of CALD and First Nations status (which form the priority cohorts for this work).

Given the incredibly diverse nature ‘hard to reach’ learners a data driven approach alone is not suitable to understand these learners. This result arises from both a deficit of suitable data sources and learner characteristics that simply cannot be uniformly collected.

In line with this, the learner profiles provided a data-driven approach to identifying key local government areas (LGAs) for prioritisation by ACFE. As such, key LGAs are highlighted within the learner profiles within this section and be used by ACFE in future work or targeting provision or outreach in LGAs of interest.

### Defining ‘hard to reach’ learners

This section defines ‘hard to reach’ learners as individuals who not only possess low levels of educational attainment (i.e. year 10 and below including did not go to school) but importantly, are the least likely to walk through ACFE’s door.

### Method

Deloitte Access Economics has developed three learner profiles. Each learner profile is composed of the learning skill needs at the LGA level identified in the previous ACFE project, alongside a selection of hard to reach variables for the cohort of interest. This report predominately draws upon the 2021 census, with one variable drawn from the 2016 census (low socio-economic status) due to a lack of

<sup>1</sup>Victorian Government, Data collection standards - Culturally and linguistically diverse communities, 2022, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-family-violence-data-collection-framework/data-collection-standards-culturally-and->

data availability. The estimated skills needs by LGA was estimated using the 2016 census and 2012 PIACC data, and has been drawn from a previous report undertaken for ACFE. The three learner profiles can be defined as follows:

- **Profile 1:** Non-priority cohort learners with low levels of educational attainment
- **Profile 2:** CALD learners with low levels of educational attainment
- **Profile 3:** Indigenous learners with low levels of educational attainment

For profiles 2 and 3, Deloitte has applied additional filters available in the census to identify these cohorts (in [Appendix 1](#)).

- For profile 2, where possible Deloitte has applied a widely accepted definition of CALD communities “CALD communities as people of non-English speaking background, as well as people born outside Australia and whose first language is not English”.<sup>1</sup>
- For profile 3, Deloitte has applied the Indigenous status filter available in the census.

Following the application of these filters to identify the cohort of interest, through this lens the learner profiles then investigate additional characteristics of this cohort.

### Selection of hard to reach variables:

- Each learner profile includes a number of ‘hard to reach’ variables to help characterise the learner cohort.
- These variables have been selected initially, based on variables identified in the analytical plan (informed by literature), followed by additional relevant variables uncovered during the analysis. Some of the ‘hard to reach’ variables include disability status, low socio-economic status, not engaged in employment, education or training (NEET) and unemployed and looking for work.
- Additional variables have been added where they are relevant to the cohort of interest (e.g., recently arrived status and English proficiency levels for the CALD learner profile).

A guide to the indicators used is included in [Appendix 2](#).





## Defining 'hard to reach'

The variables used in the data analysis have been mapped to the characteristics of 'hard to reach' learners identified through the literature scan.

### Access

Barriers which limit access to study and training.

Potential variables include:

- **Remoteness**
- **Low socio-economic status**
- Total personal weekly income

Unaware of available study options

Financial or distance constraints

Long periods without engagement in study or work

Poor experiences with learning

### Achievement

Barriers which relate to previous experiences

Potential variables include:

- **Not engaged in employment, education or training (NEET)**
  - **Unemployed and looking for work**
  - **Low levels of educational attainment (year 10 and below)**
- Concentrations of low educational attainment (i.e. low aspirations become entrenched in communities)

Limited social networks

Limited career aspirations or guidance

### Aspiration

Barriers which relate to low aspirations to work or training.

Potential variables include:

- **Access to the internet**
- **Skill level of occupation**

Weak LLNED skills

### Application

Barriers which undermine applications or commitment to study.

Potential variables include:

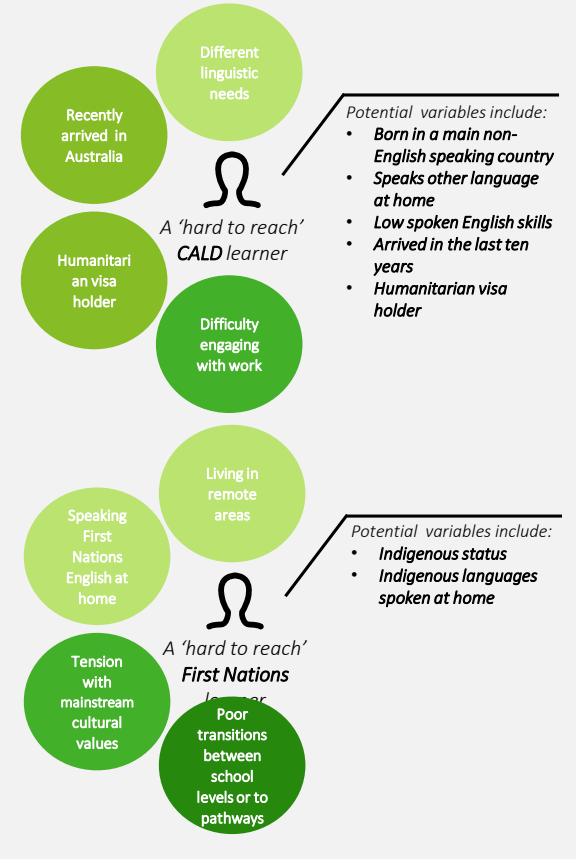
- **Disability status**
- **Low socio-economic status**
- **Low levels of educational attainment (year 10 and below)**
- Long term health conditions
- Unpaid domestic work
- Unpaid child care
- Unpaid assistance to a person with a disability

Functional barriers (i.e. poor health, low SES)

A 'hard to reach' learner

Key:  
Variables included in this analysis

Priority cohorts also possess the following characteristics:

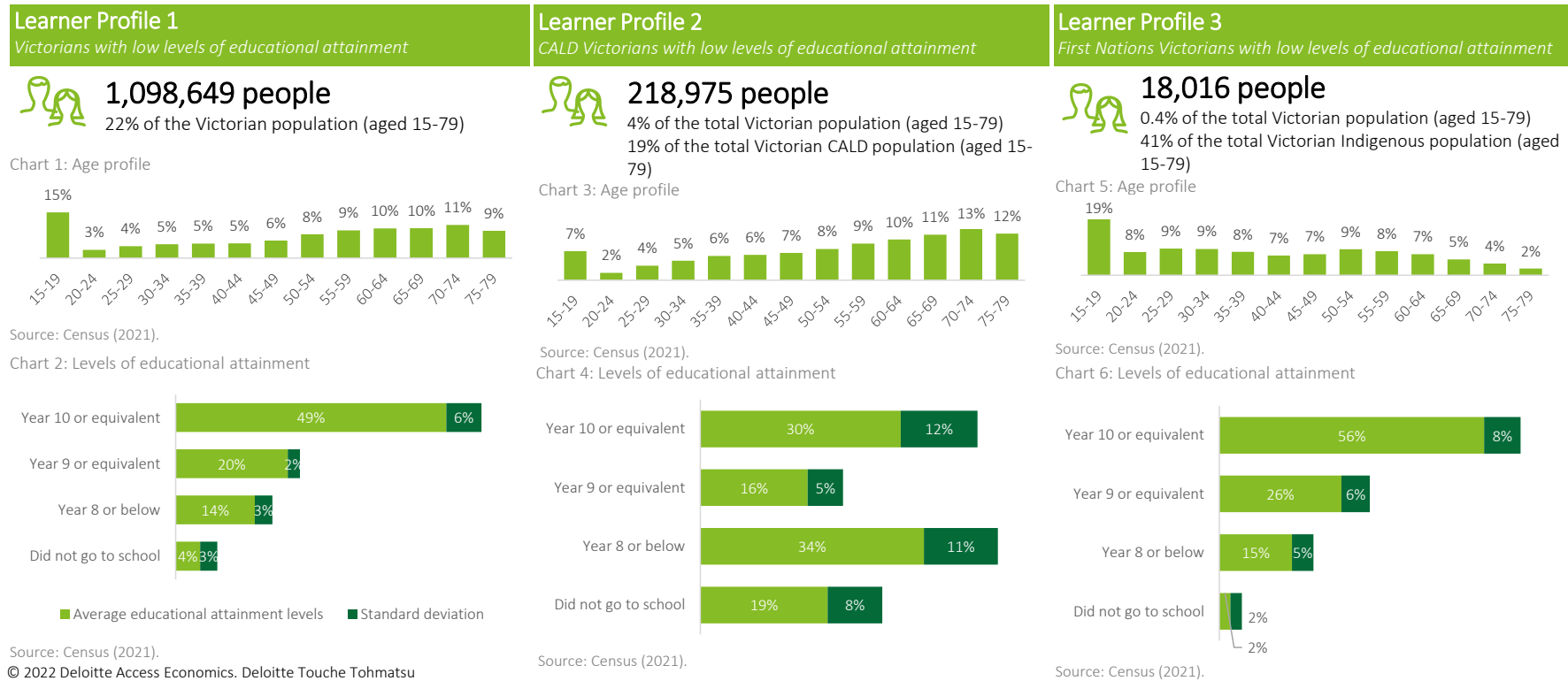




## Understanding the key demographic traits of each learner cohort

Non-priority and First Nations learners share similar educational attainment profiles, meanwhile CALD learners tend to have much lower levels of educational attainment, including a high share who did not attend school.

An overview of the educational attainment levels of each of the three learner profiles is provided below, including the estimated size and age profile of the cohort. The level of educational attainment differ across each cohort, non-priority and First Nations learners (profile 1 and 3) share a similar educational makeup with the majority of individuals completing year 10 or equivalent, meanwhile CALD learners (profile 2) have much lower levels of educational attainment, including a much higher share who did not attend school. Similarly, the age profile differs between each group as First Nations learners tend to be younger, while CALD learners tend to be older and non-priority learners tend to lie somewhere in-between these two groups with the exception of a reasonably large representation of young people (15% of the total).

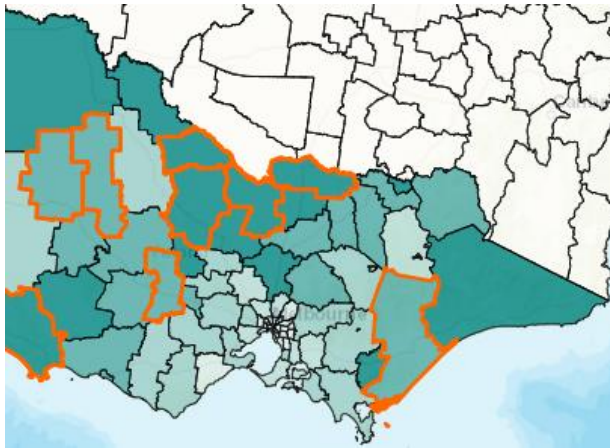


## Victorians with low levels of educational attainment

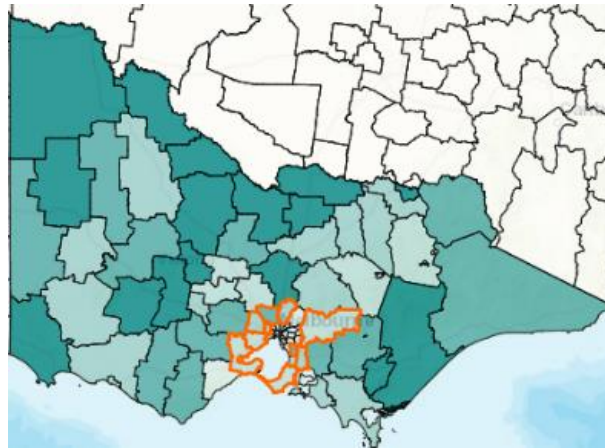
The top ten LGAs with the highest share of individuals with low levels of educational attainment are located in regional and rural parts of Victoria, particularly in the north-western areas of the state.

