An Investigation of the State and Nature of Languages in Australian Schools

Prepared by the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures Education
University of South Australia

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The interviews and document analysis for this project occurred during 2006 and 2007; however statistical information was available only up to 2006.
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Executive Summary

Introduction

This project is one of the Australian Government’s national projects funded through the School Languages Programme to support the implementation of the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008. The project is an investigation into the state and nature of languages education in Australian schools. It was undertaken to form a foundation for long-term planning and policy development in languages education at the national level.

There are a number of recent initiatives that have sought to influence the nature of languages education in Australia. The most recent and significant of these is the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008, which frames the nature and purpose of languages education in a nationally agreed manner. In addition, the development of Professional standards for languages teaching similarly seeks to influence the nature of languages education nationally. One of the central features of the evolving nature of languages education is the developing profile of intercultural language learning.

Method

The investigation for this report involved the collection of data about the state and nature of languages education from a number of different sources in order to generate a rich description of the current situation, which can be used as a basis for decision-making and agenda-setting. The investigation was based on four main sources of input:

- a literature review and document analysis;
- a quantitative survey;
- interviews and focus groups;
- qualitative data.

Language Policy

One of the differences in language education policies around Australia is whether languages are compulsory or elective parts of the curriculum. The mandating of languages is probably the most controversial of the policy issues around language study.

In Australian policy documents, ‘languages’ is identified as a key learning area, and it is this idea of ‘key’ that is at the heart of the debate about mandating languages. Effectively, if all key learning areas were actually understood in the same way, they would all be compulsory to some degree and the expectation would be that all students developed some capacity in each area. The question of mandating languages can be resolved only with an understanding of education more broadly. If education is seen as embodying certain key learning areas, then the very idea of ‘key areas’ should be that they are educationally important for all learners.

In most countries compulsory language study is a normal part of the secondary school curriculum, and is increasingly common in primary schools. The countries in which compulsory language learning is least well established are English-speaking countries in which only one language is used for official purposes. It is also in these countries that concern for participation in language learning is most commonly expressed.
Languages Taught in Australian Schools

The twenty most widely studied languages by student numbers reported as taught in Australian government, Catholic, independent, and ethnic schools in 2005 were:

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<td>Italian</td>
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<td>Chinese*</td>
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<td>Macedonian</td>
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<td>Modern Greek</td>
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<td>Vietnamese</td>
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<td>Khmer**</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Pitjantjatjara</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
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* Chinese includes reports of Mandarin or unspecified Chinese.
** Khmer includes Cambodian.

Participation Rates in the Government Sector

The data collected on participation in language programmes are very patchy, except for government sector schools. Complete data were not available for government schooling in Queensland and Tasmania. In the government sector:

- A total of 1,735,754 students were studying a language at some level of schooling in 2005.
- The overall numbers of students studying languages as a proportion of the whole school population has fallen from 50.9% in 2001 to 47.5% in 2005.
- In 2005, the proportion of students studying a language at school varied across States and Territories from a low of 27.6% in New South Wales to a high of 75.1% in Victoria.
- Most language study occurs in primary schools and language enrolments decrease steadily from Year 7.
- Most States and Territories show a reduction in participation rates in languages from 2001 to 2005.
- In spite of policy attempts to increase the number of students taking a language at senior secondary level, language enrolments have remained relatively static over the last decade.

Curriculum

K–10 Curricula

The curricula across the country for the years K–10 show considerable variations in terms of whether they are specifically languages curricula or whether languages are in some way integrated into a more general curriculum framework. Languages in education are understood in larger terms than the linguistic code itself. All these documents have an emphasis on communication and include reference to a cultural dimension relating to language.

Curriculum documents also show the residues of the history of languages curriculum in Australia. In many cases these influences have accumulated to produce documents in which there are multiple layers of understanding and multiple theoretical dimensions.
Languages are treated in different ways in the curricula of different States and Territories. In some jurisdictions languages are a recognised part of the mainstream curriculum, in others they are optional or marginal.

**Senior Secondary Curricula**

In the various State and Territory documents at senior secondary level there are a number of common elements, notably:

- The use of similar topics in various States and Territories (based on the Collaborative Curriculum and Assessment Framework for Languages)
- A strong grammatical focus, with roughly similar content
- Emphasis on both spoken and written language production and reception
- Inclusion of school-based assessment.

At the same time, there are many differences in the ways in which senior secondary syllabuses are constructed, and especially in the assessment component.

**Other Issues**

Language curricula in Australia are designed in most cases with a vision of K–12 language study; however, most schools are not required to provide K–12 language study and the relationship between K–12 curriculum documents and actual learning experiences is problematic. In addition, curricula are designed with at least notional ideas of how much time will be devoted to language study; however, language programmes often do not give as much time to language learning as the curriculum is designed for. Both of these issues create problems for mapping actual learning against curriculum documents.

The place of assessment in language curricula is problematic and needs to be further developed. Although assessment appears to be the driving force in curriculum design, this focus on assessment has tended not to be based on, nor to have produced descriptions of, typical levels of student learning in languages in general or in specific languages.

Language programmes for background speakers are highly variable across Australia, both in terms of the learning focus and in definitions of what constitutes a background speaker. Such programmes are as a result offered indiscriminately to highly varying cohorts of students with very different experiences of the language.

**Language Programmes**

**In Primary Schools**

Primary school language programmes begin at different year levels in different States and Territories and at different schools within States and Territories. The programmes tend to provide little time for actual language learning, with most programmes around Australia having less than 60 minutes contact time per week. All these factors compromise the quality of language teaching and learning in primary schools and the outcomes that can be expected of primary school programmes.

**In Secondary Schools**

In secondary schools in Australia there is also much variability in the nature of language programmes, but there appears to be less variability within States and Territories than there is for primary school language programmes. Secondary schools also tend to be more consistent
with States and Territories as well and respond more directly to government policies relating to language learning.

When language study in schools becomes elective, it is common for language enrolments to decline sharply. The decline in student numbers in elective language study may be the result of individual attitudes and preferences and this is inherent in the nature of elective subjects:

- Senior secondary students believe that taking a language will negatively affect their university entrance score or that learners will be disadvantaged by having to compete against native speakers.
- Subject groupings from which electives are chosen may prevent students from taking a language because of clashes with core subjects.
- Languages, which are perceived to be hard work, are grouped as electives with subjects that do not have the same reputation (e.g. craft subjects, art, sports).
- Languages at secondary school become elective too early for the learners to see the value of their learning.
- School learners have a perception that languages are not relevant for their future lives and this perception is reinforced by parents and by career advice given by schools.
- Planned discontinuity is a feature of some language programmes:
  - language study as part of a series of subjects through which learners cycle in the course of the year, usually taking a different subject each term or semester;
  - the provision of ‘taster’ programmes in which learners are exposed to a number of languages across the school year or over a number of years.

**Complementary Providers**

Complementary provision of language programmes occurs in government schools of languages, ethnic schools, and distance education schools. Among the complementary providers there is variation in the quality of education offered and in the nature of the programmes available.

Complementary providers have an important role in the delivery of language programmes in Australia; however, the availability of languages through such providers is not well distributed across the country. The sorts of complementation provided by different school types are different:

- Ethnic schools complement the mainstream by providing programmes that meet the language and culture maintenance needs of immigrant communities.
- Schools of language provide an alternative way of accessing mainstream programmes, where the language programme may not be offered by a school.
- Distance education provides access to language programmes primarily on the basis of geographic isolation and complements the traditional classroom, usually for more than just language learning.

At present no form of complementary provision appears to be established to deal with more general questions of access to the study of a particular language. Only some schools of language offer programmes that increase students’ choice of language, and most of these require a commitment to out-of-school study of the language. This provision is, however, largely restricted to major cities.
Teacher Supply and Retention

Teacher supply and retention are ongoing problems, which have been recognised for almost two decades, but for which there have been no consistent attempts at solutions. A lack of qualified teachers is often cited as the reason for cutting language programmes from schools.

Few primary teacher education programmes provide opportunities for teacher education students to develop their language abilities and to qualify as teachers of language. This contributes significantly to the lack of primary school qualified language teachers. One solution adopted by schools is to staff language programmes in an ad hoc way whereby teachers with language abilities but without language education qualifications are employed as language teachers, or qualified teachers without language abilities begin their language learning and language teaching at the same time.

Overseas-qualified native-speaker teachers have difficulties adapting to the Australian educational culture and are not supported by either pre-service or inservice professional learning programmes.

Language teachers, especially in primary schools, often have poor employment conditions: many positions are fractional, short-term contracts. Many teachers are therefore itinerant teachers who have to assemble full-time work over a number of schools and renegotiate contracts every year. These teachers are not well integrated into schools and are not well supported through planning, resource and space allocation, preparation time, etc. Language teachers often find it difficult to establish career pathways while remaining in language teaching, except in schools with large language programmes with several staff. The employment conditions for teachers and the lack of career pathways have a significant effect on the retention of language teachers in language teaching. Mobility requirements for teachers can undermine language programmes, because schools that lose their language teacher may not receive a replacement language teacher or may receive a teacher of a different language.

Professional Learning

There has been little systematic language-specific professional development, especially professional development aimed at the maintenance and development of language knowledge for language teachers.

There are issues around the models of professional learning available. Some programmes have sustained and supported professional learning through classroom investigation. There is also a significant use of one-off workshops, which introduce teachers to new ideas or new documents, but have no direct classroom follow-up.

Train-the-trainer approaches to inservice professional learning can be successful only if trainers already have a base level of knowledge and are required to focus only on developing the knowledge to deliver the content or use a training manual. Train-the-trainer programmes do not work well if the knowledge to be covered in the train-the-trainer workshop is too far beyond the current knowledge base of the trainer, or if the workshop trainer does not have sufficient time to develop the level of knowledge of theory and application necessary and is confident with his/her understanding of the material.

Programme Development

Current approaches to programme development by governments and teachers are episodic rather than long term in their focus, and overall coherence of programmes relies on orientations to curriculum framework documents or on the coherence provided by particular textbooks. Language programmes are not developed over a long period of time but rather are accumulations of episodes with little internal structuring. Language teacher education,
including inservice professional learning, does not seem to have emphasised programme development as an activity undertaken by language teachers, and so programme development remains weak at the classroom level.

Quality Assurance

Work in the area of quality assurance at a formal level within the system and individual schools has been limited in the languages area. State education systems have gathered limited amounts of data on the demographics of programmes and teachers and the data gathered have not been systematically analysed and used to inform development. Little data have been gathered on student achievement. School review reports tend to focus on the school-as-a-whole, and languages rarely feature.

Advocacy and Promotion

Advocacy for and promotion of languages education in Australia consist almost entirely of the production and distribution of promotional materials, either web-based or printed; there is now a large corpus of such material. It generally seems to be the case that once materials have been distributed (usually to language teachers) that is the end of the campaign; there is no sustained implementation, and no follow-up.

Recommendations

Recommendations to MCEETYA

Recommendation 1: That MCEETYA extend the National Statement and Plan for Languages in Australian Schooling for a further quadrennium in order to continue national collaboration in languages and to address further the areas of need identified in the Plan.

Recommendation 2: That the MCEETYA working party investigate models for coordinating national collaboration in languages for the development of curriculum, materials, professional learning, etc., and as a resource for policy advice, and conduct a feasibility study into a selection of models.

Recommendation 3: That on the basis of Recommendation 11 below, the MCEETYA working party undertake collaborative action to develop language-specific curricula.

Recommendation 4: That MCEETYA actively address the issue of teacher education in the area of languages, especially in primary school education, and develop models of teacher education that include languages as a key learning area for teachers.

Recommendation 5: That MCEETYA investigate the current provision of pre-service and inservice teacher education programmes for overseas-educated native speakers and consider how to address needs that are not being met.

Recommendation 6: That MCEETYA explicitly include in any national strategy for workforce planning the employment of language teachers which addresses the problems in terms of employment, career paths, and working conditions.

Recommendation 7: That MCEETYA explicitly include in any national strategy for workforce planning data collection to aid workforce planning for languages education, including the age profile of language teachers and potential retirements from teaching, the numbers of teachers employed full time, part time and on short-term casual contracts, the number of contracts per teacher, rates of turnover and attrition, and the number of qualified language teachers employed but not teaching languages.
**Recommendation 8:** That MCEETYA develop as a long-term strategy a coherent, systematic, nationally agreed languages education policy. The policy should establish national agreement on a number of dimensions including, but not limited to:

A: The policy should be nationally agreed, but allow for adaptation to State/Territory and local context, with principles to guide such adaptation.

B: The policy should take into consideration the following:
- the place and status of languages in the school curriculum
- the normal duration of languages learning during compulsory schooling
- appropriate time allocations for achieving desired levels of learning
- teacher education, especially for primary schooling
- teacher recruitment and workforce planning
- teachers’ employment conditions
- curriculum, with a focus on the cohesion of curriculum and the relationship between generic and language-specific curricula
- assessment, with a focus on assessment innovation that addresses alternative approaches to assessment
- quality assurance
- national collaborations with commitment to harnessing the best available expertise to sustain and develop the diversity of languages that make languages education in Australia meaningful and distinctive
- research and development
- funding allocations
- monitoring and evaluation of the policy.

C: The policy should be systematically monitored and evaluated during its implementation to track changes in languages provision and programme quality.

D: The policy should also include the establishment of a broadly based national committee to advise on the implementation of the policy, the research and development agenda, decisions about projects and future directions, and evaluation. The committee should include high-level representatives of jurisdictions, professional associations, language educators and researchers, and deans of education.

E: The policy should run for 10 years with a substantive review at the end of this period as a basis for refocusing and renegotiation.

**Recommendations to DEEWR**

**Recommendation 9:** That DEEWR continue to support national projects for a further quadrennium and increase the proportion of the School Languages Element allocated to national programmes to 10% of total funding to reflect the increased level of national collaboration in languages which is being developed and which needs to be sustained.

**Recommendation 10:** That as a next step to developing the state of languages in Australian schooling, DEEWR develop and fund a large-scale national assessment project to investigate what students can realistically be expected to acquire through the programme types that currently exist.
**Recommendation 11:** That DEEWR develop and fund a national project to identify common elements in languages curricula, syllabuses, and resources across States and Territories and identify how these can be used more effectively as a basis for national collaboration.

**Recommendations to State and Territory Jurisdictions**

**Recommendation 12:** That States and Territories support national collaboration for the next quadrennium by undertaking projects to complement initiatives from the Australian Government.

**Recommendation 13:** That State and Territory jurisdictions develop more effective strategies to ensure that current and future language education policy is implemented in schools. Such strategies may take the form of inclusion of language programme quality in terms of continuity and time on task in performance management for leaders, incentives for schools maintaining high-quality language programmes or demonstrably improving programme quality.

**Recommendation 14:** That State and Territory jurisdictions address the issues of employment conditions for languages teachers, including the impact of short-term contracts, part-time positions, career paths and itinerancy, which are currently working as barriers to staffing language programmes and retaining teachers.

**Recommendation 15:** That State and Territory jurisdictions develop a collaborative approach to developing syllabuses for background speakers at senior secondary level, e.g. along the lines of CCAFL, to ensure that syllabuses respond to a range of background speaker needs.
1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Languages education has been a focus of educational policy work for two decades, beginning with the National Policy on Languages (Lo Bianco, 1987); however, it continues to occupy a fragile position in Australian school education, in spite of its inclusion in the National Goals of Schooling (MCEETYA, 1999). Recent reviews of the field (Review of the Commonwealth Languages Other Than English Programme (Erebus, 2002b) and the Review of Languages in Australian Schools (MCEETYA, 2003) have identified both successes and difficulties in languages education. They also signalled a lack of consistency in language offerings and programme requirements across States and Territories. These reviews have primarily addressed the state of languages education in Australia, but have given less attention to its nature. It is therefore particularly important to develop a better understanding of the nature of languages education in order to provide a strong basis for long-term policy development.

A number of recent initiatives have sought to influence the nature of languages education in Australia. The most recent and significant of these is the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008, which frames the nature and purpose of languages education in a nationally agreed manner. In addition, the development of Professional standards for languages teaching (Liddicoat et al., 2005; Scarino, Papademetre, & Dellit, 2004) similarly seeks to influence the nature of languages education nationally. One of the central features of the evolving nature of languages education is the developing profile of intercultural language learning (Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, & Kohler, 2003). At the same time there are a number of difficulties which influence the nature of languages education in Australia and which have a wide application nationally. These include issues relating to retention in higher levels of school language learning (Liddicoat & Díaz, 2004), to the engagement of boys in language learning (Carr & Pauwels, 2005), the diversity of programmes and programme outcomes (Clyne et al., 1995; Scarino, 2003b), and programme sustainability (Dellit, 2002; Scarino, 1995b). These studies, however, focus on single factors in isolated contexts rather than on giving a comprehensive national picture of the issues confronting languages in Australians schools.

1.2 The Project Brief

This project is one of the Australian Government’s national projects to support the implementation of the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008 (MCEETYA, 2005b) funded through the School Languages Programme. The National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008 is intended to provide greater coordination of languages education across the country for the years 2005–2008. Specifically, the National Plan aims to:

• establish long-term directions for languages education;
• advance the implementation of high-quality and sustainable programmes;
• maximise collaboration in the use of national, State, and Territory resources; and
• provide flexibility in implementation by individual jurisdictions.

This project is an investigation into the state and nature of languages education in Australian schools. It was undertaken to form a foundation for long-term planning and policy development in languages education at the national level.
It contributes towards the achievement of the objectives listed in the National Plan for Strand 1 (Teaching and Learning), Strand 2 (Teacher Supply and Retention), Strand 3 (Professional Learning), and Strand 4 (Program Development). Specifically, the project aims to:

- form a foundation for long-term planning and policy development in languages education at the national level, including informing the work of the MCEETYA Languages Education Working Party;
- develop a comprehensive picture of the current provision of languages education in Australian schools, including information regarding State and Territory policies and curriculum frameworks, modes of delivery, programme models, including bilingual immersion models, and teacher supply and demand;
- examine and document the role different providers play in languages education, including Government and non-government primary and secondary schools, Government schools of languages/Saturday schools, distance education providers, and ethnic or community language schools, and how these interrelate;
- analyse how State and Territory policies respond to issues of mandatory language study, choice and continuity, workforce planning and teacher qualifications and professional learning, and how these policies affect the quality of languages provision and take-up by students;
- identify areas that may benefit from greater collaboration and cooperation between State and Territory education authorities;
- identify policy drivers and inhibitors that help or hinder the effective delivery of languages programmes; and
- make recommendations to increase the effectiveness and quality of languages learning within the current context of Australian schooling.

1.3 Issues Relating to Terminology

The nature of the school systems in Australia mean that there is a diversity of terminology which had to be taken into account in describing the school system.

The first of these is the designation of the Pre-Year 1 first year at school. This is known variably as Kindergarten, Prep(aratory), Reception, and Transition. In discussions of particular States and Territories the relevant term has been used; however, generically this year is referred to as Kindergarten, or K, as in K–10.

The division of schools into primary and secondary also varies across Australia. In most parts of Australia (Victoria, ACT, New South Wales, Tasmania), secondary schooling begins in Year 7 – that is primary school is Years K–6 and secondary school is Years 7–12. Although in the ACT senior secondary schooling is carried out in colleges, giving a three-tiered system. In other parts of Australia (Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, and, until recently, the Northern Territory), secondary schooling begins at Year 8 – that is primary school is Years K–7 and secondary school is Years 8–12. There is no way to generalise this and so the differences need to be borne in mind while reading the document.

In addition, the term ‘middle school’ is variously understood around Australia. Although it is not formally built into the school system in most States and Territories, the Northern Territory introduced a three-tier school system with primary (Years T–6), middle (Years 7–9), and senior school (Years 10–12) in 2007. As this report primarily covers the period up until the end of 2006, the term middle school has been largely avoided, except where it has particular relevance.
The term ‘Languages Other Than English’ (LOTE) has been used in Australia for a considerable period of time; however, in the *National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008*, the term ‘LOTE’ has been avoided and the term ‘languages’ used instead. In this report, the term ‘languages’ is used everywhere, except in direct quotations in which case the original text is maintained.

### 1.4 Method

The investigation involved the collection of data about the state and nature of languages education from a number of different sources in order to generate a rich description of the current situation, which can be used as a basis for decision-making and agenda-setting. The investigation was based on four main sources of input:

- a literature review and document analysis;
- a quantitative survey;
- interviews and focus groups;
- qualitative data.

#### 1.4.1 Literature Review and Document Analysis

The literature review was undertaken to provide a critical overview of research, curriculum, and policy, in Australia and overseas, relating to the state and nature of languages education. In addition to research studies published in books and academic journals, the literature review covered a large collection of government documents and documents from other organisations relating to languages education.

- Australian government documents
  - policy documents (from 1987 onwards)
  - curriculum documents (Statements and Profiles)
  - reports on languages education, and on general education with language references
- State and Territory government documents
  - curriculum/assessment documents
  - policy documents (languages, education, human resources)
  - reports on languages education, and on general education with language references
- National level documents
  - National goals of schooling documents
  - *National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008*
  - MCEETYA reports on languages education, and on general education with language references
  - National reports on schooling
- Documents from non-government educational sectors (Catholic, independent, and ethnic schools)
  - curriculum/assessment documents
  - policy documents (languages, education, human resources)
  - reports on languages education, and on general education with language references
• Documents from teacher registration bodies
  o policies, regulations
  o annual reports
• Documents from associations
  o reports and other documents from language teacher professional associations
  o reports with reference to languages from principals’ associations
  o reports with reference to languages from parents’ organisations
• International documents
  o policy documents (focusing on the European Union, Council of Europe, France, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Germany, UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Japan)
  o reports on languages, education with language references, including Eurydice country reports (focusing on the European Union, Council of Europe, UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand).

1.4.2 Focus Groups and Interviews

The process of using focus groups in each State/Territory aimed to develop an account of the key areas of focus for stakeholders in languages education and to develop a national perspective on these. Interviews and focus group discussions were held with key stakeholders in each State and Territory. The interviews focused on what stakeholders perceive as the more important developments in languages education in each State and Territory, the needs for maintaining and expanding languages provision, the main future directions for languages, and the opportunities and threats confronting effective and sustainable languages programmes.

Interviews were conducted with all jurisdiction representatives in order to gain a system perspective on issues around the state and nature of languages education in their particular systems. In some cases these interviews were conducted with more than one person, depending on the local decisions made by the jurisdictions themselves. In addition, interviews were conducted with representatives of schools of languages, distance education schools, etc. The use of an interview technique was chosen, as the focus of the process was to examine issues and perspectives as they were viewed within the relevant institutions.

The focus groups were conducted with various representatives of organisations such as professional associations, parents’ groups, and tertiary educators. Focus groups were chosen for these organisations as being better able to gauge the range of issues and opinions for these groups of stakeholders. The focus groups allowed for interactive discussion on the questions raised by the facilitator(s) and this interaction allowed different versions of perceptions of the state and nature of languages to emerge and be discussed in the group (Morgan, 1996). Both focus groups and interviews were based on the same protocol, a copy of which is included as Appendix 1. The interviews were semi-structured as it was felt that it was more important to follow ideas as they emerged and this required a degree of flexibility in using the protocol. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researchers to gather comparable information from the participants, while at the same time allowing for flexibility to pursue relevant issues as they emerged (Mishler, 1986) and the opportunity of exploring issues relevant to the interviewee’s concerns (Stewart & Cash, 1991).

In general it was preferred to conduct all interviews and focus groups face to face, usually with two interviewers/facilitators. However, for logistical reasons, some interviews were conducted by telephone. This was not an option for focus groups where interaction between participants is an important part of the data collection. Where a focus group could not be arranged, organisations were invited to prepare a written response to the questions. Such written responses do not capture the diversity of views found within such organisations as
they tend to present an agreed view of the situation; however, such information was still useful for the project.

The list of participants in the interviews is given in Table 1 and for focus groups in Table 2. Participants were contacted initially by email as many of the organisations included in this part of the data collection are staffed by volunteers and do not have a central telephone contact. It proved impossible to conduct interviews or focus groups with all of the stakeholders identified in all States. In some cases, participants did not wish to be included in the interviews because they felt that they had nothing that they could usefully contribute to an investigation focused on languages. In other cases, it proved impossible to establish contact and this was especially the case for parents’ organisations and for groups without a formal structure, such as tertiary educators. In some cases, participants invited to focus groups were unable to attend while project members were in their relevant State or Territory; these organisations were offered the opportunity of providing a written response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>NT</th>
<th>Qld</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Tas</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>WA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government systems</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic systems</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent systems</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boards of study</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

✓ Interview/focus group — No group
× Invited, not available NR Invited, no response

Table 1: Interview participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>NT</th>
<th>Qld</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Tas</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>WA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ associations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLTAs</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ associations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Languages</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance education</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Schools</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uni language teachers</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uni teacher educators</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

✓ Interview/focus group — No group
NR Invited, no response W Written response
× Invited, not available WR Written response not returned
NC Not contacted

Table 2: Focus group participants

1.4.3 Quantitative Survey

The quantitative survey collected data from a number of sources in order to develop as complete a picture as possible for 2000 to 2005.

- Most languages data for 2000 to 2002 were obtained from the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs’ (MCEETYA) languages review (MCEETYA, 2003).
- Data for 2003 to 2005 were requested from State and Territory jurisdictions, although there were problems with the collection of this data that will be discussed below.
• Year 12 statistics for language students from 1991 to 2005 were obtained from the former DEST and are drawn from the State/Territory boards of examination data supplied to the former DEST for inclusion in the Annual Report on Schooling.

• The Year 12 statistics for language students for 1990 were obtained from the Australian Education Council’s (AEC) National Reports on Schooling in Australia (Australian Education Council, 1991, 1992, 1993).

• Data on total numbers of Year 12 students in State and Territory schools for 1993 to 2005 were obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Schools Australia Reports (www.abs.gov.au). Additional data for 1990 to 1992 were also sourced from ABS data.

• Data for ethnic school enrolments for 2003 were obtained from the various ethnic schools associations in each State and Territory.

• Finally, data for 1987 were obtained from the National Survey of Language Learning in Australian Schools (DEET, 1988).

1.4.3.1 Quantitative Data Sources, 2003–2005

Jurisdictions and ethnic schools were contacted with requests for data. We requested data on:

• the languages taught in each State and Territory by language provider, the levels at which they were taught, the number of students taking each language at various levels, the number of students completing senior secondary qualification in each language; and

• languages teachers, including numbers of teachers at primary and secondary levels across all language providers, number of teachers for each language, level of qualifications, and unmet demand for teachers of particular languages.

The quantitative survey also aimed to identify and document what data is aggregated at systemic level. It was hoped in particular to follow through the data collected in 2003 by the MCEETYA languages review (MCEETYA, 2003), which covered 2000–2002. It became apparent early that there were significant gaps in the data available from the jurisdictions and even the aim of following through data collected earlier could not be achieved. In particular, it was found that:

• teacher data is highly variable across the country and not kept in all jurisdictions.

