

PDF



Everyday Literacy for Local Communities
Program Stages
2009 – 2011

Evaluation Report

Prepared by
PDF Management Services Pty Ltd

for the
Tasmanian Association of Community Houses

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1. Executive Summary and recommendations

1.1 Executive Summary

There are a number of people in the community, particularly those communities served by Neighbourhood Houses, with very low literacy skills who do not use (and will never use) other existing literacy programs.

This evaluation shows however, that some of these people are willing to access literacy projects provided by Neighbourhood Houses. This is particularly the case using a soft entry approach where literacy outcomes are combined with activities that meet personal interests and other needs of participants and contribute to their broader life skills development.

There is an opportunity for the Tasmanian Association of Neighbourhood Houses (TACH) and the Neighbourhood House network to capitalise on this informal, soft entry community based literacy approach. This approach not only improves reading and writing skills, but also achieves more holistic, personal, family and community outcomes in a much broader context - not offered by other literacy providers. It also fits well with the unique positioning of the Neighbourhood House network within the community and builds on their effectiveness in engaging isolated and vulnerable people.

Many participants in other literacy programs are engaged in the community; are committed to improving their literacy skills; and are ready for one to one tutoring. In the case of Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program, many participants are not engaged in the community; would not commit to a literacy project if it were described as such; and will only become engaged in a literacy project where literacy outcomes are an adjunct to meeting other practical needs.

It is the view of this evaluation, that this participant group should be the primary target of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program. The Program is not designed to serve participants who arguably have higher entry level literacy skills and would be more likely to enrol in more formal and structured literacy programs offered by other providers.

Not surprisingly, the first two years of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities has focussed on establishing the Program – what could loosely be described as ‘the here and now’ needs. This has included developing program guidelines and funding processes; establishing policies, processes and reporting frameworks; increasing awareness and promoting the Program to Neighbourhood Houses; and encouraging and supporting Houses to apply for funding.

This establishment phase is now complete and a solid foundation for future development and growth has been built. The Program has clearly developed a model that has credibility and is achieving results. The next stage of development of the Program should focus more strongly on strategic thinking and long term planning.

The significant funding of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program (which covers a 10 year period, with provision of an interest investment trust fund to continue beyond that) provides a framework to make a real difference to people with low literacy skills and their families. Developing long term targets and strategies provides the potential for larger and higher level outcomes than would be achieved by focussing solely on an annual funding process.

In order to construct a long term direction, TACH has a pivotal role and must:

- take a proactive strategic leadership role
- build the capacity of each Neighbourhood House to think and act strategically
- pursue the development of skills and expertise of staff and volunteers
- galvanise a culture that delivers this larger vision and delivers value for this substantial investment in the Tasmania community.

This report contains a number of recommendations that are designed to inform and drive the next stage of evolution and development of the Program.

1.2 Summary of recommendations

Recommendations are provided through-out the report, along with the observations and rationale which has led to the recommendations. Listed below is a summary of the recommendations detailed through-out the report.

Recommendation 1

'that TACH develop a strategy and action plan for the remainder of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program grant period which identifies the long term change and outcomes to be achieved with the funding and details of how this will occur.'

Recommendation 2

'that a process be developed to enable the assessment panel to engage with applicants where additional or clarifying information is required'.

Recommendation 3

'that examples of funded and/or completed projects be provided to all Neighbourhood Houses with the funding application pack for each funding round'.

Recommendation 4

'that the TACH Executive Officer and the TACH Project Officer provide input as required and appropriate to the discussion section of the assessment panel meeting and leave the meeting for the decision-making part of the meeting.'

Recommendation 5

'that TACH work with the Houses receiving Everyday Literacy for Local Communities funding and the project assessment panel to develop and implement an outcomes reporting template.'

Recommendation 6

'that TACH explore/consider a grants structure which includes a final payment being conditional on receipt of the project outcomes reporting template.'

Recommendation 7

'that TACH incorporate features to add value and flexibility to the current funding model designed to increase outcomes from literacy projects in line with the long term strategy for the Program.'

Recommendation 8

'that TACH adopt a funding model of an annual grants round, supplementary grants and small grants with the funding thresholds for each of these streams to be determined by TACH (in consultation with the project funding assessment panel) on an annual basis.'

Recommendation 9

'that TACH expands upon its project reporting and acquittal framework to match the required type and amount of effort for Houses with the relative size and risks of the project or activity.'

Recommendation 10

'that TACH review and where appropriate modify the annual allocation of project funding for the remainder of the 10 year program.'

Recommendation 11

'that TACH develop an annual project funding budget allocation for years 11 to 15 to be funded from the interest investment trust fund.' (This would be used to inform the review in recommendation 10).

Recommendation 12

'that TACH develop and implement capacity building initiatives to assist Houses identify and develop potential projects to maximise literacy and other related outcomes in line with the overall strategy for the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program.'

Recommendation 13

'that TACH design and staff a literacy development officer position.'

Recommendation 14

'that TACH determine the roles and functions it will provide within the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program – and to what level.'

Recommendation 15

'that a plan be developed to deliver/provide the TACH roles and functions.'

Recommendation 16

'that TACH develop a communication strategy to engage, consult and inform key stakeholders of the next stage of development of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program – including priorities, participant target groups and new initiatives.'

Recommendation 17

'that TACH develop an overall evaluation strategy for the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program which reflects the long term strategy for the Program.'

Recommendation 18

'that TACH facilitate capacity building activities for Houses involved with the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program to assist these Houses develop a longer term strategy and an action plan for their communities. Such plans should include the long term outcomes to be achieved for the remainder of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program.'

Recommendation 19

'that TACH include marketing and promotion skills and strategies to recruit and engage literacy participants in the capacity building program -including Houses sharing their experiences of what has worked and what hasn't'.

Recommendation 20

'that the TACH literacy capacity building program include consulting with Houses to develop a framework and tools to better understand and record outcomes from literacy initiatives embedded in other projects '.

Recommendation 21

'that TACH explore the possibilities of people expressing interest in literacy skills development through the Literacy Hotline, being given their local Neighbourhood House Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program provider as an option.'

Recommendation 22

'that TACH incorporate further understanding and development of project success factors and suitability of projects into capacity building and information sharing between Houses'

Recommendation 23

'that TACH build the capacity of Houses to measure the outcomes and success (or otherwise) of specific literacy products and software and other resources and tools.'

Recommendation 24

'that information to encourage and support Houses including sufficient funding for project support and administration in addition to funding for contact hours be emphasised in the Program Guidelines and funding/capacity building activities.'

Recommendation 25

'that TACH develop and implement a State Neighbourhood House capacity building program, in consultation with the three regional Neighbourhood House networks.'

Recommendation 26

'that the year 4 evaluation of the Program include a focus on partners and partnership development.'

Recommendation 27

'that TACH development and implement a capacity building plan for the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program, incorporating project staff and tutors, project volunteers and Neighbourhood House Co-ordinators.'

Recommendation 28

'that TACH determine the level of investment to be allocated to capacity building and how this will be funded.'

Recommendation 29

'that the professional develop plan include areas to increase the efficiency of literacy projects such as long term time tabling of activities, calendar development, marketing and staffing.'

Recommendation 30

'that TACH, in consultation with the Houses, develop and implement a narrative framework to assist in recording and reporting outcomes from the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program.'

Recommendation 31

'that TACH determine and implement the necessary capacity building and systems development required to implement a narrative outcome reporting framework.'

Recommendation 32

'that TACH facilitate the sharing of information, resources and experiences as part of structured capacity building processes'. This may include the production of a resources and equipment directory.

2. Introduction

The Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program is delivered through the Neighbourhood House network in Tasmania using funds provided by the Tasmanian Community Fund.

The funding deed requires TACH to undertake an evaluation of the Program every two years. The Program has now been operating for two years and this is the first evaluation to be undertaken.

The Program

The Program is co-ordinated by the Tasmanian Association of Community Houses, through a 10 year funding agreement which provides \$ 1.5 million for program delivery, professional development and administration.

A provision in the grant allows for the services to continue beyond the initial 10 year period. The grant includes the establishment of a perpetual fund in which the interest from the grant funds (the full ten year grant was paid up-front), is to be invested. At the end of the initial 10 year grant period, the interest from the perpetual fund is to be used for the ongoing funding of literacy projects in the future.

This funding model is unusual in that such long term funding with the capacity to create a perpetual funding stream from the grant is not common. Whilst not common, it is very innovative and a model for community sector funding that should be watched with some interest, as potential model for expansion in the future.

One of the consequences of this funding model is for TACH to consciously consider the funding and management of projects during the initial 10 year grant period, financial planning and program management for year 11 and beyond, and the need for transition arrangements at the end of the initial 10 year funding period.

Funded Projects

Three funding rounds have been allocated in the first two years of the Program. Round 1 of project funding was under-subscribed and an additional funding round was organised to allocate these funds.

A summary of projects funded to date is provided below.

Table 1: Projects - Round 1

Neighbourhood House	Project Title	Funded	Funded Amount	Amount requested
Unsuccessful application		No		\$ 5,250
Risdon Vale	<i>Searching for Literacy</i>	Yes	\$ 900.20	
Goodwood	<i>Growing Good Readers at Goodwood</i>	Yes	\$ 14,596	
Unsuccessful application		No		\$ 30,668
Zeehan	<i>Computer Basics and Internet Access</i>	Yes	\$ 3,000	
Dorset	<i>Everyday Literacy in Dorset</i>	Yes	\$ 2,472	
Eastern Shore	<i>Doing It Right</i>	Yes	\$ 7,600	
St Helens	<i>Information Form Education</i>	Yes	\$ 1,474	
Devonport	<i>Reading Time at Playhouse</i>	Yes	\$ 2,250	
Unsuccessful application		No		\$ 500
			\$ 35,890.20	\$ 36,418

Table 2: Projects - Round 2

Neighbourhood House	Project Title	Funded	Funded Amount	Amount requested
Unsuccessful application		No		\$ 4,148
Ravenswood and Northern Suburbs	<i>Literacy Links</i>	Yes	\$ 29,434	
Ulverstone	<i>Basic Computer Savvy, Computer Savvy Seniors, Literacy Using Computers</i>	Yes	\$ 6,502.67	
Unsuccessful application		No		\$ 5,288.25
Zeehan	<i>Let's Get Cooking</i>	Yes	\$ 2,160	
Roseberry	<i>Basic Computer and Internet Skills Training</i>	Yes	\$ 4,800	
Tresca	<i>Window on Words</i>	Yes	\$ 12,435	
Burnie	<i>Getting It Together</i>	Yes	\$ 1,500	
Total			\$ 56,831.67	\$ 9,436.25

Table 3: Projects - Round 3

Neighbourhood House	Project Title	Funded	Funded Amount	Amount requested
Geeveston	<i>Cracking the Code</i>	Yes	\$ 2,012.75	
Fingal	<i>I Can</i>	Yes	\$ 10,000	
Women's Karadi Aboriginal Corporation	<i>Let's Make It Work Together</i>	Yes	\$ 2,500	
Risdon Vale	<i>Real World Learning</i>	Yes	\$ 8,156.50	
Gagebrook	<i>Let's get Cooking</i>	Yes	\$ 2,956.28	
Goodwood	<i>Literature, Puppets and oral Language</i>	Yes	\$ 2,960	
Ravenswood and Northern Suburbs	<i>Literacy Links continued</i>	Yes	\$ 49,288	
Total			\$ 77,873.53	

3. Evaluation Objectives

The main purpose of this evaluation is to assess the initial effectiveness of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program in achieving its aims and to provide recommendations to guide the continuing development and operation of the Program.

The evaluation objectives cover two distinct, though interrelated, areas; one deals with the implementation of the overall Program and its resultant effectiveness; the other deals with the implementation of the individual projects funded by the Program and the outcomes attained by those Projects.

The specific evaluation objectives for each area are as follows:

Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program

The evaluation objectives are:

- *Determine the appropriateness of the Program aims, rationale and assumptions, and policies.*
- *Review management, administrative and technical capacities of Tasmanian Association of Community Houses to deliver the Program*
- *Review the processes and efficiency of operation of the Program*
- *Review the effectiveness of the delivery of the Program*
- *Recommend any improvements to Program design and delivery.*

Funded Projects

The evaluation objectives are:

- *Review how Projects identify local literacy needs*
- *Determine the suitability of Projects for addressing identified literacy needs*
- *Review the capacities of Houses to manage, administer and provide appropriate skills to deliver literacy Projects*
- *Review the processes and efficiency of operation of Projects*
- *Review the literacy and other outcomes from the delivery of Projects*
- *Identify gaps in local capacities and resources*
- *Recommend any improvements to the design, delivery and data collection of Projects.*

4. Methodology

The evaluation was undertaken using the following stages:

Stage 1: Project Plan

A draft project plan was developed, based on the evaluation brief provided by TACH and the objectives of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program.

This was finalised in discussion with the TACH Executive Officer and the TACH Project Officer and informed by a preliminary review of program documentation provided by TACH.