The top 10 Victorian LGAs with low levels of educational attainment were identified by measuring the LGAs with the **highest share** of individuals low levels of educational attainment as a proportion of the total population – this approach helps to avoid skewness towards LGAs with larger populations. As illustrated below (Map 1 and Map 2), the LGAs with the greatest share of individuals with low levels of educational attainment do not align closely to those with the highest volume of individuals with low levels of educational attainment – as expected the top 10 LGAs identifying using volume are largely concentrated around Melbourne.

Map 1: Top 10 Victorian LGAs with the highest share of individuals with low levels of educational attainment



Map 2: Top 10 Victorian LGAs with the highest volume of individuals with low levels of educational attainment



*Top 10 LGAs with the highest representation of individuals with low levels of educational attainment*

Top 10 LGAs (by highest share)	Top 10 LGAs (by highest volume)
Gannawarra (S)	Casey (C)
Central Goldfields (S)	Greater Geelong (C)
Pyrenees (S)	Hume (C)
Moira (S)	Wyndham (C)
Campaspe (S)	Whittlesea (C)
Hindmarsh (S)	Brimbank (C)
Loddon (S)	Greater Dandenong (C)
Glenelg (S)	Melton (C)
Yarriambiack (S)	Mornington Peninsula (S)
Wellington (S)	Yarra Ranges (S)

Source: Torrens University Australia, *Social Health Atlases*, (2022).

**Data notes:**

- The **highest share** of learners with low levels of educational attainment is measured by taking the number of individuals with low levels of educational attainment as a proportion of the total LGA population (aged between 15-79).

The characteristics of learners within these top 10 LGAs are outlined on slides [43](#) and [44](#).

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*This approach employed in this analysis*

## Victorians with low levels of educational attainment

The table below presents the top 10 Victorian LGAs with the strongest representation of individuals with low levels of educational attainment, alongside the estimated skills needs in each LGA investigated as part of a previous project undertaken for ACFE 'Growing Adult Community and Further Education in Victoria'.



Table 1: Number of individuals in each LGA that could benefit from at least one ACFE course, sorted by the highest share of individuals with low levels of educational attainment

LGA	Language <sup>^</sup>	Literacy <sup>^</sup>	Numeracy <sup>^</sup>	Digital <sup>^</sup>	Total courses <sup>^</sup>	Total unique individuals <sup>^</sup>	Estimated population <sup>*</sup>	Share of total population <sup>*</sup>
<b>Gannawarra (S)</b>	31	1,422	2,115	1,152	4,720	2,538	3,305	41%
<b>Central Goldfields (S)</b>	40	1,737	2,585	1,418	5,780	3,108	4,206	40%
Pyrenees (S)	24	831	1,249	712	2,816	1,514	2,376	39%
Moira (S)	184	3,610	5,403	3,032	12,228	6,574	8,898	38%
<b>Campaspe (S)</b>	128	4,545	6,816	3,868	15,357	8,257	10,955	37%
Hindmarsh (S)	104	797	1,183	638	2,722	1,464	1,590	37%
<b>Loddon (S)</b>	26	950	1,416	778	3,170	1,704	2,213	37%
Glenelg (S)	49	2,463	3,691	2,090	8,292	4,458	5,685	36%
<b>Yarriambiack (S)</b>	25	855	1,281	717	2,879	1,548	1,777	36%
Wellington (S)	222	4,898	7,396	4,350	16,865	9,067	12,556	35%
All LGAs <sup>(a)</sup>	265,761	575,404	885,265	563,015	2,289,445	1,230,885	1,098,649	22%

Source: Census (2016 and 2021). <sup>(a)</sup> Figures for this cohort across all Victorian LGAs

© 2022 Deloitte Access Economic <sup>(b)</sup> The assessment of LGAs with strongest need is based on a combination of skills needs, the size of the estimated cohort, age profile (i.e., individuals still participating in the labour force for a number of years) and hard to reach variables.

Note: When limiting this analysis to working age Victorians (i.e., 15-64 years old), the same 10 LGAs are identified with the exception of Wellington (S) (replaced by Ararat (RC)).

\* Estimated using the 2021 Census  
<sup>^</sup> Estimated using 2016 Census and 2012 PIACC

## Victorians with low levels of educational attainment

The combination of demographic and 'hard to reach' indicators provides an evidenced view of the LGAs ACFE may consider targeting, both with respect to potential overall need for ACFE courses and presence of 'hard to reach' learners.

LGA is ranked among the top 5 for total unique need for foundational courses

Profile 1

Profile 2

Profile 3

LGA is ranked among the top 5-10 for total unique need for foundational courses

LGA with strongest need<sup>(b)</sup>

Table 2: Learner profile of individuals with low levels of educational attainment

LGA	Age profile*	Gender*	Share of households with low SES <sup>^</sup> (c)	NEET* (d)	Unemployed and looking for work*	Share with a disability* (e)	Digital inclusion (f)	Share of learners currently enrolled in ACFE courses (g)	Provider density (per 1000 people) (h)
Gannawarra (S)		43% Female 57% Male	48%	49%	2%	9%	Excluded	-	-
Central Goldfields (S)		46% Female 54% Male	56%	58%	3%	13%	Excluded	1%	0.10
Pyrenees (S)		37% Female 63% Male	49%	44%	2%	9%	Included	1%	0.16
Moira (S)		44% Female 56% Male	45%	49%	2%	10%	Included	1%	0.13
Campaspe (S)		44% Female 56% Male	43%	45%	2%	10%	Included	1%	0.07
Hindmarsh (S)		41% Female 59% Male	51%	48%	3%	11%	Included	6%	0.23
Loddon (S)		42% Female 58% Male	48%	51%	3%	11%	Excluded	1%	0.17
Glenelg (S)		43% Female 57% Male	46%	48%	3%	9%	Included	2%	0.13
Yarriambiack (S)		44% Female 56% Male	51%	52%	2%	13%	Excluded	4%	0.40
Wellington (S)		42% Female 58% Male	42%	46%	3%	9%	Included	1%	0.08
All LGAs (a)		47% Female 53% Male	38%	45%	4%	10%	-	2%	0.05

### Key insights

#### Demographic:

- On average, these learners tend to be older, although some LGAs have a high representation of young learners (Wellington and Campaspe).
- These learners tend to represent males located in regional parts of Victoria.

#### Intersection with 'hard to reach' variables:

- While overall the share considered to be low SES is not particularly high, within the top 10 LGAs identified the share considered low SES is particularly pronounced.
- Across all LGAs, the number of unemployed individuals is reasonably low alongside a high share of NEET. This reveals that most learners are not in the labour force. While in LGAs with an older age profile, most of these learners have likely retired, in other LGAs this may reveal something more sinister – where workers may have experienced long periods of unemployment leading to permanent labour market scarring.
- Some LGAs have a particularly high representation of individuals with a disability (Yarriambiack and Central Goldfields).
- All LGAs possess a digital inclusion ranking below the state and national average, with some identified among the lowest in Victoria (Loddon and Gannawarra).

Source: Census (2016 and 2021).

\* Estimated using the 2021 Census

<sup>^</sup> Estimated using 2016 Census

© 2022 Deloitte Access Economics. of years) and hard to reach variables.

(a) Figures for this cohort across all Victorian LGAs

(b) The assessment of LGAs with strongest need is based on a combination of skills needs, the size of the estimated cohort, age profile (i.e., individuals still participating in the labour force for a number

of years) and hard to reach variables.

(c) Measured using the ABS Experimental IHAD Index (see slide 54)

(d) People aged between 15-74 not engaged in employment, education or training. This category includes persons who are unemployed or not in the labour force and who were not attending an educational institution

(e) This captures individuals who may be experiencing a disability.

(f) Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) (see slide 54).

(g) Measured using an average of the volume of learners across 2019-2021 by LGA as a share of the estimated population, provided by ACFE.

(h) Provider density reflects the number of learn locals per 1000 people (aged 15-79), a low density indicates a low number of learn locals (taking into account the population size) within that LGA. This measure does not capture the maturity or reach of providers.

## CALD Victorians with low levels of educational attainment

The top ten LGAs with the highest share of CALD communities with low levels of educational attainment are located in metropolitan parts of Victoria, particularly in the north-western areas around Melbourne.

The top 10 Victorian LGAs of CALD individuals with low levels of educational attainment were identified by measuring the LGAs with the **highest share** of CALD individuals low levels of educational attainment as a proportion of the total population – this approach helps to avoid skewness towards LGAs with larger populations. Historically speaking, migrants tend to favour settling in cities as opposed to the regions – a phenomenon demonstrated below (Map 3). Given the regions identified align closely to metropolitan areas, the LGAs with the greatest share of CALD individuals with low levels of educational attainment tend to align closely to those with the highest volume, although there are some slight differences in the rankings of these LGAs.

Map 3: Top 10 Victorian LGAs with the highest share of CALD individuals with low levels of educational attainment



Source: Torrens University Australia, *Social Health Atlases*, (2022).

The characteristics of learners within these top 10 LGAs are outlined on slides [46](#) and [47](#).

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Top 10 LGAs with the **highest share** of individuals with low levels of educational attainment

Top 10 LGAs (by highest share)	Top 10 LGAs (by highest volume)
Greater Dandenong (C)	Brimbank (C)
Brimbank (C)	Casey (C)
Hume (C)	Greater Dandenong (C)
Whittlesea (C)	Hume (C)
Darebin (C)	Whittlesea (C)
Casey (C)	Wyndham (C)
Maribyrnong (C)	Melton (C)
Melton (C)	Monash (C)
Darebin (C)	Moreland (C)
Wyndham (C)	Darebin (C)
Manningham (C)	Whitehorse (C)

*This approach employed in this analysis*

Profile 1	Profile 2	Profile 3
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LGA is ranked among the top 5 for total unique need for foundational courses

LGA is ranked among the top 5-10 for total unique need for foundational courses

LGA with strongest need (b)  
From previous ACFE report

## CALD Victorians with low levels of educational attainment

The table below presents the top 10 Victorian LGAs with the strongest representation of CALD individuals with low levels of educational attainment, alongside the estimated skills needs in each LGA investigated a previous project undertaken for ACFE 'Growing Adult Community and Further Education in Victoria'.

Table 3: Number of individuals in each LGA that could benefit from at least one ACFE course, sorted by highest share of CALD individuals with low levels of educational attainment

LGA	Language <sup>^</sup>	Literacy <sup>^</sup>	Numeracy <sup>^</sup>	Digital <sup>^</sup>	Total courses <sup>^</sup>	Total unique individuals <sup>^</sup>	Estimated CALD population*	Share of total population*	Humanitarian settlers arrived in the last 10 years <sup>(c)</sup>	Most represented ethnicity*
<b>Greater Dandenong (C)</b>	25,542	17,392	26,255	15,123	84,312	45,329	20,167	17%	3,848	Vietnamese
Brimbank (C)	25,989	21,800	32,979	19,209	99,977	53,751	22,448	15%	2,624	Vietnamese
<b>Hume (C)</b>	15,972	21,171	32,130	19,082	88,355	47,503	20,573	11%	12,019	Arabic
Whittlesea (C)	14,777	20,427	31,181	19,043	85,429	45,929	14,535	8%	2,418	Italian
<b>Casey (C)</b>	16,299	30,164	46,198	28,630	121,292	65,211	21,170	8%	5,598	Italian
Maribyrnong (C)	7,576	7,121	11,086	7,406	33,189	17,844	4,384	6%	666	Italian
<b>Melton (C)</b>	5,341	13,410	20,102	12,412	50,995	27,417	8,266	6%	3,086	Vietnamese
Darebin (C)	10,769	13,441	20,746	13,462	58,418	31,408	6,747	6%	384	Greek
<b>Wyndham (C)</b>	12,440	19,123	29,524	19,112	80,199	43,188	12,023	6%	3,946	Afghan
Manningham (C)	8,779	10,613	16,507	10,931	46,830	25,177	5,346	6%	422	Greek
All LGAs <sup>(a)</sup>	265,761	575,404	885,265	563,015	2,289,445	1,230,885	218,975	4%	46,871	-

Source: Census (2016 and 2021).

