

## **Call for Papers**

### **Special Edition: Australian Journal of Adult Learning Policy, practice and pedagogy: Adult education in times of decaying capitalism and failed democracy**

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***Guest editor:*** *Dr Kellie Sanders*

We live in times of ecological crisis and climate collapse, witnessing a resurgence of fascism once considered inconceivable in the post-World War era. Epidemic rates of mental ill health, social disunity and fragmentation are rife. Social inequality and persistent poverty have grown, despite historically unprecedented wealth and accumulation by a handful of individuals creating a new oligarchic ruling class. Similarly, despite the promised democratisation of information with the advent of internet technologies, new media monopolies promote mass censorship, diminishing informed citizenship.

Investment in citizens and a collective public good no longer drives the politics of those in positions of power. Research has long pointed to the impact Western cultures could make toward addressing climate change and meaningfully attending to such things as educational disadvantage, poverty, childhood adversity and the ongoing harms of colonisation for First Nations communities. And yet governments – at best – tinker around the edges of such crises while decrying economic hardship and ‘responsible’ fiscal policy, all the while investing in corporate tax

incentives and fossil fuel subsidies while we witness rapacious social service policies, chronically under-funded public schools, and a public health system perpetually at breaking point.

Such are the spoils of late-stage capitalism.

The roles, purposes, hopes and possibilities for education have always been contested, and that of adult education arguably the most neglected of all. Decades of neoliberalism has engendered a cycle of precarity for those on the frontline of community provision of adult education services.

In times of decaying capitalism and what we call a failed democracy, we explore the role of adult education for individuals, communities, the public good, and (perhaps) influencing our social worlds. We ask what role adult education can or should play in people's lives, what challenges adult education is facing, and what enables and sustains adult education in the face of poly-crisis.

In this special issue, we position adult education as lifelong learning, including and expanding beyond the bounds of formal, organised education settings (such as higher education, professional learning) and consider such things as:

- The roles, purposes, values and capacity of adult education in times of local, national, and global threats to democracy
- Adult education toward the practice of freedom, agency, self-actualisation, and fostering a life worth living
- Adult education and/in/for social and civic responsibility and citizenship
- Adult education for ecological survival
- Public pedagogies in action for and with diverse communities
- Activism and praxis fomenting adult learning

We invite submissions from a wide range of interdisciplinary fields and perspectives that reflect, analyse, speculate and explore such things as policy, practice and pedagogy as it relates to adult learning in the current moment.

## **Submissions guidelines**

We welcome submissions from researchers, educators, practitioners and activists to submit proposals to this special issue.

- Abstracts should be up to 500 words in length.
- Refereed papers should generally not exceed 6,000–7,000 words

## **Submission details**

- Abstracts: 300-500 words (excluding references), to be sent to the Guest Editor via the email provided below.
- Academic papers: 6,000-6,500 words, including references, tables, data, and figures; double-blind, externally peer reviewed.
- Practice stories: Up to 3,000 words, including references, tables, data, and figures, reviewed by editors.

## **AJAL submission and author guidelines**

<https://www.ajal.net.au/peerreview/index.php/ajal/about/submissions>

## **Timeline**

- Submission of abstracts – 1 December 2025
- Accepted abstracts notified – 31 January 2026
- Submission of full papers for review – 31 July 2026
- Publication of Special Issue – November/ December 2026
- Publication: November 2025

## **Abstracts and questions can be submitted to the Special Edition Guest Editor via email**

Send abstracts and any questions to Dr Kellie Sanders

Email: [k.sanders@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:k.sanders@latrobe.edu.au)