Stage 2: Project Establishment and Preparation

Key program files and documentation were identified in consultation with TACH and analysed against the evaluation objectives. These were:

Resources for applicants/potential applicants, including:

- ❖ Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Resource Kit
- ❖ Funding Guidelines
- ❖ Funding Application forms
- ❖ Sample Funding Application form guides
- ❖ Summaries of previous funding round outcomes
- ❖ Feedback and observations from the Assessment Panel
- ❖ Useful contacts
- ❖ Frequently Asked Questions
- ❖ Feedback Form

Administration and Records, including:

- ❖ TACH/Tasmanian Community Fund Deed of Grant
- ❖ TACH/House Project Funding Agreement
- ❖ TACH Progress Reports to the Tasmanian Community Fund
- ❖ TACH Annual Reports to the Tasmanian Community Fund
- ❖ Completed Funding Applications from each funding round
- ❖ Project reports from completed projects
- ❖ Stakeholder lists and contact details

Observations resulting from the analysis of these documents are included in the findings detailed in the body of this report. The above list of documents, which include information such as feedback and observations of the assessment panel, illustrate the quality, depth and transparency of TACH's approach to the Program.

The TACH web site provides a number of reference materials and links to assist Houses in the development projects, which include:

- ❖ Tasmanian Adult Literacy Action Plan
- ❖ Map of Tasmanian Literacy Co-ordinator locations
- ❖ Australian Core Skills Framework
- ❖ Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey
- ❖ Community Adult Language, Literacy and Numeracy Provision in Australia
- ❖ Health Literacy Fact Sheets
- ❖ TACH Conference presentation notes on Adult Literacy - Hugh Fielding
- ❖ TACH Conference presentation notes on Adult Literacy - Dr Terry Whitebeach
- ❖ Multi literacies – literacy and community learning

This material provides great insight into the context, structure and the strategic direction to address adult literacy needs in Australia.

This stage of the evaluation also involved the selection of the seven Neighbourhood Houses for intensive interviews in the consultation stage of the evaluation.

Evaluation tools including customised surveys for every Neighbourhood House and customised interview questions for the range of stakeholders who were engaged on the face-to-face consultation process were developed. A copy of these materials is included as Appendix 1.

Stage 3: Evaluation and consultation

The evaluation involved the following stakeholder engagement:

- ❖ a written questionnaire sent to every Neighbourhood House – customised based on their involvement in the Program. A copy of these questionnaires is provided as Appendix 2.
- ❖ intensive interviews with the seven Houses involved in the application for and/or delivery of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities projects. The interviews were designed to further explore the issues and implications of their project approach, processes, administration and skills and to discuss their experience of the overall Program's administration and effectiveness.

- ❖ consultation with Houses around Tasmania through facilitated discussion at the three TACH Regional House network meetings
- ❖ interviews with two of the independent members of the funded projects assessment panel
- ❖ an interview with the Executive Officer of the Tasmanian Community Fund
- ❖ interviews with three project participants from one of the projects. (All Houses who were interviewed individually and had delivered projects were asked if they had participants willing to participate in the evaluation. One House was able to get three participants prepared to be involved in this process.)
- ❖ interviews with the TACH Executive Officer and the TACH Project Officer
- ❖ validation meetings to seek reaction to observations from the consultation process were undertaken with two of the TACH Regional House network meetings.

Stage 4: Project reporting and presentation

A draft evaluation report was prepared and finalised following discussion with TACH.

Presentations of the final report to the TACH Board and the Tasmanian Community Fund are proposed.

5. Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program Findings

5.1 Overview

The Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program provides an extraordinary opportunity for TACH and each individual Neighbourhood House. It is very rare to find a program funded for 10 years under a model which also generates an investment to fund projects and activity beyond that period.

TACH and the Neighbourhood Houses receiving project funding have a responsibility to maximise the outcomes of the Tasmanian Community Fund funding for the 10 year grant period and beyond.

The key finding of the evaluation, both at a Program level and at a Funded Projects level, is that the initial thinking, scope and outlook of the literacy activities is currently short term, that is, thinking about projects and planning activities occurs on an annual basis for the year ahead. While the results for the Program have been positive to date, the Program could maximise its outcomes over the full life of the grant and beyond, by undertaking longer term strategic thinking and planning.

It is important to note that TACH has identified the need to further invest in building the capacity of Neighbourhood House management and project staff. To this end TACH has already negotiated with the Tasmanian Community Fund to establish a capacity building component for the Program over the longer term. This initiative is appropriate, however, the longer term, strategic thinking required to identify the change to literacy levels sought by the Program over the next 10 years and to plan for the achievement of these results needs to occur now. Such thinking would consider issues such as:

- ♦ strategic financial planning and funding allocation over the remainder of the 10 year grant period
- ♦ financial planning beyond the 10 year funding agreement
- ♦ development and dissemination of resources
- ♦ development of policies and practices
- ♦ measuring, recording and reporting of outcomes
- ♦ clarifying and developing the TACH roles and functions to facilitate and share information and skills between Houses
- ♦ professional development for each House in strategic thinking and long term planning - that may have a broader application than just the literacy program

- ♦ staged capacity building regarding the literacy program with Neighbourhood House management and project staff
- ♦ community development to support recruitment of individuals and families to participate in projects
- ♦ clarifying the targeted literacy support that TACH and the Houses can best deliver
- ♦ literacy partnerships between Houses, other literacy providers and the community
- ♦ program and project evaluation.

This evaluation also found that TACH and the Neighbourhood House network is providing a community based response to literacy that does not appear to be being delivered by other literacy providers. This is largely due to the effective manner in which Houses engage vulnerable people within their communities and to the nature and style of the literacy projects and activities being offered.

Given that the assumptions and rationale which informed TACH's funding application to the Tasmanian Community Fund have been well validated through the experience of Program delivery, TACH is now well placed to:

- ♦ clarify the literacy focus it wishes to concentrate on
- ♦ undertake effective planning to maximise the results from Tasmanian Community Fund grant – including the development of longer term goals and objectives for the remainder of funding period and beyond
- ♦ build a base of experience and a track record which will increase the likelihood of TACH and the Neighbourhood Houses becoming a significant literacy service provider in vulnerable communities around Tasmania
- ♦ develop a reputation, credibility and achievements which position TACH and the Neighbourhood House network for future funding opportunities
- ♦ use this opportunity to identify other potential areas where TACH and the Neighbourhood House network can access funding and work together to achieve significant and long term change/outcomes within the community.

Recommendation 1

'that TACH develop a strategy and action plan for the remainder of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program grant period which identifies the long term change and outcomes to be achieved with the funding and details of how this will occur.'

5.2 Determine the appropriateness of the program aims, rationale and assumptions, and policies

The aims of the Program are for Neighbourhood Houses to offer support for a person's literacy development through two broad approaches. These are:

- 1. Provide a non-threatening entry for people through practical projects that seamlessly build literacy into the process.*
- 2. Target support for people who have already identified or begun addressing their literacy needs.*

The primary rationale and assumptions behind these aims are that Neighbourhood Houses provide a readily accessible community venue which is seen to provide a mix of practical courses and activities to the communities they serve. In this way they provide a credible and soft entry into literacy projects, especially for people who prefer to hide or disguise their low literacy skills.

These assumptions proved to be correct. Neighbourhood Houses are located in communities where vulnerable people live - including people with limited literacy skills. The culture, values and community connections of Neighbourhood Houses mean these organisations are ideally placed to deliver a program designed to engage people with low literacy skills at a local community level.

Many people with limited literacy skills are often drawn to Neighbourhood Houses to undertake personal business activities with unavoidable literacy components, for example, filling out Centrelink forms; applying for work; or applying for and managing a loan. Others were engaged through activities of daily living, such as cooking, reading to their children, or using on-line shopping.

Neighbourhood Houses approach the delivery of such programs from a holistic perspective – looking at literacy in the context of the whole life of the individual and within their family situation. This means, for example, taking into account issues such as confidence and self-esteem; health and wellbeing; parental relationships with children; access to education and employment; applying literacy in areas of specific interest and need; and addressing barriers to participation. Importantly, this means not looking at developing literacy skills in isolation from the life circumstances of the learner and their practical use of literacy.

Feedback from the Houses confirmed that:

- many people involved with Neighbourhood Houses around the State have low levels of literacy
- many people with low levels of literacy skills lack confidence and are sensitive to ridicule as a result of their experience of stigma by the community

- Neighbourhood Houses provide an entry point for community based literacy programs for people with low confidence and self esteem

While these observations are consistent with the Program's original assumptions, building relationships with potential participants and actually recruiting and engaging them in literacy projects proved a challenge. This is described in more detail later in the report.

Examples of the types of feedback provided to support this finding include:

- in response to the survey question 'what role do you think Neighbourhood Houses should play in improving literacy skills in your community' one House responded '*I think we should play a big role, as the community feels comfortable in coming here*'
- another House commented, '*a great opportunity for smaller projects on a localised level. The possibilities are enormous for grassroots alternatives to the education system*'

5.3 Review management, administrative and technical capacities of Tasmanian Association of Community Houses to deliver the Program

TACH's primary management, administrative and technical capacities are concerned with the applications and assessment process for Funded Projects and outcome measurement and reporting.

Application and assessment process

TACH has called for submissions for literacy projects from Neighbourhood Houses each year of the Program. Houses are provided with a Funding Guidelines and Application Pack via the web site. Applications can be hand written or typed and lodged by mail or e-mail. Typed applications sighted in the evaluation were easier to read and completion of the forms in this manner is to be encouraged, (some of the hand written applications were more difficult to read).

Applications are provided to an independent assessment panel who recommend funded projects to the TACH Board. The TACH Executive Officer and the TACH Project Officer attend the meeting of the assessment panel and are available to provide additional information where appropriate.

The Tasmanian Community Fund was invited to provide a member for the funding assessment panel, and this occurred for the first two funding rounds. On further consideration and advice from Crown Law the Tasmanian Community Fund recognised a potential conflict should a funding decision be challenged and the funding body was seen to be part of the decision making process. The Tasmanian Community Fund no longer provides a member of the funding assessment panel.

Part of the Tasmanian Community Fund's interest in providing a representative for the first two funding rounds was to obtain confidence in the program and the funding process – given that the Fund had not previously funded any program of a similar size and funding period.

The level of applications in the first round of funding was surprisingly low. This was in part due to the newness of the Program. Houses reported a greater understanding of the Program now, and an increased interest in seeking funds from the Program in the future.

Initially some Houses chose not to apply for funding. Some made this choice because they already had literacy funding from another source and the TACH view was that the Houses should not also seek funding from this Program. This view has now changed and Houses are able to apply for funding from the Program either to complement other funded programs or for new or additional projects.

Generally the Neighbourhood Houses, TACH staff and the assessment panel all reported satisfaction with the application and assessment process.

Houses indicated that the requirements of preparing their funding submissions were not too onerous, and that there has been some evolution and refinement to the funding process since it started.

The current application process was supported by one House that commented: *'I found it to be a simple process unlike many grant applications. I would not change anything; it works well for me as it is. Short and simple, didn't take a huge amount of time to apply.'*

Another House indicated that *'TACH could teach some funding bodies a lesson in how to make the application process easy to use'*, going on to say *'Houses are always busy and time is precious. The time spent in preparing submissions is very consuming and this often acts as a deterrent in applying for grants. The TACH Literacy grants were easy to apply for and did not take up precious time.'*

Timing of the application process was noted as an issue with one House, indicating it is a *'busy time of year for us in September/October.'*

The Program's funding guidelines received consistently positive comment by the Houses and the two assessment panel members interviewed. One House did however comment, the funding guidelines were *'very good, although we neglected to fully note it was for adults only.'*

Representatives of the assessment panel expressed a desire to clarify aspects of applications direct with applicants where information in the application was not clear - rather than the alternative of rejecting what may be a positive project. Ideally clarification would be via direct personal contact and occur during the panel's assessment meeting - rather than requiring a second meeting. Suggestions were that there may be opportunities to align the assessment panel meeting with gatherings of

Houses such as conferences or state meetings or to use telephone contact as an alternative to face to face contact.

Houses were interested in seeing a report on the outcomes of funding rounds so the process was transparent and so that they had the opportunity to learn from the size, type and scope of applications being approved. Houses also suggested that examples of previously successful applications/projects would be useful in the application pack.

Details of successful funding applications have been provided by TACH for every funding round. In addition, the assessment panel produce a summary which includes overall observations regarding the applications in general. This information is invaluable in guiding future funding applications.

This information has also been published on the website and in the TACH newsletter. Information on unsuccessful applications is not published in any identifiable format, however the assessment panel provide de-identified feedback for every funding round. Some Houses may not be aware of this information and/or may not have accessed it.

The assessment panels for all rounds of funding have consisted of members independent of the Neighbourhood Houses. This process and structure appears to have worked well.

The two assessment panel members interviewed valued the insight provided by the participation of the TACH officers. Nonetheless, maintaining the independence of the assessment process is important and systems required dealing with probity issues must be in place.

The assessment panel expressed interest in seeing copies of final reports to get a sense of what projects have worked well. As an alternative such information may be presented by the TACH officers. This would reduce any additional reading required of the assessment panel to undertake.

The selection criteria for grants also provide an opportunity to target specific literacy outcomes. This may include strategic priorities identified and agreed by the Houses and TACH (for example, parents reading to children or multiple Houses working together on joint projects) or more concerted targeting of literacy activity specified in the funding deed with the Tasmanian Community Fund, for example, information technology; health; documentation; prose; numeracy; and problem solving. These funding deed targets are detailed in the Funding Guidelines and Application Form, however, there appeared to be low awareness of these at a House and project level and scope to further develop project alignment with them in the future. This might include prioritising or designating specific funds to some of these areas in some or all funding rounds. A more strategic approach to the Program would be expected to guide these priorities.