<sup>(a)</sup> Figures for this cohort across all Victorian LGAs

<sup>(b)</sup> The assessment of LGAs with strongest need is based on a combination of skills needs, the size of the estimated cohort, age profile (i.e., individuals still participating in the labour force for a number of years) and hard to reach variables.

<sup>(c)</sup> Number of permanent humanitarian visa holders arriving between 01 January 2012 and 31 December 2021. Data from the Department of Home Affairs.

Note: When limiting this analysis to working age Victorians (i.e., 15-64 years old), the same 10 LGAs are identified with the exception of Darebin (C) and Manningham (C) (replaced by Swan Hill (RC) and Greater Shepparton (C)).

\* Estimated using the 2021 Census

<sup>^</sup> Estimated using 2016 Census and 2012 PIACC



## CALD Victorians with low levels of educational attainment

The combination of demographic and 'hard to reach' indicators provides an evidenced view of the LGAs ACFE may consider targeting, both with respect to potential overall need for ACFE courses and presence of 'hard to reach' learners.

Profile 1

Profile 2

Profile 3

LGA is ranked among the top 5 for total unique need for foundational courses

LGA is ranked among the top 5-10 for total unique need for foundational courses

LGA with strongest need <sup>(b)</sup>

Table 4: Learner profile of CALD individuals with low levels of educational attainment

LGA	Age profile*	Gender*	Share that arrived in the last 10 years <sup>(c)</sup> *	Share with low spoken English skills <sup>(d)</sup> *	Share of households with low SES <sup>^</sup> <sup>(e)</sup>	NEET <sup>^</sup> <sup>(f)</sup>	Unemployed and looking for work <sup>^</sup>	Digital inclusion <sup>(g)</sup>	Share of learners enrolled in ACFE courses each year	Provider density (per 1000 people) <sup>(h)</sup>
Greater Dandenong (C)		54% Female 46% Male	30%	56%	46%	53%	4%	Included	7%	0.10
Brimbank (C)		55% Female 45% Male	20%	52%	48%	61%	5%	Included	4%	0.07
Hume (C)		53% Female 47% Male	35%	47%	46%	64%	4%	Included	5%	0.05
Whittlesea (C)		55% Female 45% Male	19%	39%	48%	66%	3%	Included	1%	0.04
Casey (C)		52% Female 48% Male	38%	41%	33%	48%	5%	Included	3%	0.05
Maribyrnong (C)		58% Female 42% Male	19%	39%	51%	62%	5%	Included	15%	0.16
Melton (C)		55% Female 45% Male	27%	58%	36%	46%	5%	Included	4%	0.03
Darebin (C)		59% Female 41% Male	12%	39%	59%	72%	2%	Included	4%	0.05
Wyndham (C)		55% Female 45% Male	40%	40%	37%	48%	5%	Included	6%	0.04
Manningham (C)		58% Female 42% Male	22%	42%	40%	64%	2%	Included	3%	0.07
All LGAs <sup>(a)</sup>		56% Female 45% Male	28%	43%	49%	58%	4%	-	5%	0.05

### Key insights...

#### Demographic:

- On average, these learners tend to represent older females located in metropolitan areas.
- Although some LGAs have a high representation of younger learners (e.g. Casey, Hume and Wyndham) – these LGAs correspond to those with a large number of recent humanitarian settlers (who tend to be younger). In line with this result, these LGAs have a strong representation of individuals from war-torn countries.

#### Intersection with 'hard to reach' variables:

- Overall more than half of this cohort are not engaged in employment, education or training. This result reflects a combination of two factors: the older age profile and the high share of females represented (who are likely completing unpaid domestic work).
- Some LGAs are displaying reasonably high levels of unemployment, these tend to correspond to LGAs with a younger population, high share of recent arrivals and low spoken English skills.

Source: Census (2016 and 2021). <sup>(a)</sup> Figures for this cohort across all Victorian LGAs  
<sup>(b)</sup> The assessment of LGAs with strongest need is based on a combination of skills needs, estimated size, age profile and hard to reach variables.  
<sup>(c)</sup> Time period refers to 2011- 2021  
<sup>(d)</sup> Defined as self-reported spoken English skills of not well and not at all.  
<sup>(e)</sup> Estimated using the 2021 Census  
<sup>(f)</sup> Estimated using 2016 Census

<sup>(g)</sup> Measured using the ABS Experimental IHAD Index (see slide 54)  
<sup>(h)</sup> People aged between 15-74 not engaged in employment, education or training. This category includes persons who are unemployed or not in the labour force and who were not attending an educational institution.  
<sup>(i)</sup> Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) (see slide 54).  
<sup>(j)</sup> Measured using an average of the volume of learners across 2019- 2021 by LGA as a share of the estimated population, provided by ACFE.  
<sup>(k)</sup> Provider density reflects the number of learn locals per 1000 people (aged 15-79), a low density indicates a low number of learn locals within that LGA.

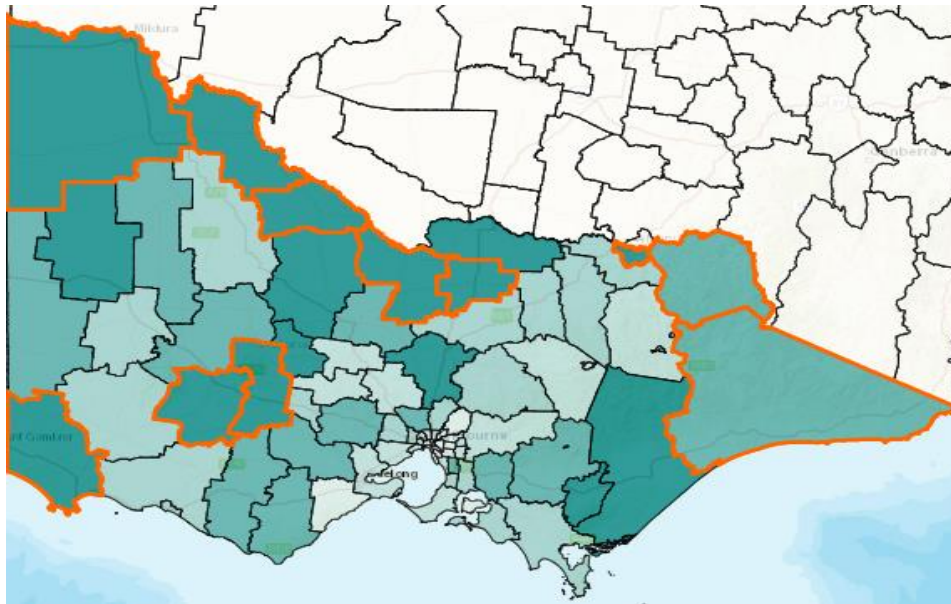


## First Nations people with low levels of educational attainment

The top ten LGAs with the highest share of First Nations people with low levels of educational attainment are located in mostly regional parts of Victoria, particularly in the most northerly parts of the state.

The top 10 Victorian LGAs of First Nations people with low levels of educational attainment were identified by measuring the LGAs with the **highest share** of First Nations people low levels of educational attainment as a proportion of the total population – this approach helps to avoid skewness towards LGAs with larger populations. As illustrated below these individuals tend to be located in regional part of the state (Map 4), the LGAs with the greatest share of First Nations people with low levels of educational attainment tend to align somewhat to those with the highest volume.

Map 4: Top 10 Victorian LGAs with the highest share of Indigenous people with low levels of educational attainment



Top 10 LGAs with the **highest share** of individuals with low levels of educational attainment

Top 10 LGAs (by highest share)	Top 10 LGAs (by highest volume)
Mildura (RC)	Greater Geelong (C)
Swan Hill (RC)	Greater Shepparton (C)
Greater Shepparton (C)	Mildura (RC)
East Gippsland (S)	Greater Bendigo (C)
Campaspe (S)	Wyndham(C)
Ararat (RC)	Melton (C)
Wodonga (C)	Casey (C)
Glenelg (S)	East Gippsland (S)
Gannawarra (S)	Whittlesea (C)
Towong (S)	Ballarat (C)

*This approach employed in this analysis*

Source: Torrens University Australia, *Social Health Atlases*, (2022).

The characteristics of learners within these top 10 LGAs are outlined on slides [49](#) and [50](#).

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Profile 1	Profile 2	Profile 3
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## First Nations people with low levels of educational attainment

LGA is ranked among the top 5 for total unique need for foundational courses

LGA is ranked among the top 5-10 for total unique need for foundational courses

**LGA with strongest need<sup>(b)</sup>**  
From previous ACFE report

The table below presents the top 10 Victorian LGAs with the strongest representation of First Nations people with low levels of educational attainment, alongside the estimated skills needs in each LGA investigated as part of a previous project undertaken for ACFE 'Growing Adult Community and Further Education in Victoria'.

Table 5: Number of individuals in each LGA that could benefit from at least one ACFE course, sorted by highest share of Indigenous individuals with low levels of educational attainment

LGA	Language <sup>^</sup>	Literacy <sup>^</sup>	Numeracy <sup>^</sup>	Digital <sup>^</sup>	Total courses <sup>^</sup>	Total unique individuals <sup>^</sup>	Estimated Indigenous population*	Share of total population*
Mildura (RC)	1,148	6,463	9,684	5,447	22,742	12,227	857	2%
Swan Hill (RC)	619	2,375	3,557	1,994	8,544	4,594	306	2%
Greater Shepparton (C)	2,082	7,403	11,127	6,364	26,976	14,503	900	2%
East Gippsland (S)	197	5,250	7,925	4,637	18,009	9,682	543	1%
Campaspe (S)	128	4,545	6,816	3,868	15,357	8,257	393	1%
Ararat (RC)	72	1,324	1,993	1,144	4,533	2,437	116	1%
Wodonga (C)	319	4,345	6,594	3,954	15,211	8,178	406	1%
Glenelg (S)	49	2,463	3,691	2,090	8,292	4,458	176	1%
Gannawarra (S)	31	1,422	2,115	1,152	4,720	2,538	87	1%
Towong (S)	15	716	1,082	635	2,448	1,316	47	1%
All LGAs <sup>(a)</sup>	265,761	575,404	885,265	563,015	2,289,445	1,230,885	18,016	0.4%

Source: Census (2016 and 2021).

<sup>(a)</sup> Figures for this cohort across all Victorian LGAs

<sup>(b)</sup> The assessment of LGAs with strongest need is based on a combination of skills needs, the size of the estimated cohort, age profile (i.e., individuals still participating in the labour force for a number of years) and hard to reach variables.

Note: Note: When limiting this analysis to working age Victorians (i.e., 15-64 years old), the same 10 LGAs are identified.

\* Estimated using the 2021 Census

<sup>^</sup> Estimated using 2016 Census and 2012 PIACC

Profile 1	Profile 2	Profile 3
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## First Nations people with low levels of educational attainment

LGA is ranked among the top 5 for total unique need for foundational courses

LGA is ranked among the top 5-10 for total unique need for foundational courses

LGA with strongest need <sup>(b)</sup>

The combination of demographic and 'hard to reach' indicators provides an evidenced view of the LGAs ACFE may consider targeting, both with respect to potential overall need for ACFE courses and presence of 'hard to reach' learners.

