

# Now is the moment to put language in place: Reimagining the Adult Migrant English Program

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***Putting Language In Place: Improving the Adult Migrant English Program*** is a new report from the Centre for Policy Development (CPD) that details how one of Australia's great nation building programs, the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), can be remade for the future.

"This report provides important context for the recently announced expansion of the AMEP to any permanent resident or citizen requiring English language support and the relaxation of the timeframe in which people can access this support," said Annabel Brown, CPD's Program Director.

"We welcome the Federal Government's decision to enact important changes to the AMEP," said Ms Brown. "We, along with colleagues across the sector, have had productive conversations with government officials over many months about how better English language support can boost economic and social participation for migrants."

"We are delighted many of the recommendations in this report are aligned with the announcements made about AMEP's future" said Ms Brown. "These are positive steps for migrants who will benefit from the additional English language support well into the future, unlocking untold benefits for their families and for Australia. The challenge now is to ensure a new and improved AMEP can deliver on this aspiration."

"***Putting Language In Place*** sets out how to build on this newfound flexibility to create a more tailored and outcomes-driven AMEP, which supports people on their full settlement journey, and allows them to adapt their English learning to their needs, and the places they live and work," said Ms Brown.

Today, English language proficiency is more important than ever before. "The pathway to viable, long-lasting employment, and engagement in the wider community without English is far more difficult than it was for previous generations," said Henry Sherrell, the report's author.

"Whether recently arrived or resident for years, people with poor English will face additional barriers to full engagement in society and struggle to find work in an unforgiving post-COVID-19 labour market," said Ms Brown. "It is vital that changes to AMEP are followed by reforms to employment services too."

"The reforms to the AMEP provide an opportunity to better integrate English language learning with other settlement priorities like finding work in local employment markets and furthering study, and create provider arrangements that encourage specialist and sustained high-quality services."

Wyndham City's Cultural Diversity portfolio holder Cr Henry Barlow said the city has welcomed almost 21,000 overseas migrants in recent years. "A third of all Wyndham residents speak another language as well as English, but almost 6 per cent of our population either do not speak English well or do not speak the language at all. By increasing access to flexible language tuition, it gives more residents the opportunity to fully participate in our local community and economy as we build back from COVID-19."

Chief Executive Officer of Community Hubs Australia Dr Sonja Hood is a leading advocate of empowering recent arrivals to Australia, particularly female migrants. "Two out of three AMEP students are women but they often miss out on tuition as they try to juggle family responsibilities," she said. "We can better support them with informal pathways into conversational English learning, providing co-located childcare and coordinating their tuition with other settlement supports."

The report is available in full [here](#).

Henry Sherrell, Annabel Brown, Dr Sonja Hood and Cr Henry Barlow are available for comment.

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