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# Digital Literacy Programs for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities

Developing, facilitating and enhancing digital literacy  
programs in Australian Public Libraries

Digital Guide

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## Authors



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## Library partner

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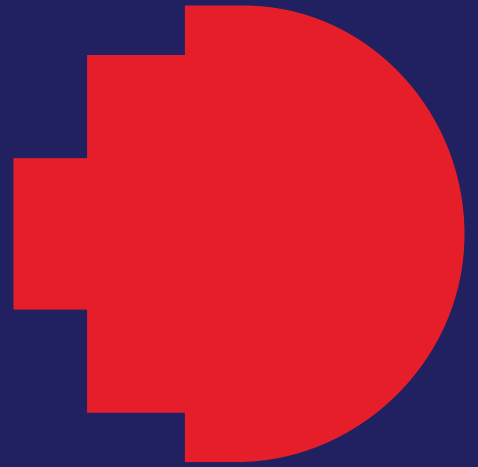
Australian Library and  
Information Association

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## Digital Literacy:

"...incorporates the ability to search and navigate, create, communicate and collaborate, think critically, analyse information, and address safety and wellbeing using a variety of digital technologies"

(Commonwealth of Australia 2020, p. 4)



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# Overview

This digital guide was produced by RMIT researchers to support Australian Public Libraries to develop and enhance digital literacy programs for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. The guide was produced as a result of a project conducted in partnership with Hume Libraries. The project was initiated in response to the 2019, Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) report, 'Services for Migrants and Refugees', which examined the programs that were being implemented across Australian Libraries.

The research project extended ALIA's work by partnering with Hume Libraries to explore, examine and document the pivotal role that library staff play in implementing and sustaining Digital Literacy Programs for CALD communities. The framework presented in this guide was informed by a literature review that identified good practice and lessons learned in developing, delivering and supporting digital literacy programs globally. It is also informed by the analysis of a series of interviews and a focus group with staff from Hume Libraries in Melbourne who have extensive experience developing and facilitating digital literacy programs to support their CALD community. The remainder of this guide features an introduction to Hume Libraries, followed by presentation of the framework.

# Hume Libraries

Hume City Council is located in the outer north-west of Melbourne and currently supports five libraries under the banner "Hume Libraries".

## About Hume Libraries

Hume City serves a culturally diverse and youthful population and services delivered by Hume Libraries include programs for children and families, with a strong focus on early literacy, including an innovative bilingual storytelling program. A broad range of community resources and programs is delivered, including traditional English library collections, material in community languages including Arabic, Farsi, Hindi, Punjabi, Sinhalese, Tamil, Turkish and Urdu. The library collection comprises approximately 180,000 items in total. A suite of programs aimed at young people and adults are also offered. These include digital and technology programs, health and wellbeing, careers and jobs, school holiday programs and more.

## Current service points

- Broadmeadows Library in the Hume Global Learning Centre
- Craigieburn Library in the Hume Global Learning Centre
- Sunbury Library in the Hume Global Learning Centre
- Gladstone Park Community Library
- Tullamarine Library



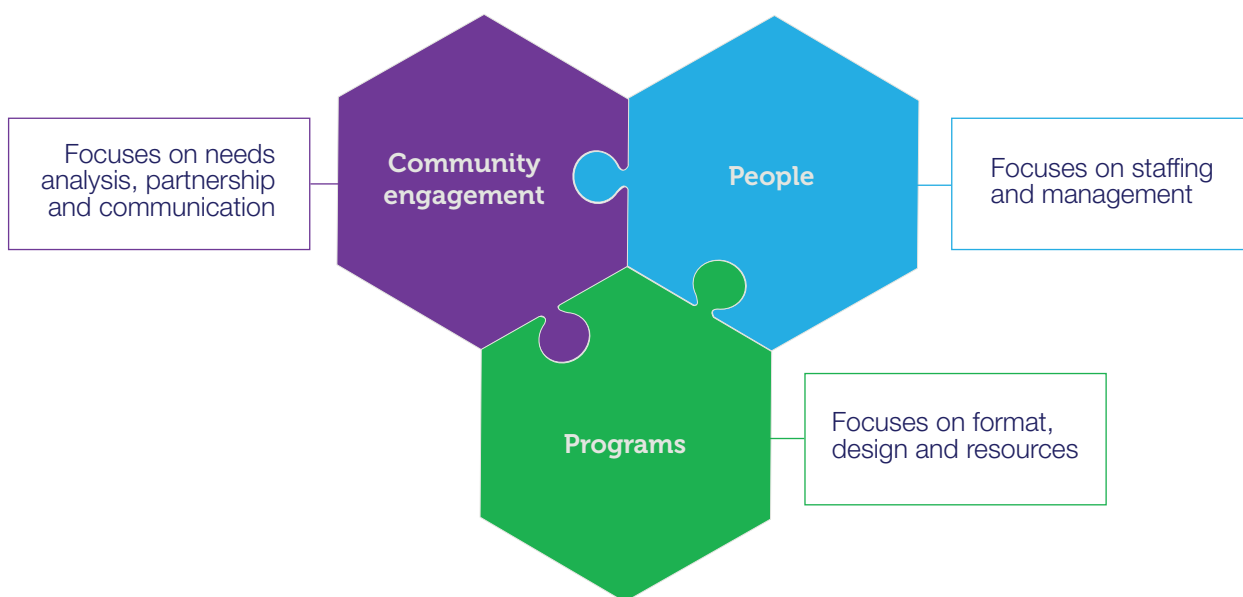


# Developing Digital Literacy Programs for CALD Communities

Community engagement, people and programs represent three dimensions that are critical to the successful development and facilitation of digital literacy programs for CALD communities. These dimensions have been distilled into a checklist of key tasks required as programs are developed and enhanced.