Table 6: Learner profile of CALD individuals with low levels of educational attainment

LGA	Age profile*	Gender*	Share speaking Indigenous languages at home	Share of households with low SES <sup>^</sup> (c)	NEET* (d)	Unemployed and looking for work*	Share with a disability (e)	Digital inclusion (f)	Share of learners currently enrolled in ACFE courses (g)	Provider density (per 1000 people) (h)
Mildura (RC)		53% Female 47% Male	1%	69%	48%	7%	14%	Included	9%	0.16
Swan Hill (RC)		52% Female 48% Male	2%	73%	59%	7%	13%	Included	5%	0.12
Greater Shepparton (C)		50% Female 50% Male	3%	64%	45%	6%	13%	Included	0%	0.12
East Gippsland (S)		50% Female 50% Male	2%	78%	50%	6%	15%	Included	2%	0.11
Campaspe (S)		48% Female 52% Male	3%	71%	46%	6%	14%	Included	1%	0.07
Ararat (RC)		25% Female 75% Male	3%	63%	26%	0%	14%	Included	0%	0.11
Wodonga (C)		54% Female 46% Male	1%	58%	45%	6%	14%	Included	0%	0.12
Glenelg (S)		40% Female 60% Male	0%	67%	42%	3%	13%	Included	2%	0.13
Gannawarra (S)		40% Female 60% Male	0%	62%	57%	10%	18%	Excluded	-	-
Towong (S)		51% Female 49% Male	0%	91%	47%	13%	10%	Included	0%	0.21
All LGAs (a)		47% Female 53% Male	1%	56%	43%	6%	14%	-	3%	0.05

### Key insights...

#### Demographic:

- On average, these learners tend to be younger (aged between 15 and 24).
- The gender breakdown in each LGA varies, however on average this cohort tends to be more male dominated.

#### Intersection with 'hard to reach' variables:

- Across Victoria, a high share of these learners are unemployed (as compared to the national Victorian rate of 4.2%), with some LGAs revealing a particularly high levels of unemployment (Towong and Gannawarra).
- Considering the younger age profile of this cohort, the high share of NEET individuals is particularly concerning (as very few would have retired/permanently left the workforce).
- Despite nearly all LGAs being considered digitally included, all LGAs possess a inclusion index below the state and national average.
- All combined, this cohort is displaying particularly deep levels of disadvantage – many households are considered to be low SES, and have high levels of NEET, unemployment and disability.

Source: Census (2016 and 2021). <sup>(a)</sup> Figures for this cohort across all Victorian LGAs \* Estimated using the 2021 Census <sup>(b)</sup> The assessment of LGAs with strongest need is based on a combination of skills needs, the size of the estimated cohort, age profile (i.e., individuals still participating in the labour force for a number of years) and hard to reach variables.

<sup>(c)</sup> Measured using the ABS Experimental IHAD Index (see slide 24)

<sup>(d)</sup> People aged between 15-74 not engaged in employment, education or training. This category includes persons who are unemployed or not in the labour force and who were not attending an educational institution

<sup>(e)</sup> This captures individuals who may be experiencing a disability.

<sup>(f)</sup> Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) (see slide 24).

<sup>(g)</sup> Measured using an average of the volume of learners across 2019- 2021 by LGA as a share of the estimated population, provided by ACFE.

<sup>(h)</sup> Provider density reflects the number of learn locals per 1000 people (aged 15-79), a low density indicates a low number of learn locals within that LGA.




## Consolidation of LGAs identified across the learner profiles

Gannawarra, Campaspe and Glenelg appear more than once across the three learner profiles – reflecting a more immediate need for ACFE intervention as they represent potential learner ‘hotspots’.

Table 7: Top 10 LGAs included in each learner profile

Profile 1	Profile 2	Profile 3
Gannawarra (S)	Greater Dandenong (C)	Mildura (RC)
Central Goldfields (S)	Brimbank (C)	Swan Hill (RC)
Pyrenees (S)	Hume (C)	Greater Shepparton (C)
Moira (S)	Whittlesea (C)	East Gippsland (S)
Campaspe (S)	Casey (C)	Campaspe (S)
Hindmarsh (S)	Maribyrnong (C)	Ararat (RC)
Loddon (S)	Melton (C)	Wodonga (C)
Glenelg (S)	Darebin (C)	Glenelg (S)
Yarriambiack (S)	Wyndham (C)	Gannawarra (S)
Wellington (S)	Manningham (C)	Towong (S)

Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2022).

 LGA appears more than once across profiles



## From person to place

Key insights from the secondary data analysis encourage a shift from targeting individuals based on their characteristics to places where these individuals are located, exploring opportunities to work with other Government agencies to achieve shared goals.



### Key messages from the secondary data analysis

The development of learner profiles through the secondary data analysis revealed that the pursuit of developing a 'hard to reach' persona would not represent a worthwhile endeavour for ACFE, as the outputs of this analysis would not provide meaningful insights that would further ACFE's understanding and ability to target this cohort. Consistent with this message, ACFE is encouraged to pivot from a focus on the average learner including their associated characteristics to a **focus on uplifting the places where these learners are located** (i.e., communities). As such, ACFE should shift from rationing funding based on individuals and their associated characteristics that Learn Local reach to growing the capacities of communities where Learn Locals are located. In line with these key messages from the secondary data analysis, Deloitte Access Economics has developed the following conclusions.

#### Conclusion 1

Across the three learner profiles, some regions appear more than once, including Gannawarra, Campaspe and Glenelg – reflecting a more immediate need for ACFE intervention as they represent learner 'hotspots' that ACFE should consider targeting in the first instance.

#### Conclusion 2

The identification of places (i.e., the LGAs identified across the three profiles) including the relativities between these places represent the key insights from the secondary data analysis and at this stage represents a sufficient evidence base to inform geographic regions of focus for ACFE.

#### Conclusion 3

Further exploration of census data would present diminishing returns for ACFE since the exploration of census data reaches its limits quickly. In the pursuit of more data-led insights, ACFE may consider investigating alternative data sources listed on the following slide, including expanding their own monitoring systems.

#### Conclusion 4

ACFE should leverage Census data (provided separately to this report) to create profiles for each Victorian LGA. These profiles should be developed for each Victorian LGA and outline basic demographic information such as cohort size, age and gender to assist Learn Local's learner targeting efforts.

#### Conclusion 5

Given ACFE's purpose is inherently linked to a range of Victorian Government initiatives, particularly those focused on uplifting the capabilities of regions, ACFE should explore opportunities to work hand-in-hand with other Government agencies to achieve their shared goal. Some examples of potential partnerships are listed on the following slide.



## Next steps

Given ACFE's purpose is inherently aligned to a range of Victorian Government initiatives, ACFE should explore potential partnerships with other Government agencies. Alongside this, in the pursuit of more data-led insights, ACFE may consider how Learn Local services could be complimented by additional data collection.

### Alignment to Victorian Government initiatives

#### Regional Partnerships and Regional Economic Development Strategies



Victoria's nine Regional Partnerships were established in 2016 by the Victorian Government in recognising that local communities were best placed to understand the challenges and opportunities faced within their own region. The Partnerships then provide advice directly to the Victorian Government about regional priorities so they can be incorporated into government policies, programs and planning. Alongside this, each region has established its own Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) which outlines the key strategic directions for the region – with growing the skills of the existing workforce and raising the overall level of educational attainment featuring in several strategies. This focus on growing the capacity of communities suggests there would be a strong appetite for ACFE to work alongside these regional partnerships more closely in order to achieve their shared goal, particularly in regions with high concentrations of individuals with low levels of educational attainment.

#### Aboriginal Economic Development



The Victorian Government and Aboriginal Victorians' have developed a strategy 'Yuma Yirramboi' which outlines a shared vision to generate individual and collective wealth for Aboriginal Victorians. A large component is this strategy involves supporting Aboriginal Victorians through greater employment opportunities with the Victorian Government, private and community sectors. ACFE has the potential to play a large role in equipping Aboriginal Victorians' with the foundational skills such as employability skills, occupational health and safety skills or digital literacy training needed to be successful at work.

#### Regional Jobs Fund



The aim of the Regional Jobs Fund (RJF) is to attract new investment, create new jobs and retain existing jobs in regional Victoria and to support businesses to improve their productivity and competitiveness. The RJF program considers projects resulting in the retention and creation of new jobs, with part of the criteria being projects enhancing the skills of workforce to raise productivity. There is a clear potential for ACFE to work alongside another organisation to deliver a project which neatly aligns with this criteria – with ACFE delivering the skills required to be successful at work and the partner organisation running a project that creates jobs for these individuals.

These represent some initial suggestions for ACFE's consideration and does not represent an exhaustive list of potential partnerships.

### Opportunities for further data analysis:

#### Leverage the existing work of agencies to grow shared understanding.

Investigate opportunities to collaborate with other agencies to explore more sophisticated datasets. For instance, linked datasets such as the Multi-Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP) which combines information on health, education, government payments, income and taxation, employment and demographics may hold some useful insights and present a data source worthy of further investigation. Some local agencies already working with this dataset include the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, Victorian Department of Premier and cabinet and the University of Melbourne.

#### Learn Local entrant and monitoring data collection.

Reviewing the data capture conducted on entry (and exit) into ACFE, specifically ACFE may consider:

- Experiences of Learn Local outreach
- Experiences of barriers to enrolment/ delayed enrolment into Learn Local courses
- Involvement in Learn Local, education, and work by members of immediate group/ family
- History of education and work participation

#### State-level or school exit foundation skills survey.

Conduct a broad survey on foundation skills of the Victorian population (at a whole of state level or targeted at school leavers). Refer to previous ACFE report 'Growing Adult Community and Further Education in Victoria' for more information.

#### Employer foundation skills attitudes and requirements.

Survey employers to understand current practices in developing foundation skills, minimum skills required for employment and willingness to refer to ACFE. Refer to previous ACFE report 'Growing Adult Community and Further Education in Victoria' for more information.

## Section 3. Stakeholder insights and case studies

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## Stakeholder engagement approach

Deloitte Access Economics consulted a diverse group of stakeholders to explore how different organisations conceptualised and identified hard to reach learners, and the strategies used to locate and engage them.

### Interviews

Deloitte Access Economics held virtual consultations with a wide range of stakeholders, including Learning Local Providers, training providers, peak and representative bodies, and community organisations. These consultations were run as semi-structured conversations, where questions were asked to general insights across two themes:

- Theme 1: Identifying ‘Hard to Reach’ learners explored how different organisations identify hard to reach learners, and key characteristics of them.
- Theme 2: Engaging ‘Hard to Reach’ learners explored effective strategies for reaching, engaging and retaining ‘Hard to Reach’ learners in foundational skills courses.

A list of organisations consulted with is provided below.

	Stakeholder
1	AMES Australia
2	Australian Council for Adult Literacy
3	Adult and Community Education Victoria (ACE Vic)
4	Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council (VALBEC)
5	Literacy for Life
6	Community colleges Victoria
7	Foundation House:
8	Cultura
9	Scanlon Foundation
10	Victorian Department of Health
11	Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training

### Case studies

Deloitte Access Economics selected case studies from the sample of consulted stakeholders consultations and additional desktop research.

These case studies are not intended to be a comprehensive representation of the strategies for cohorts from CALD and First Nations communities. Rather, the intent is to showcase a variety of examples targeted to understand better practice relevant to the Learn Local provider context.

