



Reading Writing Hotline **1300 6 555 06**

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Caller trends illuminate changing literacy landscape on Reading Writing Hotline's 25th anniversary

The Reading Writing Hotline, Australia's national literacy referral service, today celebrates 25 years of helping people improve their literacy and numeracy skills, with a quarter century of caller trends painting a compelling picture of adult literacy in Australia.

Initially established as a phone service to accompany the ABC's *Reading Writing Roadshow* in 1994, the Hotline soon took on a life of its own and has since helped 160,000 callers pursue adult literacy education across Australia.

The majority of those seeking help are not who you might think – they are primarily young men aged 25-44 from English-speaking backgrounds who left school in Year 9 or earlier to enter the blue-collar workforce.

While this has remained unchanged in 25 years, what has changed is the proportion of callers who seek help on behalf of others as fewer people seek help themselves. Nearly half of the Hotline's callers are now employers, health care workers, disability support workers, friends and family who see others struggling with literacy demands.

Some demographics are now less likely to seek help, but others are seizing the opportunity to improve their literacy, with the proportion of calls from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders more than doubling since 2016.

According to the Hotline Manager Vanessa Iles, these trends demonstrate that while many barriers to seeking help remain, they can be overcome by governments and service providers working together to address adult literacy outcomes and reach those who most need help.

"The success of the Hotline over the last 25 years speaks to its enduring relevance in modern Australia," said Ms Iles. "I could not be prouder of what we have achieved or more certain that our work is more important than it has ever been.

"With the arrival of the digital age and the widespread demand for literacy and computer skills in the workforce, it's harder than ever for us to get by with limited literacy. Improving these skills in the general population is fundamental to bulding a healthy society and economy.

"We have helped thousands of Australians change their lives by giving them the skills and confidence they need to thrive in work and life, and we intend to help many more. It's never too late to learn."

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Attached media: video with testimonials from current literacy students