

A submission into the The Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Inquiry into Migrant Settlement Outcomes

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) is a good concept to help new migrants improve their English so they can better participate in the Australian community.

However, it is not enough to have this program in place—the government that pays for it has a responsibility to ensure that it is functioning well and achieving the desired outcomes. In this respect, I submit that there are serious flaws in how AMEP is run in practice. The following observations are based on my spouse's experience with the program.

The course providers do not ensure there is consistency in teaching, and often, there will be a different teacher every couple of weeks. This is highly disruptive for the students' learning. Every new teacher must learn the students' names, abilities, areas for development and any special learning needs, as well as tracking what the class has already learned and what they will need to cover. Imagine if our children's schools functioned in the same way—it would be unacceptable.

The course providers make little effort to determine students' special learning needs. For example, students who are dyslexic will have vastly more difficulty learning English, which is one of the least phonetic languages. It is easy for these students to pass the listening and speaking components, whilst falling severely behind in writing and reading comprehension. This hinders every aspect of their settlement in Australia, including work, family life, study opportunities and daily activities (managing finances, housing, medical care and so on). It results in terrible wasted potential of people who would otherwise be able and willing to contribute economically and socially to the Australian community. Is a travesty that no support is given for students in these situations.