• participation data: problems with gender breakdown of study, time allocation.

• achievement data: very limited, except for senior secondary level.

• trend data: not all years in the desired period have available data.

The extent of the problems encountered can be seen in Table 3, which identifies which core elements of data were obtained from the various jurisdictions. The table shows a very patchy coverage even of this limited data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Government sector</th>
<th>Catholic sector</th>
<th>Independent sector</th>
<th>Ethnic Schools sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Languages taught</td>
<td>Students/ language</td>
<td>Students/ language/year</td>
<td>Contact time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qld</td>
<td>✓ (PS, Yr 12 only)</td>
<td>✓ (PS, Yr 12 only)</td>
<td>✓ (not 2004)</td>
<td>✓ (not 2004)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: In the table, 'none' indicates that we did not get any data from that particular State and sector. This has occurred for a variety of reasons. In some cases, we received a response indicating that the State/sector did not collect any data. In other cases we did not receive a response; in many of these cases, we are aware that the data collection period coincided with a change in personnel in the relevant areas.

Table 3: Data supplied by jurisdictions
1.4.3.2 Issues Surrounding Quantitative Data and Analysis

There are many problems and caveats surrounding the collection, analysis, and presentation of quantitative data for this report, ranging from the non-existence or non-reporting of figures, through figures being divided up differently, to apparently similar figures not actually corresponding. In some cases this reduces comparability across States or sectors; in other cases there is no comparability through time.

In many cases there appears to be no collection of figures which, from a policy perspective, could be considered as important. For example, nearly all sectors in the different States collect few figures relating specifically to language teachers; while those involved in the administration of the sectors have some very general ideas about the nature of the workforce, they have relatively little idea of issues that might affect workforce planning, such as how many qualified language teachers there are in the sector, what training they have, or any demographic factors such as what ages they are or how soon they are likely to retire.

In many of the non-government sectors, a great deal of the data around languages and languages teaching is collected on a purely voluntary basis, and consequently the data available represents less than 50% of the schools in the sector. Although this is not necessarily an issue in itself, it is usually unclear whether the available data is in any way representative of the system as a whole, or whether it over- or under-represents the real picture. That is, given that those who are more interested in a particular issue tend to be those who are more likely to respond, it is quite probable that those schools who have a stronger languages programme are more likely to respond to a voluntary data collection exercise relating to languages. Other sectors indicated that, as a system, they did not collect any figures relating to languages education in the schools in their sector.

There were also issues of data confidentiality, which impinged on the data collection for this project. In some non-governmental sectors, the central sector administrative body sometimes had access to some data on languages education from the schools, but as schools themselves had not explicitly given permission for this data to be passed on to us, the sector administration did not feel that they could allow us access to the data.

Where figures are collected, it is usually the case that, following different traditions, different education sectors in different States collect somewhat different figures. For any particular set of figures, some sectors might record their figures separately for male and female students; some figures might be divided up by year level, others only by school level (primary versus secondary). This is a very big issue when dealing with twenty-four separate sets of figures — if an attempt is made to collapse together figures every time one of the sets does not make a particular division, by the time all the sets are accounted for, all possible distinctions within the figures have disappeared, and all that remains is a figure of the total number of students in each sector (across both genders, all year levels, all age groups and school types) who have had something to do with a language that year.

This lack of comparability of figures is particularly noticeable when the data collection is further extended to take into account specialist schools of languages and ethnic schools, where the figures are often not collected (or indeed collectable) by year-level correspondence. This is not necessarily a problem in itself — but it does mean that it is not possible to include the ethnic school figures or schools of language figures in some counts.

There are additional particular data analysis issues relating to ethnic schools and schools of languages (and, indeed, private language classes and in some cases distance education courses), and to including these figures in with other sets of figures. In most cases there seems to be no tracking of individual students from within their educational sector if they participate in language classes outside the sector. This is an issue if we wish to attempt to calculate how many students (or what percentage of students) are studying a language — while we may know that 300 students in a particular State are studying a language in ethnic schools, for example, it is usually impossible to tell if these students are studying another language at their
regular school or not, and whether simply crudely adding together the figures will double-count most students, or provide a more accurate figure.

A similar issue arises with many of the figures, which (understandably) relate to enrolments in particular languages rather than actual bodies. In some schools in some sectors it is common (or in the case of ‘taster’ courses, often obligatory) for students at particular levels at particular schools to study two or three different languages during the course of a year. Except at senior secondary level (where there are often much more precise figures), it is then the case that while it is easy to determine what percentage of students in the system are studying French, and what percentage are studying Japanese, it is usually unclear what percentage of students are studying ‘a language’ and what percentage are not studying any language at all. Even when it is known that it is common in a particular sector for many students to study more than one language in a single year (for example, in the Victorian Government sector), it is not the case that this happens with every student at every school in the sector, and there is thus no way to take account of this.

Even when it appears that the same figures are available across different schools, sectors and States, it is not always clear that ‘the same’ figures are the same. For example, it may be possible to see from the figures that, say, 50% of students at Year 3 level were studying a language. However, in some sectors in some States, this may perhaps include students studying some form of cross-cultural awareness rather than a language class per se; it may include students who have studied 30 minutes per week of language over the year, but some of these may have studied three different languages during that time, each for only a term; and it may also include students who have studied a single language for 90 minutes per week over the full year. Adding together all of these figures to conclude that 50% of students at Year 3 level have studied a language is not, under these circumstances, an especially revealing figure. But this is usually the best we can come up with on the basis of the current data collection, and in general this is the level of accuracy represented by figures in the present report. Obviously, caution is strongly advised in the use of such figures.

1.5 Organisation of the Report

The report has been organised to follow the strands identified in the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008 (MCEETYA, 2005a) as this seemed to be the most appropriate format for a report that seeks to inform contemporary policy-making for languages. Information obtained through the various data sources used has been integrated into the various sections of the report rather than having discrete sections for each data set. The strands of the National Plan are: Teaching and Learning, Teacher Supply and Retention, Professional Learning, Program Development, Quality Assurance, and Advocacy and Promotion of Languages Learning.

Although the strands of the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008 provide a useful framework for examining the state and nature of languages, additional considerations should be included. This means that while the strands form a base for the report, the report does not conform completely with those strands. In particular, the teaching and learning strand covers a number of core issues and each of these has been put into a separate chapter.
2 Policies for Languages Education

This chapter gives an overview of Australian Government, State/Territory, and nationally agreed policies (that is, policies agreed by all State/Territory governments and the Australian Government) relating to languages education. The Australian Government policies have been important in developing and framing both national and State/Territory policies, and so these will be reviewed over the period 1987 to the present. State and Territory policies, however, will be examined to determine the current state of policy, with earlier documents being included only where they are necessary for understanding the current situation. There are few relevant national policies and of these two still currently shape languages policy in Australian schools. The discussion of policy will also consider languages education policy in a number of other countries as a point of comparison with Australia’s policy positioning for languages.

2.1 National Policies

2.1.1 National Goals of Schooling – 1989, 1999

The study of languages has consistently been included as one of the key learning areas in the National Goals of Schooling. The declarations which constitute the national goals of schooling have been developed collaboratively by State, Territory and Australian Government ministers of education, meeting collectively first as the Australian Education Council (AEC) and later as the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). The Hobart Declaration (Australian Education Council, 1989) listed under its ‘common and agreed goals’ the expectation that Australian students would develop ‘a knowledge of languages other than English’. In the revision of these goals of schooling, published in the Adelaide declaration (1999), languages were included in the eight key learning areas which constituted a ‘comprehensive and balanced curriculum in the compulsory years of schooling’. In addition, the Adelaide declaration states as an overarching goal for schooling that:

> all students understand and acknowledge the value of cultural and linguistic diversity, and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, such diversity in the Australian community and internationally.

This statement goes beyond a claim that languages are necessary for a comprehensive and balanced education, but also contribute to broader core goals of education. The inclusion of languages in the National Goals of Schooling gives languages, at the policy level, an agreed place in education, in common with the other key learning areas.

2.1.2 National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008

This document (MCEETYA, 2005a) was agreed by MCEETYA in 2005 and is divided into two parts. The first is a statement about the nature and purpose of languages education. The rationale is based on the need for intercultural awareness and understanding in order for Australia to act in relation to changes stemming from globalisation and internationalisation. The statement gives a strong profile to intercultural language learning (for more information see Liddicoat et al., 2003) as a way of achieving the educational capabilities identified by the statement. The statement also acknowledges the diversity found in languages education in Australia and allocates to jurisdictions and schools the responsibility of deciding on languages provision in response to local needs and aspirations, together with issues relating to the availability of teachers and resources, and continuity of languages learning. The Plan, which

is a nationally agreed framework for action to be taken in the period 2005–2008, identifies six inter-dependent strategic areas (strands) for developing languages in Australian schools:

- teaching and learning
- teacher supply and retention
- professional learning
- program development
- quality assurance
- advocacy and promotion of languages learning.

Each strand is developed with an overall objective, an underlying principle, and a list of recommended actions through which the objectives of the strand can be reached. The plan also identifies two key activities through which its effectiveness will be measured:

- the collection and analysis of student participation data;
- the development of national sample assessment processes to determine the quality of student learning outcomes.

Different jurisdictions have responded to the National Statement and Plan in different ways, and currently, it is the Australian Government which has taken the most obvious action in taking the plan forward.

Since 2005, the Australian Government has allocated 5% of School Languages Programme (SLP) funds annually to national level projects. Ten national projects have been implemented since 2005:

- conducting a national seminar in 2006 for key stakeholders (held in Canberra on 30 and 31 October 2006). A second seminar will be held in November 2007.
- improving the national coordination and quality assurance of languages programmes in after-hours ethnic schools (July 2005–December 2006), for which a second phase of funding has been approved to develop quality assurance in ethnic schools further (see http://www.communitylanguagesaustralia.org.au/Documents/FinalReport.pdf).
- investigating Indigenous languages programmes operating in Australian schools (July 2006–August 2007).
- investigating the state and nature of languages education in Australian schools (the current project) (July 2006–July 2007).
- developing a nationally coordinated promotion of the benefits of languages learning in schools (January 2007–February 2008).
- providing professional learning for school principals (Leading Languages) and leaders in the area of languages education (July 2006–April 2007) (see http://www.apapdc.edu.au/leadinglanguages).
- professional standards project, to develop and implement a nationally coordinated professional learning programme for languages teachers (May 2007–December 2008).
- the collection and analysis of student participation data (May–August 2007).
In addition, a large project, Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning in Practice, a professional learning project (June 2006–December 2007), was funded under the Australian Government Quality Teaching Programme (see www.iltlp.unisa.edu.au).

### 2.2 Australian Government Policies

#### 2.2.1 The Senate Report: A National Policy on Languages, 1984

Australian Government work on language policy began with the enquiry conducted by the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts into language policy in 1982. The terms of reference for the report were very broad and dealt with any areas of policy that had any language component at all, including education, translation and interpreting, language resources, communication aids, etc. One central impact of the report of the Senate Committee was the introduction of the term ‘Language Other Than English (LOTE)’ as a global term for the languages area, with the aim of avoiding internal classifications of languages within the domain. Although the term LOTE may have given coherence to the languages area, it meant that languages were divided into two categories: English and ‘other’.

The report (Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts, 1984) made 104 recommendations covering a wide range of areas but highlighted four main areas of need:

- the place of English in relation to other languages
- support for Indigenous languages
- developing priorities for languages
- languages for external needs.

The question of priorities of languages focused on three groups of languages:

- community languages
- languages of economic, political, or cultural importance
- languages of historical importance.

The report also identified four principles that should be used in determining a language policy:

- competence in English
- maintenance and development of languages
- provision of services in a range of languages
- opportunities for second language learning.

The report was completed in 1983, but not released until 1984, and no action was taken on the report until 1986. In 1986, Joseph Lo Bianco was appointed to draft a national policy on languages. This policy was published in 1987.

#### 2.2.2 National Policy on Languages, 1987

The *National Policy on Languages* (NPL) (Lo Bianco, 1987) was adopted as a bipartisan policy in 1987. The policy document justified the need for a coherent national approach to languages on four grounds:

- Equity
- Economic needs
• Educational and cultural enrichment
• External needs.

The policy focused on four of the areas of policy work identified by the Senate report in its recommendations:
• English for all: literacy and ESL
• A language other than English for all
• Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages
• Equitable and widespread language services.

In its discussion of languages education, the NPL identified two key educational functions for languages: language maintenance and new learning. This distinction meant that language education under the NPL had a dual role. One the one hand it supported the continued learning of community languages by members of ethnic communities in Australia. This meant preserving and extending Australia’s existing bilingual resources. On the other hand it gave emphasis to the learning of additional languages by the monolingual English-speaking population, increasing the overall bilingual capacity of Australia.

The NPL identified a number of ‘languages of wider teaching’, for which additional support was to be given above that provided to languages in general. The languages of wider teaching identified were: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish. These languages were identified not only for additional resources, but also with the expectation that these languages would be ‘expected to be offered continuously’ and ‘expected to be taken to matriculation level with continuity to tertiary study being highly desirable’ (p. 125). The NPL emphasised that these languages were for focused attention and were not intended to displace other languages in the educational system.

It needs to be stressed that it is not the intention of this categorization to imply or to lead to a devaluation of other languages, or of any language study (p. 125).

The NPL contained separate provision for Indigenous languages, which included education as well as other issues specifically relating to the sociolinguistic context of Indigenous languages in Australia. The policy strongly supported bilingual and bicultural programmes. The focus of provision for Indigenous languages was on the learning of these languages by Indigenous people, either as language maintenance or as new learning depending on context. In addition, it recommended the need to develop a wider awareness of Indigenous languages through education for non-Indigenous Australians.

Under the NPL, language education was funded through two programmes: the Australian Second Language Learning Programme (ASLLP), the Asian Studies Programme (ASP), and the National Aboriginal Language Project (NALP), although the latter two were wider in focus than languages education. The objectives of ASLLP were:
• promoting the growth of a wide range of languages
• improving the quality of second language programmes
• ensuring the continuity of language programmes throughout the various levels of education
• returning Year 12 levels in language study to at least those of the late 1960s
• developing bilingual education programmes
• ensuring optimum commonality of curriculum frameworks, syllabus design, assessment and teaching methodology.
Funding under the programme contained a general element, providing grants to government and non-government school systems, and a national element funding programmes of national significance. In 1987–88, the distribution of funds was 95% to the general element and 5% to the national element, changing in 1988–89 and 1989–90 to 80% to the general element and 20% to the national element (AACLAME, 1990). The ASP did not have languages education as one of its core objectives, although language study was included in the understanding of ‘Asian studies’ and some language-related projects were funded under the ASP. Under NALP approximately 27% of funding went to support programmes in schools (AACLAME, 1990).

The NPL also included a research and development dimension in the form of the Languages Institute of Australia (renamed The National Languages Institute of Australia, the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia, and Language Australia). Although the initial review of the NPL recommended the continuation of the NPL into a second phase of funding (AACLAME, 1990), the policy was revised through a green paper in 1990 (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1990), culminating in a white paper in 1991, with a new policy focus.

2.2.3 Australian Language and Literacy Policy, 1991

The Australian Language and Literacy Policy (ALLP) (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991) retained the four areas of focus found in the NPL, but refocused these programmes and replaced the broad objectives of the NPL with more narrowly focused targets. The four objectives of the ALLP were:

- All Australians should develop and maintain a level of spoken and written English which is appropriate for a range of contexts, with the support of education addressing their diverse learning needs.
- The learning of languages other than English must be substantially expanded and improved to enhance educational outcomes and communication both within and outside Australia.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages should be maintained and developed where they are still transmitted. Other languages should be assisted in an appropriate way, for example, through recording. These activities should only occur where speakers so desire and in consultation with their community, for the benefit of the descendants of their speakers and for the nation’s heritage.
- Language services provided through interpreting and translating, print and electronic media and libraries should be expanded and improved.

Of these the first three objectives were funded through specific programmes, while the language services dimension was of lesser importance in the policy. The policy focus had therefore shifted from a broad-based language policy to a more narrowly based language education policy.

The ALLP’s provisions for language education began a move away from the broad-based diversity of the NPL and emphasised the need for the narrower focus of language learning provision on economic grounds:

Any strategy which seeks to increase the study of languages in Australian schools must strike a balance between the diversity of languages which could be taught and the limits of resources that are available (vol. 1, p. 15).

The focus of provision also showed a movement away from community languages, arguing that the diversity of language groups in Australia was a problem for language education and that it was necessary to focus on ‘languages of broader national interest’ (vol. 1, p. 15). The policy also strongly articulated a central place for languages of the Asia–Pacific region in
language education in Australia. Language maintenance was flagged as a responsibility for the ethnic schools sector, funded through the Ethnic Schools Programme, although it was acknowledged that the greater integration of such programmes in schools was desirable.

The ALLP identified fourteen ‘priority languages’: Aboriginal languages, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Russian, Spanish, Thai, and Vietnamese. From this list, States and Territories were to select eight on which Australian Government assistance would be focused. A goal was set for 25% of Year 12 students to be studying a language, and funding was allocated on a per capita basis for students studying the designated languages at Year 12 level, to a ceiling of 25%. The 25% proportion was therefore the maximum level of Commonwealth funding, not a minimum target. This funding was identified as the Priority Languages Element (PLE), and was paid to government and non-government education authorities. Although funding was based on the priority languages elected by States, PLE funds could be used more widely as the policy itself did not specify that funding had to be directed to the priority languages. In addition, the Community Languages Element (CLE) – the successor to the Ethnic Schools Programme – funded languages teaching in after-hours ethnic schools. The ALLP further allocated $1 million for national development activities.

The provision for Indigenous languages under the ALLP included these languages within the priority languages, and thus made these languages available in the mainstream for funding at Year 12 level. In addition, the Aboriginal Education Programme (AEP) allocated funding for Indigenous language education for Indigenous people, but incorporated this with ESL and literacy in English.

The ALLP, with some revisions, has basically remained in place for languages education since 1991 as one element of the LOTE in Schools Programme, and more recently as the School Languages Programme. The most notable change in the ALLP provisions was the combining of CLE and PLE funding elements in the LOTE Element from 2001, which no longer differentiated between funding to ethnic schools and funding to government and non-government education authorities. The LOTE element supported school language programmes at all levels of schooling across all sectors including European, Asian, Indigenous languages, and community language programmes. The LOTE element also supported community language programmes, although this responsibility fell almost exclusively onto government school systems since the two former elements were combined.

### 2.2.4 National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy, 1994

The National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) Strategy was developed on the basis of the report *Asian Languages and Australia’s Economic Future* (COAG, 1994). In terms of language policy, NALSAS was a narrowly focused strategy based around four priority languages: Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, and Korean. It did not replace the ALLP, but was designed to operate alongside it. PLE and CLE funding (and later the LOTE element) continued to operate alongside NALSAS funding. Although the NALSAS Strategy maintained the ALLP goal of 25% of Year 12 students studying a priority language, it recast the ways in which language education was to be structured, with a target of 60% of students studying one of the four Asian languages at Year 10 level and 15% studying one of these languages at Year 12.

The goals of NALSAS were addressed through four strategic areas:

- Curriculum delivery
- Teacher quality and supply

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1. Australian Indigenous languages were thus grouped as a single language for policy purposes.
• Strategic alliances
• Outcomes and accountability.

Funding for the NALSAS languages was made in addition to the other languages funding, and more than $200 million was allocated by the Australian Government to develop the teaching and learning of these four languages (Erebus, 2002a). NALSAS funding was allocated to State and Territory jurisdictions, with 5% retained for funding national projects. The projects focused on both research and development relating to the NALSAS languages and included:

• Materials development
• Investigations of issues relating to proficiency outcomes
• Investigations of issues relating to the teaching and learning of writing systems
• Investigations of up-take in NALSAS languages
• Investigations of issues relating to proficiency outcomes
• Investigations of the relationship of language learning to literacy
• Investigations of issues relating to professional practice and standards.

The NALSAS Strategy was included as the second element of the School Languages Programme, until it ceased in 2003. The NALSAS Strategy was specifically funded on the basis that it would not be ongoing and that it would be self-sustaining in schools by the end of 2002. State and Territory education authorities were aware of this from 1999 and were expected to factor it into their forward planning to ensure the continuity of their Asian language programmes.

2.2.5 School Languages Programme – 2005–2008

The School Languages Programme (SLP) is the current Australian Government languages education programme. It is providing $112 million for languages over the 4-year period 2005–2008. The majority of the funding is given to State and Territory education authorities to support the teaching and learning of Asian, European, Indigenous languages, and Auslan in schools and community language programmes in ethnic schools. Five per cent of SLP funds (about $1.25 million per annum) has been set aside for national strategic projects in line with the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008 (MCEETYA, 2005b).

2.3 State and Territory Policies for Language Education

This section will investigate how languages are integrated into education through government policy documents. In particular it will investigate whether languages are mandated by policy, what recommendations policies make about the duration of language study and time allocation for languages. The overall status of language education requirements in the various States and Territories is summarised in Table 4.
Table 4: Language requirements in Australian States and Territories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Extent of study</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>not mandated</td>
<td>100 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>mandated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>not mandated</td>
<td>100 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>mandate being revised</td>
<td>Years 4–7</td>
<td>Under regional language plans the level of mandating for individual schools has been reduced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>implied mandate</td>
<td>R–10</td>
<td>Year levels not explicitly stated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>not mandated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>expectation of teaching</td>
<td>P–10</td>
<td>Expectation expressed in terms of provision of programmes rather than study by students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>implied mandate</td>
<td>Years 3–10</td>
<td>Students expected to reach Level 3 by Year 9.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3.1 ACT

Languages are not a mandatory area of study in the ACT; however, the government sector developed an action plan for languages in 1993, *Setting Directions for LOTE 1994–2006*. The action plan recommends minimum class teaching times of 60 minutes per week for lower primary schools and 90 minutes per week for upper primary. Although data on actual class times was not collected, the ACT reported to MCEETYA that in 1997 classes ranged from 30 to 150 minutes per week in primary schools, and average 150 minutes in secondary schools (MCEETYA, 1998).

The action plan also stated that primary schools were expected to offer a languages programme for all learners from K to Year 6. However, the action plan recognised that this was not possible for all primary schools, but stated that languages programmes were mandatory for Years 3–6. In 1997, the ACT reported that most primary schools offered a language in Years 2–6. The ACT also reported that most secondary schools run languages programmes for Years 7–8, while in Years 9–10 languages tended to be elective years, with the exception of a small number of schools with compulsory languages in Years 7–10 (MCEETYA, 1998).

Time allocations and other expectations are not explicitly stated in the new curriculum documents in the ACT; however, languages continue to remain elective for ACT students.

2.3.2 New South Wales

Under the New South Wales Education Act 1990, mandatory requirements for the award of the School Certificate include the Languages Key Learning Area. The Board of Studies New South Wales requires that students complete 100 hours study of one language in one year between Years 7 and 10, but preferably in Years 7–8. The amount of study required is by far the smallest in all jurisdictions in which languages are mandated. The 100-hour course must cover the Stage 4 outcomes and content of the chosen language syllabus (see page 52).

New South Wales has an Aboriginal Languages Policy, and the New South Wales Department of Education and Training works collaboratively with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Board of Studies to implement this policy in schools.

Apart from the Aboriginal Languages Policy, there is no clear languages policy in New South Wales to reflect the national commitment to languages education.
2.3.3 Northern Territory

In 1997, the Northern Territory Policy on Languages and Implementation Guidelines were revised, replacing the first policy published in 1987. The policy sets out principles and goals for languages as a key learning area. According to this policy language study is mandatory, although schools differ in how they implement the policy. The Northern Territory Board of Studies curriculum had nominated associated time allocations for language study. Up to Year 3, the curriculum made no explicit statements about time allocations for languages but recommended that there be some teaching from each of the eight learning areas each week, in Years 4–7 it recommended at least two hours per week for languages. For Years 8–10, rather than a weekly allocation, the curriculum recommended a total of 280 hours over the whole period with an emphasis on continuity of learning over consecutive terms. These were recommended, not mandated times, but the inclusion of these recommendations supported an understanding that language study in the Northern Territory was compulsory during compulsory schooling. The 2004 curriculum reform removed the mandatory time allocations for languages. There seems to be considerable confusion about the status of languages study in the Territory, with some people believing that languages remain mandated although the hours of study are not specified, while others interpret the new policy as the removal of mandated languages study in Territory schools. The document itself does not clarify which of these interpretations should be considered the correct one.

2.3.4 Queensland

In Queensland, the 1991 LOTE Initiative (Braddy, 1991) included compulsory language study for students in Years 6–8. This mandating of languages was accompanied by requirements for time allocations to languages at these levels. Students in State primary schools in Years 6 and 7 were expected to have 90 minutes per week of language instruction, and this was recommended to take the form of three 30-minute lessons given on three separate days. In State secondary schools, there was a minimum mandated time allocation in Year 8 of 90 minutes per week, with a recommendation that 120 minutes be the actual weekly provision over the full school year. For language programmes offered at other year levels, time allocations were at the discretion of the school. It was envisaged that this initial phase would be extended to run from Year 4 to Year 10, as staff became available.

The current Queensland arrangement is under review through the process of Regional LOTE Education Plans (RLEPs). With implementation only beginning in 2008, the impact of these is not yet known. Regional plans are designed ‘to provide more flexibility in how LOTE education is offered’ and to ‘enable regions to review the current strategy of mandatory provision in Years 6 to 8’ (http://www.qtu.asn.au/delivery_of_lote_review.pdf). The philosophy of the education plans is to shift the focus from student participation to a focus on student outcomes.

The language education goals of the RLEPs are to improve the retention rate to Year 12, to provide all secondary students with access to a language programme and to provide continuity of learning of the same language to students from primary level to Year 12. The focus here is on the provision of programmes rather than on ensuring students’ participation in programmes at any level. Within this logic, compulsory language study in Years 6–8 could be abolished – the review explicitly states that:

The existing LOTE strategy will continue, including the mandatory provision in Years 6–8, until a region’s LOTE Education Plan has been developed and approved.
(http://www.qtu.asn.au/delivery_of_lote_review.pdf)

This implies that mandatory provision from Years 6 to 8 is not necessarily required in the regional plans.
2.3.5 South Australia

Language policy in South Australia underwent a change with the *Languages Statement 2007–2011* replacing the *Languages other than English Plan 2000–2007* (DECS, 1998). The *Languages other than English Plan 2000–2007* had the goal that all R–10 learners in government schools will be learning at least one language. This plan was based on the review *Consolidating Gains, Recovering Ground: Languages in SA* (Lo Bianco, 1995). The plan required all schools to establish a languages programme in schools offering primary enrolments by 2004 and for secondary schools to do so by 2007. The plan aimed to establish that by the year 2007, all learners in R–10 would be learning a language other than English in quality programmes that are an integral part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

In 2007 the *Languages Statement 2007–2011* (DECS, 2007b) was introduced by the South Australian Government. The current formulation of a languages requirement is found in the goals of the statement. It says:

> All DECS students will be engaged in quality languages programmes enabling them to achieve the Outcomes and meet the Standards described in the South Australia Curriculum, Standards and Accountability Framework, the required curriculum for all DECS schools (DECS, 2007b: 8).