## How it works

The checklist for each of the three interrelated themes focuses on key areas for consideration as programs are developed and enhanced. Each task can be marked as not applicable, to do, underway and done, highlighting the actions required to support program development.



# Community engagement

Engaging with members of the local community is central to understanding and meeting their needs and thus delivering successful digital literacy programs. A needs analysis should identify what digital literacy programs are already on offer so that new programs can focus on filling gaps and providing services that are not offered elsewhere. Partnerships with trusted organisations that support CALD communities are essential to support an effective needs analysis and can inform the program design and delivery. To achieve this, it is important that communication strategies are employed to reach key stakeholders.



## Needs analysis

Tasks	N/A	To do	Underway	Done
Analyse the composition of community (especially language groups) and their needs (e.g. Australian Bureau of Statistics data, host community forums)				
Map and evaluate what other sessions and resources are available in the community				

## Partnership

Tasks	N/A	To do	Underway	Done
Establish trust-based relationships with a range of community groups and services				
Cross-promote library programs via community partner organisations and encourage referrals				
Develop partnerships with organisations to support in-community delivery				

## Communication

Tasks	N/A	To do	Underway	Done
Promote programs via multiple channels in prevalent community languages and formats				
Translate the library website into prevalent community languages				

# People

Library staff and management are central to the continuous development and delivery of successful digital literacy programs. Adaptable, digitally literate, bi-lingual staff are the foundation for successful programs. They empower participants to build their skills to support lifelong learning. In addition, management support for resourcing and knowledge sharing is essential to the success of digital literacy programs.



## Staffing

Tasks	N/A	To do	Underway	Done
Recruit staff fluent in the main languages used by the community				
Recruit staff who are digitally literate, tech savvy and committed to continuous development of their technical skills				
Recruit staff who are resilient, adaptable and client focused				

## Management

Tasks	N/A	To do	Underway	Done
Secure funding and resources to support program staffing and acquisition of technology				
Establish opportunities for knowledge sharing and regular communication between program facilitators				
Establish a culture and communication channels that empower staff to develop, design and pilot new programs and initiatives				
Maintain security of client records and personal information				
Systematically evaluate digital literacy programs to support continuous quality improvement				

# Programs

Digital literacy programs should be co-designed with the community and offered in a range of prevalent community languages. The programs should be offered in a variety of formats (e.g. session size, location, timing) and designs (e.g. practical, topic content). Programs should be adequately resourced in terms of technology and curricula. Attending to these dimensions will help ensure that digital literacy programs are accessible and as engaging as possible for clients.



## Format

Tasks	N/A	To do	Underway	Done
Offer a range of interactive individual and small group sessions in prevalent community languages alongside opportunities for client driven 'drop-in' consultations				
Offer in-library and in-community (mobile library) sessions				
Offer online session options using delivery platforms selected to meet community needs				
Vary the program schedule to meet community needs (e.g. during school hours, after-work hours)				
Adopt a train-the-trainer approach with partner organisations to extend program reach				

## Design

Tasks	N/A	To do	Underway	Done
Co-design a bespoke suite of sessions with community members in response to the needs analysis				
Design 'hands on' practical sessions that support experiential learning				
Ensure online safety is embedded in session design				



## Resources

Tasks	N/A	To do	Underway	Done
Co-design and curate a suite of bilingual program support resources with the community (e.g. digital tip sheets or videos)				
Leverage and support the range of technology that is used by and accessible to clients				
Provide access to a range of loan technology for client use during sessions (e.g. tablets, laptops)				
Establish a minimum technology standard in terms of device specifications (e.g. age), platform (e.g. iOS, android, windows) that will be supported by programs				

"Our research highlights the crucial role that libraries play in building valuable partnerships with communities and organisations. Through the dedication of their staff and volunteers, libraries are able to develop programs that include the support and development of vital digital literacy skills for the CALD community. This research project is one example of the great work that libraries are currently doing and we are extremely grateful to Hume Libraries for sharing their practice with the broader Australian community"

Dr Huan Vo-Tran  
Senior Lecturer  
RMIT University





# Conclusion

This digital guide presents a checklist developed to support library staff as they develop and enhance digital literacy programs for CALD communities. It draws on RMIT research conducted in partnership with Hume Libraries and seeks to share insights with staff across the network of Australian Public Libraries. The guide can be used in conjunction with other library policy documents and tailored to meet the needs of particular library services. Please contact the RMIT research team should you be interested in finding out more about this study or to explore opportunities for collaboration and research:

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