The Tasmanian Community Fund provided feedback to the evaluation indicating their complete satisfaction with the program and the performance of TACH. Further, the Fund indicated the level and type of reporting and communication with TACH had exceeded their expectations and their experience with TACH and the Program had provided such

a level of confidence and satisfaction that the Fund would be prepared to consider a similar funding model for other longer term grants and substantial programs in the future.

Given the advice from Crown Law and the current level of satisfaction regarding the Program by the Tasmanian Community Fund, there evaluation is not recommending involvement in the project assessment process by the Fund.

Recommendation 2

'that a process be developed to enable the assessment panel to engage with applicants where additional or clarifying information is required'.

Recommendation 3

'that examples of funded and/or completed projects be provided to all Neighbourhood Houses with the funding application pack for each funding round'.

Recommendation 4

'that the TACH Executive Officer and the TACH Project Officer provide input as required and appropriate to the discussion section of the assessment panel meeting and leave the meeting for the decision-making part of the meeting.'

Measuring outcomes and reporting

Given the major focus of the Program as predominantly a soft entry program designed to engage people with low literacy skills, unlikely to participate in more structured literacy programs, the task of recording and measuring outcomes is quite a challenge.

In more main stream literacy programs, recognised standard entry and exist assessment processes are common. In the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program, many of the outcomes such as confidence; self-esteem; participation and engagement; and family involvement are subjective and relate to the quality of life of participants and their families. This means that standard literacy assessment processes are less able to be applied to people wary of any formal learning or official processes. They are arguably also less appropriate as the outcomes sought are far broader than just literacy.

The nature of many of the projects delivered by the Houses do not really lend themselves to formal literacy assessment as literacy skills are embedded in the activity – for example, a cooking project, filling out forms or looking for a job, and the literacy intervention can be very specific and short term.

While the majority of the projects are of a soft entry nature, there are some Houses that have provided overt literacy tutoring. In most cases even these participants are at a

level below that where formal literacy assessment would be relevant or appropriate, and the duration of the literacy intervention by the House is such that in many cases it may not be long enough to see a marked difference in skills.

In many of these cases however, there is significant change in the health behaviours of the participant and their family (for example preparation of more nutritious meals); the confidence and self-esteem of the participant; and/or extension to the participant's support network as a result of their participation. There are also examples where there have been employment, training and other personal outcomes as a direct result from the engagement in the Program. While these outcomes may not be of a pure literacy nature, they are related to the literacy activity and the Program has been the catalyst for these wider individual, family and community benefits.

In summary, the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program cannot usefully employ formal literacy assessment for many of its projects. This is not to suggest that the outcomes from the Program should not be captured and that TACH and the Houses providing the Program should not be accountable for obtaining results from the funding.

A mechanism to capture and record outcomes (including appropriate literacy outcomes) is needed. A narrative process that uses a template to tell the story of a participant may be a useful method. Such a template could be designed in a way that can be readily edited into case studies which can be added to the TACH web site. This offers both a way of accounting for results, and also provides a capacity building and information sharing process between Houses.

Recommendation 5

'that TACH work with the Houses receiving Everyday Literacy for Local Communities funding and the project assessment panel to develop and implement an outcomes reporting template.'

The outcomes reporting template may include a narrative or story-telling component and include personal and other outcomes in addition to the direct literacy outcomes. The reporting template should be suitable for TACH to adapt and include on their web site and/or distribute to other Houses.

It is not always easy to obtain the required timely and complete reports on projects, and there are some examples of this in the Program to date. If the intention is to increase the level of reporting to include a more narrative description of the participant's literacy and other personal outcomes, then some incentives may be required to assist achieve this. For example, consideration could be given to options such as the final grant payment being payed upon receipt of the project report (for example, a \$ amount or a % - whichever is most appropriate) being a condition of grant.

Recommendation 6

'that TACH explore/consider a grants structure which includes a final payment being conditional on receipt of the project outcomes reporting template.'

5.4 Review the processes and efficiency of operation of the Program

Reviewing the processes and efficiency of the operation of the Program focused on four key areas

- Grants options
- Reporting and acquittals
- Financial planning for the balance of the Program
- Capacity building.

Grant options

At this stage, the funding allocation for the Program enables some larger projects and a range of smaller projects to be funded.

- Larger projects are likely to be characterised by: longer duration; more intensity and/or complexity; greater involvement of staff, volunteers and tutors; longer and higher level literacy interventions; partnerships with other Houses and other organisations; greater resource inputs; more 1:1 participant engagement; involvement of staff with more specific literacy skills.
- Smaller projects are more likely to be characterised by: short duration very specific topics and content – taster activities; group work and activities; soft entry projects which meet participant needs and interests and with embedded literacy content and support; projects which recruit and engage participants as an entry point that, for some, may lead to greater involvement in other higher level and more specific literacy activities; involvement of a range of staff and volunteers.

Feedback from the Houses endorsed the continued funding of both larger and smaller project grants – recognising that for larger grants more substantial assessment, reporting and acquittal processes may be required.

Comments also suggested that the annual funding process meant that there could be a long period between the completion of a small project and the opportunity to apply for funding from the next funding round.

Houses also made reference to the 'TACH Get Healthy' grants program where up to \$ 500 was accessed for smaller projects on a six month cycle through a simple

application process. The 'TACH Get Healthy' grants received high praise and there was interest in developing a similar capacity within the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program.

The evaluation identified a number of opportunities for the grants model to maximise outcomes from the Program, and build on the success of projects offered by Houses and/or groups of Houses. These include:

- extending successful projects
- funding projects for more than one year
- encouraging Houses to apply for collaborative projects with other Houses or external partners
- making greater use of the current provision for core funding with additional add-on funding, if funds become available, for example, a House may apply for a core project and indicate that if additional funds were available, they would propose a larger project with additional activities. Take-up of this option appears to be low, (7 of the 25 applications in the first 3 funding rounds requested value-adding funds), so additional capacity building and promotion of this option should be considered.

It is important to note that all the above points have the capacity to provide greater job security to project staff and assist Houses retain staff involved in their literacy activities.

Consideration also needs to be given to the situation where there are unallocated funds at the end of a funding round.

There are a number of options of how unspent funds may be used. These include:

- additional funding rounds
- carry the funds forward to allocations in future year
- fund applications for project extensions
- 'one off' small grant offers – for example, up to say \$ 2,000 for major equipment items to support literacy projects such as lap top computers or smart boards – along the lines of the small grants program
- re-allocating funds to other important aspects of the program such as capacity building.
- It is important that any grants model provides a level of certainty to funded projects while building in a flexible response to funded project needs and funding availability. Again the decisions in this regard should be informed by the overall strategy developed for the Program.

Decisions on how these unspent funds are allocated need to be considered within the overall strategy for the Program and the impact on the Program Budget– for example, committing funds in advance for more than one year will have an impact on subsequent budgets if future funding rounds are oversubscribed. Any such consequences need to be thought through prior to making a funding commitment.

Recommendation 7

'that TACH incorporate features to add value and flexibility to the current funding model designed to increase outcomes from literacy projects in line with the long term strategy for the Program.'

Recommendation 8

'that TACH adopt a funding model of an annual grants round, supplementary grants and small grants with the funding thresholds for each of these streams to be determined by TACH (in consultation with the project funding assessment panel) on an annual basis.'

The strategic objectives of the Program and the practical advantages of flexible funding suggest that the Program might be best served by layered grant options.

The following grants model provides a brief outline of how a layer grants might operate:

Table 4: Grant Options

Grant Type	Description	Inclusions
Annual Project Grants	This category would allocate funding through an annual funding round. The maximum amount that Houses could apply for would be set by TACH on an annual basis. It is anticipated that the majority of available funding would be allocated in this funding round by the funding assessment panel.	Consideration of amounts up to \$ 30,000 is recommended Smaller projects would also be funded in this process May consider substantial projects over multiple years

Table 4: Grant Options continued

Grant Type	Description	Inclusions
Small Grants	<p>Small grants would be made available to all Houses each year. TACH would determine the amount allocated for each House through the small grants program on an annual basis.</p> <p>A simple application form would be used – with automatic approval for items on the list. Some items on the list may be supplied by TACH. Others may be purchased by the Houses.</p> <p>A suggested process would be the (a) Houses obtaining approval from TACH for the item to be obtained through the application form process, (b) Houses purchasing the agreed item, and then (c) Houses being reimbursed on production of the receipt. Such a process would then mean that that grants acquittal processes would not be required.</p> <p>The outcome of this process would be reported to the Funding Assessment Panel – however, their consideration of these applications would not be required.</p>	<p>Houses would select items from an approved small grants purchase list produced and maintained by TACH. The types of items on the list would include:</p> <p>Books and Games, for example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Books Games Children’s books Scrabble boards and games <p>Computer software and technology, for example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drivers licence – computer – learn to type software Literacy focussed videos ‘I can’ technology <p>Training and development, for example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short courses and skill development activities for volunteers and staff – for example recognised literacy tutoring certificate courses

Table 4: Grant Options continued

Grant Type	Description	Inclusions
Supplementary Grants	<p>In the event that there were unallocated funds from the Annual Grants a process to fund smaller projects and equipment would occur approximately 6 months after the Annual Grants round.</p> <p>Assuming the funding available was less than a figure determined by the TACH Board (for example 25% of the annual allocation), this funding process would be conducted and assessed by TACH. In the event that the funding available was greater than the % of the annual allocation determined by the Board, then an assessment panel would be appointed to ensure additional and external input was involved in distributing this larger amount of funding.</p>	<p>The maximum amount that Houses could apply for would be set by TACH on an annual basis, with the maximum amount likely to be around \$ 3,000.</p> <p>This funding may also be used for literacy related equipment, furniture and resources. TACH may publish a list to assist Houses identify potential items for Houses to consider. Examples may include:</p> <p>Equipment</p> <p>Equipment for specific literacy projects (such as cooking, health literacy or computers)</p> <p>Smart boards</p> <p>Lap tops</p> <p>Furniture</p> <p>Book cases</p> <p>Consideration may also be given to Houses seeking part funding for these items and projects, where they have access to other funds.</p>

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Reporting and acquittals

Given the varying characteristics of the different grants proposed above, consideration should be given to different reporting and acquittal requirements for different levels of funding.

The reporting and acquittal requirements need to be determined based on the level of risk for TACH and the Tasmanian Community Fund. As a general principle, the greater the level of funding, the more interested TACH should be in substantiation of what has been delivered and what has been achieved. The reporting and acquittal processes should be developed accordingly. In part, this is suggesting that in most cases the small grants and supplementary grants proposed are relatively low risk for TACH and the reporting and acquittal processes should be simple and not onerous for the Houses involved.

Some consideration should also be given to reporting on the inputs to the project. This would mean recording information such as the number of participant hours in structured projects. That is, if a House provided a health literacy project involving 3 hour weekly sessions for 11 participants over an 10 week period, then the project report may require the number of participant hours, in this case 330 hours (assuming full attendance), to be included.

Recommendation 9

'that TACH expands upon its project reporting and acquittal framework to match the required type and amount of effort for Houses with the relative size and risks of the project or activity.'

Financial planning for the balance of the Program

The current budgeting process for projects for the 10 year grant period has been done on a linear basis, that is, an allocation of \$ 100,000 plus 3% each year.

Given the size, scale, duration and evolution of the program within the Neighbourhood House network, along with the ongoing interest investment trust fund associated with the fund, an alternative logic to this funding allocation warrants consideration.

Some of the factors for consideration include:

- awareness, understanding and interest in the program in Houses is currently moving from an establishment phase to one where there is a track record of achievement and Houses, both those who have been funded and those who haven't, are seeing the possibilities of the program (One House commented, 'we

will try to access the fund a bit more regularly, as we now have a number of ideas for literacy development that we did not think about before.)

- Houses that have previously accessed literacy funds from other sources are now seeing this program as an option for them (Some of these projects are at the end of their other funding, while others are looking at applying for additional complementary activities through the TACH grants.)
- bringing forward some of the capacity building funding allocated for literacy project staff and House co-ordinators in the later years of the Program to maximise the benefit of these initiatives much earlier
- planning for the reduction in funding allocation from the interest investment trust fund from year 11

All of these factors (and others) suggest that an alternative funding allocation model could be considered. Such a model may result in a funding allocation greater than \$ 100,000 per year in some years and funding of less than \$ 100,000 in others. Reducing the level of project funding in the later years of the Program may aid the transition to the lower level of funding that is likely to be available in year 11 and beyond.

From a strategic perspective, Houses may also need to look at areas such as recruiting and developing volunteer literacy staff in order to sustain the desirable levels of literacy activity as the funding reduces toward the end of the initial 10 years of the program.

Recommendation 10

'that TACH review and where appropriate modify the annual allocation of project funding for the remainder of the 10 year program.'

Recommendation 11

'that TACH develop an annual project funding budget allocation for years 11 to 15 to be funded from the interest investment trust fund.' (This would be used to inform the review in recommendation 10).

Capacity building to identify and develop project ideas

One House that applied for funding and was unsuccessful reported that the reason they had difficulty in preparing their funding submission was *'more to do with difficulties in identifying suitable activities'*. To the question *'on reflection what additional types of support and assistance would have helped the funding process'*, their response was *'would need much more intensive input and assistance with the process of working through what was the best way for us to go'*. The information they indicated they would

like to see provided to all Houses as part of the application process include - *'it would be good to see a snapshot of what was successful. If interested in a specific one, would be good to be able to get further information about what was involved, costs and so on, and avoid duplication of effort'*.

