

**Expressions of Interest –
Lived-Experience Research Advisors (LERA) - four (4) voluntary advisory positions
Digital Exclusion Research Project**

BACKGROUND:

As a result of COVID-related restrictions in 2020, North Melbourne Language and Learning's (NMLL's) capacity to engage with the community in adult learning and community development (CD) programs was severely hampered. NMLL would like to further understand how access to data, devices and the skill level of using digital technology of our participants contributed to our community's ability (or inability) to participate fully in NMLL activities and classes because of COVID.

Through Melbourne University Community Fellowships program, NMLL has been given the opportunity to link to a broader research project undertaken by University called "Understanding Digital Inequality".

NMLL's research will specifically focus on engaging NMLL learners and community development participants who have experienced digital exclusion as a result of COVID-19.

NMLL adult learners and community development participants will be invited to participate in this research through completing a questionnaire (support provided by teachers, NMLL bilingual staff and Lived Experience Research Advisors) and or participating in one to one and group semi-structured interviews. Participation in this research project is voluntary.

The research aims to better understand:

- NMLL learners' and CD participants' access to digital technologies (devices, data, WiFi and digital literacy [DL] skills) during the pandemic
- How NMLL students and participants access digital technologies
- How digital exclusion has impacted on their ability to learn and engage in community activities.

ABOUT THE LIVED EXPERIENCE RESEARCH ADVISORS (LERA) ROLE

NMLL is recruiting four (4) people from the local community who have participated in NMLL's community development activities and English classes, as Lived-Experience Research Advisors (LERA). Please note that in this case 'lived-experience' means someone who has had direct experience of participating in activities run by NMLL – either as a student or a community development participant.

The LERA's will support the Community Development Coordinator with a research project into better understanding the digital exclusion (DE) of NMLL participants as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic.

LERA's duties will include:

- Promoting the research project to their community members and networks– either by word of mouth or through their social media networks
- Distributing the questionnaire to their relevant community networks
- Supporting their community members to complete a questionnaire and or participate in a semi-structured interview (some translation may be required)
- Participating in a 1-hour research project briefing
- Advising the Community Development Coordinator on research questions
- Advising the Community Development Coordinator on issues of cultural sensitivity in undertaking research

Requirement:

- As this is a Volunteer position, all successful applicants will need to fulfil the NMLL volunteer recruitment process, you can find the volunteer information by clicking on this link <http://www.nml.org.au/get-involved/volunteering/>
- LERA's will be expected to work at least 6 hours supporting the research project and will be offered a \$200 honorarium for undertaking this work as a Lived Experience Research Advisor.

This opportunity will most suit and **priority given** to local community members:

- Who speak a relevant community language (either Somali, Arabic, Oromo, Tigrigna, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese) as well as English
- Who have an interest in social research and digital inclusion (CD) for culturally diverse communities
- Who have been or are currently participants in NMLL adult learning classes and community development programs and who live in the North Melbourne and Flemington public housing estates
- That can make the time commitment of a minimum of 6 hours to support this research project

Benefits of being an NMLL LERA include:

- Acknowledgement in final research report
- Opportunity to participate in professional development research workshops delivered by Melbourne University (this will need to be undertaken in own time)
- Community Development Worker can be a referee for other employment or volunteer opportunities
- Experience of being involved in a social research project in a community setting

If you are interested in the role please complete the Volunteer Application Form, which you can find at <http://www.nml.org.au/get-involved/volunteering/>

For more information contact Loretta Asquini – Community Development Coordinator on 9326 7447 or lasquini@nml.org.au

If you would like assistance with the application process, please do not hesitate to contact Loretta using the above details.