This new statement is less explicit about the mandating of languages, and this lack of clarity appears to have led to some confusion about whether or not languages are mandated. The confusion seems to derive from the removal of the mention of R–10 language study in the new document, with the result that the current formulation of the languages requirement does not explicitly state that languages are mandated from R–10 in the South Australian system. This is, however, implied by the goal as achieving the levels of the *SACSA Framework* (see page 56) is predicated on R–10 study. Although R–10 study is not mandated, the tying of language study to the *SACSA Framework* implies that a similar amount of time will be allocated to language learning, although this could be organised in other ways than in a straight R–10 programme.

The statement includes three strategic directions, each of which has a set of specified key outcomes. The strategic directions are:

- engaging and retaining all students of languages in quality, sustainable programmes by enhancing access, choice, and continuity;
- ensuring supply and retention of quality teachers of languages; and
- developing community understanding of languages education.

These strategic directions are further developed in the *Language Engagement Strategy 2007–2008* (DECS, 2007a). This document breaks the strategic directions down into priority actions for the State office, districts, and schools to be implemented in the period 2007–2008.

2.3.6 Tasmania

Historically Tasmania has not had a large community languages sector and schools tend to be less multicultural than in many mainland States and Territories. Therefore there has not been a strong community drive for policy in this area.

Languages are not compulsory in Tasmanian schools and policy documents do not recommend time allocations for languages or any other areas of the curriculum. The support for languages at the policy level has been mixed. In the past decade Tasmania has established a primary language programme that at its peak involved more than 80% of primary schools throughout the State. Commonwealth funding for the NALSAS Strategy gave the impetus for the programme, but the State Government has provided in excess of 1.1 million dollars per year to ensure that the programme could be maintained. The Minister for Education has also
publicly committed Tasmania to support the National Statement and Plan for Languages Education.

However, there is less explicit mention of languages in Tasmanian documents than in other Australian documents.

The current version of Tasmania’s curriculum document – which is currently being renewed – states ‘Although language teaching is encouraged, it is not compulsory’. It also states:

LOTE is incorporated into the Framework diagram in the same segment as English/Literacy. Encouraging, while not mandating, language study remains a goal of the Tasmanian Curriculum.

2.3.7 Victoria

In 1985, the State Board of Education and the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Multicultural and Migrant Education in Victoria issued a report to the Minister for Education entitled The Place of Languages other than English in Victorian Schools. The Languages Action Plan, which included a timeline for the consolidation and extension of languages education, was released in 1989.

The recently established Ministerial Advisory Council on Languages other than English, in conjunction with the then Directorate of School Education, released the LOTE Strategy Plan in 1993. The Strategy Plan aimed to have all learners in years P–10, and 25 per cent of learners in Years 11–12 learning a language by the year 2000. In Victoria it is expected that schools provide a language from Prep to Year 10. This formulation as an expectation is different from an explicit statement that languages are compulsory and an expectation of provision is different from an expectation that all students P–10 will study a language. Languages other than English is one of the discipline-based domains in the recently released Victorian Essential Learning Standards. All government schools are expected to enable their students to meet the Standards at the appropriate levels, and are expected to report student achievement in Languages other than English from Level 4 commencing in 2008. Schools currently report LOTE achievement against the Curriculum and Standards Framework.

Victoria recommends that a minimum of 150 minutes per week be allocated to language study at all levels of compulsory schooling. A review of languages in Victoria, however, noted that this minimum was not achieved in many schools (DET, 2002). The review, however, recommended that the minimum time recommendation be retained.

2.3.8 Western Australia

Compulsory language study was introduced in Western Australia in LOTE 2000: New Horizons Strategy (Education Department WA, 1995a), which required all Year 3–10 learners to study a language (60 per cent an Asian language) by 2003. The first target set by this policy was for all students in primary school (3–7) to be studying a language. The policy of introducing languages from 3–10 was continued in a revised version in LOTE Beyond 2000 (Education Department WA, 2001). The most recent version of the Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting (CAR) Policy (May 2007) sets out reporting requirements for languages from Year 3 to Year 10, (with flexibility in Year 10 to cater for academic needs and interests of students at this level). Although this in theory mandates languages study during these years, there is no specific time allocation. There is an Achievement Target for all Year 9 students, which is Level 3 in the Outcome Listening and Responding, and Speaking.

2.3.9 Comments

One of the differences in language education policies around Australia is whether languages are compulsory or elective parts of the curriculum. The mandating of languages is probably the most controversial of the policy issues around language study. During the investigations
for this project, a number of common themes were expressed both in favour and against mandating language studies. The most common rationales for compulsory language study are:

- language study is important but languages will not be offered by schools or taken by students if they are not compulsory;
- mandating languages shows clearly that language education has value;
- mandating languages gives direction in a context of general apathy or ignorance about languages.

The most common rationales against language study are:

- language study should not be made compulsory for people who simply do not want to study them as this only means that students are disengaged;
- other important subject areas are not mandated so languages should not get special treatment;
- the community does not want compulsory language study; and
- languages should be offered only if the quality of the programme is assured.

These rationales in many cases reflect different interpretations of the same phenomena. The perception that languages are not valued in the community leads some people to conclude that languages should be mandated for study, while others conclude that they should not be. Some of the reasons for wanting compulsory language study reflect a pessimistic view of the future of languages education if they are not compulsory and reflect misgivings about the willingness of students, communities, and school leaders to engage voluntarily with language learning. The reasons for not having languages as compulsory parts of the curriculum often reflect responses to perceived difficulties about languages education and argue that because such difficulties exist, those facing difficulties should not be required to act. Some of these views appear to be based on some underlying assumptions that require further investigation.

The first is the idea that mandating languages where other subjects are not mandated gives a special place to languages. The first question this view raises is whether it is in fact true that other subject areas are not mandated. The question of mandated curriculum areas can be seen in two ways. There are areas of the curriculum which are expected to be taught and for which such an expectation is normative – that is, these would be taught in all schools at all levels regardless of policy prescriptions and if they were not taught there would be important consequences for the school that did not offer them. Such curriculum areas are, for example, literacy and numeracy. These can be considered to be mandatory parts of the school curriculum and their inclusion is unquestioned. Where questions of mandating arise for these areas, the issue is about mandated minimum time allocations. In at least some jurisdictions other curriculum areas are mandated, most notably physical education. Where this is the case, the mandating is often unquestioned by significant parts of the community as they see the curriculum area as centrally important for the resolution of some identified problem, for example, childhood obesity. For these subjects, the mandating is seen as a way of ensuring that something that is believed to have value is included in the curriculum, which might not even though languages are compulsory, that doesn’t mean schools will have a language programme. It’s hard to set up and keep going and the Department is on my back about other things. As long as I don’t have to report on languages, why would I make the effort? Principals think about what they have to do and if there’s any time over then they focus on the other things, so unless languages are a real priority you won’t get much change.

Primary school principal
be included in all schools. It would appear that mandating languages would therefore be consistent with the normal treatment of curriculum areas that are felt to need policy support to ensure their inclusion in the curriculum of all schools. If the lack of language learning in Australian schools is considered to be the cause of some problem for Australian school leavers, but if community expectations and students’ study choices will not address this problem ecologically, then mandating languages would be the appropriate policy solution.

A second issue that calls for comment is that language learning should not be mandated as this would lead to classes with disengaged students. This view seems to be based on two underlying assumptions: that curriculum areas should only be required for all students if all students are engaged in studying them and that disengagement is a normal feature of the languages classroom. The idea that only engaged students should be offered a curriculum area is one that makes the teacher’s job in the classroom easier, but does not seem to be in and of itself an educative decision. Moreover, while languages may have particular problems around engagement because of community perspectives of the value of languages, it is not true that languages are the only curriculum area in which students are disengaged. Many teachers of other subject areas, including ‘core’ areas such as literacy and numeracy, also experience disengagement; however, this would not be used as an excuse to discontinue the subject area. The argument against mandating languages on the basis of students’ engagement is one that implicitly assumes that languages are not a necessary, integral part of education but rather an optional extra.

The argument that languages should be offered only if the school can ensure the quality of the programme also calls for comment. At one level it seems obvious that schools should seek to provide high-quality education, and if a school is not able to offer a high-quality programme it should not offer the area. Features that affect programme quality for languages are usually articulated as the lack of suitably qualified teachers, problems with ensuring continuity if a teacher leaves the school, and problems with providing adequate time allocations because of the ‘crowded curriculum’. This argument also has assumptions that relate to the ways in which languages are valued compared with other parts of the curriculum. A school would not cancel a mathematics programme because there was no suitably qualified teacher, or because the teacher may leave the school, or because there was not enough time available in the curriculum to offer the subject. These sorts of arguments about languages again imply a view that languages are not an important part of the curriculum.

It is also questionable whether languages must be compulsory in order for students to take them as this implies a very pessimistic view of the community and students’ perceptions of languages. However, it is true that at least some students continue to study languages whether they are mandated or not and some parents at least advise their students to continue in a language even if it is not compulsory to do so. This shows that where parents and students see the value of language learning, mandating languages is not necessary. The question here is whether language learning should be only for those who value languages or whether what is gained through languages should be a part of every student’s learning. The solution to this problem of providing languages to all students would therefore require either mandating languages or significantly altering community values and perceptions.

In Australian policy documents, ‘languages’ is identified as a key learning area and it is this idea of ‘key’ that is at the heart of the debate about mandating languages. Effectively, if all key learning areas were actually understood in the same way, they would all be compulsory to some degree and the expectation would be that all students developed some capacity in each area. The question of mandating languages can be resolved only with an understanding of education more broadly. If education is seen as embodying certain key learning areas, then the very idea of ‘key areas’ should be that they are educationally important for all learners. Such a formulation logically requires that these curriculum areas be provided to all learners and that schools be accountable for educating their students fully in accordance with the way a full
education is understood, which is effectively what mandating means. The issue therefore is not that languages need to be treated differently from other key learning areas but rather that they are treated equally as key learning areas. Where languages remain elective and in schools and jurisdictions which provide only minimal language programmes, the issue is the overall quality and breadth of the education offered to learners in comparison with how a good education is understood. If the national goals for schooling are in fact an expression of how Australian governments understand a complete education, then it is clear that some schools and some jurisdictions do not offer their learners a complete education.

The differing treatments of languages across Australia calls into question what is actually meant by the idea of languages as a key learning area in the National Goals of Schooling (MCEETYA, 1999).

2.4 International Comparisons

This section will give overviews of language policy in a number of countries as a point of comparison with Australian policies. The survey covers countries from North America, Europe, Asia, and the Pacific. Most of the countries chosen have a single official language, and in this way are comparable to Australia. In addition, some officially bilingual countries have been included (Canada, New Zealand) as these also offer contexts that are similar to Australia. This section will treat policies generally, and further details relating to specific issues, such as language study at primary and secondary levels, will be discussed in more detail in the relevant sections of this report. In particular, it aims to examine the ways in which policies in these countries address issues of participation: the starting point and duration of language study, whether languages are compulsory and whether time allocations for languages are indicated.

2.4.1 United States of America

The US Federal Government offers funding to states and local educational agencies for teaching and study of foreign languages and related area studies. Foreign languages were recognised as part of the core curriculum in the 1994 Goals 2000: Educate America Act under the heading of ‘Student achievement and citizenship’, where it states:

By the year 2000, all learners will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.

The objective for language learning in the period 1994–2000 was that ‘the percentage of all learners who are competent in more than one language will substantially increase’ and was also implicit in the objective that ‘all learners will be knowledgeable about the diverse cultural heritage of this Nation and about the world community’ (see also Rhodes & Branaman, 1999). The Improving America’s Schools Act (1994) provided a Foreign Language Assistance Programme which authorises grants to states and local schools to enhance their language education efforts, and activities to support Native American education.

Most recently, federal languages education initiatives have been located within the context of national security, first with the National Security Education Programme (1999), which included languages education as a key need for enhancing security through better understanding of the world. The language emphasis for security was more strongly developed through the National Security Language Act (2003). The educational objectives within the scope of this National Security Language Act include:

- Early foreign language instruction
- Advanced level foreign language education
Foreign language marketing campaign.

In 2003 the US Department of Defense established the Center for the Advanced Study of Language, which was charged with helping to improve US intelligence capabilities, enhance national security, and serve the goals of US foreign policy (Brecht, 2003). The work of the Center includes improving knowledge of less commonly taught languages; enhancing the acquisition and maintenance of foreign language capability by government professionals; advancing the US capacity to use foreign language skills in a wide variety of professions and situations; and improving the quality of human language technology. The US Senate declared 2005 to be a national year of languages and a number of activities were established promoting languages education. In 2006, the National Security Language Initiative was established to increase the number of Americans developing proficiency in critical need languages; encourage language learning to start at a younger age; increase the number of advanced-level speakers of foreign languages, and increase the number of teachers of critical need languages and the resources for them. These activities provide an overall framework indirectly influencing school languages education throughout the USA.1

In 1994, all fifty states included foreign languages in their curricula, while forty states have laws requiring public school learners to have at least 2 years of foreign language study available to them, usually at the secondary level. Ten states have laws which require that college-bound or advanced/honours secondary learners study a foreign language. Although state curricula include, or require, languages, most of the decisions about foreign language teaching are made at the level of the local education agencies (Dutcher, 1995).

Bilingual education became part of the official policy of the federal government in 1968 with the passing of the Bilingual Education Act, which introduced transitional bilingual education programmes for the children of immigrant – mainly Spanish – communities. Bilingual education was given added impetus in 1974 by the Lau v. Nichols decision that provision of education only in English to children from minority language groups was inconsistent with the principles of the Civil Rights Act. Although bilingual education still exists within federal policy in the USA, since the 1980s it has been increasingly under threat as an educational strategy for children speaking minority languages.

Indigenous languages in the USA are treated in policy separately from foreign languages and different provisions exist. The Native American Languages Act (1990) encouraged the use of Indigenous languages as media of instruction in schools with Native American populations. The act was amended in 2006 as the Native American Languages Preservation Act to strengthen the earlier policy and to introduce Native American Language Survival Schools and Native American Language Nests, the latter modelled on the New Zealand Māori Language Nests (Te Kohanga Reo).

The state-based nature of education policy and the devolution of decision-making for languages in the United States to local authorities, mean that language education policy in the USA is highly variable and few generalisations can be made. However, at the federal level there is an increasing emphasis on raising participation in languages education, developing higher levels of proficiency in languages, and increasing the range of languages being studied in US schools and universities.

2.4.2 Canada

Canada is officially a bilingual country with English and French as official languages. Although the Federal government sets some educational policy, education is a provincial responsibility, with much of the decision-making about programmes devolved to local school boards. The official bilingualism in Canada means that a strong emphasis is placed on the learning of one of the official languages by learners who are speakers of the other – French

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1 For a critique of recent US policy see Kramsch, 2005.
for speakers of English and English for speakers of French. Canada has no federal level ministry of education and so languages education policy at federal level is integrated into other aspects of social policy. The most significant language education document at the Federal level in Canada is the Action Plan for Official Languages (2003). The second language learning objective of the Action Plan is to raise this proportion of 15–19-year-olds who speak both official languages to 50% by 2013, which will double the current proportion of bilingual high school graduates. A more attenuated level of support is given for Canada’s heritage languages. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988 states that it is the policy of the Government of Canada to ‘facilitate the acquisition, retention and use of all languages that contribute to the multicultural heritage of Canada’.

The range of approaches to language education in Canada can be seen in the curricula of three different provinces: Ontario, an English-speaking province with a significant French-speaking minority; British Columbia, an English-speaking province with a small French-speaking minority; and Quebec, a French-speaking province with a significant English-speaking minority.

**Ontario:** In Ontario study of a second language (French or English) is required from Grade 4 to Grade 12: learners from the anglophone majority study French and those from the francophone minority study English. In addition, another language can be added at secondary school. Although aspects of language study are mandated for all learners, a range of programme types are available and local schools and school boards decide which programmes to offer. For anglophone students the minimum requirement is Core French, with a minimum of 600 hours of instruction between Grade 4 and Grade 8. Some school boards also offer French Immersion from Grade 1 to Grade 8 in which at least 50% of the curriculum is taught in French (a minimum of 3800 hours per year). In addition, some school boards offer Extended French programmes from Grade 4 to Grade 8: bilingual programmes have at least 25% of the curriculum (a minimum of 1260 hours taught in French). Both programme types involve French as a Second Language classes, but also require some other subject areas to be taught in French (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001). In French medium schools, requirements exist for English language study but with different programme types. Curricula exist for English (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) and Beginners English (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2002). The English curriculum is the normal curriculum and resembles the French curriculum in many respects, but does not mandate hours of study, nor does it have equivalents to Extended or Immersion programmes. The Beginners English curriculum is designed as a pathway into the regular mainstream English curriculum rather than as an independent course of study. In secondary schools anglophone learners continue to study French but again programmes vary widely. Curricula exist for Core, Extended, and Immersion French for Grades 9–12. For francophone learners English curricula exist for mainstream English for Grades 9–12 and for English for Beginners (*Anglais pour débutants*), the latter for new learners of English entering the school system at secondary level. From Grade 9 to Grade 12, learners may also begin an additional language – either an international language or classical language. Classical languages are specified as Latin and Ancient Greek; international languages, however, are not specified.

**British Columbia:** Learners in British Columbia must take a second language in Grade 5 to Grade 8. The language studied can be chosen from four categories: French, an international language, a classical language, or an Indigenous language, with the determination of the language left to school boards. French, however, is expected to be the usual second language for most learners in British Columbia, with learners in francophone schools studying English. Language study from Grade 9 to Grade 12 is optional. International and classical languages are included in the official school curriculum starting in Grade 9 (age 15), but these are not

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1 Although Canada itself is officially bilingual, the province Quebec is officially a monolingual French-speaking province.
available in all schools. British Columbia also offers French immersion programmes for English-speaking learners at all levels from K to 12. Government policy mandates time allocations to French and English for immersion programmes: Grades K–3, 100% in French; Grades 4–7, 80% in French and 20% in English; Grades 8–10, 50–75% in French and 50–25% in English, Grades 11 and 12 at least 25% in French and no more than 75% in English. Heritage or First Nations languages may be taught to learners at any age, but the policies and practices vary extensively from school to school and community to community. Many such languages are taught in primary schools either after school hours or on Saturdays.

**Quebec:** In Quebec, language study is compulsory in different ways, depending on which language is being studied. French-speaking learners begin studying English in Grade 3, English-speaking learners begin studying French in Grade 1 and French remains compulsory until Grade 12. Learners learning French or English as a second language have an alternative between a *programme de base* (basic programme) and a *programme enrichi* (enriched programme). In the basic programme the language is studied as a subject, while in the enriched programme the second language is used as a language of instruction – that is, the enriched programme is a French immersion programme. In secondary school a further language is optional. Education in Indigenous languages is less well developed in Quebec, although some Indigenous schools have established language programmes. Quebec’s official language act, limiting the use of languages other than French, has proved a barrier to establishing Indigenous languages within mainstream schooling.

### 2.4.3 New Zealand

New Zealand’s policy work has largely focused on curriculum and assessment issues rather than issues of participation. In New Zealand, foreign languages form part of the ‘Language and Languages’ learning area. This learning area divides languages into two classes: English and *te reo Māori* (the Māori language) and other languages, and the two classes are treated differently. Foreign languages are not compulsory at any level of study in New Zealand; however, there is a Ministry expectation that all schools will offer language programmes from Year 7 to Year 10.

Schools should be required to provide instruction in an additional language in Years 7–10 (except for Māori immersion settings) but it should not be mandatory for all Year 7–10 students to learn a language. In some NZ schools, Years 7–8 are primary level, in others they are secondary level, so the NZ system focuses on the middle years of schooling through to the end of compulsory schooling (Ministry of Education, 2002).

The New Zealand approach is therefore one of provision and supply, rather than one of educational requirement for languages study. The place of languages in the curriculum is further weakened in terms of language development because the Ministry recommends the introduction of one or more taster courses in a language in Years 7 and 8 (Barnard, 2006). *Te reo Māori* is also not compulsory, however, the NZ education act requires that schools must take reasonable steps to provide *tikanga Māori* (Māori culture) and *te reo Māori* if parents request it. This means that *te reo Māori* may be available to learners in primary school. *Te reo Māori* is also taught in bilingual programmes primarily designed for speakers of Māori and in which ESL may constitute the second language.

### 2.4.4 United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has different requirements for language study in different parts of the country.

In **England** language education has received considerable recent attention from the government. The *National Languages Strategy* (Department for Education and Skills, 2002) introduced a decision to shift the focus of compulsory language learning from ages 11 to 16 to
finish at age 14 (Hunt et al., 2005). Finishing languages education at age 14 has, however, been found problematic as it has severely reduced the number of learners taking GCSE O-level languages and the government found it necessary to reconsider this lower age range (Clark, 2006). In March 2007 the Government introduced a policy requiring compulsory language study from age 7 to 14, but did not increase the upper age to cover GCSE (Andalo, 2007; Garner, 2007). Although it is trying to increase the number of language learners at GCSE level, the government may also consider introducing compulsory language study at GCSE level if this fails (‘Ministers may rethink language plan’, 2007).

Scotland has a requirement for language study in the last 2 years of primary schooling and the first four of secondary schooling (ages 10–16), with an expectation of 6 years of study of the same language. This requirement was introduced in 1998. The policy was further developed in the report Citizens for a Multilingual World (Scottish Executive, 2000). Scotland introduced foreign languages into its primary schools in 1998. The aim of the programme was to develop language competence and the policy was supported by a nationally planned and supported programme with a professional learning programme to ensure there was one qualified language teacher in more than 95% of Scottish primary schools by 2000 (Scottish Executive, 2000). Notable features of the Scottish model include requirements that the programme begin no later than Primary 6 and cover either a minimum of 6 years of study or its equivalent of 500 hours, with the programme being continuous and progressive in the same language.

Wales includes primary level study of a second language in its primary curriculum with a focus on the learning of Welsh and thus gives priority to learning Welsh at primary level. In Wales the study of Welsh and English is mandatory at primary school level, for many people this means studying Welsh as a second language. Some Welsh schools currently teach a foreign language in primary school and the Welsh Assembly plans to increase this, although without making a foreign language compulsory (Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru/Welsh Assembly Government, 2002).

Northern Ireland has included Irish at primary schools although it has not developed a foreign language programme for the primary level. In March 1999 the UK Government announced an Early Language Learning initiative to promote and develop the provision and quality of languages teaching and learning in Northern Ireland’s primary schools.

2.4.5 Continental Europe

In the European Union, current policy is driven by the Common European Framework for Languages (Council of Europe 1996). Learners at secondary school level in most countries must study two foreign languages during secondary education. In some countries, the second language is included as a compulsory subject in the post-compulsory years of schooling only. However, in Europe the introduction of a compulsory second foreign language is being introduced gradually and is yet to be applied in all schools (Eurydice, 2005). The consistent profile in continental Europe is that of increasing engagement with language learning in the later years of schooling as additional languages are taken on by learners at this level. This contrasts strongly with the weakening of participation in languages at senior secondary level in Australia.

In France the compulsory study of at least one foreign language at secondary school is a traditional part of the French education system. More recently France has extended language learning requirements at both primary and secondary levels.

I don’t understand the ‘crowded curriculum’ argument. Why is it like that? In Europe, kids study two or three languages and you don’t hear about the crowded curriculum there. So why would languages crowd the curriculum here? In any case, how can giving a good education crowd the curriculum? Is that what the curriculum is for? To give kids an education? Parent
In 1989 France introduced a national project (Enseignement d’initiation aux langues étrangères – EILE) to increase the uptake of language learning to 25% of pupils in CM2\(^1\), the final year of primary school (age 10) by the end of 1993. The project specified three hours per week of language study for learners at this year level. This project brought forward the normal starting age for language learning by one year – all learners in 6\(^{ème}\) (age 11) study a foreign language. By 1993, the project had exceeded its goals with 32% of CM2 pupils and 15% of CM1 pupils (aged nine) studying a language. In January 1993, a new national policy was announced that included a gradual expansion of primary language provision to all learners in CM2 beginning from 1995. The full institution of languages for all learners in CM2 has not yet been completed. At the same time, however, a 15 minute per day language awareness programme (Initiation aux langues vivantes – ILV) has also been introduced for learners in CE1–CM1, as a prelude to language learning proper in CM2. This programme was not designed as language learning per se but as a process of familiarisation with languages. From 1998, the provisions of the EILE and ILV were modified under a new plan (Enseignement des langues vivants – ELV) in which language learning, rather than language awareness, was extended to CM1 with the plan for all learners to begin language study in CM1 (Belletto-Sussel, Scoffoni, & Richon, 2001).

At the secondary level at present it is compulsory for French students to study two foreign languages for only 1 year of their secondary schooling (Eurydice, 2005). The French Ministry of Education requires students in the second and third years of collège (cinquième, age 12 and quatrième, age 13) to study a foreign language for 3 hours per week, while in quatrième, study of an additional foreign language is required, also for 3 hours per week (Ministère de l'éducation nationale, 2001). The study of the second language is optional after quatrième as is a third foreign language, which can be studied through to baccalaureate level. The number of languages studied varies according to the stream that a student will take for the baccalaureate: in the scientific (série S) and economic and social (série ES) streams only one foreign language is required, with additional languages being optional, for the literary stream (série L) two languages are required, with a third language being optional.

In Austria, foreign language study was made compulsory in primary schools in 1983, from Year 3 (age 8). The language was to be taught for one hour a week, but could be broken down into smaller time units. In 1998 foreign language teaching in primary school was extended to 4 years, starting in Year 1 (age 6) (Seebacher, 2001). A curriculum was developed that became mandatory for all primary schools from 2003. In Austria, it is not seen as desirable for language teaching to be an area for specialist teachers: the aim is that the language will normally be taught by primary school teachers with language education qualifications who are also the regular class teachers. In Austria, study of at least two foreign languages is compulsory for all secondary learners between the ages of 14 and 18 in the Realgymnasium (technical school) and Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium (commercial school), while learners in the academically orientated Gymnasium are required to study three languages. That is vocationally orientated courses require learners to complete only two languages by the end of secondary schooling, while academically orientated courses require three (Eurydice, 2005).

The Netherlands introduced compulsory language study in primary schools in 1986 and by 1993 language study was fully established in the curriculum of primary schools, usually beginning at the age of 10. In the Netherlands, students are currently required to study two languages for the entire duration of secondary schooling and three languages in the final year.