One House indicated it would be good *'seeing some case studies of other programs that have been run elsewhere'*. While another House suggested, *'details of funding provided and to whom and details about projects and the House's reported outcomes, would be useful. Another House commented, 'it is always interesting to see who was successful, I don't need to know who wasn't. Also found it handy knowing what others were working on.'* As mentioned earlier in this report, some of the information being requested here is already available from TACH and does not appear to be being accessed by all Houses.

Mechanisms to disseminate this information are already in place, albeit limited information due to the newness of the Program, and the type and amount of information available is expected to increase significantly as the Program continues to grow and mature.

Co-ordinated effort in the areas of capacity building and Program/project development is an important investment in the next stage of the Program. This is unlikely to occur to level required to realise the potential of the Program without a dedicated TACH staff member in this role.

This evaluation therefore proposed that a Literacy Development Officer position be designed and staffed. It is envisaged that this would be funded from the capacity building allocation of the grant. This position may not be required to the same level for the 10 years of the Program and beyond. The capacity building funding therefore may be allocated to resource the necessary days, in the short and medium term (which would be envisaged as 2 or 3 per week) to fast track capacity building initiatives. The number of days may then be reduced over time as the capacity of the House network is built.

Recommendation 12

'that TACH develop and implement capacity building initiatives to assist Houses identify and develop potential projects to maximise literacy and other related outcomes in line with the overall strategy for the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program.'

Recommendation 13

'that TACH design and staff a literacy development officer position.'

5.5 Review the effectiveness of delivery of the Program

The feedback from Houses in regard to the role of TACH in the funding process was that TACH was there to assist with their funding request and that the funding process was generally simple and not onerous.

Not surprisingly, in the establishment phase TACH appear to have focussed on designing and implementing the funding process. This include paying attention to probity - keeping a degree of objectivity and distance so as not to compromise the funding process, while being as supportive and encouraging as possible for all Houses.

Now that this establishment phase is complete, the challenge for TACH is to develop the long term strategy for the Program and identify the capacity building initiatives to optimise the outcomes to be achieved by the end of the 10 year Program.

This raises questions like, 'what should the role of TACH be and how should TACH resource their roles and functions in the Program?' That is, what Everyday Literacy for Local Communities staff should TACH employ and what should they do?

Options that TACH may consider include:

Planning, strategic thinking and strategy development

- ❖ ongoing program development, long term strategy development and planning
- ❖ determining to what extent should there be any sort of moderation, where Houses are using the same and/or consistent materials
- ❖ building the capacity of Houses to think and act startegically

Organisational development and capacity building

- ❖ assisting Houses with funding applications
- ❖ assisting and supporting Houses to recruit, develop and retain volunteer tutors and literacy project officers

Facilitation and co-ordination

- ❖ a facilitation and co-ordination role for capacity building
- ❖ facilitating the sharing of ideas, information and skills between Houses such as working with Houses to improve recruitment and engagement of participants in literacy projects

Program development, recording and reporting

- ❖ collecting, recording and disseminating outcome information
- ❖ developing a bank of outcome records to substantiate the value and contribution of the Program

- ❖ evaluation and review – including the opportunity now to identify key evaluation questions or areas for the life of the Program – noting the developmental nature of the evaluation and the potential to add additional value by taking a longer term view of the evaluation structure and content – for example, if there is an agenda of increasing the amount and sophistication of literacy assessment how can this be evaluated or, with the predominant focus on soft entry, informal, life skill based practical literacy application and the like, how can the measurement and reporting processes continually be developed to build a stronger case to keep allocating resources to this area in the future
- ❖ liaison with funding body

Resource development and management

- ❖ resource development and dissemination
- ❖ a resource bank and clearing house type role
- ❖ resource research – such as new and different products

Policy development

- ❖ policy development – including areas such as age limits and any prescription of project development and delivery by Houses including areas such as linking projects to the core skills framework. State-wide policies may also be appropriate in areas such as security and supervision regarding materials participants are able to access on the web
- ❖ sorting intellectual property issues – including areas such as intellectual property issues when literacy staff and tutors develop new materials and resources in their own time

Funding and resource acquisition

- ❖ tender writing and gathering additional resources to add value to the current Program and position for future funding opportunities

The above list identifies some potential TACH roles where knowledge and understanding of adult literacy is advantageous. It also highlights however, that a significant amount of the potential role of TACH is one of community and organisational development and this skill set must feature in the selection of any staff involved in supporting the Program.

There may also be options of outsourcing some of these roles to an external organisation or contractor. While this may be appropriate in the short term, it would be desirable for TACH to provide the majority of these roles and functions internally – perhaps with some outsourced supplementation in specialist areas. For example, a staff member might look after convening and facilitating processes and a content specialist might be brought in for specific planning, capacity building and strategic thinking activities.

The other consideration is state-wide versus regional roles and locations of TACH staff. One State based staff member located in the TACH office is preferable, as this offers aids management through the person being in the TACH office and also provides greater capacity to provide build a centralised bank of expertise and support.

One House however suggested, *'a paid tutor throughout the regional areas (North West, North, South East, South West regions), where all Houses would have access to a full-time tutor employed by TACH. They would then be utilised either throughout the State as required or engaged in specific Houses area for a set time'*. While this may be a useful model to trial, it is likely to be cost prohibitive within the funding currently available.

This is more a project level staffing that is being described rather than the more central TACH functions. From a project perspective, there may be an option of employing specialist literacy tutors that are shared across multiple Houses for more intensive literacy skill development work.

The co-ordination, travel and logistics of such a proposal would need to be well thought through and care would be needed to ensure this did not significantly deplete the budget at the expense of creative and innovative local projects aimed more at soft entry participants. Any such arrangements would need to be documented between the relevant Houses to ensure partnerships were built on solid foundations and formalised agreements.

Whilst saying this, the idea deserves further consideration as partnerships across Houses can assist build a bank of expertise; create consistency in service delivery and provide additional staff hours which add stability and reduce staff turnover.

Trials could be undertaken to assess the cost/benefits of any of the options outlined above.

Recommendation 14

'that TACH determine the roles and functions it will provide within the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program – and to what level.'

Recommendation 15

'that a plan be developed to deliver/provide the TACH roles and functions.'

TACH also needs to lead the culture and approach to literacy project delivery across the Neighbourhood House network. This means, for example, not only understanding how the Program is seen by Houses and others, it is about having a view on strengths the House network offers in the overall delivery of community based literacy initiatives.

This means asking questions like, how is the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program seen by TACH and the Houses? Is it a State Program with local initiatives OR local projects meeting local needs – or is it be both?

Answering these questions will assist TACH make decisions in regard to the staff required and what their roles and functions might be.

The evaluation has reaffirmed that Neighbourhood Houses are well positioned to engage people who are socially isolated and with limited literacy skills. The evaluation has also highlighted that many of the participants involved in the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities projects are starting from a very low base and are not ready for overt literacy tutoring and the more formal approaches offered by mainstream literacy programs. In fact examples were cited where other literacy providers were referring participants who were struggling with their programs to Neighbourhood House literacy projects funded under this Program.

The evaluation has suggested that the Program is also delivering a substantial amount of outcomes which are meeting other participant needs in areas such as personal, employment, education, and life skills. This is another illustration of the holistic approach Houses have when working with people and in terms of outcomes some of what has been achieved may seem negligible to an outsider but arguably can be life changing for some people and their families and cannot be under-estimated in the context of the circumstances and capacity of the participants.

The evaluator believes the outcomes being achieved are valid and it is appropriate that the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities target and work with the participant demographic that is unlikely to engage with and/or 'succeed' in other more formal and mainstream literacy programs.

Making decisions about focus and targets will also assist in determining issues such as using (or not using) the core skills framework, or the role of formally assessing (or not assessing) the literacy levels of participants upon entry and exit of projects.

This should continue to be communicated to key stakeholders so that their expectations are aligned to the priorities and approach of the Program.

Recommendation 16

'that TACH develop a communication strategy to engage, consult and inform key stakeholders of the next stage of development of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program – including priorities, participant target groups and new initiatives.'

It should be recognised that some projects and participants will focus on overt literacy tutoring and potentially be capable of participating in more mainstream literacy programs. Where participants prefer to engage with a House and the House has the capacity to provide a project and/or tutoring that meets their needs, then the Program should be able to deliver this.

TACH has scheduled evaluations for the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program every two years during the life of the Program. These evaluations need to reflect the long term strategy of the Program and reflect the evolution of the Program along with specific priorities or different stages of development during the 10 years. There have already been discussions for example, that the next evaluation should include a focus on partnerships and other stakeholders.

When the long term strategy for the Program is developed, some thought should be given to what that means from an evaluation perspective and some planning for a longer term evaluation framework and objectives can be determined at that stage.

Recommendation 17

'that TACH develop an overall evaluation strategy for the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program which reflects the long term strategy for the Program.'

5.6 Recommend any improvements to Program design and delivery

These recommendations are included in the body of the report.

6. Funded Projects Findings

6.1 Overview

The evaluation of projects, as with the Program, has identified the need to establish strategic, long term literacy objectives at an individual House level.

The initial two years of the Program has been very successful in establishing the Program and encouraging and supporting individual Houses to identify and respond to local literacy needs through projects at a local level. A Program funding process and guidelines have been developed and implemented which are working well and are not unnecessarily onerous on the Houses seeking funding.

It should also be noted that the establishment and introduction of such a large program, which aims to make a significant different to the lives of large numbers of people and their families over an initial 10 year period, has involved managing change and assisting Houses to understand the intent of the Program and the potential outcomes it may achieve.

This process has been effective.

Now that the Program has been established and Houses have both an understanding of the Program and experience in delivering projects, the next stage is to determine the longer term strategy for the Program at an individual House level. That is, asking: What difference does each House aim to achieve in the area of literacy outcomes (and other related personal and life skill outcomes), for participants and their families over the 10 years of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program?

Given the long term and complex nature of responding to this question, it is suggested that TACH would need to assist Houses with this process.

Once established, this longer term strategy would then become a major reference point for decision making by each House participating in the Program. For example, when a House is exploring ideas for projects, asking the question, how does this fit our strategy and how will this maximise our desired outcomes?

Recommendation 18

'that TACH facilitate capacity building activities for Houses involved with the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program to assist these Houses develop a longer term strategy and an action plan for their communities. Such plans should include the long term outcomes to be achieved for the remainder of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program.'

6.2 Review how Projects identify local literacy needs

Some Houses promoted their projects as activities for participants to improve their reading and writing skills; other Houses promoted the content area (cooking, safety in the home, using e-bay, and so on) and were silent on or understated, the literacy aspect of the project.

The content areas of projects were predominantly based on the type of support participants in the House were requesting, such as assistance to fill in forms, or based on the working knowledge the staff have in regard to the communities they serve. The evaluation did not reveal any structured needs assessment process leading to the content and design of any specific project.

Some Houses however, did indicate they spoke with services like the library, LINC and other providers to determine need and develop collaborative responses and/or referral processes.

Houses provided a consistent comment and feedback around the difficulty of recruiting and engaging people in the literacy project, with advertising and promotion being relatively ineffectual and the importance of building relationships with participants, potential participants and referral agencies being emphasised. Comments also suggested that leveraging off other existing programs, activities and structured groups had been effective, for example, working with the dad's or young mum's group or engaging participants at a family expo.

Given that Houses can potentially develop soft entry options and embed literacy 'by stealth' in other activities, the evaluation is not suggesting that the needs identification process be too prescriptive. Experience shows that there is generally low levels of literacy in the communities served by the Houses and embedding literacy in other House activities has proven to be an effective way of achieve literacy and other outcomes.

Targeting areas of personal and family need appears to have been the most successful recruitment method, with many of these projects being based on known and generic needs that do not require extensive research, for example, filling in forms or completing a job application or resume.

Some examples of project promotions and recruitment that worked well include:

- ❖ 'a rocking', active engaging launch – such as a literacy expo with lots of other providers attending
- ❖ using other programs such as Nils – to connect with other programs
- ❖ building relationships with participants and potential participants prior to them being involved with the literacy project and then developing pathways once they make the decision to participate

- ❖ recruiting from existing groups – such as young mothers group or the health program
- ❖ engaging people through existing events such as a Families week expo
- ❖ through other services where participation in the literacy project can assist meet their obligations or requirements in the other programs – for example, participation in the literacy project may assist a family demonstrate commitment and reliability to an agency such as Child Protection
- ❖ advertising linked to need – ‘do you have trouble getting on the net or google?’

One House in response to the question: ‘What are your overall views on the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program?’ indicated that *‘it is a great need in the community but difficult to get the community engaged’*.

Some examples of project promotions and recruitment that did not appear to have worked well include:

- ❖ Radio
- ❖ Web
- ❖ Extensive mail out
- ❖ Newspaper adverts.

This is not surprising in many ways because (a) many of the media described above are literacy based; (b) the level of confidence and self esteem of many potential participants is such that they are unlikely to respond to an advertisement and attending a program where that may not know anyone; and (c) the experience of Houses shows that having a relationship with potential participants dramatically increases the likelihood of them becoming involved in a project.

