

Lifelong Learning Council Queensland Policy

Lifelong Learning Council Queensland focuses on learning that is pursued throughout life: learning that is flexible, diverse and available at different times and in different places. Lifelong learning crosses sectors, promoting learning beyond traditional schooling and throughout adult life (ie. post-compulsory education). The Council's belief of learning is drawn from Delors' (1998) four 'pillars' of education for the future:

- Learning to know -mastering learning tools rather than acquisition of structured knowledge
- Learning to do – equipping people for the types of work needed now and in the future including innovation and adaptation of learning to future work environments
- Learning to live together, and with others – peacefully resolving conflict, discovering other people and their cultures, fostering community capability, individual competence and capacity, economic resilience, and social inclusion
- Learning to be – education contributing to a person's complete development: mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation and spirituality

Lifelong learning can instil creativity, initiative and responsiveness in people thereby enabling us to show adaptability in our post-industrial society through enhancing our skills to:

- manage uncertainty
- communicate across and within cultures, sub-cultures, families and communities
- negotiate conflicts

The emphasis is on learning to learn and the ability to keep learning for a lifetime.

Purpose:

LLCQ acknowledges the importance of learning for community well being, social cohesion and improved quality of life. This policy is developed to enable LLCQ to:

- Contribute to the development of a vision of vibrant and effective community learning in Queensland.
- Provide a framework for community and government to work in collaboration and to provide strategic guidance, key directions and implementation outcomes for the range of sectors supporting community learning in Queensland.
- Promote LLCQ's mission statement: 'Queensland's Voice for Community Learning'.
- Facilitate pathways and progressions through lifelong learning, to foster social cohesion and improve quality of life for all Queenslanders.
- Pursue the integration of formal and informal learning for the enrichment of all facets of the learning community.
- Promote an environment of understanding, tolerance, compassion to bring about greater equality according to gender, education, ethnicity and age.
- Foster a learning culture that underpins economic activity and quality of life for all in a learning community and strengthens capacity within that community.
- Encourage people to equip themselves with learning tools that will sustain them and their societies for the rest of their lives.
- Make lifelong learning a reality for all Queenslanders

Principles and Defining Features

This policy is based on the following features:

- People learn most effectively in learner-centred environments where they are actively involved in decisions about management, content, style and delivery of their learning.
- Learning strengthens communities by building diverse skills and capacities, including enterprise skills and community management skills. It is responsive to community requirements for learning. Participation in learning enhances family and interpersonal relationships and can lead to participation in broader social, economic and cultural debates. Local community organisations can most readily identify and respond to the needs of their local community.
- Learning should be accessible, appropriate, stimulating and affordable in recognition of differing circumstances and constraints. Community learning is inclusive of all people regardless of their background, age and circumstance. It has the capacity to increase access to learning pathways for people who are under-represented in employment and training.
- Learning is a diverse phenomenon including literacy and numeracy; basic education; liberal and general education; vocational preparation; training and skills development; continuing professional education; and tertiary studies.
- Learning is more responsive when collaboration occurs between all sectors of education and training. Existing and newly developing community networks need to be supported and strengthened to enhance the availability of learning opportunities. Community learning has a long tradition of innovative delivery based on providing learning at times, places and ways that are appropriate to the learner. It displays flexibility and is user-focused.

Scope

LLCQ acknowledges that lifelong learning is a broad, inclusive concept spanning from 'cradle to grave'. Nevertheless, it focuses on meeting the needs of adults who, for whatever reason, may not access mainstream traditional learning in schools, institutes or universities. It encompasses learner-centred, community-based delivery that is connected to life realities, to develop experiences, knowledge, skills and understanding in learning, living and working.

This policy covers a spectrum of programs including general and liberal education; basic adult education; vocational education and training; continuing education and public education. It advocates for appropriate infrastructure to support the scope of delivery. It also covers learning activities across diverse social and political areas, ranging from offerings on a voluntary basis through to full user-pays.

Learning opportunities can be accredited or informal, can be fulfilling in their own right or lead to pathways for further learning.

Description

Lifelong learning in Queensland is inclusive of learner-centred, formal and informal, voluntary, fee-paying and non-fee paying activities, that focus as equally on learning that is non-work oriented as it does on work-based learning. It is a vehicle for individuals within learning communities to make their own contributions measured by the extent to which they form a civil society of 'good will' where there is coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. People can learn to take charge of their future, realize more of their potential and give direction to their personal, spiritual, social and economic development as well as that of the communities they live in..

To be a lifelong learner is to know how to seize opportunities to broaden knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes, to adapt to a changing, complex and interdependent world ... and to keep learning for a lifetime.

Our position

Adopted at the Executive meeting held 18th March -for further discussion with the membership

The Council's policy acknowledges that Lifelong Learning is a "cradle to grave" endeavour for individuals and their communities. However, we position our activities principally in the informal post-compulsory sector of learning because:

- Adults learning in communities is receiving limited attention from any of the formal parts of the education sector
- Although short of resources and funding, the schools, vocational education and training (public providers), and the tertiary sectors of education receive substantial funding for infrastructure, capital expenditure and operational costs, whereas the informal sector of post-compulsory education struggles to be recognised for the immense contribution it makes to Queensland's economy, community capital and individual well-being.
- Many adults, especially over 40 years of age have had educational experiences that did not necessarily equip them for a rapidly changing world, this is even more particularly so with increasing years of life. Many adults over 60 years of age experienced limited schooling.
- Formal education, either schooling or post-compulsory, does not meet the needs of many young people, and these are increasingly being catered for through community provision.
- In Queensland the provision of informal learning opportunities for adults has experienced major changes since the mid-1990s. Prior to this time TAFE Institutes offered extensive programs at affordable costs (TAFE-ACE). This provision has been in steady decline since this time. There is currently no systematic effort to replace this provision and not-for-profit organisations are beginning to fill this need.
- Since 1991 there has been no policy portfolio within the Queensland Government or legislation with any responsibility for adult education that is not-accredited. This is in substantial contrast to New South Wales, Victoria (which have established Boards under legislation), and South Australia.

Furthermore, for the present, we are directing our resources more substantially to the not-for-profit sector of post-compulsory learning because not-for-profit organisations:

- Generally work at increasing a community's wealth collectively rather than the individual wealth of their organisation's directors. Wealth accumulated by these organisations is used to build the organisation, it's service provision and work at the development of the community.
- Frequently share a philosophical approach towards working with people to meet their participants needs draw substantially on the capacity and capability of the voluntary effort of community members.