Five best practice case studies were developed to demonstrate effective outreach, engagement, and retention strategies used by Learn Locals and other organisations. The case studies presented on the following pages are:

1. Wyndham Community and Education Centre – a Learn Local highlighted by a representative body as having effective practice through their relationship with the local council and industry.
2. Laverton Community Education Centre – a Learn Local highlighted by research as having effective practice through delivering integrated programs across multiple foundation skills, particularly for people with a disability.
3. Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services - a Learn Local highlighted by the Learn Local Awards as having effective practice through aligning programs to the need of the individuals and the community, and through partnership.
4. Literacy for Life Foundation – a not-for-profit organisation that was highlighted through literature as having effective practices for literacy education targeted towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
5. AMES Australia – a large Learn Local provider highlighted through consultation as having effective practices in co-designing courses with community members.



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## Insights from consultations

The stakeholders consulted did not think of the learners as ‘hard to reach’ but rather as individuals who require a supportive gateway into skills development that appropriately reflects their circumstances and needs.

### Working definition of ‘Hard to Reach’ learners

Stakeholders considered the term ‘hard to reach’ not appropriate due to the term being individualistic, rather than focusing on how services, teachers, institutions, and policies can better support learners.

*“One of the issues about to ‘hard to reach’ learners is that it is very individualistic about where the deficit is... Why are we saying ‘why aren’t students engaging’, rather we should be saying ‘why aren’t the institutions offering a service to engage them’” – Representative Body*

Further, one stakeholder noted that the term ‘culturally diverse’ is not appropriate due to individuals’ culture (e.g. food, marriage practices) not influencing their skills. Further, they noted migrants and new arrivals have a diverse skill base and education levels.

### ‘Hard to Reach’ learner profiles

Stakeholders cited several characteristics of ‘Hard to Reach’ learners including family violence, child care needs, high debt levels, low income, rural and regional residence, people with a disability, and people from a non-English speaking background. One stakeholder noted that these characteristics were similar to people having trouble gaining employment or receiving government support.

*“Inevitably the same determinants that make it hard for someone to get a job are the same ones that make it difficult in training ... there is a need to think of a model to promote economic and social mobility” – Training Provider*

During consultation, it was noted that ‘Hard to Reach’ learners were the first to disengage from Learn Locals during the COVID-19 pandemic and the last to re-engage. The consultee noted that this is due to them often having complex needs, including having a disability.

One stakeholder emphasised the importance of not profiling learners due to the diverse experiences of individuals requiring an individualised approach to outreach or engagement.

### Outreach and engagement strategies

Several strategies for reaching and engaging, strategies for ‘Hard to Reach’ learners were discussed by stakeholders. An overview of strategies is provided below:

- **Building strong partnerships** with other services in the community (e.g. libraries, health services, post offices, community groups) that may provide referrals noting it needs to be a systemic approach to bring services together.
- **Bringing services to learners** to ensure services are appropriately aligned. For example, learners may enrol in Learn Locals for social participation rather than education. If Learn Locals can discern the skill levels they can be a stepping stone for further pre-accredited training.
- **Focusing on social participation** for engaging CALD learners as learners may engage with Learn Locals to connect with other community members. Noting, there is the possibility that learners may transition to focus on foundation skills and employability courses.
- **Need for a nuanced approach**, noting that one size does not fit all. Specifically, strategies have to be targeted based on the community and learners’ need. A consultee noted that a community with a relatively high share of young non-English speaking people, will require a different strategy for engagement compared to a community with a relatively high share of older- English speaking people.
- **Importance of developing a sense of belonging** and emotional connection with students, with it being crucial for Learn Locals to take time and have the opportunity to build trust and rapport. However, consultees noted that Learn Locals funding may not support community outreach and the development of relationships with potential learners.
- **Well-trained teachers and staff** (e.g. receptionist) to provide a positive experience to learners. Consultees emphasised that if learners have a poor experience they are likely to not return to the services and share the experience via word of mouth. One consultee noted that ‘hard to reach’ learners may be reaching services, but not engaging due to a poor experience.

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## Better practices illustrated through case studies

Better providers use a variety of outreach and engagement strategies that align with better practice as identified in the literature, and these providers are adopting these strategies, in spite of rather than because of, the resources available to them.

### Outreach: General outreach strategies

Better providers utilise general outreach strategies that create a connection with learners to identify their needs and raise awareness about available options that would meet those need via, for example, community information events and advertising.

- The Literacy for Life Foundation case study shows how the Foundation train members of the community to become community facilitators that doorknock across the local area to have a conversation with individuals, often in first languages, about learning. If an individual is interested the staff will follow up to discuss the course. This is an intensive method that may not always be feasible.
- The AMES Australia case study highlights the importance of community or social events in encouraging initial connection with potential learners – as many potential learners will not have the confidence to self-select into a more formal training course.

### Outreach: Pathways

Better providers use pathways to support disengaged learners to link learning to training and/or employment goals by creating strong community relationships, co-location of services and referral pathways. The case studies that follow highlighted strong relationships between provider and local councils, schools, community services, community members (e.g. elders), and industry (e.g. large local employers). The relationships assist in identifying learners and referring them to Learn Locals, and adapting programs to align with individual/community need.

- The Wyndham Community and Education Centre case study highlights a partnership with a local concrete manufacturing company to develop an employment pathway for recent Burmese migrants.
- The Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services case study illustrates how their Karen Engineering Program services as a successful pathways based approach.

### Engagement: Curriculum and resources

Better providers use strategies that target the design of courses or programs to address learner needs and encourage participation. The case studies in the following slides discuss the opportunity for Learn Local courses to focus on the outcomes for students, rather than their deficits.

- The Laverton Community Education Centre case study highlights delivery of integrated programs across multiple foundational skills, specifically the “Stepping Forward for Independence” program focused on three key components – employment skills, health skills, life skills, and community participation.
- The Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services case study outlined the importance of designing a course that is aligned with community interest – in this case, an English Language course to assist the Karen community in attending TAFE. Additionally, this case study outlines the importance of courses adapting, with the Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services course adapting to include numeracy when the educator noted the numeracy limits of students.
- The Wyndham Community and Education Centre case study highlighted the need to deliver training to where the ‘Hard to Reach’ learners live or work, even if it is outside of the ‘normal’ remit of the provider, for example delivering training at employers, community organisations, or in peoples home. This provides learning flexibility to the students, with courses being adapted to meet the needs of students.

### Engagement: Wellbeing

Better providers consistently use strategies to support learners overcome barriers they face to engage in learning, including the provision or accessibility of support services. The case studies in the following slides have emphasised the importance of Learn Locals providing additional supports and adapting courses to overcome learners’ barriers.

- The Literacy for Life Foundation case study removed certain barriers to learning participation and engagement via transport services to and from class, meals, and laundry services.

# Case studies

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## Case study 1 – Wyndham Community and Education Centre

Reaching out to learners at their point of need, and strong relationships with community organisation and industry.

### Overview of City of Wyndham

The City of Wyndham is a local government area in the outer south-western suburbs of Melbourne, located between Melbourne and Geelong. As of 2021, there are 8 Learn Local providers in the region. Based on the secondary data analysis, regarding CALD Victorians with low levels of educational attainment, Wyndham has the sixth highest volume in Victoria. A snapshot of the learner profile of Wyndham CALD individual's is provided below.

Table A: Learner profile of CALD individuals with low levels of educational attainment

LGA	Share that arrived in the last 10 years	Share with low spoken English skills	Share of households with low SES	NEET	Unemployed and looking for work	Share of learners enrolled in ACFE courses each year
Wyndham	40%	42%	37%	48%	5%	6%
All LGAs	28%	43%	49%	58%	4%	5%

The local council, Wyndham City, has a strong focus on community learning. In 2017, the council released the *Learning Community Strategy 2018-2023*, which outlines a commitment “to ensuring the benefits of learning are available to all Wyndham residents and promotes a learning community culture where equity and inclusion are the drivers of planning, engagement, and delivery”. The strategy noted that this applies to learning across all life stages.

### Overview of Wyndham Community and Education Centre

Wyndham Community and Education Centre (CEC) is a not-for-profit organisation that was established in 1974, with it becoming a Registered Training Organisation in 1997. Wyndham CEC offers a range of programs and services that include pre-accredited and accredited training courses and community programs. They have a strong emphasis on providing courses and programs to the disadvantaged, youth, refugee and humanitarian entrants, and other new and emerging communities.

Wyndham CEC operates as a hub and spoke model – with its head office in Werribee (the hub), and 25 smaller offices across Wyndham (the spokes). Each spoke offers different courses and resources depending on the community's needs, however, the majority offer employment skills and English Language courses.

### What does effective practice look like in City of Wyndham?

In consultation, Wyndham CEC emphasised several aspects of best practice in identifying, engaging, and retaining learners:

- reaching out to learners at their point of need
- developing strong relationships with community organisations (e.g. local councils, schools, and community services)
- developing strong relationships with industry (e.g. employers in the region)

#### Reaching out to learners at their point of need

In consultation, Wyndham CEC noted the importance of delivering training to where the ‘Hard to Reach’ learners live or work, even if it is outside of the ‘normal’ remit of the provider (e.g. delivering training at employers, community organisations, or in learners homes). This provides learning flexibility to the students, with courses being adapted to meet the needs of students.

*“What makes us different is we always say yes and think about how we do it later. A lot of organisations will [say no] if it doesn't fit within their structure. We will say yes, and we will ask how to deliver. There is always a way to troubleshoot. We're willing to go to places that others don't, out of the 9-5.” - Wyndham CEC Representative*

#### Strong relationships with community organisations

Wyndham CEC emphasised the importance of developing strong relationships with community organisations (e.g. local councils, schools, and community services) to assist in identifying the needs of the community, and adapting programs to align with the community's needs. Several practical examples of how these techniques were implemented were discussed, with it differing depending on the type of learner. For example:

- For recent refugee arrivals, Wyndham CEC closely liaises with community leaders by utilising their team of bicultural employees who belong to the cultural groups
- For young people, Wyndham CEC liaises directly with schools, mental health organisations (e.g. headspace, Orygen), and youth services at the local government.

*“It's about linking to leaders in the community, having a suite of other services to draw people into education. This may be settlement services or community development.” - Wyndham CEC Representative*

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## Case study 1 – Wyndham Community and Education Centre (Cont.)

Reaching out to learners at their point of need, and strong relationships with community organisation and industry.

### What does effective practice look like in City of Wyndham (cont.)?

Additionally, in consultation, Wyndham CEC discussed its partnerships with the local council to raise awareness of their organisation. This is achieved through the Wyndham Learning Festival (discussed below.)

**Wyndham Learning Festival:** The Wyndham Learning Festival is an annual, series of events that provides opportunities for free learning activities across the City of Wyndham. The Festival aims to showcase learning across all life stages. Classes offered included lawn bowls, cooking, language cafes, and environmental classes - foundational skill courses are not offered. The Wyndham Learning Festival is delivered by the Wyndham CEC, in partnership with the Wyndham City Council.

#### Developing strong relationships with the industry

Wyndham discussed the importance of having strong relationships with industry or employers in the area. This allows them to understand the needs of the local industries, with courses being aligned to suit the need of industries – both in terms of upskilling current employees or potential future employees.

*“Providers must work with business and industry because they do have huge needs – they won’t seek help from providers like us, so you need to go to them. Set up meetings, talk to them, what are the needs of your workforce? Don’t sit back and wait, do it the other way.” - Wyndham CEC Representative*

In consultation, they discussed their partnership with Vertech Hume, a Werribee-based concrete products manufacturing company (see below).