The evaluation has shown that there is a lot of experience and expertise regarding participant recruitment and engagement within the Neighbourhood House network and in TACH that could be used in a capacity building program.

Recommendation 19

‘that TACH include marketing and promotion skills and strategies to recruit and engage literacy participants in the capacity building program -including Houses sharing their experiences of what has worked and what hasn’t’.

Further work is also required to gain greater understanding of the outcomes from embedding literacy in other House activities.

Recommendation 20

'that the TACH literacy capacity building program include consulting with Houses to develop a framework and tools to better understand and record outcomes from literacy initiatives embedded in other projects '.

Some Houses questioned possibilities - *'how can we get involved with and/or get referrals from the literacy hot-line'*. This is a question for TACH to follow through as the sole referral point for these calls would most likely be the LINC or Polytechnic. The negotiations required determining a referral process or other access to this source of interested people is likely to be complex.

Recommendation 21

'that TACH explore the possibilities of people expressing interest in literacy skills development through the Literacy Hotline, being given their local Neighbourhood House Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program provider as an option.'

This section is also linked to the next evaluation objective 'Determine the suitability of Projects for addressing identified literacy needs' where the evaluation examines in more detail what motivates participants to engage in the literacy program and identifies some of the barriers to participation. This then leads to identifying some of the factors that influence the success of local projects.

6.3 Determine the suitability of Projects for addressing identified literacy needs

Given that most of the projects have been soft entry activities where literacy is combined with other broader outcomes, participation in itself is potentially one of the indicators of suitability and the evaluation has demonstrated the Houses have been effective in achieving project participation.

One House indicated, *'I think this is a beneficial program, especially here on the West Coast with the isolation we face, people often slip through the cracks.'*

In designing successful projects Houses need to identify motivators and barriers to participation. The evaluation has identified the following motivators to participation:

- ❖ Children and parents working together – on activities or where there is a competition or rewards involved
- ❖ Potential to win prizes

- ❖ Provision of transport
- ❖ Cash incentives (prizes or support)
- ❖ Competitions
- ❖ Games that are enjoyable and informal
- ❖ Knowing people prior to program – building on existing relationships between the house and participants and/or relations already existing with participants
- ❖ Projects which enable participants to give more support to their children
- ❖ A non-school environment
- ❖ No pressure to learn
- ❖ Activities which are self paced
- ❖ Responding to local circumstances – major business closing and several redundant employees – respond with employment related resume/employment application support activities
- ❖ Provision of – inclusion of food
- ❖ Provision of – inclusion of childcare
- ❖ Free of charge
- ❖ Interactive – multi media
- ❖ Equipment and resources which support participation and variety and interest to the activity such as smart boards
- ❖ Head phones for some computer activities to assist with concentration
- ❖ A safe and private environment where participants are not likely to be seen, judged and stigmatised
- ❖ Not overtly focussing on literacy – the emphasis being on cooking, computers and the content area of the project.

Some of the factors above relate to accessing quality resources and using them appropriately. The TACH capacity building program could also be used to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of specific literacy resources and equipment.

One House responded to the question 'what sort of projects or activities do you believe are the most desirable and/or suitable for the program' suggesting '*it needs to be fun and exciting, activities that are outside the square, as literacy isn't the most exciting thing.*'

One House noted, that '*literacy skills are an area in which people tend not to talk about. The soft entry approach will be our focus in the future*', going on to say, '*one on one*'

basic literacy appears to have more responses than group sessions unless the literacy programs can be disguised in some other format’.

Another House indicated desirable projects that should be supported are those ‘*that provide employment along with long term outcomes – improving the life of even one person is of benefit to the community.*’ This fits well within the funding guidelines which include:

Projects should also contribute towards one or more of the following:

- ♦ *Developing social and cultural opportunities for community members*
- ♦ *Contributing to healthier lifestyles*
- ♦ *Increasing people’s life skills*
- ♦ *Increasing people’s skills for gaining employment*
- ♦ *Improving people’s work*

Other than the opposite of the items listed above as motivators, (obviously if provision of transport is a motivator, transport is also a barrier) the following barriers to participation have been identified in the evaluation consultation:

- ❖ Hard to access people who have not been involved with the house before
- ❖ Logistics – being able to contact people and let everyone know what is going on
- ❖ Maintaining privacy and confidentiality – particularly in small towns
- ❖ Participant personal habits – no role models – not getting up on time, lack of routine, and punctuality skills and so on. One House reported that providing transport assistance had helped to establish routine and more reliability
- ❖ One participant could not come all day – because they had \$ 20 on pay as you go and children would use all the power if home alone – heating and so on
- ❖ Multiple crises – house eviction, relationship issues
- ❖ Staff/volunteer resources to organise and support programs. Most projects seem to have requested funding for contact hours for a project officer or tutor and then found they do not have enough time to do the other support and administrative activities – recruiting, organising, planning, providing transport, and so on. One particular program which was a learner driver program with another service partner aimed at drivers licences for migrants had to end early because of this lack of support resources

The evaluation consultation also noted that some projects require a progression of levels to ensure there are multiple entry points and also pathways to meet participant needs and maintain their engagement. That is, rather than having basic, generic and

homogenous activities, a range of levels are offered – for example art 1, 2, and 3, or e-bay basic and e-bay advanced.

Analysis of the motivators and barriers described above and further consultation discussions with Houses project success factors have been identified. Some of these relate to the way the House organises and designs the project, while others relate to the behaviour of the participants.

The way the House organises and designs projects will also influence the achievement of outcomes. Some areas of project organisation and design to be considered include:

- ❖ *Program scheduling* – so participants know what is on and have confidence to make the necessary arrangements and commitment to attend – calendar for the term and planning ahead
- ❖ *Seek commitment* – so participants actually say they are planning on attending
- ❖ *Creating relationships* – with other organisations such as the Polytechnic and the LINC – with capacity to access additional funding and resources
- ❖ *Adequately funded and resourced* – able to pay entry fees (like vintage car museum), bus fares and the like
- ❖ *Partnerships across multiple Houses* – shared staff who were more able to commit because of greater hours of employment and longer duration of contract – staff retention better – also increase chance houses will look at joint programs in other areas in the future
- ❖ *Provision of support* – such as using community buses for transport
- ❖ *Using qualified and skilled staff* – one administration staff member who assisted with delivering a basic computer program suggested ‘I can do the basis but would need a qualified trainer to deliver program at a higher level next time’
- ❖ *Patience* – to move at a comfortable pace for participants
- ❖ *Not making assumptions or judging participants or potential participants* - ‘people have soft hearts and are not what they seem sometimes’

One House commented, ‘*our computer program was not ongoing however those who attended it when it did run found it to be set up in a non-threatening environment and found the program was flexible depending on needs.*’

Another indicated, ‘*we are available for advice at any time and all participants know that. They can call us, e-mail, face book or drop in.*’

The design and structure of the project also needs to support participants to maintain their involvement. Areas where participant behaviour has contributed to the success of projects include:

- ❖ Being organised – knowing the times and getting themselves there
- ❖ Dedication – increased interest and commitment to keep the time free

One House commented, *'the program fits into the overall House programs very well. We would have liked more participants but realise that the program is about quality in skill building and not necessarily numbers.'* When we began the program it was focussed on group participation. This was not successful and one to one sessions became the more appropriate way to deliver the program'.

This supports the early comments that while most projects involve the soft entry end of the literacy spectrum, there is also capacity to provide overt literacy tutoring and engagement where appropriate and required.

Recommendation 22

'that TACH incorporate further understanding and development of project success factors and suitability of projects into capacity building and information sharing between Houses'

Recommendation 23

'that TACH build the capacity of Houses to measure the outcomes and success (or otherwise) of specific literacy products and software and other resources and tools.'

Recommendation 24

'that information to encourage and support Houses including sufficient funding for project support and administration in addition to funding for contact hours be emphasised in the Program Guidelines and funding/capacity building activities.'

6.4 Review the capacities of Houses to manage, administer and provide appropriate skills to deliver literacy Projects

Observations and comments would suggest that the capacity of Houses to apply for funding and accept and administer a grant is really a 'business as usual' process, no different to attracting and implementing any other program offered by Neighbourhood Houses, and there were no issues or concerns in this regard.

The areas where there is scope for further work include: a more strategic approach to changing the literacy skills in the community over the next 10+ years; recruiting,

supporting and managing the staff and resources to deliver the program – including volunteers; and developing the capacity of the House in terms of skills, resources and logistic support for the project.

Many Houses appear to have applied for the funding to deliver the project, however, there are limited resources to support the project in areas such as timetabling, following up participants and supporting them to attend, communication with participants, recruiting participants, networking with other services, and so on.

Partnerships are an area where there was mixed feedback – there are some Houses with a good working relationship with other literacy providers however, there appear to be a number of other examples where Houses are not really happy with the relationship and/or have chosen not to have a relationship with these organisations because they do not want to work with them.

Some of the elements identified where good relationships with other providers have been developed include:

- ❖ recognition that the projects being delivered by various providers are different and participants being referred appropriately
- ❖ different projects working together with some of the same participants
- ❖ referral between projects where one is fully subscribed and the other has capacity
- ❖ sharing of resources
- ❖ mature and professional relationships between staff and organisations

The situation in regard to areas where such relationships are less effective includes:

- ❖ other programs being possessive of participants
- ❖ other organisations feeling threatened by and/or wanting to control projects being offered by Houses
- ❖ under-valuing and lack of real understanding of what Houses are doing
- ❖ judging Houses by comparing them to the delivery methods and standards (like the Australian Core Skills Framework) that other providers use
- ❖ other providers feeling that TACH has literacy money that should have been given to them

TACH and the Houses need to determine the partnership and/or desired community relationships to be achieved and then develop strategies to deliver these outcomes. Strategies are likely to include stakeholder education and relationship building to develop levels of trust and understanding whereby Houses have the appropriate level of recognition and support for projects by other providers. TACH may have a central role in

some of this relationship building, where State Managers or policy officers of other organisations manage and/or influence their staff at a regional and local level.

Areas where the need for capacity building initiatives should be considered include:

- ❖ volunteer tutoring training
- ❖ tutor development – through joint arrangements with other providers and providers offering accredited tutoring certificates such as the LINC or Polytechnic
- ❖ facilitating delivery of and/or access to the 'Literacy unit in Certificate IV in Community Development
- ❖ how to recognise literacy issues early
- ❖ building sustainability by increasing pool of volunteer tutors and addressing barriers encountered like the 'lack of volunteers'
- ❖ know where literacy resources are and how to access them
- ❖ skills development and capacity building in the area of parents reading to their children
- ❖ embedding literacy in other programs
- ❖ annual State/regional Literacy forums
- ❖ mini demonstrations at State Conference
- ❖ \$'s to attend other capacity building activities from the grant (for example if another provider is offering a relevant skill development activity, the grant may be used to support House staff to attend the activity)
- ❖ developing partnerships where the other organisation is equal partnership with house – not House being seen as the poor cousin by the other party which has been reported by one House. A contract or service agreement should be used to formalise expectations and roles and responsibilities and where appropriate Houses should be paid by the partner for some of the activities and services delivered/provided
- ❖ preparing joint funding applications with other Houses and/or other organisations (partnerships with other houses – could encourage through application selection criteria in the funding guidelines)

One House commented, *'service providers are aware that Community Houses have access to funds and can provide great venues for working with people in alternative ways.'*

Another House commented on partnerships, *'very informal, unfortunately some institutions are keen to sign people up and this is not how the House works, so we limit these partnerships though they would be great to access.'*

Another commented, 'I am wary at times of overlapping with the other services however do feel we have a place in improving skills in this area.'

Recommendation 25

'that TACH develop and implement a State Neighbourhood House capacity building program, in consultation with the three regional Neighbourhood House networks.'

Recommendation 26

'that the year 4 evaluation of the Program include a focus on partners and partnership development.'

This recommendation recognises that the first evaluation (year 2) has concentrated predominantly on the internal stakeholders for the program and the evaluation scheduled for year 4 should have some emphasis on the external stakeholders and the amount, type and effectiveness of partnerships developed by the Houses.

6.5 Review the processes and efficiency of operation of Projects

One of the biggest areas highlighted was the need to timetable ahead so all concerned had certainty about dates and times to aid recruiting and participant support. This also has implications for funding, as Houses need to ensure this logistical support has been included in the budget they apply for in the grant. There is also a capacity building issue of skilling up staff, tutors and volunteers to be organised and plan in this area.

In order for projects to be as effective and efficient as possible, Houses need to construct and schedule activities with adequate administrative and logistical support which match the needs, circumstances and capacity of participants. Specific actions in this area include:

- ❖ planning and publishing a calendar for the year (or half year or term). A calendar needs to provide a timetable and schedule which supports participants to commit to the project and provide the necessary direction for staff to plan the project. In many cases the activities will be flexible and informal and the calendar will provide the space for these activities or this engagement to occur. A calendar should not be interpreted as the schedule of courses for the year, as this is not the intent - such a level of formality may discourage the soft entry engagement that the project is trying to achieve. Houses apply a very effective community development approach in the literacy and other work they

undertake and the literacy projects need to be designed and delivered within this framework.

- ❖ include diversity and variety in the calendar – both in content and levels of activities
- ❖ considering different levels within different content areas – art 1, 2 and 3 or basic and advanced cooking
- ❖ considering rolling programs (for example a 6 week activity, then a 2 week break and another 6 week activity and so on for the period of the calendar), so that participants, service providers, referral agencies and staff can plan with confidence.