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1 The French primary schooling covers 5 years as follows:
- CP Cours Préparatoire (age 6)
- CE1 Cours Elémentaire 1\(^{ère}\) année (age 7)
- CE2 Cours Elémentaire 2\(^{ème}\) année (age 8)
- CM1 Cours Moyen 1\(^{ère}\) année (age 9)
- CM2 Cours Moyen 2\(^{ème}\) année (age 10)
of post-compulsory schooling. However, earlier starting points for the study of the third language is being phased in with learners preparing for the Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs (VWO) school leaving certificate who will be required to study three languages from age 12 – that is, for the entire period of compulsory secondary education. The more vocationally orientated Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs (HAVO) requires study of three languages from 12 to 15 and two languages for the final 2 years of study, while learners who are streamed to complete schooling at the end of compulsory schooling are required to study only two languages from 12 to 16 (Eurydice, 2005).

The profile of secondary language learning in many Asian countries is one of stable language enrolments over the period of secondary education, with reductions in numbers because of learners leaving the education system rather than opting out of language study. In these countries, the provision of languages in high school is strongly established and it is primary level study that is weaker.

In Japan study of a foreign language is compulsory at both junior high school and senior high school levels. In junior high school students begin with 150 minutes of language instruction per week, divided into three separate classes. There has been debate about introducing English as a compulsory subject in primary schools for some time and primary level language programmes are considered highly desirable (Monbusho, 2002). The Japanese Government, which is usually quite prescriptive in its approach to education, has largely allocated the implementation of language study at primary schools to local government agencies and individual schools (Butler, 2005). Although languages at primary school are optional at present, Ito (2005) reports that 88% of government primary schools currently teach English in some way.

In China foreign language study is compulsory at secondary school level. Students at this level typically receive five to six periods of 45 minutes of language instruction per week, or a total of 3.75 to 4.5 hours. China also introduced compulsory language study in primary school in 2001, implementing a roll-out of English language programmes first in city schools and later in town and village schools. The syllabus for English in primary school is contained in the Basic Requirement for Primary School English released by the Ministry of Education in 2001. The Basic Requirement for Primary School English states that language learning is to begin in Grade 3, with a recommended time allocation of 80 minutes per week divided into four periods (Qiang, 2002).

Korea has compulsory foreign language study at secondary school level, with students at junior levels receiving 2 to 4 hours of instruction per week and students at senior secondary level (grades 10–12) receiving 4 hours. Korea instituted compulsory language study in 1997 beginning at Grade 3 (age 8), and since 2000 all learners in Grades 3 to 6 participate in language learning. In Grades 3 and 4 learners receive a 90-minute lesson each week and Grades 5 and 6 receive two 40-minute lessons per week. The current National Curriculum for English includes provisions for primary school language teaching and the Ministry prescribes a set textbook for all schools (Butler, 2005; Jung & Norton, 2002; Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003).

### 2.5 Comments

In most countries compulsory language study is a normal part of the secondary school curriculum, and is increasingly common in primary schools. The countries in which compulsory language learning is least well established are English-speaking countries in which only one language is used for official purposes. It is also in these countries that concern for participation in language learning is most commonly expressed. In countries that have compulsory language study, the policy concern is less with participation and more focused on issues of ensuring teacher supply, teaching quality, and curriculum development. These issues also appear to be of concern in countries in which languages are not compulsory.
3 Languages Taught in Australian Schools

One feature of languages education in Australia is the large number of languages taught. This diversity reflects both the historical context of languages education in Australia and also the present range of needs that Australian education addresses.

For 2003 the MCEETYA report on languages reported 146 languages being taught in Australian schools. This number differs from the situation in 2005, when 133 languages were reported in all sectors of Australian schools, including ethnic schools. The difference in numbers may be explained by a number of factors. The first is that the data collected for 2005 is less systematic than that collected at the time of the MCEETYA report and so smaller languages taught only in some systems may not have been reported. In addition, in reporting languages, the same language may be reported under different names, even within a single jurisdiction – for example, Khmer may be reported as Cambodian, Farsi as Persian – while other language names may hide internal diversity – for example, Chinese may mean Mandarin or it may mean other varieties, especially Cantonese. How such examples are treated will affect the total number of languages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amharic</th>
<th>Fijian</th>
<th>Nepalese</th>
<th>Tatar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assyrian</td>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>Nuer</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bari</td>
<td>Gujarati/Gujarati</td>
<td>Oromo</td>
<td>Tok Pisin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgarian</td>
<td>Harari</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Uighur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>Mandaean</td>
<td>Slovak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinka/Madi</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Languages taught only in ethnic schools

Of the 133 languages, forty-five were Indigenous Australian languages while eighty-eight were non-Indigenous languages, taught either as foreign languages or community languages. The ethnic schools sector taught seventy-seven languages. Ethnic schools do not provide programmes for Indigenous languages and all Indigenous languages were taught in the mainstream sectors. Twenty-two languages were available only in ethnic schools (see Table 5). Languages taught in ethnic schools tend to cater mostly for background speakers of the languages and serve language maintenance needs for particular community groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ancient Greek/Classical Hebrew</th>
<th>Kurdish</th>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classical Greek</td>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auslan</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Pashto</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Languages taught only in government, Catholic, or independent schools

Eleven languages, in addition to the forty-five Indigenous languages, were taught only in mainstream schooling sectors (see Table 6). These languages include classical languages, which by definition have no community of speakers, Auslan, which is most common in schools that provide education to both deaf and hearing students, and a small number of languages of specific communities, which are mostly taught through government schools of languages or in independent schools associated with particular communities.

A further forty-seven languages were taught in all school sectors. Again, some of these languages were taught in a limited number of schools and in the government sector many were taught only in schools of languages. Other languages were taught in government, Catholic, or independent schools, which had a local community reason for teaching the language as well as in ethnic schools.

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1 Auslan, although indigenous to Australia, has not been included as an Indigenous language because the educational, sociolinguistic and socio-political context in which Auslan is taught and learnt differs significantly from that of the languages of Indigenous Australians.
In these cases, ethnic schools and mainstream schools were catering to similar populations of background speakers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albanian</td>
<td>Croatian</td>
<td>Hungarian</td>
<td>Lithuanian</td>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Dari</td>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>Macedonian</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Thai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian</td>
<td>Farsi†</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>Samoan</td>
<td>Tigrinya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auslan</td>
<td>Filipino††</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Maltese</td>
<td>Serbian</td>
<td>Tongan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengali*</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Khmer†</td>
<td>Māori</td>
<td>Sinhala††</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnian</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Modern Greek</td>
<td>Slovenian</td>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese**</td>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>Latvian</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* incl. Bangla</td>
<td>† incl. Persian</td>
<td>‡ incl. Cambodian</td>
<td>‡‡ incl. Sinhalese</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Languages taught in all school sectors

Although a large range of languages are taught in Australia, a much smaller number is widely taught. The twenty most widely studied languages taught around the country in 2005 show a mixture of languages including international languages, community languages, a classical language, and an Indigenous language (see Table 8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Language</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Japanese</td>
<td>11. Auslan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Italian</td>
<td>12. Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Indonesian</td>
<td>13. Korean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. French</td>
<td>14. Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. German</td>
<td>15. Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Modern Greek</td>
<td>17. Serbian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Vietnamese</td>
<td>18. Khmer**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Spanish</td>
<td>20. Tamil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chinese includes reports of Mandarin or unspecified Chinese.
** Khmer includes Cambodian.

Table 8: The twenty most widely studied languages, by student numbers, reported as taught in Australian government, Catholic, independent, and ethnic schools, 2005

If one excludes the languages taught in ethnic schools the picture looks slightly different (see Table 9). The six most widely studied languages remain the same and preserve their order. The next languages are also quite stable, but there is a variation in the rank order of the languages, which are reordered to reflect the relative importance of the languages in the ethnic schools and in other jurisdictions. Spanish, which is taught more widely as a second language, moves up from 10 to 7. Modern Greek and Vietnamese, which are more likely to be taught to background speakers, move lower. The remaining languages also show re-ordering, most notably Pitjantjatjara moving from 19 to 17 and Tamil being replaced in 20th position by Adnyamathanha, indicating the distribution of Indigenous language teaching programmes in mainstream schools and the strong presence of Tamil in ethnic rather than other schools. The relative change of Korean and Turkish is interesting in that it indicates a stronger presence of Korean in ethnic schools rather than mainstreams schools, in spite of Korean having been one of the designated NALSAS languages.

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1 Indigenous languages are hard to rank because there were more than 7000 ‘Indigenous’ or ‘other Indigenous’ responses, and lack of responses from some of the key jurisdictions for Indigenous languages.
Table 9: The twenty most widely studied languages, by student numbers, reported as taught in Australian government, Catholic, and independent schools, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Language</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Indonesian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chinese*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Modern Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Auslan</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Korean</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Macedonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Pitjantjatjara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Khmer**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Serbian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Adnyamathanha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chinese includes reports of Mandarin or unspecified Chinese.
** Khmer includes Cambodian.

As statistics are generally more complete in government schools, the distribution of the twenty most widely studied languages is perhaps the clearest indication of the actual levels of study available from the 2005 data (see Table 10).

Table 10: The twenty most widely studied languages, by student numbers, reported as taught in Australian government schools, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Language</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Indonesian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chinese*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Modern Greek</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Auslan</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Korean</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Macedonian</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Pitjantjatjara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Khmer**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Serbian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Adnyamathanha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Punjabi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chinese includes reports of Mandarin or unspecified Chinese.
** Khmer includes Cambodian.

The most noticeable difference between government schools and the total provision of languages is the omission of Hebrew from the list. Hebrew is very strong in Jewish independent schools; however, it is not widely taught in other sectors. The other languages remain much the same, although there is some re-ordering of languages other than the six most widely taught. Indigenous languages figure more highly in government schools than in the aggregated results, while Latin has a lower rank in the government sector. The 20th position would appear to be the position most subject to change with context in the data. In this case it is Punjabi.

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1 Indigenous languages are hard to rank because there were more than 7000 ‘Indigenous’ or ‘other Indigenous’ responses, and lack of responses from some of the key jurisdictions for Indigenous languages.
4 Teaching and Learning: Participation

The data on participation were part of the quantitative survey described in Section 1.4.3 above and must be read with the caveats mentioned there in mind. Although levels of participation in languages are fundamentally important for language education policy, it is relatively difficult to determine how effective such policy has been because jurisdictions have not necessarily documented levels of participation. This means that in many sectors language education policy is based on limited information about what is happening in schools and how education policy has affected language study. Because the data for the government systems are the only data set available for 2005 which approach completeness, these data will be examined first, with further analysis of what data were available for the non-government jurisdictions used to supplement them. The non-government data are only partial and so could not be included with the government data without skewing the results.

4.1 Participation Rates in the Government Sector

The overall number of students studying languages in 2001 and 2005, as a proportion of the whole school population, is shown in Figure 1.

![Figure 1: Participation rates in languages in government schools (excluding Qld, Tas), 2001 and 2005](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Language enrolments</th>
<th>Total student numbers</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Language enrolments</th>
<th>Total student numbers</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT*</td>
<td>21538</td>
<td>37970</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>18486</td>
<td>36595</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>208248</td>
<td>755246</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>170492</td>
<td>740439</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>9602</td>
<td>28538</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>10710</td>
<td>28554</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qld**</td>
<td>129007</td>
<td>435095</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>116908</td>
<td>450964</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>116070</td>
<td>172840</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>107907</td>
<td>164714</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vic</td>
<td>399972</td>
<td>532256</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>383644</td>
<td>536635</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>135362</td>
<td>224296</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>133078</td>
<td>228817</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total***</td>
<td>890792</td>
<td>1751146</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>824317</td>
<td>1735754</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data used for 2001 and 2003 as 2005 data were not available.
** Queensland data are for primary school only.
*** Excluding Queensland and Tasmania. Tasmanian data were not supplied.
Figure 1 shows that overall the level of engagement in languages in Australia is relatively low, with only half of all students studying a language in 2001 and slightly less in 2005. Although these figures include post-compulsory schooling, in which case issues such as mandated language study do not apply, they nonetheless show that participation rates are not as high as could be expected in many States and Territories. Although secondary school data are not available for Queensland, most of the policy focus in Queensland has been at primary school level and the small participation rate should be understood in that context.

There has been no change in the relative order of States and Territories in terms of participation rates in languages. The participation rate in New South Wales has been significantly lower than most other States and Territories. The Northern Territory and Queensland participation rates are also very low (although the Queensland figure is difficult to interpret as the data is only partial). Victoria and South Australia have consistently had the highest participation rates, with Victoria consistently having the largest proportion of language learners. More importantly, what the data show is that participation rates have fallen in every State and Territory except the Northern Territory from 2001 to 2005. In most cases the drop is small; however, as a national trend, even a small decrease is a problem. The reduction in participation rates is largest in the ACT, followed by New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria, with the lowest rates of decrease in South Australia and Western Australia (see Figure 2).

Comparison of the 2001 and 2005 enrolments in the top twenty most commonly taught languages in government schools shows that the twenty most widely taught languages cover the majority of language learning in the government sector (see Table 11). In 2001, only 17,231 students (1.7% of all language students) studied languages other than these twenty languages, while in 2005, 21,465 students (2.3% of all language students) studied them. Language study is not evenly distributed over the twenty most widely taught languages. There were nine languages in 2005 with enrolments of more than 10,000 students (Japanese, Italian, Indonesian, French, German, Chinese, Modern Greek, Spanish, and Vietnamese), an increase from eight languages in 2001, when Vietnamese had fewer than 10,000 students. In 2005, there were four languages with enrolments more than 100,000 (Japanese, Indonesian, Italian, and French), a decrease from five in 2001 (German also had enrolments of more than 100,000 students in 2001).
These figures also show an overall decrease in both the number of students studying these twenty languages and also in the number of students studying languages in the period 2001–2005. This is consistent with the overall decrease in rates of language study in most States and Territories that was seen in Figure 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Total student numbers 2005</th>
<th>Total student numbers 2001</th>
<th>% of all languages 2005</th>
<th>% of all languages 2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>220,126</td>
<td>239,030</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>192,097</td>
<td>196,585</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>170,273</td>
<td>211,003</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>123,861</td>
<td>135,826</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>92,433</td>
<td>107,695</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese*</td>
<td>52,960</td>
<td>51,351</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Greek</td>
<td>16,107</td>
<td>14,637</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>15,953</td>
<td>17,994</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>11,055</td>
<td>8,991</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>9,878</td>
<td>8,614</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auslan</td>
<td>6,153</td>
<td>3,596</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>1,878</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>2,683</td>
<td>2,962</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonian</td>
<td>1,069</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitjantjatjara</td>
<td>1,661</td>
<td>1,516</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khmer**</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbian</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adnyamathanha</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total students of these languages</strong></td>
<td>919,760</td>
<td>1,002,568</td>
<td>97.8</td>
<td>98.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total students of all languages</strong></td>
<td>941,225</td>
<td>1,019,799</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Figures exclude Tasmania.
3. NSW and Qld did not give specific figures for Auslan, Khmer, Latin, Macedonian, Punjabi, Serbian for 2001, so figures for 2005 for these languages excluded from totals here so as to not bias % change.
* Chinese includes reports of Mandarin or unspecified Chinese.
** Khmer includes Cambodian.

**Table 11: Comparison of 2005 and 2001 government sector enrolments in the twenty most widely taught languages**

Table 11 also shows that between 2001 and 2005 there was a decline in the number of learners in the largest languages taught in the Australian Government education sector, but growth in some of the less widely taught languages. This pattern of change can be seen more clearly in Figure 3. This graph shows that the four most widely taught languages all suffered decreases in student numbers between 2001 and 2005. Of these Indonesian was the most significantly affected, losing 19.3% of its learners from 2001. Losses for Japanese (-7.9%), French (-8.8%), and German (-14.2%) were also significant, while the loss for Italian was comparatively small (-2.3%). The only very widely taught language to show an increase in enrolments during the period was Chinese, with an increase of 3.1%. The remaining
languages, except Spanish (11.3% decrease) and Korean (9.4% decrease), all showed overall increases in the number of students, although numerically these increases were small. The largest proportional increases were found in the middle range of the twenty most widely taught languages. Modern Greek (10%), (Vietnamese 23%), Arabic (14.7%), and Auslan (71.1%) had numerical increases similar to or greater than that for Chinese, as the number of students is comparatively low the proportional increase for these languages is high.

Figure 3: Comparison of 2005 and 2001 government sector enrolment changes in the twenty most widely taught languages

Auslan is particularly remarkable here and it may represent an overall increase in Auslan teaching or it may reflect an under-reporting of the teaching of Auslan in previous data collection in which Auslan was considered as education for the Hearing impaired, rather than as language study. The growth of the remaining languages is significant in proportional terms (e.g. Serbian 106%, Turkish 140%, and Adnyamathanha 105%) but overall numbers are low.
Nonetheless, taken globally, there appears to be an overall increase in less widely taught languages and a decrease in more commonly taught languages.

Figure 4: Comparison of 2005 and 2001 government sector enrolment changes in widely taught and less widely taught languages

Figure 4 shows that there has been a considerable decrease in participation in the most widely taught languages, but a growth in other languages; however, the growth is not as great in terms of student numbers as the loss in the most commonly taught languages.

The enrolments in the most commonly taught languages in the non-government schools for which data were available is shown in Table 12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>NSW Ind</th>
<th>Qld Ind</th>
<th>SA Ind</th>
<th>SA Cath</th>
<th>Vic Ind</th>
<th>Vic Cath</th>
<th>WA Ind</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>5,088</td>
<td>1,088</td>
<td>1,422</td>
<td>8,452</td>
<td>1,762</td>
<td>85,410</td>
<td>1,322</td>
<td>104,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>7,218</td>
<td>20,418</td>
<td>7,463</td>
<td>2,223</td>
<td>14,350</td>
<td>24,789</td>
<td>6,193</td>
<td>82,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>22,084</td>
<td>8,158</td>
<td>3,484</td>
<td>1,380</td>
<td>23,552</td>
<td>14,584</td>
<td>7,766</td>
<td>81,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>3,333</td>
<td>1,823</td>
<td>3,176</td>
<td>2,368</td>
<td>9,358</td>
<td>16,616</td>
<td>7,813</td>
<td>44,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>7,029</td>
<td>7,710</td>
<td>8,108</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>10,411</td>
<td>1,025</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>35,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese*</td>
<td>1429</td>
<td>4,409</td>
<td>3,121</td>
<td>1,369</td>
<td>10,847</td>
<td>3,904</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>25,459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>412</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,643</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>7,003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>386</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4,675</td>
<td></td>
<td>457</td>
<td>5,518</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>1,247</td>
<td>1,327</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>3,864</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Greek</td>
<td>708</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,525</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>408</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,692</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>464</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,967</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,603</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,460</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auslan</td>
<td>190</td>
<td></td>
<td>855</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,045</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data for NSW and Victorian independent schools and for SA Catholic schools are incomplete as they do not include all schools in the sector.

* Chinese includes reports of Mandarin or unspecified Chinese.
Table 12 shows very different distributions of language study for thirteen commonly taught languages, in which no jurisdiction actually teaches the full range of these languages. However, the data here are very limited in that some of the large jurisdictions, including much of the Catholic education sector, were not available.

### 4.2 Year 12 Participation Rates

The most rigorously collected data on language study in Australia focus on Year 12 study in tertiary accredited courses. These data have been collected more systematically in part because the Australian Government priority languages element funding was tied to Year 12 enrolments since the 1991 ALLP. One of the goals for language learning in both ALLP and NALSAS was to increase the total number of Year 12 students taking a language to 25%. The Year 12 enrolment figures therefore provide a historical overview of the achievement of targets for the highest levels of school language study. Although data were not available for all years it is possible to trace the pattern of participation rates since 1987, the year that the National Policy on Languages was introduced (see Figure 5).

![Figure 5: Percentage of students studying a language at Year 12 level, 1987–2005](image)

The data for the period 1987 to 2005 show a rapid growth from 8.9% in 1987, the low point of Year 12 language study, to 15% in 1994, the high point of language study for this period and the date that marks the commencement of the NALSAS Strategy. Since then language participation has declined but has remained relatively static, with a low point in 1999–2000 from which levels have recovered slightly, but without reaching the 1994 level.

Although the Year 12 data are the most systematically collected, they do, however, have some problems that make interpretation at best approximate. Firstly the Year 12 figures overestimate the percentages, since the number of enrolments in a language in Year 12 does not record the number of individual learners studying a language, but the enrolments in particular languages. This means that if a single student enrolls in more than one language, he/she is counted twice. However, the data may also underestimate the percentages, since the data only includes enrolment in tertiary-accredited subjects. Any students studying non-tertiary-accredited language courses will not be counted. Ethnic school students sitting external exams will be included. In addition, the count does not distinguish between those
who begin language study in senior secondary school and so does not necessarily indicate those students who have undertaken extended language study at senior secondary level.

A more detailed analysis is possible for the data collected between 2001 and 2005. The general trend in Year 12 enrolments has been for the overall number of students to remain static with very little fluctuation in language study over the period 2001–2005 (see Figure 6). Similarly the proportion of males to females has remained relatively static, with females significantly outnumbering males in language study. Overall numbers, however, do not necessarily show a change in the proportions of students studying a language. This information can be seen in Table 13 and Figure 6.

![Figure 6: Number of Year 12 students studying a language, 2001–2005](image)

Table 13 shows the fluctuation in enrolments from a low point of 24,419 in 2002 to a high point of 26,106 in 2001. These were also the years in which high and low enrolments are found as a proportion of total enrolments (12.6% in 2002 and 13.9% in 2001). None of the data indicate therefore a clear trend upward or downward over the period 2001 to 2005, but rather see that language enrolments are being maintained at a relatively low proportion of total enrolments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrolments in a language in Yr 12</th>
<th>Students in Yr 12*</th>
<th>% of Yr 12 students studying a language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>9,318</td>
<td>15,966</td>
<td>25,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>9,274</td>
<td>16,265</td>
<td>25,539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>8,948</td>
<td>15,989</td>
<td>24,937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>8,312</td>
<td>16,107</td>
<td>24,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>8,765</td>
<td>17,337</td>
<td>26,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>8,131</td>
<td>16,431</td>
<td>24,562</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 13: Year 12 language enrolments as a proportion of total Year 12 enrolments, 2001–2005
The patterning of the fluctuation of the percentage of students studying a language at Year 12 shows that males and females fluctuate in similar ways and for the total number of students. This is in spite of a slight upward trend in the proportion of males taking languages at Year 12.

If the gender difference is considered from the perspective of the relative proportion of languages by gender, the picture that emerges shows the division between males and females studying a language at Year 12 is approximately one-third males and two-thirds females.

![Figure 7: Percentage of Year 12 students studying a language, 2001–2005, by gender](image)

**4.2.1 Participation in Language Study Across Years of Schooling**

The participation rates for all languages across years of schooling show a clear pattern of language study (see Figure 8).

![Figure 8: Number of students in each year level, 2001–2005 — all languages](image)

Government schools: Data available from NT, SA, Vic, and WA only.

Non-government schools: Data available from Victoria Catholic and Queensland Independent sectors only.

![Figure 8: Number of students in each year level, 2001–2005 — all languages](image)
Many issues must be taken into account in interpreting Figure 8. First, the data are problematic in cases where students study more than one language in certain years in the form of taster courses. This leads to substantial double-counting of students. For example, if each enrolment in a language class is treated as being for a separate student, and compare this with the number of students enrolled at each year level, in the Queensland Independent system 103% of Year 7 students studied a language; in the Victorian Catholic system, 162% of Year 7 students and 118% of Year 8 students studied a language. It is highly likely, then, that the apparent ‘spike’ in enrolments in Year 7 in the above graph could be more related to double-counting than higher numbers of students studying languages at Year 7 level in this data. Had New South Wales data been available for this comparison, the spike around Year 7 and 8 levels would have been accentuated by the compulsory language requirement at this level.

In some States, the data from the school of languages (or equivalent) is not divided into year-level equivalents, but simply counted as ‘ungraded primary’ or ‘ungraded secondary’. Thus the above figures do not include students in some States who are studying a language in a specialist school of languages. There are similar issues with students enrolled in ethnic schools who are not counted in the above figures, as they are not broken down by year level. These issues do not, however, change from year to year, thus the 2001–2003–2005 contrasts are little affected.

What Figure 8 shows is that much language learning in Australia is concentrated in the primary school years, especially when it is considered that in some States (Queensland, South Australia) Year 7 is included in primary schooling. Language learning in secondary school is weaker and as the level advances the participation rate declines. This means that the bulk of language learning is concentrated at those levels of schooling where programmes are most likely to be characterised by low time allocations (e.g. 45 minutes per week) and is not continued to higher levels of proficiency. The impact of this on Australian languages education is that, while many students may have an experience of language learning, this experience is unlikely to contribute to the development of useful levels of language proficiency.

A further issue that comes from these studies is that goals such as having 25% of students studying a language in Year 12 are unlikely to be achieved, because of the very low participation rates in Year 10. Unless more than 25% of students at Year 10 study a language it is highly unlikely that such levels of participation will be achieved after Year 10. If Australian school education is to develop a substantial proportion of language learning at higher levels of proficiency, it would appear that the rapid decline in language study must be addressed.

4.2.2 Participation Rates in Ethnic Schools

Participation rates for ethnic schools are available only for 2005 and show only total numbers of students as these figures are not reported by year level. Moreover, statistics are not available for all States and Territories. The twenty most widely taught languages in the ethnic schools sector is shown in Table 14. The full data for 2005 is shown in Appendix 3. Table 14 and Appendix 3 show that ethnic schools cater for relatively small numbers of students, with only three of the twenty most widely taught languages being taught to more than 10,000 students. In reality, Arabic may also be included in this group if complete statistics were available. Of these languages only ten are taught to more than 100 students (although again, Sinhala may also be in this group). Appendix 3 shows that forty-eight of the languages taught in ethnic schools are taught to groups of less than 400. These twenty most commonly taught languages account for 93.1% of the total number of language students reported for ethnic schools. This means that many ethnic schools are targeting particular local populations and that the programmes delivered by these schools are developed on the basis of local needs of individual communities, and may be catering for small or recently arrived
immigrant groups who are not provided for in other educational sectors and not just for large and well-established communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Qld</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Tas</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>WA**</th>
<th>Total (excl. WA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese*</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>8868</td>
<td>2554</td>
<td>1052</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11274</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>24,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>4196</td>
<td>1222</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>7339</td>
<td>14,881</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Greek</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2590</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>1543</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>6523</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>11,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>5583</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>2773</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>9,078</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1727</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>2,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>1,892</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>757</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>1,298</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>1,082</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>1,066</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>1,026</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinhala</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>947</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>752</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>671</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>660</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbian</td>
<td></td>
<td>154</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>652</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dari</td>
<td></td>
<td>293</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>587</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>536</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>447</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>411</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures are for all places in ethnic schools, not just funded places.
* Mandarin or unspecified
** No figures were available for WA, only a list of languages taught (marked as ✓ )

Table 14: Enrolments in ethnic schools – twenty most widely taught languages

### 4.3 Comments

Participation rates in Australian schools show that there has been extensive growth in primary schools and that languages are most commonly studied in primary school programmes. Secondary schooling is more problematic with strong attrition rates as the level increases and, although Year 12 participation has increased significantly since 1987, it has tended to stabilise at around 13% in recent years. This number does, however, represent a national average rather than indicating a consistent languages enrolment across States and Territories. In some States and Territories participation in languages is much stronger than in others.