**Partnership with Vertech Hume:** In 2012, Wyndham Community and Education Centre partnered with Vertech Hume, a Werribee-based concrete products manufacturing company. The company employed a group of Burmese people for whom English is a second language. To support their language learning, Wyndham Community and Education Centre developed an ongoing English language program with Certificate I in ESL as the basis. Following this program, Wyndham CEC continued their partnership, by providing leadership courses to the same cohort.

### Wyndham Community and Education Centre’s point of difference

Wyndham CEC discussed that it is a challenge for Learn Local’s to have initiatives or programs that focus on identifying, outreaching, and engaging ‘Hard to Reach’ Learners. Specifically, they discussed that funding received does not support activities outside the delivery of courses. They noted that as a large provider they have the scale to engage with community members and leaders, and offset the potential costs. However, for smaller providers, it is a challenge to do more than just deliver courses, due to the associated costs.

*“It’s a challenge for providers to do more than just the delivery. We have an advantage over others as we’re large enough – we can have coordinators going in and developing courses. All of those things is a challenge because funding is for the course delivered. We’re not funded to do this – but being a large organisation we can offset this.” - Wyndham CEC Representative*

### Wyndham Community and Education Centre’s suggestions for ACFE

Wyndham Community and Education Centre emphasised in consultations that ACFE could improve its communication process to celebrate successes, to share resources across the sector, and promote professional development courses.

*“ACFE has its strategic plan and the ministerial statement, and the work we’re doing with business and industry and vulnerable learners is part of the Ministerial statement. But not all Learn Locals do it, and nor should they because they’re not set up to do it. Where there are Learn Locals who can do this work, that ACFE should be across it and be promoting it, and be supporting it.” - Wyndham CEC Representative*

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## Case study 2 – Laverton Community Education Centre

Integrated programs across multiple foundational skills and community partnerships

### Overview of Hobsons Bay

The City of Hobsons Bay is a local government area in the south-western suburbs of Melbourne. As of 2021, there are 4 Learn Local providers in the region. Based on the secondary data analysis, regarding Victorians with low levels of educational attainment, Hobsons Bay has the twenty-eighth highest volume in Victoria. A snapshot of the learner profile of Hobsons Bay is provided below.

Table B: Learner profile of individuals with low levels of educational attainment

LGA	Share of households with low SES	NEET	Unemployed and looking for work	Share with a disability	Share of learners enrolled in ACFE courses each year
Hobsons Bay	42%	50%	4%	12%	3%
All LGAs	38%	45%	4%	10%	2%

### Overview of Laverton Community Education Centre

Laverton Community Education Centre (CEC) is the education and training component of Laverton Community Integrated Services.

Laverton CEC offers a range of Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses including a Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care, Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care, Certificate III in Individual Support, Certificate IV in School Based Education Support, and Certificate I in Transition Education courses. Additionally, Laverton CEC delivers the Skills for Education and Employment Program (SEE) and Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP). Additionally, Laverton CEC delivers pre-accredited programs designed to engage participants in learning and provide pathways to VET courses and employment outcomes. In consultation, they noted the majority of pre-accredited training courses delivered are English language courses, with some employment skill courses.

### What does effective practice look like in Laverton CEC?

In consultation, Laverton CEC discussed two aspects of effective practice in identifying, engaging, and retaining learners:

- developing and delivering integrated programs across multiple foundational skills, and
- developing strong community partnerships for effective outreach and co-designing programs.

#### Developing and delivering integrated programs across multiple foundational skills

In consultation, the representative from Laverton CEC noted that they deliver an integrated program across multiple LLNED skills, with it being framed in terms of outcomes for the participant (rather than a learner’s deficit). Further, they noted programs should be multi-faceted around a set of collective needs or objectives for a community cohort.

*“The pre-accredited English, literacy and numeracy space is not current and not aligned with what people want and their aspirations – it is not a good match for their aspirations.”*

For example, Laverton Community Education developed the “Stepping Forward for Independence” program, which is designed for young people with a permanent cognitive impairment or intellectual disability. The program focuses on three key components with the objective being for learners to transition to a more independent life.

- Employment skills (weekly on Mondays and Wednesdays) – specifically, setting vocational and further study goals, preparing for and undertaking a practical work placement, developing employability skills, building communication skills, improving money management skills, and improving literacy and numeracy skills.
- Life skills and health well-being skills (weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays) – to support the transition to a more independent adult life – including digital literacy, kitchen operations, creative work, and horticulture.
- Community participation (every 2-3 weeks on Thursday) – provides students with the opportunity to travel and explore new places around Melbourne and the Western suburbs. This will include travel planning and training to build independence in traveling to and accessing services in our community. Following the program, the Laverton Community Education Centre assists learners in securing pathways to further education, employment, or community participation.

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## Case study 2 – Laverton Community Education Centre (Cont.)

Integrated programs across multiple foundational skills and community partnerships

### What does effective practice look like in Laverton CEC (cont.)?

#### **Developing strong community partnerships for effective outreach and co-designing programs.**

Laverton noted that strong connections to community organisations are essential for outreaching to community members, through establishing trust within specific community cohorts. Additionally, they noted that strong relationships with community organisations assist in co-designing programs to ensure it is aligned to the aspirations of learners, for example, programs that address both loneliness and building English language skills.

Laverton CEC noted that they connect with several community organisations for targeting different cohorts. For example organisations with newly serviced migrants (e.g. Settlement in Hobsons Bay and Vietnamese Women's Association of Hobsons Bay), or schools for students for learners with a disability. The representative discussed that schools are effective at identifying students with disability who were going to drop out of the school system (or had dropped out), the strong relationship has resulted in schools referring students with disability to Laverton CEC.

### Laverton CEC suggestions for ACFE

#### **Learning pathways**

In consultation, Laverton CEC suggested that it would be beneficial for the Learn Local model to evolve to focus on blending courses to meet learners' objectives, rather than a single learners' deficit (e.g. literacy, numeracy, language). They noted this may potentially allow learners a more direct pathway into employment or further training.

Additionally, they discussed that the current model "gatekeeps" learners from enrolling in a certain class. For example, learners need to meet certain literacy or numeracy stands to enrol in other courses (e.g. employment course).

*"Learners should not have to reach a benchmark standard before they can operate in daily life"*

#### **Funding models**

Laverton CEC emphasised the need to fix the funding model, specifically relating to incentivising high-performing Learn Locals. They noted the need to ensure the support provided to non-performing providers is not undermining the rewards of those that are performing.

#### **Marketing and promotion**

Laverton CEC also discussed the need for enhancing marketing skills across the sector. For example, ACFE providing evidence to Learn Locals regarding cost-effective marketing to better understand the gap in terms of the customer buying journey (e.g. awareness, interest, purchase or usage).

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## Case study 3 – Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services

Aligning programs to the need of the individuals and the community, and through partnership.

### Overview of Greater Bendigo\*

The City of Greater Bendigo is a local government area in Central Victoria. As of 2021, there are 3 Learn Local providers in the region. Based on the secondary data analysis (see XX for further details), regarding Victorians with low levels of educational attainment, Greater Bendigo has the twelfth highest volume in Victoria. A snapshot of the learner profile of Greater Bendigo is provided below.

Table C: Learner profile of individuals with low levels of educational attainment

LGA	Share of households with low SES	NEET	Unemployed and looking for work	Share with a disability	Share of learners enrolled in ACFE courses each year
Greater Bendigo	42%	45%	3%	10%	1%
All LGAs	38%	45%	4%	10%	2%

Note: LCMS services spanning across six LGAs - the City of Greater Bendigo, Loddon Shire Council, Macedon Ranges Shire Council, Goldfields Shire Council, Mount Alexander Shire Council and Campaspe Shire Council. However, this overview only focuses on Greater Bendigo due to the effective practice taking place at LCMS's Bendigo Location.

### Overview of Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services

Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services (LCMS) is a not-for-profit multicultural organisation. It was founded in 1999 and is the Ethnic Community Council and the peak body for multicultural communities in central Victoria. LCMS services span across six LGAs - the City of Greater Bendigo, Loddon Shire Council, Macedon Ranges Shire Council, Goldfields Shire Council, Mount Alexander Shire Council, and Campaspe Shire Council.

LCMS has a strong focus on individuals from multicultural backgrounds, including refugees, asylum-seekers, and people from CALD backgrounds. LCMS work sits across four areas – social inclusion and participation, strong and visible voices, pathways to job and education, and celebrating culture.

Deloitte was unable to consult with LCMS. Therefore, this case study is informed by publicly available information, including an interview with LCMS, and Bendigo TAFE conducted by Adult Learning Australia.

### What does effective practice look like in Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services ?

In 2021, Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services (LCMS) were recognised at the Learn Local Awards for their 'Starting Work in Australia - Karen Engineering Studies' program (the Program). It won awards in four categories including the Pre-accredited Program Award (For small providers), and awards for innovation and partnership. Its founder Robyn Matthews was also recognised with the Pre-accredited Trainer Award. The program highlights effective practice **aligning programs to the need of the individuals and the community, and through partnership.**

From February 2020 to December 2020, LCMS delivered the Program. The Program supports learners from the Karen community (an ethnic group from Myanmar and Thailand) in the Greater Bendigo undertaking a Certificate II in Engineering Studies at Bendigo TAFE. The program provides bilingual support, and industry-focused language and numeracy training. This includes topics relating to how to look for work, organise tax and superannuation. The course also provided support for students beyond the program, to prepare for work, and to pursue further vocational education or employment opportunities.

*"We began the course with pre-emptive learning - picking out terminology from textbooks so that participants could pick up the kinds of concepts used in the industry. The bilingual support worker was great at encouraging them and establishing that they understood." – LCMS representative*

The program resulted in 10 of 12 students gaining employment in related fields after the course, with five commencing apprenticeships, and two school-aged students returning to study after dropping out of school.

#### Aligning programs to the need of the individuals and the community

The program was developed following the employers and Job Service Providers identified skill shortages in the Bendigo area for individuals with engineering skills (including, welders, fitters, and turners). Additionally, there was a strong desire in the Karen community to learn about studying a trade, however low English language skills were a barrier, specifically as it relates to technical terminology. Therefore, additional language support would be needed to support the individuals in undertaking training.



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## Case study 3 – Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services (Cont.)

Aligning programs to the need of the individuals and the community, and through partnership.

### What does effective practice look like in LCMS (cont.)?

*“The program started when a network of employers and Job Services Providers identified that there were quite a few manufacturing firms experiencing a real shortage of people working in the field of engineering. Not just qualified engineers but welders, fitters and turners and tradies. And we knew that having a skill or a trade is something refugees and migrants really value. So we asked the community if they would be interested in doing some training” – LCMS representative*

Although the course was initially designed to focus on English Language and literacy, the focus shifted to include numeracy once the educator noted the limits of students’ numeracy.

*“The Karen community have usually attended school within camps and learned basic maths but things they need for welding like estimating size quickly, and understanding and calculating surface area and circumference are often new concepts.” – LCMS representative*

The program continued to adapt at the start of COVID-19, as students were unable to attend the TAFE campus due to lockdowns, with there being a risk that students become disengaged. Therefore, LCMS adapted its program to include digital literacy training and support so students could study remotely.

The program also included site visits to a range of local manufacturing firms, and the Bendigo TAFE campus (including the Engineering Department and the workshops). Anecdotally, it was noted this reduced anxieties and fears of students regarding entering the TAFE campus, and also the environment of manufacturing engineering, with the majority of people in the Karen community have not seen manufacturing tools or settings.

#### Partnership with other local organisations

The collaboration with other organisations, was noted as a key factor to the Program’s success. The Program was a collaboration with LCMS, Bendigo TAFE, and local JobActive centres.