Alternatively (or in addition) consideration may also be given to longer term activities that run for 6 or 12 months with an entry and exit at any time option – this is a model particularly suited to areas such as computers and cooking and could be funded under the major grants stream.

This option can also aid referral as any potential participant expressing interest can start immediately. Such a project, in areas like computers may also need the capacity to be working with participants in the group at different levels. The example provided in the quote below indicates this was the experience of this House.

One House, 'put together a tutor program however this was not followed in the end as the participants all needed different things and were at a lower level computer wise than we had first thought.'

The evaluation identified other issues Houses need to consider in the design and implementation of their projects – in particular marketing and staffing.

Marketing

The need to 'play up' or 'play down' the literacy component of the soft entry activities has already been raised, with most feedback suggesting that promoting a project as a literacy program was less successful in recruiting participants than promoting the content of the activity. Nevertheless, this is a decision Houses need to make when marketing their projects, and depending on how Houses assess their communities, will influence recruitment and participation.

The evaluation revealed that some projects were operating with relatively low numbers, albeit that these projects were often quite small and short term. In order to optimise outcomes, participation needs to be maximised.

Processes to track participation levels and intervene if there are issues such as lack of participants, poor communication with and co-ordination of participants and timetables and so on, also need to be considered. There appears to be potential for unacceptably

low participation levels to continue unless the hard questions are asked or intervention and resource allocation occurs to change this situation. Obviously this means addressing this situation in a sensitive way that matches the values and approach of the Houses.

Staffing

The degree to which specialist and generalist staff are used to deliver projects is also an area Houses need to consider – and to a degree there may not always be a ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answer, it may be more a situation of using different approaches. This relates to a question in the House interviews where asked ‘is it better to use trainers who specialise in the content area and can also work on literacy issues, or is it best to use literacy trainers who can also do the content?’ In other words is it best to use a good cook in the cooking program – who can also work on literacy needs or is it better to use a literacy tutor who can cook? And/or what is the capacity to use staff in pairs in some projects where one has the content and delivery expertise and the other has the literacy expertise.

The answers to these questions are varied. The main observation from this discussion was that the most important consideration is getting a trainer or tutor who can build effective relationships with participants, as it is the trust, credibility and rapport developed between staff/volunteers and participants that will determine how long a participant stays in the project and what literacy (and other) outcomes are achieved.

A further consideration is the degree of content expertise required when topics are delivered at a higher level – as previously quoted the administration staff member delivering a basic computer program who said *‘I can do the basics but would need a qualified trainer to deliver program at a higher level next time!’*

The range of projects and the effort and initiative that has been used to identify projects with practical application is very impressive. This has been highlighted as an important success factor – offering topics which meet the needs and interests of participants.

Some examples provided relating to practical application of literacy skills which meet the needs of participant include:

Personal needs

- ❖ lodging Centrelink forms
- ❖ resumes and form filling in for Green corps
- ❖ support with Census
- ❖ form filling – Centrelink and others
- ❖ reading the fine print on forms and rental agreements
- ❖ Nils – support take up of these programs through better understanding of them
- ❖ link to food.

Life skills

- ❖ winter freezer fillers – good recipes for dads and lots of outcomes
- ❖ using launching into learning to reach parents – use reading to their children as vehicle to engage parents
- ❖ health information and health literacy
- ❖ Health Literacy Program – communicating with health professions and pharmacists with 2 streams – first aid for parents with children and toddlers and safety in the home including:
 - first aid for parents with children and toddlers
 - safe medication of children; measuring baby formula; reading scales and thermometers; temperatures for fridges and hot water; decimal places; measuring cups and fractions of cups; dosage of tablets
 - safety in the home
 - food safety; food handling and storage (verbal and written information delivered by Council Health Officer); emergency phone numbers; building confidence with pharmacist; medication (delivered by child health nurse)
 - provide free digital thermometers
- ❖ how to use a mobile phone and all its features
- ❖ learner driver permits
- ❖ community safety for new arrivals
- ❖ migrant programs
- ❖ staff member and trained volunteers conducted legal literacy in conjunction with community legal service.

Skill development

- ❖ using the phone
- ❖ learning to touch type
- ❖ skype
- ❖ photoshop
- ❖ garden to plate program (at the LINC)
- ❖ computers for seniors
- ❖ broadband for seniors
- ❖ cooking and nutrition

- ❖ getting a job – pathways into training and employment
- ❖ computers.

One House commented, *'technology is important in this day and age. Computers are important however, it's also the basics such as filling out forms. We have Centrelink here at the centre and many people have trouble with a basic Centrelink form.'*

Community development

- ❖ documenting life history of senior citizens
- ❖ developing useful products such as a community house calendar and recipe book.

Personal interests

Using areas of interest as motivation for participants to improve their reading and writing skills, for example, using fishing guides for soft entry literacy work on a fishing trip or gathering written information on old cars for soft entry literacy work following a visit to a vintage car museum. Other examples include:

- ❖ looking at satellite imagery
- ❖ checking face book and e-mails
- ❖ going fishing with group of dads
- ❖ using things with meaning that people can remember or relate to – nursery rhyme cards
- ❖ family trees and genealogy
- ❖ visiting a vintage car museum
- ❖ bike maintenance.

Capacity Building

All of the areas discussed above identify areas where useful capacity building could be developed and implemented within the House network. The evaluation also observed significant expertise and experience that could be drawn on and shared across the House network in some of these areas. In addition, the literacy staff resource if Houses, other staff and co-ordinators could be brought together in capacity building activities to develop literacy initiatives designed specifically for the House environment.

The cost of staff, volunteers and co-ordinators participating in capacity building activities on face value is relatively low, as the cost of a presenter and in some cases a venue would be minimal and TACH could potentially co-ordinate and convene the activity. In

real terms however, the cost is much more than that – particularly if there is a commitment to invest in building the capacity of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program to be sustainable beyond the initial 10 year funding period.

The real cost of such a capacity building investment includes:

- ❖ staff time (out of the House and project – that potentially has to be taken out of contact time if the House has not budgeted for capacity building time)
- ❖ potentially back-filling staff contact hours
- ❖ travel and meals (and maybe even accommodation if there are State capacity building activities)
- ❖ administration
- ❖ resources
- ❖ presenters
- ❖ convening and co-ordination time and expenses.

A successful capacity building program requires consideration and allocation of as many of these real costs as possible if it is to be set up to succeed.

Some capacity building activities may be provided more efficiently by being incorporated into other events and gatherings such as the TACH Conference and Regional Neighbourhood House network meetings.

Recommendation 27

'that TACH development and implement a capacity building plan for the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program, incorporating project staff and tutors, project volunteers and Neighbourhood House Co-ordinators.'

Recommendation 28

'that TACH determine the level of investment to be allocated to capacity building and how this will be funded.'

TACH has a funding allocation for capacity building in the budget. One option is that all capacity building is funded from this budget. Alternatively, some of the funding could be funded through project funding - for example the project staff and House Co-ordinator time to attend capacity building activities could be included in project funding applications. If this is the case, the relevant information policies and practices would

need to be included in the funding guidelines and the capacity of the Houses would need to be developed to make these provisions operate effectively.

Recommendation 29

'that the professional develop plan include areas to increase the efficiency of literacy projects such as long term time tabling of activities, calendar development, marketing and staffing.'

6.6 Review the literacy and other outcomes from the delivery of Projects

The level and type of assessment being undertaken, including entry and exit literacy assessments, was generally absent. In the formal literacy support area this would be a concern. However, in the soft entry, embedded literacy focus of the TACH literacy program, there is an argument that this level of formal assessments is not required, nor appropriate and arguable a further barrier to participation by the target participant group.

From an accountability perspective however, there needs to be some capacity to report on the achievements from the program and the return from the investment.

The Australian Core Skills Framework provides the mechanism to formally assess and report literacy levels. Part of the rationale for not advocating for such measurable assessment in the soft entry model is that the duration and intensity of the literacy intervention is unlikely to see changes using the Australian Core Skills Framework – the changes are more likely to be of a personal nature, as detailed in the examples of outcomes the program has achieved which are provided below.

This situation could be different where long duration and/or more intensive projects are funded. Similarly, assessment using the Australian Core Skills Framework is more appropriate for participants involved in overt literacy tutoring rather than group work and soft entry activities.

There may also be some benefit in mapping the demographic of participants from a literacy perspective to better describe their literacy levels on entry to projects. If this was the case TACH would need to be confident of the benefit and value in such an assessment would outweigh any potential risks or impact on the confidence and experience of the participants.

It is therefore proposed that the method of recording the impact of projects include building a bank of stories and case studies and other records to substantiate the outcomes of projects including both the literacy and non-literacy outcomes of projects.

This supports the existing model of providing soft entry, community friendly, informal, safe and engaging environment which the evaluation shows to be working well.

Some form of inputs and participation records would also be advantageous as discussed earlier in this report. Some skill development, capacity building and systems/template development will be required to enable this to occur in the short term.

Part of choosing ways to capture and account for outcomes is answering the question, 'what does success mean/', as this will inform the definition of what outcomes are, and how they can be monitored and recorded.

This also means deciding on the validity of non-literacy outcomes from projects and how they are also captured and reported.

The evaluation sought outcome information from Houses through the interview and surveying process and these are detailed below. These are just a sample of the outcomes and do not attempt to provide a comprehensive report of what has been achieved.

What is clear however, is the difficulty in divorcing the broader and holistic outcomes achieved from the literacy projects as it has been the literacy intervention that has been the catalyst for the larger outcome.

The types of outcomes described in the consultation have been categorised as follows:

- Quality of Life – Personal Interest and Opportunities
- Family functioning
- Social Connection – removing isolation and loneliness
- Health and Wellbeing
- Life Skills
- Confidence and self esteem
- Education
- Skills Development
- Training and Employment

Some of the outcomes identified are clearly literacy related and there are a number of other individual, family and community outcomes which have been identified – all of which linked to the participant's involvement in the literacy projects.

Examples of outcomes achieved in each of these areas include:

Quality of Life – Personal Interest and Opportunities

- ❖ Senior – been in touch with genealogy to seek assistance and now looking for information on his parents

- ❖ Participant interested in model trains – now looking for model trains for sale in England
- ❖ Dad couldn't write his three children's names – now he can.

Family functioning

- ❖ Parents (dads) reading to children
- ❖ One participant reported improvements in spelling, reading and pronunciation, which was also improving her capacity to support her children
- ❖ Parents reading and writing at certain level, then children catch up, then children support parents to get better.

Social Connection – removing isolation and loneliness

- ❖ Participant – comes to the House to get e-mails – maintaining contact with family and others
- ❖ Participant – wanted skills to connect with grand children on face book
- ❖ Communicating with past exchange student hosted by the family
- ❖ Meeting people and extending support network and contacts
- ❖ Participants – *'meeting more people'*
- ❖ Participants – *'expand their communities and get's people out of their worlds'*.

Health and Wellbeing

- ❖ One mother, following health program, took temperature of ill child with thermometer provided in the program, found high temperature and took child to the doctor
- ❖ Participants – *'developing relationships with other services and health professionals'*.

Life Skills

- ❖ Routine and commitment – catching the bus every day to attend
- ❖ Participants – *'doing more things'*.

Confidence and self esteem

- ❖ Participants building confidence – *'a lot of people say they cannot read – actually they can a bit and for some, the program is about building their confidence and giving them the courage to have a go'*
- ❖ Dads and families group – soft entry, then 1:1 – recently found dad on the floor reading to someone else's child
- ❖ More confident with computers.

Education

- ❖ 2 participants have gone on to further education

The evaluation also identified that Houses engage with children around literacy needs (without adult involvement), which is outside the scope of the Everyday Literacy for Communities Program. In each of the examples identified, the Houses have been able to respond to these needs within the core Neighbourhood House funding and obtained outcomes such as:

- School sent teacher to House regarding non-engaged students involved in literacy activities – evolved to House now being part of alternative education class at the House
- 3 disengaged children – back to school through alternative education program hosted at the House

This highlights the potential for Houses to respond to issues identified through Everyday Literacy for Communities projects with other funding where such funds are not available or appropriate within the literacy program.

Another observation is the potential to use children as a mechanism to engage parents in literacy programs. A number of examples were identified where reading to children and involving children in activities was used as a motivator to engage parents and this approach appeared to be very successful.

Skills Development

- ❖ Demystifying computers – several accounts of people being less scared of computers
- ❖ Assistance with support to get drivers licence
- ❖ Participant bought motor scooter – used support from the program to achieve theory licence test
- ❖ Using e-bay
- ❖ Participant – now doing literacy on-line from home.

Training and Employment

- ❖ 3 'dads' now doing Certificate II in Community Services
- ❖ 15 enrolled in Certificate II Community Services – Aged Care – with a lot of support all completed and 12 of them then enrolled in Certificate III – 7 completed.

Specific comments from Houses include:

'One participant who is learning English as a second language has displayed a remarkable improvement in her literacy skills'

'Confidence level raised. Skills increased providing far better interaction. Increased possibilities of extending work hours and suitability to together types of jobs other than menial.'

One House commented, *'our participants are now more confident in using a computer. Changes we noticed, less questions asked and willing to try things without being worried about breaking the computer.'*

Recommendation 30

'that TACH, in consultation with the Houses, develop and implement a narrative framework to assist in recording and reporting outcomes from the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program.'

