



COMMUNITY
GATEWAY



NSW Financial Inclusion Workshops

2026

Financial Inclusion Workshops - 2026

- Workshops held in Sydney, Newcastle, Kempsey, Dubbo and Albury
- Attended by representatives from 14 different organisations including NILS officers, financial counsellors and social workers





Key takeaways from the Workshops

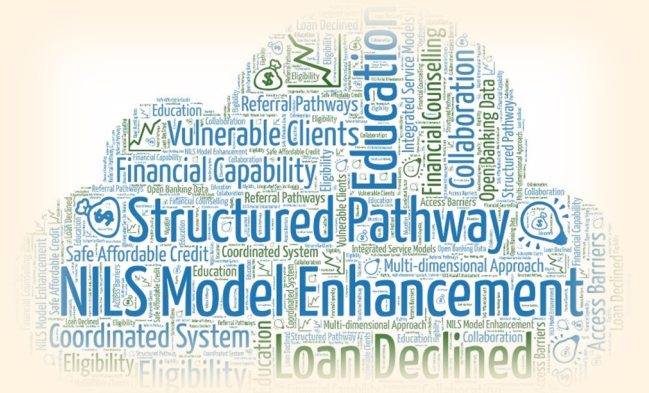
- Need for whole of government approach to Financial Inclusion
- Shift from isolated loan provision to coordinated system that addresses most vulnerable client needs
- Cross sector collaboration is important
- Opportunity to develop 'loan declined' pathway
- Address access barriers to NLS including eligibility
- Explore opportunities to develop better savings habits (include employers and benefits linked schemes)
- Need to strengthen education and financial literacy
- Identify alternatives to traditional funding (e.g. philanthropic, dormant assets etc)
- Look at ways to increase sector capacity including greater use of financial capability works, mapping referral pathways and greater collaboration

Challenges with current NILES model



- NILES is not the complete solution for financial inclusion.
- Limited capacity to spend time with declined applicants
- Gap in service around 'loan declined journey'
- Achieving loan numbers presents trade off with time spent educating clients
- Referral paths after decline not always clear
- Eligibility criteria may be too restrictive
- Focus is on repayment capacity not underlying financial vulnerability
- Limited and short-term funding requires subsidies and additional resources to deliver services effectively
- Need to accompany lending with improving financial literacy, providing digital literacy supports, and mechanisms that encourage savings

Opportunities to build on the NILS model



- Develop structured pathway for 'loan declined' applicants
- Improve collaboration between financial counsellors and NILS. Need for financial capability workers
- Address access barriers including eligibility
- Improved collaboration and integration across the sector
- Map current referral pathways and identify gaps
- Develop more safe affordable credit options (not necessarily based on credit score)
- Use of open banking data

Opportunities for Financial Inclusion beyond NILS



- Coordinated whole of government approach to financial inclusion
- Closer collaboration with employers
- Look at longer-term philanthropic funding to reduce uncertainty created by short funding cycles
 - Also dormant funds models (like in UK) – NSW has estimated \$600m in dormant funds
- Improve financial literacy
 - Financial education in schools
 - Adult education
 - Pilot financial literacy and savings programs
- Explore opportunities to develop savings habit (employer, benefit, etc.)
- Unclaimed benefits represent significant opportunity to engage with vulnerable people



COMMUNITY
GATEWAY