*“The whole project was full of people who wanted to see those disadvantaged communities get a chance at something better. We were a group of like-minded people who worked as one and had a single focus” – Bendigo TAFE Representative*

LCMS designed a program (in collaboration with Bendigo TAFE and the local JobActive) that combined a Certificate II in Engineering Studies with a tailored ‘Starting work in Australia’ component.

### What does effective practice look like in LCMS (cont.)?

Further, two local Jobactive providers (Bendigo Skills and Jobs Centre and the Matchworks and Peoples Plus Jobactive Centre) provided funding for at-home learning packs and scholarships, while LCMS compiled the content of the packs. Additionally, the program was in partnership with Bendigo Senior Secondary College, and the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet (who funded a bilingual support worker).

The partnership and collaboration also influence Bendigo TAFE’s learning style. The program included the use of a translator in the TAFE classroom (the bilingual support worker), requiring teachers to deliver more precise and simple instructions, and work at a slower pace to ensure that the learners had a safe learning environment.

### Bendigo TAFE’s suggestions for ACFE

A representative from Bendigo TAFE noted that there were surprised a similar program hasn’t been implemented prior.

*“I haven’t done a lot of research but from what I have done this kind of program doesn’t seem to have been done before – much to my amazement.” – Bendigo TAFE Representative*

Further, the representative with Bendigo TAFE noted that they hope bilingual support will be a key instrument in VET training, particularly for CALD backgrounds.

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## Case study 4 – Literacy for Life Foundation

Implementing a whole of community approach, directly reaching out to potential learners, providing opportunity for learners to sample the campaign, providing supports and adapting courses to overcome learners barriers, and training local people to deliver courses.

### Overview of Literacy for Life and their campaign

Literacy for Life Foundation (LFLF) is an Aboriginal-run not-for-profit organisation that focuses on improving the literacy levels amongst Aboriginal Australians, through examining and implementing best practice approaches to improve adult literacy.

It was formed at the direction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators and health professionals, after recognising a high level of need for literacy amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In consultation, they emphasised their focus is not on finding people who are illiterate, but rather focusing on approaches to improve literacy.

The primary practice used by LFLF is a campaign model. The model is based on the UNESCO award-winning 'Yes, I Can!' method, developed in Cuba for use with disadvantaged groups. The approach has been designed to raise literacy levels quickly, at a low cost, across a region. Globally, the use of similar models has resulted in over 10 million people being literate in 30 countries.

LFLF is the first organisation to implement a similar program in Australia (across Queensland, Northern Territory, and New South Wales). The model was applied in Australia to meet the needs of Indigenous communities following a three-year pilot stage managed by the University of New England in partnership with IPLAC and the Lowitja Foundation, funded by the Australian and NSW governments.

The Campaign is divided into three components over 9 months:

#### Mobilisation and socialisation Months 1 – 3:

- The local community steering committee is developed
- Local Aboriginal staff are recruited and trained
- Data is collected on community literacy levels
- Students enrol

#### Lessons Months 3 – 6:

- Students complete 64 basic literacy lessons
- Lessons are run by local staff using a set of instructional DVDs
- There are approximately 20 students per class
- Classes run for 6 to 8 hours per week over 13 weeks

#### Post literacy Months 6 – 9:

- Students are encouraged to 'use it or lose it'
- New literacy skills are applied to real-life situations (e.g. enrolling in further education, seeking employment, etc.)

### Overview of Literacy for Life and their campaign (cont.)

An evaluation and several research studies have been completed for LFLF's Campaign. Key results include:

- 13 communities reached
- 303 graduates
- Over 50 Indigenous jobs created
- 24% reduction in illiteracy in Bourke
- 20% reduction in illiteracy in Wilcannia
- Greater uptake of health services
- Improved school attendance and results for children and grandchildren or participants
- Established pathways to employment
- Reduced reported interactions between Aboriginal adults and police

### What does effective practice look like in Literacy for Life?

In consultation, LFLF emphasised several aspects of best practice in identifying, engaging, and retaining learners:

- Implementing a whole of community approach
- Directly reaching out to potential learners
- Providing an opportunity for learners to sample the campaign
- Providing additional supports and adapting courses to overcome learners' barriers.
- Training local people to deliver courses

#### Implementing a whole of community approach

The Literacy for Life Campaign (the Campaign) focus is on helping to build a community culture that values and supports literacy and learning. From the outset, the responsibility is on the community to take ownership and deliver the campaign, focusing on long-term social change.

From the start, LFLF only enters the community if invited in by community members or organisations. LFLF works with local Aboriginal organisations, government agencies, councils, church groups, and elders to contribute and build towards the common goal of enhancing literacy levels for all adults in the community. Additionally, Local community members are trained as campaign coordinators and facilitators supported by professional adult educators.

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## Case study 4 – Literacy for Life Foundation (Cont.)

Implementing a whole of community approach, directly reaching out to potential learners, providing opportunity for learners to sample the campaign, providing supports and adapting courses to overcome learners barriers, and training local people to deliver courses.

### What does effective practice look like in LFLF (cont.)?

*“The way we’ve approached it – it is a whole of community approach – begin by being invited in – has identified low adult literacy, as something pressing that needs to be addressed. There is already a desire to address this. Then we come into the picture and establish leadership around adult literacy campaign.” – LFLF representative*

The strong community focus ensures that the Campaign is accepted and supported by the community, leading to higher engagement, and assisting in the recruitment of teachers.

*“The difference is its right from [door knocking] its people in community, that are apart of that conversation, its accepted it’s a safe. There are already people that are saying its important for them.” – LFLF representative*

#### Directly reaching out to potential learners

To gauge the literacy levels of the community, community facilitators (members of the community who have been trained by LFLF) doorknock across the community to have a conversation, often in first languages, about learning. If the members are interested the staff will discuss the Campaign.

*“The conversation is around what good literacy looks like, how does the household feel about it. Its an indirect way of talking about literacy” – LFLF representative*

In consultation, they noted that as recruitment is through existing networks in the community, it allows for momentum around the Campaign to build, improving engagement and access.

*“ Recruitment is bottom up through existing networks in the community. Momentum builds, but the stigma and shame doesn’t disappear. Rather, its safe and appropriate way of reaching those people.” – LFLF representative*

#### Providing an opportunity for learners to sample the campaign

To make learners feel comfortable with attending and engaging with the Campaign, learners are invited to sit in the class to see what is like. Additionally, if LFLF believes an individual is overestimating their level of literacy they are encouraged to attend the class as a ‘support person’ for other learners.

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### What does effective practice look like in LFLF (cont.)?

*“If people are interested in attending, local staff will follow them up. They’ll be invited to sit in classroom to see what is it like.. there are many opportunities for communities to dip their toes in.” – LFLF representative*

These opportunities assist in learners in becoming comfortable in the class, leading to better engagement and retention as a result.

#### Providing additional supports and adapting courses to overcome learners’ barriers.

In consultation, LFLF discussed that their Campaign is flexible to adapt to learners’ needs, and they provide supports to mitigate learners’ barriers. For example, they noted that some communities choose to provide transport to and from class, meals, and laundry washing services. Additionally, they noted that there are options for people to bring their children to class (if agreed by the broader class), and classes to be rescheduled if learners have other commitments.

*“Barriers intersect with other barriers... [The Campaign’s] structure is set up by removing these barriers, creating an entry point for students.” – LFLF representative*

#### Training local people to deliver courses

LFLF’s Campaign is delivered by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In consultation, they noted this was inspired by the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health sector.

They noted that the teaching facilitator receives intensive three-week training. Additionally, before each class they prepare for the class under supervision and have a prescriptive lesson plan and curriculum. Additionally, facilitators are provided a DVD to provide a visual component of a class, with facilitators able to model their behaviour on the DVD teachers.

In consultation, they noted that assists in building a local community education workforce. Therefore, when LFLF leaves the community, the educator and community organisations are able to keep the program running in any form the community sees best.

*“ When LFLF leaves the community, the Campaign should keep running in any form the community wants. We try to build community education workforce on the spot through offering huge amount of training and supports, and ensuring rigour and tightly controlled curriculum.” – LFLF representative*

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## Case study 5 – AMES Australia

### Co-designing the pathway from pre-accredited to accredited, social participation and economic participation

#### Overview of AMES Australia

AMES Australia provides a range of settlement services for refugees and migrants, including on-arrival settlement support, English language and literacy training, vocational education and training, and employment services. These services are primarily delivered through the following federal and state contracts:

- Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP)
- Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS)
- Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)
- Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) Program
- Skills First
- Jobactive

They have services in Victoria, New South Wales, Northern Territory, South Australia, and Tasmania.

Additionally, AMES Australia is a member of the Learn Local sector delivering pre-accrediting training in 18 services in Victoria.

#### What does effective practice look like for AMES Australia?

In consultation, AMES Australia discussed two factors of effective practice:

- Co-designing the pathway from pre-accredited to accredited
- Focus on social participation

##### Co-designing the pathway from pre-accredited to accredited

In consultation, AMES Australia discussed the process of co-designing the pathway from pre-accredited training (to ACFE) to accredited. They noted the need to co-design a strengths-based and client informed for women from CALD backgrounds, as they are underrepresented across education and employment indicators.

AMES Australia engaged a group of CALD women who want to work but are currently unemployed to provide perspective from lived experience. The women were required to have lived in Australia for at least five years, to increase the likelihood of the women having live experience in education and

#### What does effective practice look like for AMES Australia?

employment systems. In consultation, AMES Australia discussed that the women were from diverse backgrounds including representatives from the Afghan community, international university students, women from the skilled migration program, and women arriving through family connections. The women were paid \$50 per meeting and committed to co-designing the course for at least 12 months.

Additionally, the women were recruited through AMES Australia’s partnership with a community organisation to develop profiles of ideal members and sharing the profile with Learn Locals.

AMES discussed that there was also on focus on women's expectations of Learn Local providers. For example, Learn Locals not managing expectations or learners misunderstanding the purpose of the Program (seeing it as a way to get a job). They noted that when learners don’t achieve their expectations, it disengages them from participating in the programs.

*“A lot of women having experience in accredited or pre-accredited and it doesn’t meet expectations. It is sold as an employment journey – but they can’t get work or interviews- because delivery hasn’t managed expectation, or misunderstood the purpose of the program- that disengages them as participating in the program” – AMES Australia representative*

##### Social participation and economic participation

AMES Australia noted that a method for engaging learners is through a focus on social participation. Particularly, as some learners do not feel like they have the ability to do a course, but want to participate in community activities. Further, they noted that once people are engaged they gain further confidence to participate in further vocational courses.

*“[Learners] want social connection and participation... noting that professionalism or sophistication is needed to properly develop and engage learners” – AMES Australia representative*

Further, they emphasised that ACFE can be seen a can be a starting point for people to achieve economic participation or mobility, through further studies or employment. AMES Australia also noted this is a potential way for ACFE to have a distinction from TAFE. They noted that greater partnerships may be

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## Case study 5 – AMES Australia (Cont.)

Co-designing the pathway from pre-accredited to accredited, social participation and economic participation

### What does effective practice look like in AMES Australia?

needed to further connect ACFE to other training providers and potential employees.

*“ACFE can have role to be starting point of economic mobility piece. Will be pathway for economic mobility – great branding position – distinction from TAFE.” – AMES Australia representative*

### AMES Australia’s suggestions for ACFE

AMES Australia discussed the opportunity for Learn Locals to take up an advocacy role at the grassroots level. Particularly, as it relates to improving pathways for different cohorts. They noted that Learn Locals will need a high level of sophistication and maturity to achieve this. However, Learn Locals will be able to design and deliver courses/pathways that align with the expectation of learners.