One notable trend in languages education that is not discussed above is the inclusion of non-languages subjects as part of the languages area. These subjects tend to focus on intercultural awareness and are explicitly accepted and reported in some jurisdictions as a ‘language subject’. Such subjects are found in the Western Australian Government system (Cultural Studies), and in the Queensland Catholic system (Cultural Literacy) and, most recently the Queensland Government system (Intercultural Investigations). The rationale for
such subjects is that even where schools do not offer a language, students should be exposed to at least some of the learning that would derive from a language subject. Although such courses clearly have a valuable place in education in general, they are more likely to resemble social sciences subjects than language study and so their inclusion as language study is problematic, especially where such an inclusion satisfies the requirement to offer a language.

Additionally, such subjects are considered to be a ‘second best option’ where there are difficulties in providing a language programme; however, the limited evidence that exists about enrolments in such subjects (from Western Australia, see Table 15) shows a growth in the number of students in such subjects and the number of schools offering them. These courses are found in rural primary schools, where they could be explained by an accommodation to mandated language study accompanied by a lack of language teachers in more remote rural areas. However, they are also found in metropolitan secondary schools, where the explanation is less easily understood simply in terms of teachers’ availability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Year levels offered</th>
<th>Number of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3–7</td>
<td>2 schools (1 rural PS, 1 metro HS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>1–7, &amp; 10</td>
<td>2 schools (1 rural PS, 1 metro HS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>729</td>
<td>2–10</td>
<td>7 schools (5 rural PS, 2 metro HS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15: Number of WA students studying/number of schools teaching ‘Other (specify) – Cultural Studies’

In the discussion of participation rates above, such subjects have been excluded from the numbers wherever possible, but if participation in such subjects is reported as part of an undifferentiated ‘other languages’ category it has not been possible to do so, and so the total number of students studying a language in some States may actually include students who are not studying a language.
5 Teaching and Learning: Curriculum

Curriculum documents in Australia exist at both Australian Government and State/Territory level in a number of different forms, particularly:

- Generic curriculum frameworks
- Languages-specific curriculum frameworks
- Language-specific syllabus documents.

Each document type has a different focus, purpose, and impact on language teaching and learning. Generic curriculum documents are designed to reflect the entire scope of learning, of which language learning is just one part, and deal with curriculum at a broad level of generality. Languages-specific curriculum frameworks present a broad perspective of the languages area through which curricula can be developed. Both types of frameworks deal with languages generically rather than focusing on specific languages and this means that much of the specific working out in terms of the practice of teaching and learning is left to teachers. Language-specific syllabuses are constrained documents focusing on the specifics of a discipline area and are most typically developed for specific languages, although they may be based on a generic underlying model.

The two levels of curriculum development in Australia – Australian Government and State/Territory – affect teaching practice in different ways, reflecting the constitutional responsibilities of each level of government for education. Australian Government documents do not have a direct impact on classroom practice and their implementation depends on their adoption by the State and Territory jurisdictions. These documents therefore tend mostly to be departure points for State and Territory curriculum development and are rarely adopted directly or without modification. State and Territory documents have more direct impact on teaching and learning and are the documents that are implemented directly. To a limited extent, an additional level of curriculum can be identified in the languages area – national curriculum documents – in which collaboration between jurisdictions in the development of curriculum has led to a common approach in curriculum at a national level. At present, this exists only for the senior secondary level. Given that Australian Government documents are implemented indirectly and State and Territory documents are implemented directly the following discussion will focus in more detail on the State and Territory documents.

Curriculum documents in Australia tend also to have different characteristics at compulsory and post-compulsory levels of schooling. In the compulsory years of schooling (K–10), most States and Territories have adopted generic curriculum documents rather than language-specific documents. At senior secondary level, however, the predominant curriculum documents are language-specific syllabuses. State and territory documents will therefore be discussed separately for compulsory schooling and for senior secondary study.

5.1 National/Australian Government Influences

A number of documents have been prepared as the result of the Australian Government’s work on languages. Most of these documents¹ have not been adopted as such in current language curriculum at State and Territory level but they have influenced the directions that State and Territory curricula have taken and serve to outline a history of the ways in which languages education has been understood in Australia in recent decades.

¹ The All Guidelines are the exception to this.
5.1.1 Australian Language Levels (ALL) Guidelines

The *Australian Language Levels (ALL) Guidelines* (Scarino, McKay, Vale, & Clark, 1988), which were formally adopted by most States and nationally through the National Assessment Framework for Languages at Senior Secondary Level (NAFLaSSL), were designed to address the commonalities within the languages area and to provide an approach that was an integrated whole consisting of language learning, curriculum, and pedagogy, and assessment. These guidelines were the common basis for language curriculum development throughout Australia for a considerable period from the late 1980s; although recent curriculum developments have not typically cited ALL as a source document, their orientation shows a significant continuation of the models developed by the ALL project. In the ALL Guidelines, language learning was conceived to have five main goals:

- Communication
- Sociocultural understanding
- Learning-how-to-learn
- Language and cultural awareness
- General knowledge.

These goals construct language learning as more than the acquisition of language proficiency, although communication is seen as the central goal. Add to this knowledge and awareness relating to languages and cultures and also understanding of the learning process itself.

The guidelines were conceived in terms of a jigsaw metaphor with five interlocking components (see Figure 9).

![Figure 9: ALL curriculum ‘jigsaw’](image)

The ALL Guidelines also incorporated eight principles of learning that were viewed as the optimal conditions for language learning:

1. Learners are treated as individuals with their own needs and interests.
2. Learners are provided with opportunities to participate in communicative use of the target language in a wide range of activities.
3. Learners are exposed to communicative data that is comprehensible and relevant to their own needs and interests.
4. Learners focus deliberately on various language forms, skills, and strategies in order to support the process of language acquisition.
5. Learners are exposed to sociocultural data and direct experience of the culture(s) embedded within the target language.
6. Learners become aware of the role and nature of language and of culture.
7. Learners are provided with appropriate feedback about their progress.
8. Learners are provided with opportunities to manage their own learning.

These learning principles involve communicative, student-centred approaches to language learning and have been influenced by the research around Communicative Language Teaching, although the inclusion of conceptual learning within the ALL Guidelines is not a typical characteristic of most approaches to Communicative Language Teaching. The ways in which learning is structured here is a cognitive view of the learning process, in line with educational theory at the time. In fact, the lack of a sociocultural approach to learning has been seen by the designers as something that should be modified in the guidelines (Scarino, 1997).

### 5.1.2 National Statement and Profile for Languages Other than English

The Statement and Profile for Languages other than English (Australian Education Council, 1994a) is a nationally developed curriculum document. Although it has been superseded in language teaching in States and Territories it has had an impact on the ways that curriculum has developed since that time, especially as a model for outcomes-based education in the languages area, which was typical of the 1990s general curriculum focus.

The Profile was produced with the intention of providing a framework for curriculum development; however, the document is primarily a set of statements of outcomes for languages learning. These outcomes are intended to cover language development during the entire period of compulsory schooling. The Profile is divided into eight levels. Each begins with a statement, which contains a general description of learners’ performance at the level. The levels are divided into three strands:

- Oral Interaction
- Reading and Responding
- Writing.

Each strand has a broad outcome statement and a series of pointers, which exemplify the outcome.

A notable element in this document is the movement away from a model of four macroskills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and the development of more integrated strands. Aspects of this integration can be seen in the curriculum documents of States and Territories.

### 5.1.3 Australian Indigenous Languages Framework

The Australian Indigenous Languages Framework (1996) (SSABSA, 1996a) was a national initiative that allowed Indigenous Australian languages to be taught in accredited programmes at senior secondary level. The AILF was organised into two components: a target language(s) component within which students learnt to use or learnt about a specific language or cluster of languages belonging to a region or location and an Australian languages component within
which students learnt about the range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and their role within society.

The framework established a range of programme types to accommodate a broad spectrum of Australian Indigenous language situations. The Australian languages component is common to all Indigenous language programmes; however, the target language component varies according to the sociolinguistic profile of the language being studied (Figure 10).

All programme types envisage some learning of a particular language, but also involve additional learning about other languages spoken in the same geographical region. The amount of time devoted to each of these varies according to the programme type. Second language learning (the new learning of a language), first language maintenance (continued development of the home language), and language revitalisation (expanding use of a traditional language), devote the most time to the learning of a particular language, both for educative and practical reasons. These language programmes presume that languages are actively used by communities of speakers, and thus have a broad living oral tradition and fluent speakers of the language who can both teach and serve as language models. Language renewal and language reclamation languages are designed for situations in which languages have ceased to be actively used and for which a broad living tradition and native-speaker models are not available. The language being learnt may, therefore, exist only in partial form, and especially in cases of language revival, the amount of the language that is known and/or knowable may be limited. Language awareness programmes involve the least language learning and do not aim at active language use, and may be used with languages for which there is minimal documentary evidence and no living community of use. The framework is supported by illustrative programmes (SSABSA, 1996b) and a textbook (Nathan, 1996).

Figure 10: Distribution of the language components in possible programme types in the AILF
5.1.4 Report on Intercultural Language Learning

The *Report on Intercultural Language Learning* (Liddicoat et al., 2003) provides a framework for the integration of an intercultural stance in languages education. The report, like the *Australian Language Levels (ALL) Guidelines*, takes an integrated, holistic approach to the understanding of curriculum, which involves the interrelationship of several activities: planning, teaching, resourcing, assessing, and evaluating and renewing (see Figure 11).

Figure 11 brings together different contributory aspects of the curriculum construction, and is intended to reflect the ecological character of the relationship among all the dimensions. Making a change to any one dimension of the curriculum will necessarily lead to changes in all others. The authors argue that, building on this concept of the curriculum ecology, intercultural language learning for the teacher becomes an overall stance in relation to his/her work as curriculum constructor and teacher. It is not simply a ‘method’ of embedding language, culture, and learning, but rather, an overall orientation, a way of thinking and doing, a stance, which influences all decisions regarding curriculum design, its operationalisation and ongoing renewal.

![Figure 11: The curriculum as an integrated whole](Source: Liddicoat et al., 2003)

The report bases the construction of this ecological approach to curriculum for intercultural language learning around five core principles:

- active construction
- making connections
- social interaction
- reflection
- responsibility.

Each of these principles is further developed in application to language education and elaborated through descriptions of teacher and learner actions that develop each principle.

5.1.5 Comments on National/Australian Government Influences

These national documents can be seen as a progression in curriculum from a holistic integrated approach in the *ALL Guidelines* to a more atomistic, outcomes-based approach in the *Profile*, with a return to integration in the *Report on intercultural language learning*. Although these documents themselves do not constitute curricula that were directly
implemented in language classrooms, they do represent a number of guiding documents that have informed curriculum development in languages with State and Territory documents reflecting the approaches and assumptions of each document at different points in time. Many existing curricula for languages include specific reference to the ALL Guidelines as a base document for their languages curriculum or imply an influence from the ALL project. The Profile is also evident in the structuring and emphasis of some curricula, while a direct influence from the Report on intercultural language learning, as a more recent document, is found only in recent revisions of the curriculum.

5.2 State and Territory Documents: K–10

The discussion here focuses on the curriculum documents developed by governments. These documents are also used by the non-government schooling sectors (Catholic and Independent schools) as the basis for their curriculum and this is often required by the Education Acts of States and Territories for schools to be accredited. The situation in the ACT is more complex than elsewhere in Australia as the Catholic archdiocese covers both the ACT and parts of New South Wales. Therefore schools in this system are required to use either the ACT curriculum or the New South Wales curriculum, as appropriate. Ethnic school systems may also use the State and Territory curricula, but because of the nature of ethnic schools education, other curricula may also be used.

5.2.1 ACT

In 2006, when data were collected in interviews and focus groups in the ACT, the ACT was using the Languages Other Than English Curriculum Framework as its primary curriculum document for languages; however, a process of curriculum renewal was underway and a new curriculum document, Every Chance to Learn, was being developed for 2007. This section will therefore examine both these documents.

The ACT Languages Other Than English Curriculum Framework explicitly includes languages not traditionally considered as part of this learning area, such as Australian Indigenous languages and classical languages. Some attention is given to the specific context of teaching of Indigenous languages in the framework, but there is little development of what may need to be modified for teaching classical languages. The languages learning area comprises five interdependent strands of learning, three of which are identified as ‘Communicating in the LOTE’: Oral Interaction, Reading and Responding, and Writing. The remaining strands are Sociocultural and Language as a System. The strands are considered the major structural organisers for the scope of languages education and describe the knowledge, skills, and processes, distinctive and essential to languages. These strands, therefore, outline what might be taught to achieve the outcomes described.

The aims of the languages learning area in the curriculum document is for learners to develop skills and gain the knowledge to communicate effectively and appropriately in a language for a wide range of purposes and audiences. According to the framework documents, this involves the capability to:

- become independent users of the LOTE and develop strategies for effective communication
- listening, speaking, reading and viewing, and writing
- use language in culturally appropriate ways
- explore the rich diversity of the spoken and written forms of the LOTE
- appreciate cultural and social contexts in spoken, written, and visual LOTE texts
- interact and communicate effectively in groups
• collect, analyse, and organise information
• derive enjoyment and vicarious experience from LOTE texts
• express insights and feelings clearly and powerfully in speech and writing
• respond creatively and imaginatively to LOTE texts
• develop a critical appreciation of LOTE texts
• reflect upon language in use, uses of language, and language learning
• be analytical, critical, and creative thinkers
• form judgments and develop values.

The framework then presents information relevant to language learning in upper primary, providing a description of learners, information about language learning, and learning experiences. The text indicates that learners at this level may be either beginning language study or continuing it from their earlier primary schooling. However, all learners completing this level are described as ‘typically able to read and write with increasing independence and have further developed literacy skills and a growing awareness of language structures and purposes’. The focus in upper primary is on the further development of the four major skills: listening, speaking, reading and viewing, and writing. The recommended learning activities at this level include: ‘social interaction that allows for experimentation with the language, such as structured games, the exchange of personal information and simple opinions, role-plays, the finding out and giving of information on a range of topics, and information-gap, problem-solving and open-ended activities’. Themes are also recommended for this level, including ‘self, family, friends, home, school, sport, leisure activities, clothing, shopping, food and drink and the world of the imagination’. Under text types, the framework recommends the use of a range of text types, including ‘charts, posters, worksheets, maps, stories, cards, invitations, labels, slogans, captions, instructions for games and actions, and rhymes, songs and poems’.

The framework also presents information relevant to language learning in high school, under the same headings: description of learners, information about language learning, and learning experiences. The framework recognises that high school is an entry point for many language learners. The framework expects that as learners pass through high school, they ‘will increasingly be able to read and understand a range of texts and summarise, discuss the main issues, retell or respond by representing texts in dramatic or artistic form’ and ‘will be able to express information and their own attitudes and feelings in short written texts, linking several ideas, thoughts or items of information by using cohesive devices’. This section of the framework also seems to expect that learners beginning language study at this level will achieve similar levels of language to those who are continuing their study from primary school. At this level, the framework argues that learners ‘need to experiment with the language in creative ways, such as writing advertisements, providing captions for cartoons, responding to visual stimuli and taking part in spontaneous role-plays, dramatic performances and problem-solving activities’. It recommends relevant themes as ‘youth, school, leisure, family, friends, travel, and the world of work. It also argues that suitable written and visual texts for high school learners include signs, notices, posters, forms, lists, menus, maps, timetables, cartoons, advertisements, postcards, recipes, labels, brochures, leaflets, extracts from magazines and newspapers, stories, plays, poems and songs’ while oral and visual texts include ‘announcements, advertisements, videos, spoken instructions, dialogues, short talks, interactive computer programs, songs and television programs’.

According to the Languages Other Than English Curriculum Framework the principal functions of assessment are ‘to judge and describe the outcomes achieved and to provide
information for developing and choosing strategies to improve learning’. That is assessment is both summative and formative. The framework also indicates that the central outcome for languages is communication, reflecting the integrated use of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, but requires that ‘all broad outcomes should be monitored, assessed, and reported on’. The framework also details effective assessment strategies, which presuppose that effective assessment is based on the use of outcomes, and require a variety of assessment tasks. The core of the assessment approach in the framework is then based on the outcomes articulated for learning across the strands of the curriculum.

The Every Chance to Learn curriculum revision introduced a series of twenty-six Essential Learning Achievements (ELA) that are largely generic in form. This curriculum revision does not explicitly acknowledge learning to communicate in another language, although it does specifically acknowledge other curriculum areas such as science, physical education, art, civics, as well as literacy and numeracy. This means that languages is more marginalised in the new curriculum than in the old, and the essential learning that most directly relates to the languages areas is ELA 11. This ELA was originally formulated as:

The student understands and values human diversity.

But was later redrafted as ELA 8:

The student communicates with intercultural understanding.

This change meant that the ELA focused more clearly on the learning of languages as an essential learning, although it is not exclusively a languages essential learning. As the draft revision of this ELA notes:

This Essential Learning Achievement has two interdependent areas of focus: communicating in the target language and developing intercultural competence for effective communication.

The Every Chance to Learn curriculum is sequenced in four bands of development from preschool to Year 10 – early childhood – preschool to Year 2, later childhood – Year 3 to Year 5, early adolescence – Year 6 to Year 8, and later adolescence – Year 9 to Year 10, with markers of progress and essential content for each band. In the essential content, languages do receive explicit mention in each of the bands as one of the ways of addressing the ELA. In the early childhood band, the learning of another language is not explicitly mentioned in the essential learnings and the focus for language is more on the awareness that other languages exist, although without precluding language study as a way of doing this. By later childhood, the inclusion of languages becomes more specific and there are clear references to learnings about a ‘target language’. The explicit references to ‘languages’ continue to increase through the adolescent bands.

Progression through the bands of the curriculum is articulated through ‘markers of progress’, which are descriptive statements of expected abilities at the end of each band. These descriptions are necessarily generic as the curriculum is not specified for content at this level. The markers of progress for the ELA ‘The student communicates with intercultural understanding’ do not mention language abilities in all of the bands. The early childhood description for example states:

By the end of early childhood, students understand that more than one language exists and that not all people use English to communicate. They understand that not everybody lives in the same way they do and begin to distinguish some common characteristics that all people share as well as some differences. It is highly recommended, but at this stage not mandatory, for schools to offer a language other than English.

This marker of progress indicates clearly that languages are not a mandatory part of the ELA at this level – although the document does not state that languages are compulsory at any level. By the early adolescent marker of progress, the inclusion of languages has become explicit and dominant:
By the end of early adolescence, students will have developed communication skills in the target language by experiencing another language in a range of contexts. Including listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks will enable students to gain knowledge of and develop skills in the application of grammatical structures. Students will develop their awareness, understanding and acceptance of diversity in their personal lives and within the local and global community. Students acknowledge that others act within different cultural contexts and begin to comprehend that intercultural understanding is about knowing how to engage with the practices of other cultures. They show respect for differences in areas of non-verbal behaviours. They acknowledge their own frames of reference and at times adopt perspectives of others.

However, given that languages are not mandated in the curriculum, it is unclear what the status of this essential learning actually is for early adolescent learners: that is, is it an essential learning in the sense that everyone should have it or is it merely a description of the learnings that result from the study of a languages, if this is included in the curriculum offered by the school.

The assessment component of the Every Chance to Learn curriculum is very general and presupposes continuous assessment of learning with formative and summative purposes. The recommendations for assessment practice refer to issues such as the need to ensure that assessment collects adequate information about the ELAs, that it uses a variety of tasks, that the assessment is valid, and allows students to demonstrate their learning.

5.2.2 New South Wales

The New South Wales K–10 Curriculum Frameworks are language-specific rather than generic and exist for a number of languages. The discussion here will be drawn from the syllabus for French, but is indicative of other languages. The curriculum takes the form of a K–10 syllabus and so the presumed learning sequence for languages is from primary to secondary, not for the 100-hour requirement in secondary school. The document, however, assumes two different pathways for study. One begins in primary school and covers Stage 1 to Stage 3, and the other begins at secondary school with Stage 4 (to be covered during the mandatory hours) and continuing to Stage 6.

The pathway starting in primary school envisages that learners will reach Stage 3 by the time they reach secondary school and cover Stage 4 during the obligatory 100 hours. The secondary pathway envisages also that learners will cover Stage 4 during their 100 hours, and presupposes that they will also cover Stages 1–3 ‘as a more compact version’ (page 12). The meeting of the two pathways during the 100 hours would seem to indicate that the primary school pathway has few advantages, except in terms of less intensity.

The syllabus has three broad objectives:

- **using language** (‘the knowledge, understanding and the listening, reading, speaking and writing skills necessary for effective interaction in French’);
- **making linguistic connections** (‘explore the nature of languages as systems by making comparisons between French and English’); and
- **moving between languages and cultures** (‘knowledge of the culture of French-speaking communities and an understanding of the interdependence of language and culture, thereby encouraging reflection on their own cultural heritage’).

The objective, Using Language, is divided into macroskills: listening and responding, reading and responding, speaking and writing for each of the stages, and also has information
on content for each stage framed as statements of what learners will learn about and what they will learn to do.

The *K–10 Curriculum Framework* is a standards-referenced framework that describes the expected learning outcomes for students. The standards in the framework consist of two interrelated elements:

- outcomes and content in syllabuses showing what is to be learnt
- descriptions of levels of achievement of that learning.

The standards are typically written for 2 years of schooling (the end of Years 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10). The assessment approach is focused around the concept of assessment for learning based on a set of generic principles of assessment. Assessment for learning is transformed into assessment of learning at moments within the reporting process as an adaptation of the purpose of assessment as a measurement against the standards.

### 5.2.3 Northern Territory

The current curriculum document in the Northern Territory is the *Northern Territory Curriculum Framework*. The framework consists of the five interrelated structural components:

- **EsseNTial Learnings**—Inner Learner, Creative Learner, Collaborative Learner, and Constructive Learner. Each Essential Learning has a set of culminating outcomes.
- **Learning Technology**—Problem-solving and Decision-making through Research; Communicating through Presentation, Publication or Performance; Operating Computer Components; and Information Communication Technology in Society.
- **English as a Second Language**—with Early Childhood/Primary and Secondary pathways.
- **Learning Areas**—the eight nationally agreed KLAs from the National Goals of Schooling.
- **Indigenous Languages and Culture**—includes language and culture outcomes for language maintenance and language revitalisation programmes.

The framework includes languages explicitly as one of the eight KLAs. For languages, the framework identifies three core groups of learners: those learning a language from primary school through to secondary school, those starting language learning at secondary school, and those learning more than one language because of a change in language enrolment at some period during their education.

The *Northern Territory Curriculum Framework* provides a languages curriculum based on four macroskills: speaking, listening, reading and viewing, and writing. This differs from a conventional four macroskills approach in that it has integrated viewing as a second language skill. Each of these four macroskills is constructed in terms of three elements:

- communication and cultural understanding;
- language structures and features; and
- learning-how-to-learn strategies.

For each of the macroskills three Key Growth Points are given, with descriptors of relevant behaviours. The Key Growth Points are conceptualised as school entry points each reflecting a different beginning point for learning. In addition there are six bands (Band 1 – ‘Beyond Band 5’) each of which has descriptors of performance at each of the band levels. Band 1 is taken as the benchmark level for Year 3, Band 2 for Year 5, and Band 3 for Year 7, the remaining bands are distributed over the remaining years of schooling to Year 10. These are further explicated outcomes for each Key Growth Point and Band accompanied by indicators,
or indicative language behaviours. The bands given in the framework are predicated on a learning experience beginning in Year 3 at the latest, although with an earlier start appearing to be envisaged if learners are to reach Band 1 by the end of Year 3, with continuous learning over the period of compulsory schooling. Although other possibilities are recognised, these have to be mapped onto the learning sequence rather than being different sequences.

The framework does not include explicit information about assessment, but as the construction of the document is based around outcome statements, the force of the document is that of providing standards against which assessment will be undertaken.

5.2.4 Queensland

The *Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework* (QCAR) (2005) is being trialled throughout 2006–2007 for implementation in 2008. However, at the time of this study, the main curriculum documents for languages in Queensland were the *Languages other than English 4–10 Syllabus*, which exists in language-specific versions for Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, and Korean.

In the *Languages other than English 4–10 Syllabus*, second language learning is defined as ‘learning to use language as well as learning about language and how to use it’ (page 8). The syllabus uses a task-based approach to language learning organised around a contextual/situational focus conceived as ‘Fields of human knowledge and endeavour’, which are:

- personal and community life;
- leisure and recreation;
- the natural world;
- the built world;
- the international world;
- the imaginative world.

These fields are intended to allow the language and subject matter to be used by students ‘in an upwardly spiralling fashion … (to) consolidate and expand their language repertoires in a systematic way’ (page 8). The aim of the organisation around fields is to ‘encourage an embedded programme that involves content based on concepts and topic areas in other key learning areas’ (page 8).

The period of study for languages is divided into three bands of schooling based on age as a measure of physical, academic, and cognitive growth: middle primary (Years 4 and 5), upper primary (Years 6 and 7), and lower secondary (Years 8, 9, and 10). These are coupled with stages of language learning, designated as Beginner, Elementary, Lower Intermediate and Intermediate, which reflect students’ progress through language learning.

The syllabus sets a number of key learning outcomes for languages learning around the focus of communication:

- use of a range of linguistic features;
- application of process skills and strategies to maintain discourse;
- demonstration of cultural understanding and development of intercultural competence.

Although intercultural competence is a stated key learning outcome (page 12), the outcomes detailed in the level statements only make explicit reference to sociocultural and cultural knowledge.

The syllabus also identifies additional outcomes that are less easily assessable and not included in the core learning outcomes.
These are:

- positive attitudes to people of other languages and cultures;
- confidence and enjoyment in the application of new communication skills in purposeful interactions;
- understanding of the nature and role of language;
- understanding of their own and the other culture, recognising that all cultures are diverse;
- a repertoire of language learning strategies that can be applied in lifelong language learning;
- creative thinking and problem-solving abilities as they draw on knowledge and language skills to solve communication needs;
- skills for constructive participation with others;
- a reflective attitude towards their language learning and their first language;
- an ability to access knowledge of the [target] culture.

The syllabus has one strand for languages and this is called ‘Communication’. Within this strand, the sequence from Year 4 to Year 10 for languages is divided into three bands, which indicate general characteristics of physical, academic, and cognitive growth. It also identifies five stages: Beginner, Elementary, Lower Intermediate, and Intermediate, with Foundation Level for learners demonstrating a level of understanding before the Beginner stage. For each band stage, essential learnings are expressed in terms of ‘knowing and understanding’ and ‘enquiring, responding and reflecting’, followed by five standards to be achieved at the band level. At each level, Communication is broken down into two dimensions, Comprehending and Composing, with a set of core learning outcomes and a set of discretionary outcomes. In the description of process skills and strategies, these are further broken down into the four conventional macroskills commonly found in languages syllabuses: Listening and Reading in Comprehending and Speaking and Writing in Composing. In addition, the framework includes Compensation strategies and Social-affective skills and strategies.