Recommendation 31

'that TACH determine and implement the necessary capacity building and systems development required to implement a narrative outcome reporting framework.'

6.7 Identify gaps in local capacities and resources

A number of resources have been identified in the consultation and there is a strong desire by Houses to develop; access; extend their knowledge, understanding and use of appropriate tools and resources; and to learn from other House's experience. This fits with the capacity building networking process proposed above.

TACH could consider the possibilities for Houses to use consistent resources where possible, and, if this is desirable, how such a process would be managed. TACH also needs to consider how it might support the access, research and development of potential resources. These items have been discussed earlier under 'the role and functions of TACH.'

Examples of useful resources currently being used by Houses, or potential/desirable items they are aware of include:

Literacy specific resources

- ❖ One House indicated they 'were using a lot of resources from language centre'
- ❖ Had issues finding affordable software – and 'got help from on-line access centre'
- ❖ Specifically designed products and resources to address literacy and numeracy needs – one example provided at a Regional Neighbourhood House network meeting was 'Brainetics', there was also suggestions that useful resources had been seen/accessed from late night television advertising and that there were organisations who provided a subscription service at low cost, (\$15 per year was quoted for one organisation) that also provided a useful service
- ❖ Props – such as vehicle literacy support cards for a driver's licences.

Equipment

- ❖ Digital camera'
- ❖ Lap tops – portable computers.

General information and materials

- ❖ Service Tasmania – information on fishing
- ❖ Internet– sites with lots of learning levels and resources by category – cars, children, cooking...
- ❖ One House suggested that 'as the project deals with everyday learning the use of newspapers, recipe books, supermarket dockets and the computer is widely used'.
- ❖ One House purchased a binding machine for the resources developed in the program.

Networking and capacity building

- ❖ Options for Houses find out what other Houses are doing?
- ❖ Access to resources developed by other Houses.

Once again, Houses indicated a desire to share information, resources and experiences. This is an area where TACH could facilitate this process, along with support Houses to access some of the desirable resources and equipment identified through the small grants program.

A number of Houses have developed and/or accessed resources such as recipe books with photos of ingredients and methods; computer manuals and so on which are ready for sharing in a capacity building program.

Where Houses are interested in a new resource or piece of equipment, TACH could facilitate the trialling and evaluation of such resources prior to other Houses purchasing them and/or them being added to the approved small grants list.

TACH may also wish to develop a directory or booklet detailing the resources, equipment and materials available within the House network, as well as known resources elsewhere.

The evaluation also discovered a number of clever approaches to building reading, writing and numeracy skills in the projects. Some examples of these include:

- putting a Scrabble Board in reception/waiting/common areas for people to fiddle with letters and make words to stimulate interest and help staff start conversations about reading and writing when they notice people using the board
- matching puppets with children's books and supporting and encouraging parents to borrow them to read to their children
- using puppets as a means to read to children to mask lack of confidence and reading skills of parents
- a partnership of 3 Houses providing a project – this resulted in a larger grant that enabled tutors to be employed for more hours and for longer thus increasing staff security and stability in the project.

Recommendation 32

'that TACH facilitate the sharing of information, resources and experiences as part of structured capacity building processes'. This may include the production of a resources and equipment directory.

6.8 Recommend any improvements to the design, delivery and data collection of Projects

These recommendations are included in the body of the report.

7. Acknowledgements

PDF would like to thank all of the people involved in the evaluation consultation for their willing and open participation in this review process.

Subjecting an organisation to an independent and objective review can be a cause of anxiety or concern. The amount of information provided and level of generous and frank contributions by all concerned. This process has been a demonstration of the passion for the literacy work being undertaken by the Neighbourhood House network and the commitment to continually improve the services and support to achieve the best possible outcomes for individuals and families.

PDF would specifically like to acknowledge and extend our thanks to John Hooper and Ron Sutton from TACH who have not only provided a major contribution to the evaluation - they have also embraced the developmental and action learning nature in which we have approached the evaluation process.

More intensive engagement occurred with 7 Neighbourhood Houses and PDF are very grateful for this insight and contribution of these Houses who have added significantly to the quality and depth of the evaluation.

PDF would particularly like to thank the project participants for their contribution to the evaluation. Reflection on your first hand experience in the projects has been invaluable and we appreciate your comments and input very much.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1

Copies of Neighbourhood House Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Survey

Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program Questionnaire

Survey Questions for Houses that applied for funding and were not successful

This questionnaire is designed to assist in the evaluation of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Literacy Program.

The Program has been funded for 10 years and this evaluation is to look at progress for the first 2 years of the funding. Evaluation processes are required every 2 years. The current evaluation will shape the program for coming years and provide information and data that future evaluations will build upon.

Your input and feedback is very important – given that the program still has 8 years to run. The evaluation is being approached as a developmental or action learning approach – not an audit, so we are keen to hear your views about what is working well, and how the program can be further improved.

This is a live word document. Please feel free to type your responses directly into the document and e-mail or post it back, or if you prefer, print the questions out and write your responses and post them back.

Please e-mail your completed questionnaire to:

pdf@pdfmanagement.com.au or

post it to:

Michael Gordon

PDF Management Services Pty Ltd

Post Office Box 814

MOONAH

Tasmania 7009

Please return your completed questionnaire by Friday 23rd September 2011

Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to give me a call on phone 0417 330 354.

Thank you for your assistance, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Michael



Michael Gordon

Director

PDF Management Services Pty Ltd

Part A: The funding process

1. What worked well, or what did you like about the literacy program funding/application process?
2. What didn't you like, or needs to be improved with the funding/application process?
3. What (if anything), encouraged you or made it easy for you to apply for funding?
4. What (if anything), discouraged you or made it hard for you to apply for funding?
5. How useful and effective were the funding guidelines?
6. How much and what type of support was provided/available from TACH to assist you prepare funding applications?
7. On reflection, what (if any) additional types support and assistance would have helped you with the funding application process?
8. Why wasn't your funding application successful?
9. Did you re-apply for funding in the next round? Yes No
If no, why did you choose not to re-apply?
10. What information do you think should be provided to all Neighbourhood Houses by TACH or the Assessment Panel regarding the outcomes of the funding process – such as which Houses applied; which Houses were successful/unsuccessful; how much funding was allocated to which Houses; details of funded projects and so on.
11. How often should the funding rounds for the Literacy Program be offered? (Is annual funding the preferred funding model?)
12. What recommendations or suggestions would you make to improve the funding/application process?

Part B: The Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program

13. What are your overall views on the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?
14. What role do you think Neighbourhood Houses should play in improving literacy skills in your communities?
15. How does/can the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program assist Houses to improve literacy skills in your communities?
16. What sort of projects or activities do you believe are the most desirable and/or suitable for the program?
17. What feedback (if any), have you received from the community and other stakeholders in your community about the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?



18. What are your plans for development and delivery of literacy projects and accessing future funding from the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?

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Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program Questionnaire Survey Questions for Houses that have never applied for funding

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Your input and feedback is very important – given that the program still has 8 years to run. The evaluation is being approached as a developmental or action learning approach – not an audit, so we are keen to hear your views about what is working well, and how the program can be further improved.

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Michael



Michael Gordon

Director

PDF Management Services Pty Ltd

Name of your Neighbourhood House:

Part A: The funding process

1. Why didn't you apply for funding from the literacy program?
2. What (if anything), encouraged you to apply for funding?
3. What (if anything), discouraged you or made it hard for you to apply for funding?
4. How useful and effective were the program funding guidelines produced by TACH?
5. How much and what type of support was provided/available from TACH to assist you prepare funding applications?
6. What (if any) additional types support and assistance would have helped you with the funding application process?
7. How often should the funding rounds for the Literacy Program be offered? (Is annual funding the preferred funding model?)
8. What recommendations or suggestions would you make to improve the funding/application process?
9. What (if anything) could TACH have done to encourage and/or assist you to apply for funding from the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?

Part B: The Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program

10. What are your overall views on the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?
11. What role do you think Neighbourhood Houses should play in improving literacy and numeracy skills in your communities?
12. How does/can the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program assist Houses to improve literacy and numeracy skills in your communities?
13. What sort of projects or activities do you believe are the most desirable and/or suitable for the program?
14. What feedback (if any), have you received from the community and other stakeholders in your community?
15. What are your plans for development and delivery of literacy projects and accessing future funding from the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?

Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program Questionnaire Survey Questions for Houses that successfully applied for funding

This questionnaire is designed to assist in the evaluation of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Literacy Program.

The Program has been funded for 10 years and this evaluation is to look at progress for the first 2 years of the funding. Evaluation processes are required every 2 years. The current evaluation will shape the program for coming years and provide information and data that future evaluations will build upon.

Your input and feedback is very important – given that the program still has 8 years to run. The evaluation is being approached as a developmental or action learning approach – not an audit, so we are keen to hear your views about what is working well, and how the program can be further improved.

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Michael



Michael Gordon

Director

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Name of your Neighbourhood House:

Part A: The funding process

1. What worked well, or what did you like about the literacy program funding/application process?
2. What didn't you like, or needs to be improved with the funding/application process?
3. What (if anything), encouraged you or made it easy for you to apply for funding?
4. What (if anything), discouraged you or made it hard for you to apply for funding?
5. Why wasn't your funding application in round 1 successful?
6. Why did you continue to apply for funding after being unsuccessful in round 1?
7. How useful and effective were the TACH program funding guidelines?
8. How much and what type of support was provided by TACH to assist you prepare funding applications?
9. On reflection, what (if any) additional types support and assistance would have helped you with the funding application process?
10. What information do you think should be provided to all Neighbourhood Houses by TACH or the Assessment Panel regarding the outcomes of the funding process – such as which Houses applied; which Houses were successful/unsuccessful; how much funding was allocated to which Houses; details of funded projects and so on.
11. How often should the funding rounds for the Literacy Program be offered? (Is annual funding the preferred funding model?)
12. What recommendations or suggestions would you make to improve the funding/application process?

Part B: The Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program

13. What are your overall views on the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?
14. What role do you think Neighbourhood Houses should play in improving literacy skills in your communities?
15. How does/can the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program assist Houses to improve literacy skills in your communities?
16. What sort of projects or activities do you believe are the most desirable and/or suitable for the program?
17. What feedback (if any), have you received from the community and other stakeholders in your community about the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?

18. What are your plans for development and delivery of literacy projects and accessing future funding from the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?

Part C: Your Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program

19. How many participants have been involved in your project(s)? *Please enter numbers on the dotted line that best describes the participation in your project(s).*

Practical projects such as cooking -----

Targeted support such as one on one individual tutoring -----

20. What geographical area does your literacy project cover?
21. What data do you collect on participants and their participation in your project(s)?
22. What other data (if any), do you think should be collected?
23. How is the literacy levels of participants assessed before, during and at the completion of the project or activity?
24. How satisfied have the participants been with the project(s), and how do you know this?
25. What have been the results of the project(s)? (For example, please details changes in participants behaviour; changes in confidence levels; skills developed and used; any other outcomes)
26. What resources have been accessed and/or developed to delivery your project(s)?
27. What (if any) additional resources would be useful in the delivery of your project(s)?
28. What resources and support is available to participants after the project(s) are finished?
29. What skills and expertise does your House have to develop and deliver the literacy project?
30. What professional development would help your project develop and deliver literacy projects?
31. How is the literacy project(s) managed within your House?
32. What professional development would help your House manage literacy project(s)?
33. Who (if any), are the partners and what linkages (if any), have your project(s) developed with other organisations and other programs?
34. How well are these partnerships and linkages working?
35. What are the overall views of the House staff regarding the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?
36. What barriers have you encountered in the development and delivery of your project(s)?

37. What support needs have you identified in the development and delivery of your project(s)?
38. How could your project(s) be further improved?
39. What have you learned from your literacy and numeracy project(s) and activities that could benefit or be used in other Houses and/or the whole TACH network?
40. What resources have been developed that could benefit or be used in other Houses and/or the whole TACH network?
41. What are your reporting requirements in regard to the project your House is delivering?
42. What (if anything) other information or data could you provide that may be useful to TACH or other Neighbourhood Houses?

Part D: Support for your Project and House by TACH

43. How would you describe the type and level of support provided by TACH?
44. What gaps in the capacity or resources of your House have you identified that TACH could assist you to improve?
45. How could TACH assist you improve the outcomes of participants in the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?

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post it to:

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PDF Management Services Pty Ltd

Post Office Box 814

MOONAH

Tasmania 7009

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Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program Questionnaire Survey Questions for Houses that were successful and unsuccessful in applying for funding

This questionnaire is designed to assist in the evaluation of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Literacy Program.

The Program has been funded for 10 years and this evaluation is to look at progress for the first 2 years of the funding. Evaluation processes are required every 2 years. The current evaluation will shape the program for coming years and provide information and data that future evaluations will build upon.

Your input and feedback is very important – given that the program still has 8 years to run. The evaluation is being approached as a developmental or action learning approach – not an audit, so we are keen to hear your views about what is working well, and how the program can be further improved.

