

## **How Measures to Improve adult literacy can foster greater labour market participation, increased productivity and improvements to individual and community wellbeing.**

I am a volunteer English teacher for the ReadWriteNow organisation in Western Australia which provides free English tutoring for those in need. I will tell you the stories of two migrants.

■■■■■ drives a small tractor for a waste disposal company. He and his family migrated from ■■■■■ five years ago. He can speak English but does not write it well. It is a requirement of his job that he passes a course in Handling Dangerous Goods. The course was held at his work by a trainer specialising in industrial training.

When ■■■■■ introduced himself to his tutor and the whole class, the tutor said "people like you do not do well in courses like this." ■■■■■ was the only person of colour in the class and, ultimately, the only person who failed. ■■■■■ came to ReadWriteNow as he will lose his job if he does not succeed with the training.

In ■■■■■ he attended university and worked as a trained nurse for 23 years. This is the work he wants to do however, he must undertake 12 months of study and pass an exam before he can work as a nurse in Australia. With his current literacy level he will not pass.

Demand for nurses is far exceeding supply in Australia, with current trends indicating an expected nursing shortage of more than 120,000 by 2030.

■■■■■ is a young man from ■■■■■ who is a trained chef. He wants to repay the country that has welcomed him by working in the community. He is currently training as an aged care nurse as this is where he sees the greatest need, but he is having difficulty with the course due to poor reading and writing skills. He has attended an English course at TAFE but says the class was very large and made up of people from many different countries, so learning was difficult. ■■■■■ gets up at 4.20 am every week day to do his cleaning job, then goes straight to the aged care training for 5 hours and then back to his cleaning job for another 4 hours. On Thursdays he leaves work and meets me for a tutoring session at 6.15 pm. In 14 weeks he has never missed a session. ■■■■■ has provided a message for inclusion in the submission.

*"My name is ■■■■■. I'm one of the member using the read/write program with ■■■■■. ■■■■■ my tutor, she is very good and professional to teach me everything when I do not understand. I decided to joined the program to help to improve my English, because English is no my first language.*

*I was very weak with my comprehension and interpretation get things mixed up and misunderstood. This affected my listening and punctuation when I'm trying to express myself. I did not have the confidence to venture into writing.*

*It giving me confident with reading, because I'm better able to pronounce words and start to understand the close sounding, yet their very different meanings".*

For both ■■■■■ and ■■■■■, one on one tutoring is much more successful as it can be tailored specifically to their needs. The ReadWriteNow program is government funded but this only provides basic premises and administrative staff. Computer systems are outdated as are the resources provided to tutors. An upgrade is particularly important given the ongoing necessity to provide online training due to COVID-19. It would be of great benefit to individuals and the community to provide additional funding to programs of this nature across Australia.

- Free tutoring could be advertised rather than relying on word of mouth
- Online training can be developed
- Resources for tutors could be updated and upgraded improving outcomes for both tutors and students.

I wish you all the best with the inquiry.

■■■■■