In the assessment section of the syllabuses for languages, general information is given about the nature and purpose of assessment and this ties assessment to measuring achievement against outcomes. The syllabuses also include generic principles for assessment and also a list of assessment techniques, which remain generic, but with some languages focus. The recommended assessment techniques are:

- anecdotal records of regular classroom interactions;
- documentary portfolios of completed tasks;
- criteria-based checklists of particular skills evidenced in practice sessions or real usage;
- student responses to stories, poems, anecdotes, advertisements, surveys, questionnaires;
- performance notes on role-plays, skits, songs, interviews;
- notes on presentations;
- self-assessment and peer-assessment records on individual performances;
- show portfolios of projects;
- working portfolios of work in progress.
5.2.5 South Australia

South Australia operates under the *SACSA Framework* (2001), which identifies five Essential Learnings which link together the curriculum: Futures, Identity, Interdependence, Thinking, and Communication. The Essential Learnings are applied through eight learning areas, of which languages is one. Each curriculum area has a set of standards (1–5), which cover the duration of schooling R–12. In addition, for languages, the *SACSA Framework* provides for two pathways:

- **Pathway 1:** Second language learners; this refers to learners with little or no prior knowledge of the target language at entry
- **Pathway 2:** Background learners; this refers to learners with some prior learning and use of the language at entry

Within each Pathway there are two entry points:

- **Entry Point A,** which refers to learners who learn the language from Early to Senior Years Bands (R–12);
- **Entry Point B,** which refers to learners who learn the language from Middle to Senior Years Bands (8–12).

Each of the two languages pathways (second language learners and background learners) has an accompanying set of standards for each of the goals of language learning. These standards include ‘Developmental Learning Outcomes’, which are broad long-term accomplishments and which reflect the integration of learning and development through the Essential Learnings, and statements of learning which describe expected outcomes from language learning at each of the standards 1 to 5. Assessment is measured against these outcome statements to gauge learners’ progress in language learning.

The rationale for languages learning in the *SACSA Framework* is a broadly communicative and cultural one, which sees languages as contributing to general educational goals.

Through the study of languages, learners gain knowledge, skills and dispositions that enable them to communicate, and to make comparisons across languages and cultures. In so doing they extend their understanding of themselves and their own language, widen their network of interactions, and strengthen their literacy and numeracy skills. This enables them to contribute positively and productively as citizens in the linguistically and culturally diverse nation in which they live, and also as global citizens (*SACSA Framework*, page 183).

The *SACSA Framework* identifies three central strands for language learning in education. The goals are:

- Communication in the target language.
- Understanding language as a system.
- Understanding culture.

These strands are further elaborated though a number of dimensions which are to be developed by learners through the learning of languages:

- communicative potential in the target language;
- an understanding of languages and how they work as systems, which contributes to their literacy development;
- an understanding of cultures and identities, which contributes to a better understanding of themselves and others;
- enhanced social and cognitive capabilities;
• expanded general knowledge;
• enhanced opportunities to participate meaningfully in voluntary, community paid/unpaid work and further education and training;
• capacities to apply learning in languages to other Learning Areas, to life in the wider community, and in accessing further education and training.

The SACSA Framework provides three parameters for different groups of languages: alphabetic languages; non-alphabetic languages, focusing primarily on Chinese and Japanese; and Indigenous languages. The rationale for the separation of alphabetic and non-alphabetic languages is based on a perceived difference in the learning needs related to developing literate capabilities in non-alphabetic languages and recognises different learning needs and timeframes. The Indigenous languages framework recognises that language learning for Indigenous languages may have a variety of different programme types and purposes – first language maintenance, second language learning and language revival – and that the learning of Indigenous languages, therefore, represents different types of language learning endeavour than is the case with other languages.

5.2.6 Tasmania

At the time of the investigation, the Tasmanian curriculum was undergoing a process of renewal. This analysis therefore will outline the state of the curriculum at the end of 2006 as a way of understanding the curriculum that was introduced in 2007. From 2000 to 2006 the essential learnings curriculum replaced all learning areas, including languages (LOTE), with five ‘essentials’ – Communication, Thinking, Personal Futures, Social Responsibility, and World Futures. During this time, although languages continued to be taught and assessed against the Tasmanian LOTE Proficiency Outcomes, the emphasis was on teaching and learning in an essential learnings context.

The essential learnings did not focus on curriculum areas as such, but it was possible to identify clearly where many learning areas belonged. Languages, however, were almost absent from the document and did not appear to be a high priority for the curriculum. Each essential learning was developed in the document, with a description and a series of ‘key questions’ for educators. Thinking, as an overarching category applying to all other learnings was non-specific about the focus; however, there was potential for the inclusion of languages specifically in the other essential learnings. The description for Communicating focused centrally on language, but throughout most of the text the word ‘language’ seemed to be intended to mean ‘English’.

It was only in the final paragraph of the text that other languages were acknowledged under the heading ‘Being literate’: ‘the skills of communicating in languages other than our own, and learning to understand intercultural exchanges, lead to an appreciation of language and of cultural diversity and enrich the life experience of individuals and their community’. These issues, however, were not included in the key questions relating to the area. The other essential learnings reflected the assumption that curriculum was structured around English, languages were not explicitly included in Personal Futures, Social Responsibility, or World Futures, although there were frequent references to issues relating to culture and diversity, including linguistic diversity.

Assessment in the essential learnings generally was often collaborative and based on a set of five standards. These standards reflected the English-only expectation of the document, in Communicating, for example, the only mention of a specific language was Australian English. Assessment in the languages areas was based on the LOTE Proficiency Outcomes. The overall image that the essential learnings gave of the role of languages was that it was
peripheral to the main school curriculum and that, in the course of normal schooling, teachers of languages would be only indirectly involved in teaching or assessing these learnings.

Each of the essential learnings was associated with a series of outcomes that were described at five standard levels. Each standard had descriptors for lower middle and upper levels within the standard. However, the essential learnings were not used for the assessment of languages – a further indication of the problematic association that had been constructed between the languages learning area and the essential learnings. Languages were assessed according to the Tasmanian Languages (LOTE) Proficiency Outcomes rather than according to the essential learnings standards.

These outcomes had three broad levels: foundation, consolidation, and intermediate. Foundation and consolidation were each divided into three levels: lower, middle, and upper. Intermediate was also divided into lower middle and upper, but students could be assessed at three levels (intermediate 1, 2, or 3) depending on the difficulty of the content. For foundation and consolidation there were indicators given for three strands: oral interaction, reading and responding, and writing. For intermediate, there were indicators for four strands: analyse, process and respond to spoken texts; express ideas and information in spoken form; analyse, process and respond to printed texts; and express ideas and information in written form. The indicators for foundation and consolidation levels were based on the national outcomes from the Profile for Languages, while those for intermediate level were based on previous secondary syllabuses.

In the second half of 2006, the essential learnings underwent a period of revision and a new curriculum model has been developed. In this revision, the essential learnings were replaced as the organiser of curriculum with seven curriculum areas: English/Literacy (LOTE), Mathematics/Numeracy, Science, Society and History, Arts, Health and wellbeing, and Vocational and Applied Learning. Thinking and ICT are to be embedded in all curriculum areas. In the first consultation draft of this document, the languages area was even less visible than in the Essential Learnings. The Tasmanian Curriculum Framework Parents Update (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2006) noted that: ‘There was concern that Languages other than English (LOTE) were not represented clearly enough in the curriculum framework’ and that ‘this has been remedied’. The revised document is still in development in 2007, with a plan to implement it in 2008. The revised curriculum framework identifies seven curriculum areas with languages being included under the broad heading of English/Literacy, but with the languages area as a parenthetic addition to this learning area. This is in recognition of the fact that Languages (LOTE) is the only learning area named in the curriculum framework that cannot currently be a guaranteed learning opportunity for all students K–10.

New languages curriculum documents have been developed for six supported languages (Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, and Japanese), organised into alphabetic and non-alphabetic languages. These documents follow the same format as all other curriculum areas, with five standards across a K–10 continuum. They are currently in a consultation phase, to be implemented in 2008. The new languages (curriculum consists of three interlocking strands: Communication (with sub-straands of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing); Language as a system; Language and culture. Each languages curriculum document consists of:

- An introductory section, which includes the standards; an overview of concepts and topics across five standards; and an overview of linguistic items across five standards.
- For each standard, an overview describing the learner; opportunities to learn (concepts and topics; linguistic items and possible teaching emphases), and suggested resources.
- An assessment evidence guide: For each strand, there are indicators at fifteen stages (three per standard) to describe student achievement across the five standards.
• Support materials including a glossary, broadsheets, and references.

The new Tasmanian curriculum now includes languages in a more explicit way than was the case in the earlier curriculum and languages would seem to be better integrated into the overall curriculum approach in the new document. The languages area is, however, still in a potentially vulnerable position in Tasmanian schools, given that languages are only ‘encouraged’ as part of the curriculum. The Minister for Education stated in the Mercury on 3 June 2007 that ‘he highly values the teaching of languages as a requirement for our students to be competitive in a global marketplace’ and in his view the curriculum revisions ‘place the teaching of languages as integral in the literacy programme’.

5.2.7 Victoria

The curriculum document for compulsory schooling in Victoria is the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) (2005). There are three strands in the VELS that define what learners should know and able to do at different stages of learning. These strands are:

• Physical, Personal and Social Learning: such as health and physical education and civics and citizenship
• Discipline-based Learning: of subjects such as the arts, economics, English, languages, mathematics, geography, and history
• Interdisciplinary Learning: covering Communication and Information Technology.

Within each strand of learning, the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours are organised into domains. Languages are recognised as one of the sixteen domains of study within the VELS. Within this domain, there are two dimensions for language study:

• Communicating in a language other than English
• Intercultural knowledge and language awareness.

The two dimensions are seen as linked: Communicating in a language other than English allows learners to gain proficiency in the target language and gain cultural insights, while Intercultural knowledge and language awareness is seen as providing cultural guidelines for effective communication and the opportunity to reflect on language as a system. The Communicating in a language other than English dimension promotes learning of the ‘knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to the specific language being studied’. This includes listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing, and the use of body language, visual cues and signs. This dimension also presupposes that learners develop knowledge of linguistic elements, such as vocabulary and grammar and are familiar with a wide variety of text types in spoken, print, and electronic form. The Intercultural knowledge and language awareness dimension aims to develop learners’ knowledge of the connections between language and culture, and understanding of how culture is embedded throughout the communication system. The VELS assumes that these understandings are ‘universal and are gained by comparing languages, including English’. The VELS gives a core role to the learners’ own cultural self-awareness and the development of ‘the ability to rationally discuss and compare cultural differences’.

The VELS also identifies four language categories – Roman alphabetic languages, non-Roman alphabetic languages, character languages, and sign languages – for which specific standards are provided for reading and writing.

The VELS languages curriculum has two pathways: Pathway 1, which spans Years 1–10, and Pathway 2, which spans Years 7–10. Pathway 1 envisages continuous study of the same language for the whole span of language study. Standards for assessment and reporting are introduced at Level 4 (the end of Year 6) and continue to Level 6 (the end of Year 10).
Progression measures are given for earlier years of study to provide a ‘typical sequence of second language development’. Pathway 2 envisages a programme of language study that starts in Year 7, in which learners work towards Level 5 continuing to Level 6 by the end of Year 10. Pathway 2 has a similar expected exit level to Pathway 1 and therefore implies a more extended programme of language study. Where learners change languages on transferring from primary to secondary school, the VELS acknowledges that learning for Communicating in a language other than English must begin anew, but argues that some aspects of Intercultural knowledge and language awareness are cumulative and that continuity in this learning is maintained even where the language has changed. This argument is based on the belief that many concepts learnt in this dimension are universal in addition to those that are language-specific.

The VELS standards for languages begin only at Level 4, with assessment and reporting at lower levels having learning focus statements that are designed to assist teachers in developing their own assessment and reporting. Up to level 4, in addition to the learning statements, progression measures are given for both communicating in the language and for intercultural knowledge and language awareness. The progression measures are statements of expected student performance at each of the levels.

5.2.8 Western Australia

The relevant curriculum documents for languages in Western Australia are the Curriculum Framework (1997) and the Outcomes and Standards Framework (2005).

The Curriculum Framework establishes learning outcomes expected of all students from kindergarten to Year 12, and divides learning according to four phases of maturation: early childhood, middle childhood, early adolescence, and late adolescence. In early childhood the focus is mainly on development of the processes and skills that underpin future learning, including literacy, numeracy, social-emotional and physical development. In middle childhood learners continue to be supported in acquiring processes, but a greater focus is placed on their application and on the acquisition of learning area concepts. Conceptual outcomes begin to be targeted more systematically. In early adolescence the focus is placed on the application of processes in the acquisition of knowledge. The scope and depth of content are broadened and there is increased focus on the development and application of understandings. In late adolescence the content becomes more specialised and diverse. Learning programmes focus on those outcomes that underpin courses reflecting learners’ interests and aspirations for post-school destinations.

The languages learning area has six interrelated outcomes, which are conceptualised in two different ways. The first three outcomes are organised according to language macroskills: (1) Listening and Responding, and Speaking; (2) Viewing, Reading and Responding; and (3) Writing. For each of these language-based outcomes, there are three content-based outcomes (4) Cultural Understandings, (5) The System of the Target Language, and (6) Language Learning Strategies. The result is a grid of nine areas of focus as shown in Table 16.
Listening and Responding, and Speaking | Cultural understandings  
| System of the target language  
| Language learning strategies  

Viewing, Reading and Responding | Cultural understandings  
| System of the target language  
| Language learning strategies  

Writing | Cultural understandings  
| System of the target language  
| Language learning strategies  

Table 16: Organisation of the Western Australia Curriculum Framework

For each of these nine areas of focus the curriculum provides content organisers, which relate to the content-focused outcomes. For Cultural understandings these are: conventions of interpersonal interaction, communities and aspects of life, and identity and cultural diversity. For System of the target language they are: textual conventions and form and features of language. Although Language learning strategies has a single organiser: Learning and communication strategies. The outcomes for the K–12 curriculum are structured into nine levels, from Foundation to Level 8, and the curriculum also provides details of expectations for teaching for the various age groupings.

For the government school system, Western Australia has produced an Outcomes and Standards Framework, which defines achievement targets at Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 for some outcomes of the Curriculum Framework, together with outcome level descriptions. The Outcomes and Standards Framework has nine levels: Foundation to Level 8. However, for languages there is no Foundation level and descriptors begin from Level 1 as the base level of learning. The progress maps for LOTE describe student achievement for the six learning outcomes of the Curriculum Framework. The achievement target identified for Year 9 is Level 3, and so it is within the first three levels that most student achievement in languages will be located. The Outcomes and Standards Framework identifies only ‘listening and responding’ and ‘speaking’ as the relevant achievement targets at Level 3. The document argues that these outcomes were chosen because these abilities are ‘perceived as the pre-eminent goals of proficiency development’ (page 11). It is possible to achieve similarly in these areas across all languages and that these areas provide ‘an opportunity to improve pedagogical practices, especially in secondary schools where reading and writing activities tend to dominate the learning programme’ (page 11).

5.2.9 Comments

The curricula across the country for the years K–10 show considerable variations in terms of whether they are specifically languages curricula or whether languages are some way integrated into a more general curriculum framework. What does emerge from the curricula and shows some unity across the country is that languages in education are understood in larger terms than the linguistic code itself. All these documents have an emphasis on communication and this reflects the communicative dimension which was central to the ALL Guidelines and which has been continued through curriculum documents since the 1980s. In addition, they also include some reference to a cultural dimension relating to language, although this is variously conceived in the different curricula, sometimes as intercultural, sometimes as sociocultural knowledge or cultural understanding. All of the documents also
show the residues of the history of languages curriculum in Australia with elements drawn from the ALL project, from the *Profiles*, and from later intercultural work. In many cases these influences have accumulated to produce documents in which there are multiple layers of understanding and multiple theoretical dimensions.

5.3 **State and Territory Curricula for Senior Secondary Level**

Senior secondary curricula in Australia take one of two forms. They are either associated with an external examination system, in which case, the curriculum is centrally defined. The assessment of the curriculum in most cases involves both school-based assessment and the examination. Alternatively, there are systems in which there is no examination and the curriculum, including the assessment, is designed by teachers on the basis of a guiding framework document and is accredited centrally to ensure consistency of standards, together with a moderation process. Many States and Territories have curricula at senior secondary level for courses in addition to the regular continuing courses for students progressing from earlier language study to senior secondary level: the additional possibilities include beginners level courses from Year 11, advanced or extension courses, and courses for background speakers. All of these will be discussed below as relevant for the State or Territory.

5.3.1 **ACT**

The ACT has a senior secondary system based on school assessment, with no external examinations. The curriculum for senior secondary subjects is accredited on the basis of a framework document and student results are moderated.

The languages area has a generic framework which is designed to guide the development of languages courses in ACT schools. It is expected that all courses developed under the framework for languages will be based on a defined set of essential concepts and skills inherent in the subject area. The essential concepts include:

- communicating with others
- understanding how cultural concepts and perspectives are reflected in language and how cultural principles and practices influence communication
- understanding the underlying structures of language
- evaluating and appreciating the diversity of human experience.

The essential skills are:

- exchanging information, opinions and experiences and ideas using verbal, nonverbal and written language
- understanding and responding to written and spoken texts
- analysing, synthesising and applying language structures in a cultural context
- recognising and evaluating attitudes and values inherent in the language and culture
- developing skills of independent and reflective learning.

The framework gives guidance for assessment by indicating required task types and a range for weightings: speaking tasks (25–40%), writing tasks (25–40%), responding tasks (25–40%). The framework also recommends that four to six summative assessment tasks be used in each standard unit (semester) and at least three summative assessment tasks in a half unit. Each of the task types has a required piece of work, which is to be used for purposes of moderation. For the speaking task, the requirement is for an unscripted interview/conversation with the teacher/native speaker presented on tape, video, or CD. For the writing task the required task is a sustained piece of writing produced in class under test conditions within a minimum of
45 minutes. Responding tasks distinguish between beginners level and other levels. At Beginning and Continuing course level a listening/reading comprehension with questions and answers in English and/or the target language. For Advanced levels, a sustained response to a previously unseen/unheard stimulus, in either the target language or English.

The framework also presents descriptors of assessment criteria at various grading levels (A–E). These are divided into two groups, one for beginning level courses and one for continuing and advanced levels. There are additional descriptors given for character-based languages in terms of the proportion of characters taught that are known and used by the learner.

The framework is used as a basis for the development of accredited courses in each language. Each senior secondary college has the potential to develop its own courses, however, the ACT also makes available accredited courses that have been collaboratively designed by staff from more than one college. In the languages area, such accredited courses exist for Advanced Japanese, Advanced Spanish, Beginning German, Beginning Italian, Beginning Japanese, Continuing Chinese, Continuing French, Continuing German, Continuing Indonesian, Continuing Italian, Continuing Japanese, and Continuing Spanish.

5.3.2 New South Wales

The New South Wales senior secondary curriculum for languages is made up of a Preliminary Course of 120 indicative hours and the HSC Course of a further 120 indicative hours.

The Continuers syllabuses are for learners continuing their language study beyond Year 10, and are organised around themes:

- The individual
- [Language]-speaking communities
- The changing world.

These themes are used as a vehicle for the teaching and learning of the language, for which a series of objectives and outcomes have been established (see Table 17).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The student will:</th>
<th>The student:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. exchange information, opinions and experiences in French</td>
<td>1.1 uses a range of strategies to maintain communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 conveys information appropriate to context, purpose and audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 exchanges and justifies opinions and ideas on known topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4 reflects on aspects of past, present and future experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. express ideas through the production of original texts in French</td>
<td>2.1 applies knowledge of language structures to create original text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 describes, narrates and reflects on real or imaginary experiences in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the past, present or future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3 structures and sequences ideas and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. analyse, process and respond to texts that are in French</td>
<td>3.1 identifies and conveys the gist, main points, supporting points and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>detailed items of specific information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2 summarises, interprets and evaluates information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. understand aspects of the language and culture of French-speaking</td>
<td>4.1 recognises and employs language appropriate to different social contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communities</td>
<td>4.2 identifies values, attitudes and beliefs of cultural significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.3 reflects upon significant aspects of language and culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17: Objectives and outcomes for senior secondary French in NSW
Along with the objectives and outcomes shown in the table, the scope of the syllabus is further defined by a list of text types and grammatical items that the learner is expected to recognise and use.

New South Wales Higher School Certificate results are based on an assessment mark submitted by the school and an examination mark derived from the HSC external examinations. School-based assessment forms the entirety of assessment in the Preliminary Course. Assessment is required for components which relate to macroskills with suggested weightings: speaking (20%), listening and responding (30%), reading and responding (40%), and writing (10%). In the HSC Course, the same components are assessed in schools, but with mandatory weightings: speaking (20%), listening and responding (25%), reading and responding (40%), and writing (15%). The HSC Course also includes an external examination made up of an oral examination (20%) and a written examination with three components: listening and responding (25%), reading and responding (40%), and writing (15%).

The Extension syllabuses are one-year HSC courses, for which the Continuers HSC course is a co-requisite. The organisational focus of the Extension syllabus is typically a single theme, the individual and contemporary society, which is studied through a number of prescribed issues, a prescribed text and related texts. The text types and grammatical focus of the Extension courses build on those of the Continuers courses.

The objectives and outcomes for Extension courses build on those of the Continuers courses, as Table 18 shows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The student will:</th>
<th>The student:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 present and discuss opinions, ideas and points of view in French</td>
<td>1.1 discusses attitudes, opinions and ideas in French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 formulates and justifies a written or spoken argument in French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 evaluate, analyse and respond to text that is in French and that reflects the</td>
<td>2.1 evaluates and responds to text personally, creatively and critically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>culture of French speaking communities</td>
<td>2.2 analyses how meaning is conveyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3 analyses the social, political, cultural and/or literary contexts of text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that is in French</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18: Objectives and outcomes for senior secondary French extension in NSW

The assessment for HSC Extension courses involves both school-based assessment and external examinations. The components of school-based assessment are speaking skills (20%), analysis of a written text (40%), response to an aural text (20%), and writing skills (20%). The external examination involves a monologue (20%) and a written examination which comprises analysis of a prescribed text (30%), a response to a prescribed text (20%), and writing in the target language (30%).

The Background Speakers syllabuses have four prescribed themes, which vary slightly across syllabuses. For example, the prescribed themes for the Chinese Background Speakers course are:

- the individual and the community
- youth culture
- Chinese communities overseas
- global issues.

These themes are explored in a range of ways, but one of these is through the reading and analysis of prescribed texts. As in other courses, these themes are the organising focus for the teaching and learning of the language, which is expressed in terms of objectives and outcomes.
(see Table 19). In addition, the curriculum lists the grammar constructions and text types the learner is expected to control.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will:</th>
<th>The student:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. exchange information, opinions, and ideas in [Language]</td>
<td>1.1 conveys information, opinions, and ideas appropriate to context, purpose, and audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 exchanges and justifies opinions and ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 uses appropriate features of language in a variety of contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. express ideas through the production of original texts in [Language]</td>
<td>2.1 sequences and structures information and ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 uses a variety of features to convey meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3 produces texts appropriate to context, purpose, and audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.4 produces texts which are persuasive, creative, and discursive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 19: Objectives and outcomes for senior secondary background speakers syllabuses in NSW**

The assessment for Background Speakers courses involves both school-based assessment and external examinations. The components of school-based assessment are identical in both the Preliminary Course and the HSC Course and involve spoken exchanges in the target language (10%), written exchanges in the target language (10%), listening and responding (20%), reading and responding (40%) and writing in the target language (20%). In the HSC Course the school-based component counts for half the assessment, with an external written examination making up the other half. The external examination involves listening and responding (20%), reading and responding (55%), and writing in the target language (25%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A student:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 establishes and maintains communication in French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 manipulates linguistic structures to express ideas effectively in French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 sequences ideas and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 applies knowledge of the culture of French-speaking communities to interact appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 understands and interprets information in texts using a range of strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 conveys the gist of and identifies specific information in texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 summarises the main points of a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 draws conclusions from or justifies an opinion about a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 identifies the purpose, context, and audience of a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 identifies and explains aspects of the culture of French-speaking communities in texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 produces texts appropriate to audience, purpose, and context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 applies knowledge of diverse linguistic structures to convey information and express original ideas in French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 applies knowledge of the culture of French-speaking communities to the production of texts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 20: Objectives and outcomes for senior secondary beginners French in NSW**
The Beginners syllabuses are 2-year courses for learners who wish to begin their study of a language at senior secondary level. The organising feature of the curriculum continues to be topics. There are six prescribed topics, which are studied from two interdependent perspectives, the Personal World and Language-speaking communities. The objectives and outcomes are designed around three objectives, Interacting, Understanding Texts, and Producing Texts, each of which is divided into outcome statements (see Table 20).

The most obvious difference between the curriculum for senior secondary level Beginners and that for other senior languages curriculum is the inclusion of content, framed as statements of what learners will learn about and what they will learn to do. The Beginners syllabuses include text types, but in this case, the prescription is limited to the texts that learners will be expected to produce rather than those they will be expected to recognise. The syllabuses also provide a listing of language structures the learner is expected to recognise and use.

The assessment of Beginners languages (Table 20) involves both school-based assessment and an external examination. The structuring of assessment is around the macroskills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. In the Preliminary Course the emphasis is placed heavily on the receptive skills in the suggested weightings: listening (35%), reading (35%), speaking (15%), writing (15%). In the HSC Course, the mandatory weightings are: listening (30%), reading (30%), speaking (20%), writing (20%). In the HSC Course there is also an oral examination (20%) and a written examination consisting of three parts: listening (30%), reading (30%), and writing (20%).

5.3.3 Queensland

In Queensland the senior secondary system is school based with no external examinations. The Senior Certificate is issued by the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) based on the school assessment of students. School-based assessment is moderated by the QSA both through the approval of subject teaching plans (‘work programmes’) and review of student results. Work programmes are developed from a subject syllabus approved by the QSA. The work programme is both a syllabus for the teaching of the subject and an assessment plan.

The syllabuses against which work plans are developed consist of a number of language-specific syllabuses, which consist of general macrolevel provisions, such as the place of the macroskills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A course of study developed from the syllabus is required to take into consideration a number of elements:

- cultural context
- settings
- themes and topics
- language functions
- grammar, vocabulary, and cohesion.

Some of these elements are generic, as is the case of the list of suggested themes and topics, for example, themes such as family and community, leisure, recreation and human creativity, school and post-school options, and social issues. Language functions are likewise constructed as generic features of language learning: socialising, imparting and seeking factual information, expressing and finding out attitudes, etc. It is therefore only in the descriptions for grammar, vocabulary, and cohesion that the language-specific syllabus documents are truly language-specific.