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Thank you for your assistance, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Michael



Michael Gordon

Director

PDF Management Services Pty Ltd

Name of your Neighbourhood House:

Part A: The funding process

1. What worked well, or what did you like about the literacy program funding/application process?
2. What didn't you like, or needs to be improved with the funding/application process?
3. What (if anything), encouraged you or made it easy for you to apply for funding?
4. What (if anything), discouraged you or made it hard for you to apply for funding?
5. Why wasn't your funding application in round 1 successful?
6. Why did you continue to apply for funding after being unsuccessful in round 1?
7. How useful and effective were the TACH program funding guidelines?
8. How much and what type of support was provided by TACH to assist you prepare funding applications?
9. On reflection, what (if any) additional types support and assistance would have helped you with the funding application process?
10. What information do you think should be provided to all Neighbourhood Houses by TACH or the Assessment Panel regarding the outcomes of the funding process – such as which Houses applied; which Houses were successful/unsuccessful; how much funding was allocated to which Houses; details of funded projects and so on.
11. How often should the funding rounds for the Literacy Program be offered? (Is annual funding the preferred funding model?)
12. What recommendations or suggestions would you make to improve the funding/application process?

Part B: The Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program

13. What are your overall views on the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?
14. What role do you think Neighbourhood Houses should play in improving literacy skills in your communities?
15. How does/can the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program assist Houses to improve literacy skills in your communities?
16. What sort of projects or activities do you believe are the most desirable and/or suitable for the program?

17. What feedback (if any), have you received from the community and other stakeholders in your community about the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?
18. What are your plans for development and delivery of literacy projects and accessing future funding from the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?

Part C: Your Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program

19. How many participants have been involved in your project(s)? *Please enter numbers on the dotted line that best describes the participation in your project(s).*
 - Practical projects such as cooking -----
 - Targeted support such as one on one individual tutoring -----
20. What geographical area does your literacy project cover?
21. What data do you collect on participants and their participation in your project(s)?
22. What other data (if any), do you think should be collected?
23. How is the literacy levels of participants assessed before, during and at the completion of the project or activity?
24. How satisfied have the participants been with the project(s), and how do you know this?
25. What have been the results of the project(s)? (For example, please details changes in participants behaviour; changes in confidence levels; skills developed and used; any other outcomes)
26. What resources have been accessed and/or developed to delivery your project(s)?
27. What (if any) additional resources would be useful in the delivery of your project(s)?
28. What resources and support is available to participants after the project(s) are finished?
29. What skills and expertise does your House have to develop and deliver the literacy project?
30. What professional development would help your project develop and deliver literacy projects?
31. How is the literacy project(s) managed within your House?
32. What professional development would help your House manage literacy project(s)?
33. Who (if any), are the partners and what linkages (if any), have your project(s) developed with other organisations and other programs?
34. How well are these partnerships and linkages working?
35. What are the overall views of the House staff regarding the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?

36. What barriers have you encountered in the development and delivery of your project(s)?
37. What support needs have you identified in the development and delivery of your project(s)?
38. How could your project(s) be further improved?
39. What have you learned from your literacy and numeracy project(s) and activities that could benefit or be used in other Houses and/or the whole TACH network?
40. What resources have been developed that could benefit or be used in other Houses and/or the whole TACH network?
41. What are your reporting requirements in regard to the project your House is delivering?
42. What (if anything) other information or data could you provide that may be useful to TACH or other Neighbourhood Houses?

Part D: Support for your Project and House by TACH

43. How would you describe the type and level of support provided by TACH?
44. What gaps in the capacity or resources of your House have you identified that TACH could assist you to improve?
45. How could TACH assist you improve the outcomes of participants in the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?

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Attachment 2

Copies of interview questions for each Everyday Literacy for Local Communities stakeholder groups

Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Literacy Program Survey Questions for Houses that did not apply for funding

Part A: The funding process

1. Why didn't you apply for funding?
2. What (if anything), encouraged you to apply for funding?
3. What (if anything), discouraged you or made it hard for you to apply for funding?
4. How useful and effective were the funding guidelines?
5. How much and what type of support was provided by TACH to assist you prepare funding applications?
6. What (if any) additional types support and assistance would have helped you with the funding application process?
7. How often should the funding rounds for the Literacy Program be offered? (Is annual funding the preferred funding model?)
8. What recommendations or suggestions would you make to improve the funding/application process?
9. What (if anything) could TACH have done to encourage and/or assist you to apply for funding from the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?

Part B: The Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program

10. What are your overall views on the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?
11. What role do you think Neighbourhood Houses should play in improving literacy and numeracy skills in your communities?
12. How does/can the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program assist Houses to improve literacy and numeracy skills in your communities?
13. What sort of projects or activities do you believe are the most desirable and/or suitable for the program?
14. What feedback (if any), have you received from the community and other stakeholders in your community?
15. What are your plans for development and delivery of literacy projects and accessing future funding from the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?

Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program

Survey Questions for Houses that applied for funding and were not successful

Part A: The funding process

1. What worked well, or what did you like about the funding/application process?
2. What didn't you like, or needs to be improved with the funding/application process?
3. What (if anything), encouraged you or made it easy for you to apply for funding?
4. What (if anything), discouraged you or made it hard for you to apply for funding?
5. How useful and effective were the funding guidelines?
6. How much and what type of support was provided by TACH to assist you prepare funding applications?
7. On reflection, what (if any) additional types support and assistance would have helped you with the funding application process?
8. Why wasn't your funding application successful?
9. Did you re-apply for funding in the next round? Yes No

If no, why did you choose not to re-apply?
10. How often should the funding rounds for the Literacy Program be offered? (Is annual funding the preferred funding model?)
11. What recommendations or suggestions would you make to improve the funding/application process?

Part B: The Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program

12. What are your overall views on the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?
13. What role do you think Neighbourhood Houses should play in improving literacy skills in your communities?
14. How does/can the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program assist Houses to improve literacy skills in your communities?
15. What sort of projects or activities do you believe are the most desirable and/or suitable for the program?
16. What feedback (if any), have you received from the community and other stakeholders in your community about the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?
17. What are your plans for development and delivery of literacy projects and accessing future funding from the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?

Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Literacy Program Survey Questions for Houses that successfully applied for funding

Part A: The funding process

1. What worked well, or what did you like about the funding/application process?
2. What didn't you like, or needs to be improved with the funding/application process?
3. What (if anything), encouraged you or made it easy for you to apply for funding?
4. What (if anything), discouraged you or made it hard for you to apply for funding?
5. How useful and effective were the funding guidelines?
6. How much and what type of support was provided by TACH to assist you prepare funding applications?
- 6a. What (if any) additional types support and assistance would have helped you with the funding application process?
7. How often should the funding rounds for the Literacy Program be offered? (Is annual funding the preferred funding model?)
8. What recommendations or suggestions would you make to improve the funding/application process?

Part B: The Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program

9. What are your overall views on the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?
10. What role do you think Neighbourhood Houses should play in improving literacy skills in your communities?
11. How does/can the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program assist Houses to improve literacy skills in your communities?
12. What sort of projects or activities do you believe are the most desirable and/or suitable for the program?
13. What feedback (if any), have you received from the community and other stakeholders in your community?
14. What are your plans for development and delivery of literacy projects and accessing future funding from the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?

Part C: Your Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program

15. How many participants have been involved in your project(s)? *Please enter numbers on the dotted line that best describes the participation in your project(s).*
 Practical projects such as cooking -----
 Targeted support such as one on one individual tutoring -----
16. What geographical area does your literacy project cover?
17. What data do you collect on participants and their participation in your project(s)?
18. What other data (if any), do you think should be collected?
19. How is the literacy levels of participants assessed before, during and at the completion of the project or activity?
20. How satisfied have the participants been with the project(s)?
21. What have been the results of the project(s)? (For example, please details changes in participants behaviour; changes in confidence levels; skills developed and used; any other outcomes)
22. What resources have been accessed and/or developed to delivery your project(s)?
23. What (if any) additional resources would be useful in the delivery of your project(s)?
24. What resources and support is available to participants after the project(s) are finished?
25. What skills and expertise does your House have to develop and deliver the literacy project?
26. What professional development would help your project develop and deliver literacy projects?
27. How is the literacy project(s) managed within your House?
28. What professional development would help your House manage literacy project(s)?
29. Who (if any), are the partners and what linkages (if any), have your project(s) developed with other organisations and other programs?
30. How well are these partnerships and linkages working?
31. What are the overall views of the House staff regarding the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?
32. What barriers have you encountered in the development and delivery of your project(s)?
33. What support needs have you identified in the development and delivery of your project(s)?

34. How could your project(s) be further improved?
35. What have you learned from your literacy and numeracy project(s) and activities that could benefit or be used in other Houses and/or the whole TACH network?
36. What resources have been developed that could benefit or be used in other Houses and/or the whole TACH network?

Part D: Support for your Project and House by TACH

37. How would you describe the type and level of support provided by TACH?
38. What gaps in the capacity or resources of your House have you identified that TACH could assist you to improve?
39. How could TACH assist you improve the outcomes of participants in the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?

Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Literacy Program Interview Questions for TACH

Part A: The funding process

1. How satisfied are you with the level of take up and access to the funding?
2. What worked well, or what did you like about the funding/application process?
3. What didn't you like, or needs to be improved with the funding/application process?
4. How useful and effective were the funding guidelines?
5. How much and what type of support was provided by TACH to assist prepare funding applications?
6. What has been changed in the funding process since funding round 1 and why?
7. How often should the funding rounds for the Literacy Program be offered? (Is annual funding the preferred funding model?)
8. What recommendations or suggestions would you make to improve the funding/application process?

Part B: The Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program

9. How does TACH know what outcomes are being achieved?
10. How satisfied is TACH with the outcomes being achieved?
11. How do the reporting activities for the Houses contribute to the reporting obligations of TACH to the Tasmanian Community Fund?
12. What data would be useful for TACH?

Part C: TACH support of projects and Houses

13. How would you describe the type and level of support provided by TACH?
14. What gaps in the capacity or resources has TACH identified that could assist Houses to improve the development, delivery and management of projects and activities?
15. How could TACH assist Houses to improve the outcomes of participants in the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?
16. To what extent do you believe the aims of the program are being achieved?
17. How could the achievement of the program aims be further improved?

Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Literacy Program

Interview Questions for the Assessment Panel

Part A: The funding process

1. What worked well, or what did you like about the funding/application process?
2. What didn't you like, or needs to be improved with the funding/application process?
3. What has been changed in the funding process since funding round 1 and why?
4. How useful and effective were the funding guidelines?
5. How much and what type of support should TACH offer to assist Houses prepare funding applications?
6. What feedback is/should be provided to unsuccessful applicants?
7. How often should the funding rounds for the Literacy Program be offered? (Is annual funding the preferred funding model?)
8. What recommendations or suggestions would you make to improve the funding/application process?
9. What information does the Assessment Panel need in order to effectively assess applications? (For example, reporting of outcomes from previously funded applications)
10. What are your overall views of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?
11. What (if anything) do you believe may need to change or be reviewed from a funding/application perspective over the 10 year lifetime of the program?

Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Literacy Program Discussion Questions for the Regional TACH Meetings

Part A: The funding process

1. What worked well, or what did you like about the funding/application process?
2. What didn't you like, or needs to be improved with the funding/application process?
3. How often should the funding rounds for the Literacy Program be offered? (Is annual funding the preferred funding model?)
4. How much and what type of support should TACH to assist prepare funding applications?
5. What recommendations or suggestions would you make to improve the funding/application process?

Part B: The Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program

6. How much do know about the program, what it is trying to achieve, and the process of applying for funding?
7. How easy or hard is it for a House to identify literacy needs in the community and access the appropriate expertise and skills to develop and deliver projects?
8. What are your views on the aims of practical projects and soft entry and/or targeted support – what should be the main focus of the program?
9. What is your experience regarding the best models of project development and delivery to achieve the best literacy outcomes?
10. What alternative models or approaches could be considered for the delivery of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?

Part C: TACH support of projects and Houses

12. What role should TACH play in supporting the development and delivery of literacy projects in your communities?
13. What could and should TACH be doing to assist you to achieve the best possible literacy outcomes in your communities?
14. How could TACH assist Houses to improve the outcomes of participants in the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities program?
15. To what extent do you believe the aims of the program are being achieved?
16. How could the achievement of the program aims be further improved?

Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Literacy Program Interview Questions for the Sample Houses

Part A: Your Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program

1. How satisfied is your House with the outcomes being achieved?
2. What is the best and most appropriate way of getting feedback from participants in your projects and activities?
3. How do you recruit and target participants (a) for the soft entry projects and (b) for targeted literacy and numeracy projects and activities?
4. If participants are targeted for the soft entry practical projects, what are they told about the literacy and numeracy aims of the project or activity?
5. What literacy assessment processes are involved in your projects and activities?
6. What are the management issues for your Everyday Literacy for Local Communities projects?
7. What are the staffing, expertise and resource issues for the development and delivery of your Everyday Literacy for Local Communities project(s)?
8. What gaps in the capacity or resources of the House has been identified that impact on the development, delivery and management of your Everyday Literacy for Local Communities project(s)?
9. How effective have the partnerships and linkages with other project(s) and activities been with your Everyday Literacy for Local Communities project(s)?
10. What have you learned from your literacy and numeracy project(s) and activities that could benefit or be used in other Houses and/or the whole TACH network?
11. What resources have been developed that could benefit or be used in other Houses and/or the whole TACH network?

Part B: TACH support of projects and Houses

12. What support provided by TACH has been most useful to you?
13. What additional support and resources could TACH provide to further improve the delivery of and outcomes from your Everyday Literacy for Local Communities project(s)?
14. How could TACH assist Houses to improve the outcomes for participants in the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities project(s)?