

"What do you think should be done to improve the financial literacy of Australians and who do you think should play a role?"

Assisting to improve the financial literacy of Australians is an important role that the financial planning profession needs to embrace. All respected professions contribute to the ongoing development of the communities as a whole and as the pre-eminent body of people qualified in this area we need to take the lead. For example many members of the legal profession either work on a pro bono basis or act for legal aid clients where the financial returns are significantly lower than other areas of practice .

Financial literacy has always been important for members of the public as it helps to ensure that they budget and manage their income effectively, reducing their reliance on third parties such as governments and family members. This is in the interests of all Australians.

To improve financial literacy the financial planning profession either individually or through the peak industry associations need to work on a regular basis in conjunction with Government and semi government bodies (including schools). This work would involve participating in activities such as running programs, seminars, workshops, writing e books, developing online interactive games, videos and I phone applications.

Unfortunately a large percentage of the population is simply not interested in financial matters and this lack of understanding is often reflected in their financial position. A radical change is needed to make "financial literacy fun" and part of life's essential lessons such as "sex education" now is. Every child upon leaving school should be equipped with the basic financial skills such as understanding what a bank account or financial product is, the consequences of borrowing money, how to budget and the main asset classes.

Financial Planners have a pivotal role to play in the community in improving the financial literacy of Australians. In the words of Peter Drucker "remember today knowledge has power, it controls access to opportunity and advancement."