The syllabuses also provide examples of suggested assessment tasks, which are grouped according to the four macroskills and provide a description of exit standards that should be reached in each macroskill. These lists of task types do not constitute a required model for
assessment; however, the syllabus does identify mandatory aspects of the subject area which must be assessed. In the languages syllabuses these mandatory aspects are ‘both productive (composing) and receptive (comprehending) modes of language use’ (QBSSSS, 2001: 38).

The system in Queensland means that there is potentially significant difference in the curricula experienced by learners of a language in different schools. The focus of the Queensland system is on ensuring commonality in awarding exit standards reached by learners rather than on the learning experiences and content to which learners are exposed. Decisions about content are made by local teachers within the framework of the curriculum documents.

5.3.4 South Australia and Northern Territory

The South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) provides the assessment and curriculum design mechanism at senior secondary level for both South Australia and the Northern Territory. SACE involves Stage 1 subjects, usually studied in Year 11 and Stage 2 subjects usually studied in Year 12. At senior secondary level languages can be studied for assessment in three different ways: beginners/accelerated level, continuers level, and background speakers level, although not all options are available for all languages. The curriculum usually involves a generic framework with language-specific annotations, especially in terms of language forms and structures.

Continuers level study is designed for students with previous study of the language and envisages that students will have completed approximately 400 to 500 hours of study by the end of the senior secondary programme. The study of a language at continuers level has three strands:

- Communication
- Understanding Language
- Understanding Culture.

The strands are intended to be interrelated and together provide a framework for learning in and through languages, and for developing students’ ability to communicate effectively; demonstrating students’ understanding of the interdependence of language, culture, and identity; developing students’ ability to reflect on, make comparisons, and move between languages and cultures. These strands continue the strands of the SACSA Framework and this means that South Australia’s senior secondary curriculum is the only examination-based system that is organised using the same structuring as the K–10 curriculum (see page 56). This is not, however, the case with the Northern Territory, where the K–10 curriculum is not organised in the same way as the SACSA Framework (see page 53).

Stage 1 and Stage 2 languages at continuers level are organised round three prescribed themes, and a number of prescribed topics and suggested subtopics. These themes are selected to enable students to extend their understanding of the interdependence of language, culture, and identity. The themes, topics, and subtopics are intended to be covered across Stage 1 and Stage 2. The curriculum also lists text types and grammatical structures, and for Chinese and Japanese, characters that the learner is expected to be able to use and control.

Assessment in Stage 1 of a language at continuers level consists of four components: an oral task, a written task, a text analysis task, and an investigative task. These tasks are assessed at the school level. At Stage 2 assessment consists of weighted school-based and externally assessed tasks: course work (35%), an in-depth study (15%), an oral examination (15%), and a written examination (35%).

The structure of the framework for beginners level is similar to that for continuers, but the level of language proficiency students are required to exhibit, as indicated in the descriptions of grammar and text types, is lower than that for continuers. In addition, beginners level
students work on only two themes rather than the three required of continuers. Stage 1 assessment at beginners level consists of three components which are assessed at the school level: interacting in language, analysing texts, and producing texts. The weighting of the three assessment components is not prescribed; however, each assessment component must be weighted between 10% and 50%.

Note that 2007 is the first year of the new beginners curriculum statements at Stage 1.

From 2008, assessment in Stage 2 at beginners level will consist of five weighted components: interacting (20%), analysing texts (20%), producing texts (10%), an oral examination (10%), and a written examination (40%).

The study of French at accelerated level is described in the following three strands:

- Interpersonal
- Informational
- Aesthetic.

Each of these strands has a description of the scope to be covered in the strand and a list of related themes and topics, together with a description of the relevant linguistic elements to be studied in terms of function, notions, grammar, and vocabulary. Assessment in Stage 2 at accelerated level consists of five weighted components: conversation (15%), a listening comprehension and written paper (35%), an oral presentation on a topic and a considered written response (25%), and course work (25%). 2007 is the last year of the accelerated level curriculum statements at Stage 2.

For background speakers, the senior secondary curriculum is organised around the same strands as those for continuers students, but students are required to address four themes in their study. These themes are developed for each language specifically rather than drawing from a common base of themes. Assessment in Stage 1 at background speakers level consists of four components: an oral task, a written task, a text analysis task, and an investigative task. The weighting of the assessment components is not prescribed; however, each assessment component must be weighted between 10% and 50%. Assessment in Stage 2 at background speaker level consists of four weighted components: course work (35%), an in-depth study (15%), an oral examination (10%), and a written examination (40%).

5.3.5 Tasmania

The senior secondary syllabuses for Tasmania are language-specific syllabuses that have extensive detailing of the language forms that students are expected to control by the end of their study. For each language, syllabuses are designed with a number of possible variants, with French, for example, being available in B and C versions at levels 2 to 5. The letter code indicates the number of contact hours (A=50, B=100, C=150), while the numerical codes represent proficiency levels, operationalised in the syllabus in terms of grammatical knowledge. Level 5C is the level required to qualify for university entrance.

The basic structure of the Tasmanian syllabus is organised around content described through themes, topics, and sub-topics which include tasks, text types, vocabulary, and grammar. There are three prescribed themes:

- the individual
- [Language]-speaking communities
- the changing world.

The themes provide a basis through which the teaching and learning of language is structured. The language focus is presented as a listing of grammatical forms and structures, with increasing numbers of forms required at each of the levels 2 to 5. The syllabus is
accompanied by a set of assessment criteria, again calibrated for the various levels in which most of the criteria are the same across levels, but the descriptors of performance vary with the level. The criteria for all levels are:

Criterion 1: Analyse, process, and respond to spoken texts
Criterion 2: Express ideas and information in spoken form.
Criterion 3: Analyse, process, and respond to printed texts
Criterion 4: Express ideas and information in written form
Criterion 5: Understand aspects of the target culture
Criterion 6: Collect and categorise information
Criterion 7: Select and use technologies
Criterion 8: Plan, organise and complete activities.

Two additional criteria are provided for levels 4 and 5:
Criterion 9: Examine and resolve issues
Criterion 10: Demonstrate use of language-specific skills.

The assessment for senior secondary level involves school-based assessment tasks and an external examination. School-based assessment is left to the professional judgment of the teacher, in accordance with the assessment criteria. The examination involves an oral component and a written examination with three components: listening comprehension; reading comprehension, and writing.

5.3.6 Victoria
The senior secondary curriculum in Victoria is a language-specific curriculum for continuing students with each language having a common structure of four units. Units 1 and 2 are usually taken in Year 11 and Units 3 and 4 in Year 12. Curricula exist for both second language and first language speakers; however, only a small number of languages are available in the first language model.

In the second language curriculum, the areas of study comprise themes and topics, text types, kinds of writing, vocabulary, and grammar, which are common to all four units of the study, and designed to be drawn upon in an integrated way. The themes and topics are the vehicle through which the student demonstrates achievement of learning outcomes, in the sense that they form the subject of the activities and tasks the student undertakes. Taking the French curriculum as an example, there are three prescribed themes: the individual, French-speaking communities, and the changing world. These themes are common to all VCE second language studies and have a number of prescribed topics and suggested subtopics. The curriculum also lists a series of text types and grammatical structures that the learner is expected to be able to use and control, in addition to vocabulary knowledge.

Through the four units, these common themes serve as the content through which students develop and demonstrate specified learning outcomes. The units are organised according to the language activities the students are expected to complete rather than according to themes and content, although there is some obvious overlap in these. For example, outcome 1 of Unit 1 is ‘On completion of this unit the student should be able to establish and maintain a spoken or written exchange related to personal areas of experience’, which corresponds closely to the theme of ‘the individual’. As part of Units 3 and 4, students are expected to undertake a detailed study based on a subtopic related to one or more of the prescribed topics. The detailed study is designed to enable the student to explore and compare aspects of the
language and culture of the French-speaking communities through a range of oral and written texts in French related to the selected subtopic.

The assessment of Units 1 and 2 is done through school-based assessment tasks, while Units 3 and 4 are assessed by a combination of school-based and external tasks with 25% allocated to school-based work for each of Unit 3 and Unit 4, together with an oral examination (12.5%) and a written examination (37.5%).

The first language curricula closely resemble the second language curricula in structure, with four units, of which the first two are assessed at school level and Units 3 and 4 being assessed by a combination of school-based and external tasks with 25% allocated to school-based work for each of Unit 3 and Unit 4, together with an oral examination (10%) and a written examination (40%). In the Chinese as a first language curriculum there are three prescribed themes, which are the organising content of the curriculum:

- Self and others
- Tradition and change in the Chinese-speaking communities
- Global issues.

These themes are common to all VCE first language studies and have a number of prescribed topics and suggested subtopics. The curriculum also lists a series of text types and grammatical structures that the learner is expected to be able to use and control, in addition to vocabulary knowledge.

5.3.7 Western Australia

The senior secondary curriculum in Western Australia involves approved subjects at Year 11 and Year 12 levels. The Year 11 subjects are designed to articulate with the Year 12 subjects. The curricula are language-specific, but these are developed within a generic framework. Courses exist for continuing and beginning students of languages as well as for advanced students, who may be background speakers in Chinese, Japanese, and Indonesian.

At the time of writing, the Western Australia senior secondary syllabuses for languages were under revision. Until the end of 2007 languages will be assessed using the existing curriculum, with new curricula phased in from 2008.

The current senior secondary curriculum for languages is organised into modules based on an ‘organisational focus’. In the continuing curriculum for Year 12 French, these are given as: self, family, and friends; home and daily routine; leisure time; food and drink; country and city life; holiday and travel; school and future plans; obtaining services; health and fitness; world issues; and reading for pleasure. There is an expectation in the curriculum that ‘Teachers should have covered at least 6 focuses in Year 11’, but there is no specification of the sequence in which these will be covered. The development of modules is done by teachers, but in developing the modules teachers are expected to cover a certain number of ‘notions’ and ‘functions’ in teaching the thematic content. The notions to be covered include: socialising, communicating information, getting things done, expressing attitudes and organising and maintaining communication. Although the notions include things such as time, space, quantity, characteristics, etc. The curriculum also gives details of the ‘likely’ modes of communication and grammar and ‘suggested’ text types for reading and listening.

The assessment of languages at senior secondary level involves both in-school assessment and an external examination. The school-based assessment component is expected to address the four macroskills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing equally. The examination consists of an oral interview (25%), and a written paper (75%). The written examination consists of three sections: aural comprehension (25%), reading comprehension (25%), and writing (25%).
In the beginners level curriculum, there is a different organisational focus from the continuing curriculum. At beginners level, the study of French, for example, is set within the context of a number of topics, at least four of which must be covered: at the restaurant, health and leisure, transport, department stores, information and services, and the world of work. From the study of these topics, students are expected to achieve five outcomes:

Outcome 1: Comprehend spoken texts
Outcome 2: Communicate orally and non-verbally
Outcome 3: Comprehend a variety of written and visual texts
Outcome 4: Write a variety of texts
Outcome 5: Understand aspects of cultures and some of the customs of [Language]-speaking countries, communities and situations

Beginner level students also have a common assessment framework consisting of six tasks: a processing spoken text, an oral response, an oral presentation, a processing written text (two tasks), and a written assignment. The assessment for beginners level is therefore school based.

The advanced level subjects have a quite different organisation from beginners or continuing levels subjects. The syllabus for advanced-level Chinese, for example, includes language studies and background studies. The language studies component is heavily literature based, with a number of nominated texts being set for study. The background studies section covers the period 1966 to the present within the following set themes and topics: China and the world, political changes, and social and economic changes. Advanced Chinese is assessed by school-based tasks and an external examination. The examination involves translation from Chinese to English and from English to Chinese (30 marks); composition (20 marks), commentary on issues raised in the set texts (20 marks), and an essay and short responses relating to the background studies (30 marks).

A revised syllabus for Western Australia senior secondary level is currently being prepared for implementation from 2008. The planned implementation involves a gradual roll-out of language subjects, with Italian and Chinese chosen for implementation in 2008. Draft syllabuses exist, however, for other languages.

The revision to the senior secondary syllabuses has three main outcomes: ‘listening and responding’, ‘spoken interaction’, ‘viewing, reading and responding’ and writing. These outcomes are based on languages area outcomes in the West Australian Curriculum Framework. It is notable, however, that the outcomes given exclude the outcomes ‘cultural understandings’, ‘system of the target language’, and ‘language learning strategies’ and focus only on the three communication outcomes, which separate listening and responding from speaking. The syllabus also identifies course content, which includes four areas: text types, linguistic resources, intercultural understandings, and language learning and communication strategies. The content areas included focus on some of the outcomes that have been excluded and there seems to be a mismatch in the document between the course content and the assessed outcomes.

The syllabus itself is divided into stages, which correspond roughly to the levels of the Outcomes and Standards Framework (see page 61): Stage 1 is pitched at levels 3 to 4, Stage 2 at levels 4–6, and Stage 3 at levels 6–8. Each stage consists of two thematically based units, which are allocated a notional 55 hours of instruction time. Each language has varying units of work. The units for the Italian, Chinese, and French syllabuses are shown in Table 21.
Table 21: Units in the WACE syllabuses, selected languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Italian Unit 1AITA: Here and Now</th>
<th>Chinese Unit 1ACSL: Teenagers</th>
<th>French Unit 1AFRE: The World of Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1BITA: Things to Do, Places to Go</td>
<td>Unit 1BCSL: Things To Do</td>
<td>Unit 1BFRE: The Francophone World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2AITA: Relationships</td>
<td>Unit 2ACSL: The Chinese</td>
<td>Unit 2AFRE: That’s Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2BITA: Travel</td>
<td>Unit 2BCSL: Travel</td>
<td>Unit 2BFRE: Travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3AITA: Made in Italy</td>
<td>Unit 3ACSL: Here and Now</td>
<td>Unit 3AFRE: The Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3BITA: What Next?</td>
<td>Unit 3BCSL:</td>
<td>Unit 3BFRE: The World around Us</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The content of each unit is framed around three themes:

- The Individual
- The [Language]–speaking Communities
- The Changing World.

These themes resemble those of the CCAFL syllabuses.

The assessment for senior secondary level in Western Australia involves both school-based assessment and examinations. The school-based assessment involves three task types: oral communication, response, and written communication, which are assessed for each stage. The Chinese and Italian syllabuses allocate weighting ranges for each of these tasks: oral communication (25–35%), response (25–45%), and written communication (30–40%). The French syllabus gives no weightings, but has the same list of task types. The examination is designed for Stages 2 and 3 and students for examination are expected to have studied two Stage 2 or 3 units.

At the time of writing, the examination details for these subjects were not available, but the sample examinations published by the Curriculum Council suggest that the examination will involve listening comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing tasks.

The development of senior secondary syllabuses in Western Australia shows some influence from the CCAFL syllabuses in terms of the learning contexts to be covered; however, these syllabuses are not as closely aligned with the CCAFL syllabuses as those in other jurisdictions.

5.3.8 Collaborative curricula

For small-candidature languages a process of national collaboration in senior secondary assessment has been in action since the mid to late 1980s, with collaborative assessment approaches implemented in the 1990s as the National Assessment Framework for Languages at Senior Secondary Level (NAFLaSSL), based on the national ALL Guidelines. A key element in the development of collaborative approaches to assessment was the development of agreed curricula for the languages to be assessed. The NAFLaSSL frameworks were language-specific documents, originally developed for nineteen small-candidature languages, which were given coherence as a group through a set of common aims and objectives. The content of the framework syllabuses included suggested activities, roles, and settings, contextual elements, discourse forms, linguistic elements, resources, and an assessment scheme, including a 3-hour external examination. Although the structure was general enough to allow for local variations in teaching and learning, the 3-hour examination was essentially a
proficiency test with a focus on fluency, accuracy, and appropriateness of language use (Mercurio, 2005). The examination was accompanied by school-based assessment, which was more diverse and more responsive to local demands and orientations. Although the process was conceived initially in terms of assessment, nationally collaborative assessment implied and required a nationally collaborative approach to curriculum, and this dual emphasis was recognised in the revision of NAFLaSSL as the Collaborative Curriculum and Assessment Framework for Languages (CCAFL) in 2001. Mercurio (2005) argues that the CCAFL model allows for both a broad and a narrow interpretation of the framework. The broad interpretation allows for individual assessment agencies to develop assessment within the framework with reference to local contexts. In a broad interpretation, the numbers of tasks, their relative weighting, etc., can be adjusted by the local authority within the framework of the shared curriculum and assessment models. The narrow interpretation involves a single examination common to all students in all States. Both CCAFL and NAFLaSSL were intended to be applicable not only to small-candidature languages, although these were the main focus, especially for NAFLaSSL; however, the implementation of common syllabus has proved to be difficult for larger languages with longer traditions of curriculum and assessment development at senior secondary level. Nonetheless, in South Australia and Victoria all language subjects are considered to be based on the CCAFL models, although both narrow and broad interpretations of the framework are found for different languages. The impact of the national collaboration in languages can be seen in the various curricula in the States and Territories, and is most notable in the framing of curriculum around themes, which are usually identical across the country.

5.3.9 International Baccalaureate

A number of Australian schools have been accredited to offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma. Like the Australian senior secondary curricula, the IB is a 2-year programme of study. The curriculum is divided into six groups: the learner’s first language, a second language, ‘individuals and societies’, ‘experimental sciences’, ‘mathematics and computer science’ are compulsory, and the sixth subject is chosen either from the arts group or from one of the other groups. Normally three subjects are studied at higher level (courses representing 240 teaching hours), and the remaining three subjects are studied at standard level (courses representing 150 teaching hours). The IB is assessed in three different modalities:

- internal assessment;
- external marking of assignments;
- external examination.

Of these, the external examination is the most heavily weighted.

Schools are accredited to offer the IB by the International Baccalaureate organisation. The ability to offer the IB curriculum is a key element in the accreditation process. This means that all IB schools must offer at least one language subject. IB accreditation carries a level of prestige and schools frequently apply for accreditation as a way of enhancing the school’s image and use IB accreditation as an element of their marketing. However, the Asia–Pacific branch of the IBO reports that sometimes after accreditation schools ask to be exempted from the requirement to provide a language, even though this is a required element of the IB programme. Such requests are a further example of the general lack of commitment to school language programmes that has been identified elsewhere in this report, and is in conflict with the IBO’s own programme standards, which state:
The school attaches importance to language learning through the development of each student’s mother tongue and the acquisition of other languages, including the host country language (IBO, 2005).

5.3.10 Comments on State and Territory Curricula

This survey of State and Territory curriculum documents shows that languages are treated in different ways in the curricula of different States and Territories. In some jurisdictions languages are a recognised part of the mainstream curriculum, in others they are optional or marginal. In the various State and Territory documents at senior secondary level there are a number of common elements, notably:

- The use of similar topics in various States and Territories (based on the CCAFL syllabuses)
- A strong grammatical focus, with roughly similar content
- Emphasis on both spoken and written language production and reception
- Inclusion of school-based assessment.

These features are also found in the CCAFL syllabuses and reflect the role of these syllabuses in shaping curricula both in those jurisdictions which have explicitly adopted CCAFL and those which have not. Nonetheless, there are many differences in the ways in which senior secondary syllabuses are constructed and especially in the assessment component. One principal difference is between States and Territories that require external assessment and those (ACT and Queensland) in which assessment is entirely school based. In States in which there is external assessment, the content of this assessment varies, as does the weighting of components. Some of this diversity reflects the flexibility inherent in the CCAFL documents, but in other cases results from local decision-making about senior secondary assessment. What this means is that, although there is significant agreement across Australia as to the overall shape of the senior secondary curriculum, the variations in task requirements and in weightings of tasks mean that the requirements of students in assessment vary across the country. Such variations inevitably have a washback effect (Hamp-Lyons, 1997) on the ways in which the syllabuses are taught in States and Territories in that teachers are likely to ‘teach to the test’ and emphasise those things given larger weighting in the assessment over those things given less weighting. This means that while curricula at senior secondary level may look similar ‘on paper’, it is not necessarily the case that the actual curriculum delivered in schools has the same level of commonality.

5.4 Observations on State and Territory Documents

The various curricula and syllabuses used for languages in Australia have many similarities, especially at senior secondary level. These similarities represent a common core understanding of the languages area and represent a useful starting point for engaging in national collaboration around the languages curriculum. At the same time, the very large differences in the ways in which curricula and syllabuses are structured and in the terminology used give the impression of great diversity in curriculum and syllabus approaches. Australia’s language curriculum and syllabus documents taken collectively do not, however, represent consistent expectations about whether learners are expected to undertake language study, how language studied will be organised and sequenced through schooling, or of what will normally be achieved in the course of language study.
5.4.1 The Nature of the Languages Curriculum

The review of curriculum in this report raises a question about the extent to which it is even possible to talk about languages curricula in Australia in the current cycle of curriculum revision. The more recently developed curricula in Australia have focused on integrated learning based around a conceptualisation of education as the teaching and learning of ‘essential learnings’ in which individual learning areas may be given greater or lesser prominence. Although the eight key learning areas of the National Goals of Schooling remain, there is a downgrading of learning areas and disciplinary knowledge and practices as an organisation feature of Australian curricula. This downgrading of learning areas has affected different areas differently, with literacy and numeracy – and sometimes physical education – remaining strongly intact, but other content areas being rendered invisible or problematic. This has been a particular problem for languages, which have often had to struggle for a recognised place in integrated curriculum. This struggle for recognition is not the result of the nature of language teaching and learning itself, which has much potential to realise the goals of integrated curricula, but rather of a difficulty for those outside the language area in understanding how to integrate languages into an overall learning programme. What can be seen in curricula is a monolingual mindset which underlies the notion of integration – content taught and learnt in English is seen as being generalisable and interpretable, while content taught and learnt in another language is seen as less accessible to an integrated programme. When integrated curriculum is planned it is rarely planned by those who have knowledge and experience of another language and the languages area represents an unknown – and potentially unknowable – dimension of the curriculum. In such an environment, a clear articulation of the links between languages and integrated curricula cannot be developed and there is no real leadership within integrated curricula for the integration of the languages curriculum. Arguments for how language can be integrated into curricula are typically generated within the languages area itself in response to the silences within the curriculum documents and processes themselves.

The weakening of the learning area focus in current curricula and the perceived difficulty in articulating the role of language learning in such curricula appear to have led to an overall undervaluing of languages as an area in education. In this undervaluing, integrated curriculum becomes a framework in which a learning area that has been perceived as difficult in a number of ways has been seen of lesser importance to current educational goals largely because knowledge of languages is not widely distributed through the teaching professional and educational policy makers. In addition, the introduction of new areas to be included in the school curriculum (e.g. bullying, bike safety) have raised the issue of a crowded curriculum, in which languages, rather than any other area of the schools’ work, have often been seen as the cause of crowding. The crowded curriculum is therefore a further reflection of the devaluing of languages in relation to other school commitments.

The Australian curriculum documents for languages show different orientations to the issue of whether languages curricula should be generic or language-specific, with most States and Territories favouring generic frameworks rather than language-specific frameworks, largely because of the cost involved in language-specific curricula. The most notable exception is New South Wales, in which curriculum documents are language-specific, rather than generic, but with many features common to the syllabuses across languages. The generic documents are a response to the diversity that is an inherent and necessary part of languages learning in the Australian context and represent a way of dealing with the multiplicity of languages at an administrative level. The development of generic documents has value in giving coherence to...
the languages area, with a common purpose and focus for languages learning regardless of language. However, the existence of generic only curricula also poses a problem for the languages area in that the languages area is also inherently diverse with different languages requiring and providing for different learning experiences and different progressions. Generic curriculum documents can only frame the languages area at the broadest level of generality and consequently provide little guidance for the actual implementation of the curriculum in a specific language, which is left to be operationalised by teachers themselves for the specific languages they teach. In some curriculum documents an intermediate position is found in which languages are subgrouped, for example, as roman alphabetic, non-roman alphabetic, character, and signed in Victoria, or alphabetic, non-alphabetic, and Indigenous in South Australia. These documents allow a greater specificity in the shaping of curriculum for language learning, but still retain a generic form of curriculum.

At senior secondary level, however, curriculum is usually constructed as language-specific syllabuses, although all curricula do contain a number of generic elements. What is typical of the senior secondary level, however, is the detailed operationalisation of the languages curriculum in terms of lists of grammatical items and, in some cases, vocabulary and/or characters that the learner is expected to control. This strong language focus necessitates each curriculum being specific; however, an inventory does not provide guidance on teaching and learning and so is only a partial curriculum.

There would appear to be a need in Australia for both generic curricula, to cater to the diversity of languages and language programmes and also language-specific curricula which frame and shape the teaching and learning of particular languages and which recognise the specific requirements in different languages. The key advantage of generic curricula is that they are less costly to produce than multiple language-specific curricula and if developed collaboratively allow for the pooling of expertise. However, as the development of curriculum is done on a State-by-State basis, this means that curriculum development in Australia is likely to produce multiple different generic curricula for languages, with little being available for specific languages. The development of language-specific curricula as a collaborative and co-operative enterprise between States and Territories would appear to be an effective solution for the economic costs of diversity in ways that multiple generic curricula cannot achieve. An example of collaborative curriculum design can be seen at the senior secondary level in which assessment-focused activities (NAFLaSSL and CCAFL) have included the development of a shared national curriculum for small-candidature languages through which collaborative assessment has been developed and implemented.

5.4.2 Languages Curriculum and the Duration of Language Study

One further notable feature of the curriculum documents is that most documents for compulsory schooling presuppose a period of language study from K to 10, whether K–10 study is mandated or not, or whether it is the norm or not – Queensland is the exception here. At the same time, these documents acknowledge that there are a range of different starting points for language study. In most cases this range of entry points maps inconsistently onto levels of achievement, where learners without prior experience of language study are implicitly assumed to ‘catch up’ with those learners who have also completed some study of the language. Such a catch up would not be a problem if it involved more intensive language study for learners who enter the study of a language at a later point; however, this does not necessarily seem to be the expectation of the policies. The end result can be considered a core

There was one document I got that said something like ‘Can read a newspaper article’. That’s just stupid in Japanese. In some languages they might think it’s an easy text, but in Japanese it’s about as hard as you can get because of the kanji. They didn’t think much about the languages we teach when they designed that.

Secondary school teacher
policy problem for language learning in that policies that often include mention of the advantages of an early start and the possibility of reaching greater levels of proficiency as the result of an extended period of study do not structure their curriculum with an expectation that this will indeed be the case, but rather present a scenario where outcomes should be similar regardless of the entry point for language study. At the policy level, this undermines the rationale for an early start in languages, although there may in fact be advantages in practice.