*“Learn local sector should have critical advocacy role – they can bring a sophisticated understanding – not just about the Learn Local business, but about how their products connects to the next piece in integrated way” – AMES Australia representative*

As discussed previously, AMES Australia noted that to engage Hard-to-Reach Learners, ACFE could market their classes to focus on social participation, with learners engaging with Learn Locals to can connect with other community people.

Further, AMES Australia noted that ACFE can distinguish itself from TAFE by focusing on being a starting point on the pathway to achieving economic participation or mobility. They discussed that ACFE could partner with other training providers or employers to develop a pathway, however, they noted that the current resource level may limit the ability to achieve this.

## Section 4. Key findings

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## Overview of key findings (1/3)

A triangulation of findings from the multiple evidence sources and analytical streams has revealed a high degree of consistency in how ‘hard to reach’ learners are understood, characterised and engaged with.

To develop findings arising from the project, a triangulation matrix has been utilised across the multiple key data sources. The matrix details the key findings, the extent to which they can be drawn from the data sources that have been included in this report, and a rating of the strength of the finding. This is provided below.

Table 8. Triangulation of findings across analytical streams and strength of findings (1/3)

Emerging finding	Desktop review	Stakeholder consultations	Secondary data analysis
Finding 1. ‘Hard to reach’ can alternatively be framed as where and how the system can work harder to reach learners who have greater need and face complex intersecting barriers – rather than focusing on characteristics or ‘deficits’ in individual learners.	<p><b>High.</b> The complex nature of defining ‘hard to reach’ is consistently highlighted in literature (including domestic and international sources).</p> <p>This type of framing is viewed by some as deficit-based, implicitly positioning learners as ‘difficult’ and questioning why they may not be engaging. As a result, alternative approaches to defining ‘hard to reach’ have emerged, where this is reframed to understand what it is about systems that may make it difficult for learners to engage.</p>	<p><b>High.</b> Stakeholders noted the term was deficit discourse, and strongly articulated the need to position this as ‘what makes the system difficult to engage with’.</p> <p>Stakeholders also noted that ‘hard to reach’ comes down to whether the Learn Local offering or product is consistent with what learners in the community are seeking, relative to their needs and aspirations. In this instance, ‘hard to reach’ occurs when there is a disconnect between the product and needs of learners that needs to be addressed by the system.</p>	Not applicable
Finding 2. The needs of learners are defined by a complex array of histories, relationships and contexts – where there are no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approaches.	<p><b>High.</b> Literature notes the need for different strategies to engage learners on the basis of age, prior educational experiences, and multiple other demographic factors. For example, CALD communities can include those seeking asylum seekers, humanitarian migrants, international students, temporary workers and their families, who would all require different approaches. Although deemed to be out of scope for this scan, this would be a potential area of exploration for further research.</p>	<p><b>Medium.</b> This was noted by a majority of stakeholder organisations, who emphasised that strategies must be targeted based on the community and learners’ need.</p> <p>An example given was the CALD cohort, who are notably diverse in their skill base, knowledge, and prior educational levels, as well as demographics. Communities with a relatively high share of young non-English speaking people, will require a different strategy for engagement compared to a community with a relatively high share of older learners.</p>	The secondary data analysis highlights diversity in the demographic characteristics of learners with low educational attainment level – which has implications for the nature of approaches required. For example, First Nations learners tend to be younger, while CALD learners tend to be older, and the general population tends to lie somewhere in-between.
Finding 3. ‘Place’ or location is another frame through which various needs of hard to reach learners can be explored.	<p><b>Medium.</b> Aboriginal communities have cultures which are place-based, not just as a matter of geography but as a relational concept of identity which has subsequent implications for how they engage with community and services. This is expected to be consolidated in understanding throughout the stakeholder consultations.</p>	<p><b>Medium.</b> Stakeholders noted that need may differ based on place and particular location of learners, including access to co-located services such as neighbourhood houses or community hubs. This need and considerations can be further identified in subsequent consultations.</p>	<b>High.</b> The secondary data analysis highlights the LGAs of the greatest level of need (educational and other ‘hard to reach’ variables), that could be used to identify more appropriate strategies for targeting.

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## Overview of key findings (2/3)

A triangulation of findings from the multiple evidence sources and analytical streams has revealed a high degree of consistency in how ‘hard to reach’ learners are understood, characterised and engaged with.

Table 9. Triangulation of findings across analytical streams and strength of findings (2/3)

Emerging finding	Desktop review	Stakeholder consultations	Secondary data analysis
Finding 4. To effectively engage learners, course offerings must be relevant – practical, pragmatic and purposeful to their stage of learning and needs.	<b>High.</b> Multiple sources of literature describe the importance of courses providing the flexibility and freedom for adult learners to direct their own learning journey. Courses must also provide flexible learning opportunities and be relevant to learners’ values, for example a holistic education environment that nurtures connections to culture and identity.	<b>High.</b> Understanding learners’ intent is important to ensure services are appropriately aligned. For example, learners may enrol in Learn Locals for social participation rather than education. If Learn Locals can discern the skill levels of learners, they can be a stepping stone for further pre-accredited training. This finding is related to finding 1.	Not applicable
Finding 5. The relationship between providers, learners and community is critical for identification, outreach, participation in learning, and completion.	<b>High.</b> Community relationships with local employers and service agencies is viewed as integral for successful identification and outreach. This is often interconnected with other related supports that learners may need or access, including counselling services, parent and toddler groups, employment support, childcare, library services, and information services.	<b>High.</b> Stakeholders consistently raised the importance of developing a sense of belonging and emotional connection with students, with it being crucial for Learn Locals to take time and have the opportunity to build trust and rapport. However, consultees noted that Learn Locals funding may not support community outreach and the development of relationships with potential learners. Well-trained teachers and staff are also crucial for provide a positive experience for learners.	Not applicable
Finding 6. Effective outreach is characterised by relationality of referrals from family, friends and trusted community organisations and networks.	<b>High.</b> There is a high degree of consistency observed in characteristics of outreach strategies required for learner groups. These strategies emphasise the need for outreach to be relationally driven. This includes community engagement, peer-to-peer representation and encouragement, building rapport and connections with learners through communities and their communication channels, and partnerships with local community organisations.	<b>High.</b> This was prevalent across all stakeholders consulted with, as well as other stakeholder organisations who took part in exploratory conversations. Building strong partnerships with other services in the community (e.g. libraries, health services, post offices, community groups) is important for providing relational referrals, noting it needs to be a systemic and holistic approach to bring services to learners.	Not applicable



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## Overview of key findings (3/3)

A triangulation of findings from the multiple evidence sources and analytical streams has revealed a high degree of consistency in how ‘hard to reach’ learners are understood, characterised and engaged with.

Table 10. Triangulation of findings across analytical streams and strength of findings (3/3)

Emerging finding	Desktop review	Stakeholder consultations	Secondary data analysis
Finding 7. Outreach strategies are most likely to be effective when they remain flexible to meet the learner at different stages of their decision making process to embark on an adult learning journey.	<b>High.</b> This was prevalent in the analysis of alternative approaches to considering how the system can engage hard to reach learners.	<b>Medium.</b> Stakeholder consultations to-date have referenced the need to ensure offerings are relevant to the learner’s particular need based on their decision to pursue learning.	Not applicable
Finding 8. Engagement strategies are most effective when they are co-designed in partnership with community groups, and meet the learner at their point of need.	<b>High.</b> Literature suggests that adequate outreach and engagement (best practices around identifying and understanding what influences a learner’s decision to engage in education first), requires positioning the learner at the centre, and to determine – ideally with their community groups – a holistic response that is directly centred in their learning needs and community/group requirements.	<b>Medium.</b> Co-design of engagement strategies was not specifically noted in stakeholder conversations held to-date, however there was a strong emphasis placed on the need to work in partnership with community groups and services, who play the most integral referral and outreach role for learners.	Not applicable
Finding 9. The role of ACFE and Learn Locals should be broader than education provision if it is truly to engage hard to reach learners.	<b>Medium.</b> The literature highlights numerous considerations for successful identification, outreach, engagement and completion of adult education, which extend beyond education provision. Beyond a core role in delivering education and ensuring curriculum and pedagogy meet learners at their point of need and at their stage of their learning journey, there are key roles with regard to engaging or linking with other services within the community, and more.	<b>Medium.</b> Stakeholders noted that a factor of considerable importance is the reach of the Learn Local, including maintaining consistency and strong linkages in the community they are embedded in.	Not applicable

# Appendix 1

## Data availability guide



## Identifying learner profiles

The table below outlines the variables used to identify the potential learner cohort for each profile.

Table A.3: Variables used to identify learner cohort profiles

Profile	Filter variable to identify cohort (in Tablebuilder)	Reference year
<b>Profile 1</b> <i>Non-priority cohort learners with low levels of educational attainment.</i>	Highest Year of School Completed (HSCP)	2021 (Census)
	Age in five year groups (AGE5P)	2021 (Census)
<b>Profile 2</b> <i>CALD learners with low levels of educational attainment.</i>	Highest Year of School Completed (HSCP)	2021 (Census)
	Age in five year groups (AGE5P)	2021 (Census)
	Country of Birth of Person (BPLP)	2021 (Census)
	Proficiency in Spoken English (ENGLP)	2021 (Census)
<b>Profile 3</b> <i>Indigenous learners with low levels of educational attainment.</i>	Highest Year of School Completed (HSCP)	2021 (Census)
	Indigenous Status (INGP)	2021 (Census)
	Age in five year groups (AGE5P)	2021 (Census)

Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2022).

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# Appendix 2

## Data indicator guide



## Indicators data guide

The table below outlines the variables used to characterise the learner profiles, including future release dates.

Table A.3: Indicators used in learner profiles

Indicator	Variable (in Tablebuilder)	Reference year	Next release	Notes
<b>Age</b>	Age in 10 year groups (AGE10P)	2021 (Census)	2026 (Census)	
<b>Gender</b>	Sex (SEXP)	2021 (Census)	2026 (Census)	
<b>Share of households with low socio-economic status</b>	IHAD Deciles (Household-based)	2016 (Census)	Uncertain	The Index of Household Advantage and Disadvantage (IHAD) is an index providing a measure of relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The index captures a wide variety of measures to estimate advantage or disadvantage, for example, households with no car, households with no internet connection, participation in voluntary work etc.
<b>Not engaged in employment, education or training (NEET)</b>	Engaged in Employment, Education and Training (EETP)	2021 (Census)	2026 (Census)	
<b>Unemployed and looking for work</b>	Labour Force Status (LFSP)	2021 (Census)	2026 (Census)	
<b>Share with a disability</b>	Core Activity Need for Assistance (ASSNP)	2021 (Census)	2026 (Census)	
<b>Victorian LGAs digital inclusion rank</b>	-	2021 (Telstra)	2022	The Australian Digital Inclusion uses survey data to measure digital inclusion across three dimensions of Access, Affordability and Digital Ability. In the same way that the income poverty line that reflects the ability of individuals and households to attain minimum acceptable standards of living, a critical threshold for digital inclusion can be identified. This is the point above which a person's level of access, ability and capacity to pay for digital technologies enables them to use digital services and participate in the contemporary digital world. Sourced from a publicly released <a href="#">dataset</a> .
<b>Humanitarian settlers arrived in last 10 years</b>	-	2021 (Department of Home Affairs)	Uncertain	Sourced from a publicly released government <a href="#">dataset</a> .
<b>Share that arrived in the last 10 years</b>	Year of Arrival in Australia (ranges) (YARRP)	2021 (Census)	2026 (Census)	
<b>Share with low spoken English skills</b>	Proficiency in Spoken English/ Language (ENGLP)	2021 (Census)	2026 (Census)	
<b>Most represented ethnicity</b>	Language Used at Home (LANP)	2021 (Census)	2026 (Census)	

Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2022).

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