5.4.3 Transition between Compulsory and Non-compulsory Schooling

A further issue for languages curriculum lies in the transition from compulsory to post-compulsory schooling. The K–10 curricula and the senior secondary curricula appear to be constructed on very different principles. Although the K–10 curriculum is generic and holistic in its approach, with little language-specific direction and an emphasis on generic macrolevel language elements, the senior secondary curriculum remains in most cases a grammar or ‘content’-driven curriculum. This raises a question of how and how well the K–10 curricula articulate and build towards the senior secondary curricula, and in what ways senior secondary curricula are designed to build upon learning experiences from K to 10.

5.4.4 Assessment

All of the curriculum documents include an assessment dimension, but the status attributed to assessment as a section of the curriculum varies from document to document. In some cases, explicit discussion of assessment is quite minimal. At the same time, all of the curriculum documents are in fact assessment-driven approaches to curriculum, with outcome statements doing double service as both the assessment dimension and the curriculum dimension. That is, curriculum is described in terms of students’ achievements at certain levels of performance. The driving force behind the outcomes-based curricula appears to have been the Profile for languages, and the various State curricula appear to orient to the Profile in developing outcomes, statements, and strands, although with different levels of conformity to these in different States and Territories. What this means is that the bulk of attention in assessment is given to the articulation of the outcomes and standards, which in many cases are generic across languages with no language-specific dimensions, rather than to the process of assessment itself.

The focus for assessment is drawn from a model of communicative language teaching, which to some extent has been influenced by the ALL Guidelines. What is to be assessed is, however, constructed through outcome statements and standards in the various curricula, reflecting the outcomes-focused orientation of the Profile for languages. The overall model of language against which students are assessed is a communicative competence model, based on theories of second language acquisition, which see language learning as a process of hypothesis formation on the basis of comprehensible input and comprehensible output (for example, Canale & Swain, 1981; Krashen, 1981; Swain, 1985, 1993). To this model a socio-cultural or intercultural focus has typically been added, rather than integrated into, language. This focus has been derived from a different theoretical tradition of language learning (for example, Kramsch, 1993, 1995a, 1995b; Liddicoat, 2002b; Liddicoat et al., 2003). The result is a model of language and culture learning in which language and culture are separated for the purposes of curriculum and assessment and in which the two dimensions may not achieve internal coherence within assessment models and practices.

Although assessment appears to be the driving force in curriculum design, this focus on assessment has tended not to be based on, nor to have produced descriptions of, typical levels of student learning in languages in general or in specific languages. The approach to design outcomes has largely been to theorise language capabilities and then to locate these within a sequence over time. Such an approach of necessity constructs an abstraction of the language learning process in which questions such as amount of class time devoted to language
learning, entry points to language learning, and continuity in language learning are set aside in the construction of standards and outcome statements. This means that there is little indication of how well standards and outcomes capture the real extent and progression of learning in the languages area and of what students’ attainment is in languages given the extreme variability in the programmes to which they are exposed.

In an assessment-driven approach to curriculum, this means that assessment is not well integrated with student learning and that the standards described for language learning do not necessarily reflect the actual levels of attainment of students. This point was noted in relation to work done using the Profile for languages: in projects that collected work samples for languages at each level of each strand of the profile, it was difficult for many languages to find any students who had achieved the higher levels in the prescribed K–10 period of learning, and in some cases, even among learners at the senior secondary level (Liddicoat, 1997). In part, the problem has resulted from a desire in establishing languages curricula to use curriculum as a driver of programme improvement by requiring particular standards for particular levels of schooling. This does not appear to have occurred and limited programmes continue to exist regardless of the development of curriculum. Nonetheless, the documents remain as problematic statements of students’ learning given the nature of the languages field. It appears necessary, therefore, for the languages area to examine the real expectations that can be had for language learning in the current context and what learnings can realistically be expected from the programme types that currently exist.

Although a nationally agreed model of assessment is in use at the senior secondary level, assessment of languages during compulsory schooling is not done according to an agreed model. However, such a model has been presented by Hill et al. (2004). This report describes Key Performance Measures that could be used to gather data nationally on student performance and have been described for student performance at Years 6/7 and Year 10 in Indonesian and Japanese. These Key Performance Measures have been endorsed in principle by all jurisdictions. The Key Performance Measures describe dimensions of student participation and achievement through four macroskills (reading and viewing, listening and viewing, writing, speaking) and two knowledge areas (linguistic knowledge and sociocultural knowledge). They are described together with information about contexts of use, text types, task types, and level of support, which elaborate the Key Performance Measures. The Key Performance Measures are designed to report on actual learning outcomes and recognise the diversity inherent in Australian languages education so that differences in opportunities to learn, such as amount of input received by students, continuity of learning, programme-type and motivation, are taken into account.

5.4.5 Curriculum Revision

As a final word on curriculum, it needs to be noted that one of the issues facing languages teachers, but not just languages teachers, is the frequency of curriculum revision. In the case of K–10 curricula, which are intended to cover a long duration of learning, it is highly unlikely that any cohort of students has experienced the full sequence of learning planned by any curriculum. Teachers frequently complain that by the time they have implemented one curriculum reform and have stabilised their practice with reference to the new curriculum, they have been required to revise their curriculum and to go through a new process of implementation, without having time to consolidate change. Teachers often feel that the professional development planned for them is primarily about the implementation of new curriculum documents, rather than with the development and enrichment of pedagogy and practice.
Although curriculum change is highly desirable in order for curriculum to remain at the cutting edge, there is a need to balance change with consolidation for change to be effective.

5.4.6 Programmes for Background Speakers

New South Wales, South Australia (and therefore the Northern Territory), and Western Australia provide programmes for background speakers in a limited range of languages, at least at senior secondary level. Such courses meet a particular need, which is an important feature of the nature of language learning in Australia. In examining these programmes a number of issues emerge.

Qualifications for entry into background speaker programmes are established in the policies of New South Wales, South Australia, and Western Australia. These States define a background speaker in similar, but not identical, ways. In New South Wales a background speaker is defined in terms of education in the target language and of regular use of the language outside school:

Students must be enrolled in the Background Speakers course if they have had more than one year’s formal education in the language in a country and/or school where the language is the medium of instruction. In this context, formal education means education at Year 1 (or equivalent) level or beyond.

Students must be enrolled in the Background Speakers course if they speak or write the language at home, or elsewhere outside the classroom, in a sustained manner with a person or persons who have a background in using the language (Board of Studies NSW, 2005: 85).

In South Australia, the definition seems to cover the same areas as that in New South Wales, but the use dimension is less clearly articulated. The South Australian definition, however, links background and education as joint components of the definition and adds an expectation that the learner will have been born in a country that uses the target language.

The Locally Assessed Languages Background Speakers Level Stage 1 and Stage 2 Curriculum Statements are designed for students with a cultural and linguistic background in [Language]. Students, typically, will have been born in a country where [Language] is a major language of communication and a medium of instruction, and will have had more than 1 year’s education in that country or in a wholly [Language]-speaking environment (SSABSA, 2007: 1).

The Western Australian definition involves a contrast between background and non-background candidates and again includes both education and use dimensions:

Background candidates have often lived and been to school in a country where the target language is one of the major spoken and written languages. They tend to use the target language for communicative interaction or for reading and writing purposes.

Non-background candidates have typically learnt all they know about the target language in an Australian school or similar environment. They may have experienced some stays (e.g. exchanges) in a country where the target language is spoken (Curriculum Council, 2006: 506).

These definitions provide a very broad definition of the background speaker and appear to aim essentially at separating those who have had only a typical school-based second language learning experience from those who have had some sustained additional experience of language learning and/or use. The background speaker category therefore has the potential to cover a very broad group of potential students, depending on the State and the interpretation given to the definitions, including:

- Australian-born students who have a home background in which there is some level of target language use;
- Australian-born students who do not have a home background in the language, but who have received some education in the target language in another country; and
Overseas-born children who have had schooling in their country of origin before coming to Australia.

Elder (2000) has argued that the definition of ‘background speakers’ in Australian syllabuses is overly reductionist and ignores the multiple dimensions and meanings of the term. The first is that home (or other non-school) language use covers a very broad spectrum of actual practices ranging from use of a second or non-dominant language for some interactions to use of a first language in largely monolingual patterns of use. These apply different levels of proficiency and are spread over different domains. The second is that more than 1 year of education encompasses vastly different experiences, from a child who left the target language environment as a young child during early primary school education to students who may have arrived in Australia after having completed the equivalent of Year 10 or 11. It appears that students in background programmes do in fact range from second language speakers of the target language to first language speakers of the language with significant levels of schooling in the language.

In New South Wales and South Australia, the background speakers curriculum is a modified version of the second language curriculum, which is differentiated from other curricula for the language mainly in terms of the expected levels of proficiency. In Western Australia, the syllabus is called an ‘advanced’ rather than a ‘background speakers’ syllabus and is not restricted to background speakers, although background speakers are the target population. In this case, the syllabus has aspects of a second language course. The Advanced Chinese syllabus also includes material that is more closely related to the needs of first language speakers, with literature and areas studies in Chinese. The expectation in all of the syllabuses for background speakers is that students will not be able to complete all tasks in Chinese as the various syllabuses specify that certain tasks are to be done in English, in a course designed for teaching and learning of Chinese, the implication is, therefore, that the speakers’ abilities in English would normally exceed those in Chinese. This, however, is not the case as some students taking senior secondary background language courses are international students for whom English is a second language. One teacher in South Australia, who was teaching first language speakers of Chinese, commented that the biggest problem her students faced was in the parts of the assessment that were conducted in English as they were less competent in English than in Chinese. These students would have been able to perform better on the Chinese language assessment tasks if they had been allowed to use Chinese.

The problem facing these background speaker syllabuses is that the syllabus is designed with a particular construction of the background speaker in mind – especially one of an English dominant speaker of the target language who is effectively learning it as a second language. However, the students who are identified as being targeted by the syllabuses do not necessarily always conform to this expectation as the definitions allow for an extensive range of language abilities. What is actually needed is more fine-tuning of syllabuses for background speakers to reflect their actual needs. As Australia takes increasing numbers of international students, who have an obvious need to be educated in their own languages as well as in English in order to equip them to live and work in their home societies, there is an increasing need for differentiation of courses for background speakers to take greater consideration of the needs of first language speakers.
Although there are problems in courses for background speakers, these problems are made more obvious where no distinction is made for types of students. In some States, background speakers are admitted to standard second language speaker courses, but with an expectation of a different pathway through their learning. The VELS documents note that:

Many students bring an in-depth knowledge of another language to the classroom. Some of these students will have a language other than English as their first language and others may have lived in a country where the language is spoken. These students may progress more rapidly through some aspects of the standards in one or both dimensions.


In Victoria this lack of differentiation has led to the introduction of a ‘special consideration scheme for interpreting students results for the purposes of calculating university entrance scores’ (Elder, 2000) in which ‘genuine learners’ are compensated in the calculation of their scores.

Similar situations exist for courses for background speakers in lower secondary education in many States and Territories in which students are not streamed into different classes for background speakers and non-background speakers. There is anecdotal evidence that where this is the case, the attrition of non-background speakers is particularly high and few non-background speakers continue their study through to Year 10 and beyond. The solution here cannot be to exclude background speakers from language learning opportunities, as has been proposed by some (for example, Cavalier, 1990), as this would be itself highly problematic. Notably, policy in the USA is now focusing on the education of background speakers of languages as a way of ensuring that learners develop the advanced level language skills that are felt to be necessary (Kagan & Dillon, 2004; Spolsky, 2002). What is actually needed in all cases where Australia has substantial numbers of background and non-background speakers studying the same languages is for languages provision to reflect the needs of the various groups of learners involved.

Chinese is compulsory for us until Year 9 if that’s the language they do, so we have a mix, you know, Aussie kids and Chinese kids and we teach them all together. Some of the Aussie kids are really good, but by the time you get to Year 10 you look at the class and it’s all Chinese faces …

The others don’t think that they can compete, even though they won’t be doing the same exams in Year 12.

Secondary school teacher
6 Teaching and Learning: Language Programmes

6.1 Language Programmes in Primary Schools

6.1.1 Primary School Language Study in Australia

Since the introduction of the National Policy on Languages in 1987, it is clear that primary school languages education has been the most significant feature of language learning in Australia, and it is in primary schools that the bulk of Australian children experience language learning. The development of large-scale primary school languages programmes is not a unique development in Australia, and many other countries have instituted such programmes. As the statistics reported on page 40 show, primary school students account for the largest proportion of school students studying languages in Australia.

Although primary school level study of a language has become a common experience for Australian children, the nature of this experience is highly variable as primary school level programmes vary greatly across Australia and within each State and Territory. The main variables are found in the age at which language learning starts, the amount of time spent in language learning, and the continuity of language study during the school year.

Firstly, language programmes in primary schools may start at different levels. In some schools learners begin language study in their first year at school and continue to study the language through to the end of primary school. In other schools, learners do not start their language study until the middle or even the later years of primary school.

Secondly, the amount of time spent in language study also varies greatly. In some States and Territories a particular amount of language learning is recommended at the policy level (e.g. Victoria recommends 150 minutes per week); however, the recommendation of an amount of time does not always apply. It is, however, most usual for schools to provide fewer hours than recommended and very rare for schools to supply more hours, except in schools in which language study is treated as a special focus of the school, as in the case of bilingual programmes. Contact times for primary languages vary from minimal programmes of around 35 minutes per week to more fully developed programmes of 150 minutes per week, with most programmes clustering at the low end of the range (35–60 minutes per week). Where classes are made available for longer periods of time, they are likely, because of staffing conditions at schools, to be taught in one or two larger blocks, rather than being distributed throughout the school week. There is evidence to suggest that such concentrated time during a week is less effective for language learning than the same amount of time spread over the school week in shorter lessons (Rosenbusch, 1991; Swender & Duncan, 1998). Rosenbusch (1991) argues that an effective language programme should be taught at least every second day, while Swender and Duncan (1998) argue for daily lessons of 30 minutes.

A third problem in primary school languages programmes is a problem of planned discontinuity of language study. Planned discontinuity is less a feature of primary schools than secondary schools, but it is still found at primary school level.

The first planned discontinuity consists in providing language study as part of a series of subjects through which learners cycle in the course of the year, usually taking a different subject each term or semester. This means that learners taking a language may study it over a period of several years, but for only a part of any year. The second is the provision of ‘taster’

Taster courses are pretty common and some schools are really proud of them. They say it gives kids a range of experiences before they choose. But it really means that the kids don’t really start language learning until after a year or two of these taster courses. I don’t know that a bit of language for a semester or a term really makes much difference to primary kids. I don’t think it helps them make choices at that age.

State/Territory policy officer
programmes in which learners are exposed to a number of languages across the school year or over a number of years, later electing one language for ongoing study. These programmes do not allow for sustained development of language capabilities in any of the languages before regular study of one language begins. The aim of such programmes is to provide learners with a broad range of experiences; however, such programmes provide particular obstacles to language learning. These will be discussed further in the section on secondary schooling (see page 89), as this practice seems more common in secondary schools than in primary schools.

Given these variables in primary school level languages programmes across the country, it is impossible to describe with any confidence a typical primary school experience of language study. Some learners may experience relatively intense, sustained programmes of learning (e.g. 150 minutes per week over 7 years) and display significant learning of the language and culture they are studying. Others may have only minimal exposure to the language (e.g. 40 minutes per week for 2 years) and consequently have little to show for their time spent learning the language.

These differences between programmes and the overall quality of the language learning experience of primary school children do not appear to be related to the policy context in a particular State or Territory, but rather result from local decision-making in individual schools. In States with mandated language study and recommended hours for language learning, it is possible to find both strong sustained language programmes, which reflect the policy position of the State and weak, short-term programmes, which can achieve little. Similarly in States and Territories that do not mandate language study there are equally strong sustained programmes and weak short-term programmes. Programme quality in primary schools is therefore not a direct outcome of policy, but rather of local factors and attitudes towards language learning. In schools where languages are treated as a key learning area and are given the same place and support in the school as other key learning areas, the result is a strong language programme. Where there is not this commitment and support, language programmes tend to be weak. It seems that there is little point in having policies that mandate or strongly encourage language learning in primary schools if such policies can be disregarded at the local level and have little impact on learners’ learning experiences.

6.1.2 Language Teaching as Release Teaching

It is common in all States and Territories for languages in primary schools to be taught during times when the mainstream classroom teacher is released from the classroom for other duties (non-instruction time, duties other than teaching, release teaching). This means that the language teacher teaches exclusively during times when the classroom teacher is not present. The rationale for using language teachers for teacher release is the result of a pragmatic approach adopted by principals. A language teacher is an extra staffing cost, but some form of release is required for classroom teachers, so the additional cost of employing a language teacher is offset as a saving against the costs of release time. Although the use of language teachers to provide release for classroom teachers is administratively efficient, it is pedagogically problematic and has been identified by many focus group participants as a key factor in affecting the overall effectiveness of language programmes.

The use of languages teachers to provide release teaching has been identified as problematic in a number of ways. Firstly, the allocation of languages to release time is seen as a marginalisation of languages as a curriculum area. It is seen as a service to cover the mainstream teachers’ other duties rather than as a valued core educational activity. However, it is not just the perceived marginalisation that is a problem for languages education in
Australia resulting from teaching during release time: there are also important educational problems. In particular, language teachers who teach only during the classroom teachers’ absence have difficulty articulating their teaching in languages with what is happening in other curriculum areas, as there are few opportunities for collaborative planning. Moreover, the mainstream classroom teacher has little idea of what is happening in the languages class, what learning is happening, and what progress learners are making. These problems are especially exacerbated if the language teacher is not present in the school full time, as there are few opportunities for the language teacher and classroom teacher to talk.

The impact of using language teachers to cover release teaching has a complex negative impact on language programmes in schools. Language teaching is isolated from the general curriculum and the general teaching of the school in practice, but also symbolically, and this symbolic separation may be the more detrimental feature. When language teachers are used to relieve mainstream teachers they are seen as a fill-in both by other teachers and by the learners themselves. This means that languages are seen as ‘time out’ from the curriculum rather than a real or important element of learning. As one primary school principal commented ‘kids see it as the baby-sitting subject’.

6.1.3 Languages at Primary School in the International Context

In their study of nineteen countries, Pufahl, Rhodes, & Christian (2000) found that primary school language programmes were available in sixteen countries – in the remainder languages were taught only after about age 12, at middle or secondary schools. Of these, languages were compulsory at this level in fifteen countries – for Australia, the sixteenth country – languages are listed as ‘widely available’, although in some States languages are compulsory at primary level. Table 22 shows a distribution of countries with national level compulsory language programmes at primary school, based on the research undertaken for this report and on the survey by Pufahl, Rhodes, & Christian (2000).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age level</th>
<th>Year level equivalent</th>
<th>Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Austria, Luxembourg*, Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>England, Luxembourg*, Morocco†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>China, Germany, Italy, Korea, Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Czech Republic, Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Canada, Denmark, France, Israel, Kazakhstan, Morocco†, Netherlands, Taiwan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In Luxembourg, learners who do not speak Letzeburghisch begin learning this language in pre-school. German is introduced in Grade 1 and French in Grade 2.
† In Morocco, French is introduced in Grade 2 and English in Grade 5.

Table 22: Starting points for compulsory language learning in selected countries

The place of languages at the primary school level is a central feature of educational development in many countries, both developed and developing, around the world. Languages may be compulsory or optional at primary level; however, it appears that government policies have tended to favour compulsory language learning for at least part of primary schooling. Languages programmes may also start at different points in primary school, with some countries beginning compulsory primary school language study at the beginning of primary school, while others introduce it in mid or late primary school. However, many countries appear to be revising their policies to promote an earlier start for language learning. In some countries in which compulsory language learning starts in mid or late primary schooling,
optional language study may be officially encouraged in earlier years. Time allocations also vary. Some countries do not make explicit recommendations about time allocations, however, where languages are compulsory it is more common for there to be a recommendation or requirement for a certain level of language instruction, usually between one and three hours per week. In most countries learners at primary school study only one foreign language, however, in Morocco and Luxembourg, two languages are required, while in Germany learners taking a language that is not continued through the entire period of schooling may be required to take an additional language from Grade 5.

Many arguments have been made for the benefit of primary school language programmes and these arguments tend to focus on the benefits of an early start for languages, including both benefits for language learning and for other educational goals.

**Higher levels of language proficiency.** The provision of a longer sequence of instruction over the whole period of schooling leads to a corresponding improvement in proficiency levels. Research has shown that there is a direct correlation between the amount of time devoted to language study and the language proficiency that the learners can be expected to attain (Curtain & Pesola, 1988). It is argued, therefore, that children who begin language study in primary school, and who continue their language study into secondary school, have a better chance of developing a high level of language proficiency than do learners who begin language learning in secondary school. The level of proficiency that a learner attains influences the achievement of positive economic, political, social, personal, intellectual, and intercultural benefits that result from knowledge of an additional language.

**Improved development of an intercultural perspective.** During their primary school years, children are more open to, and have less fixed ideas about, linguistic and cultural differences between groups. Learning an additional language and culture is an important process through which to expand learners’ intercultural views (Carpenter & Torney, 1973; Rosenbusch, 1995).

**Cognitive benefits.** Foreign language learning enhances general cognitive development and performance in literacy and numeracy in primary school children (Armstrong & Rogers, 1997). Children who are adequately exposed to two languages at an early age experience gains: they are more flexible and creative, and they reach high levels of cognitive development at an earlier age than their monolingual peers (Hamayan, 1986). In addition, learning a second language can enhance metalinguistic awareness and facilitate the acquisition of literacy (McKay, 2000).

**Enhanced communication skills.** Although children are developing the ability to communicate in a new language, they also learn to see language as a phenomenon in itself. This enables them to develop great insight into the way communication works and how meanings and texts are constructed (Curtain & Pesola, 1988).

Of these reasons, the first – that an early start allows for sustained learning and consequently higher proficiency – has been the most common rationale for introducing languages as early as possible in education.

### 6.2 Secondary School Language Study in Australia

#### 6.2.1 Context

Historically in Australia, as in many countries, most language teaching happened in secondary schools, with many schools requiring some period of compulsory language study for all learners. Language study was considered a prestigious element of the curriculum, and highly valued for ‘more capable learners’. For example, in New South Wales from the 1940s, admittance to high schools was based on an entrance examination and involved streaming of learners in light of their results. Selective high schools offered highly capable learners a curriculum which included at least one language (Latin for the most able) and which allowed optional study of a third language from their second year (Croft & MacPherson, 1991).
Learners in other high schools were streamed into two-language, one-language, home science, or commercial programme from first year, again with the more capable learners being streamed into broader language study.

The secure position of languages as academic subjects in secondary schools began to be undermined in Australia in the late 1950s and early 1960s, given impetus by the Wyndham report (Wyndham, 1957), which gave no place to languages in the new ‘comprehensive’ secondary curriculum. According to Croft and MacPherson (1991: 41), the introduction of the Wyndham scheme from 1962 ‘had the effect of eliminating the study of Languages from its first year courses’. A core ideology in the removal of languages as a core element of secondary education was the construction of language study as elitist and not required for the education of ‘ordinary’ high school learners. The Wyndham report, although specific to New South Wales had a follow on impact in the planning of secondary schooling around Australia. However, in education policy of the same time, there was a conflicting trend in high school education, which saw the gradual institution of language programmes in community languages as a measure to support immigrant groups. For these learners high school study of a language was considered a question of equity, providing a place for immigrants’ language and cultures in schooling, with the hope and expectation of improving educational outcomes and retention rates. Languages, then, developed a dichotomous identity as high school subjects: on the one hand they were elitist subjects only for the most intelligent (and hence maintained strongly in elite private schools), while on the other hand they were an equity measure directed at a perceived educational underclass (and therefore available to children from immigrant backgrounds). This dichotomous construction weakened the role of languages as a part of the education of the majority group, which fell between the two poles. In spite of the weakening of languages in secondary education and the expansion of language learning at primary schools, secondary schools have remained important sites for language learning.

6.2.2 Secondary School Programmes in Australia

The allocation of contact hours at secondary school seems to accord more time to language learning than at primary school; however, there is evidence that even at secondary level, recommended allocations for language learning are not being met. Victoria (DET, 2002) recommends 150 minutes per week for all compulsory language learning; however, in 2001, the average time allocation to languages in secondary schools was only 127 minutes.

At secondary schools in Australia there is also much variability in the nature of language programmes, but there appears to be less variability within States and Territories than there is for primary school language programmes. Secondary schools also tend to be more consistent with States and Territories as well and respond more directly to government policies relating to language learning.

In many secondary schools language learning is compulsory for a period of time, in most instances it appears that this is for the first year of secondary schooling only, but schools may have compulsory language learning for up to 4 years. In many cases, compulsory language study extends beyond the first year of secondary school in response to government policies mandating language learning for more than 1 year at secondary school. In most cases in States where language study is mandated, the mandated period of study at a particular school is the same as that mandated in policy. This means that policies mandating languages study represent a maximum requirement, which is rarely exceeded. In States and Territories without mandatory language study at secondary school, there appears to be much more variability.

In secondary schools, it is typical for learners to be offered electives, with some subjects being mandated at each year level, but with increasing choice as the level of schooling increases. In secondary schools that offer a language, the language may be compulsory for 1 or 2 years and then become an elective after that, with a possible pathway for language study through to Year 12. However, where languages are not mandated by State or Territory, they
may be available as electives from the beginning of secondary school, with only a part of the school population taking language study.

When language study in schools becomes elective, it is common for language enrolments to decline sharply. The decline in student numbers in elective language study is often the result of individual attitudes and preferences and this is inherent in the nature of elective subjects. Common personal reasons for discontinuing languages identified in many studies include:

- **Personal preference for other areas of study** (Aplin, 1991; Lemke, 1993; McGannon & Medeiros, 1995; Speiller, 1988).
- **Negative attitudes to teachers and teaching** (Aplin, 1991; Kent, 1996; McPake, Lyall, Johnstone, & Low, 1999).
- **Poor results** (Aplin, 1991).

Although these are personal factors there are, however, a number of systemic factors that affect language enrolments.

There is a cluster of attitudinal factors which directly affect learners’ choices and which relate to perceptions of the usefulness of and attitudes towards languages in general. A number of studies have shown that school learners have a perception that languages are not relevant for their future lives (Carr, 2002; Kent, 1996; Low, 1999; McGannon & Medeiros, 1995; McPake et al., 1999; Zammit, 1992). McPake et al. (1999) argue that many learners see long-term advantages in being able to speak a language, but do not see languages as being relevant for their more short-term goals, such as getting into higher education or the career of their choice. Low also found that, for younger learners, the benefit of language learning was a very far-off benefit that was relevant only after finishing education (Low, 1999). Moreover, such attitudes are often reinforced by parents. In a UK study, for example, Low (1999) found that parents were even less likely to see languages as useful for the future than were the learners themselves. As parental support has often been found to be a significant factor in learners’ persistence in school language learning (see, for example, Baldauf & Lawrence, 1990; Low, 1999; McGannon & Medeiros, 1995; McPake et al., 1999; Zammit, 1992), the ways in which the usefulness of languages is perceived by parents is important for maintaining participation in languages learning. Perceptions of the usefulness of languages are also reinforced by advice from careers teachers, with some studies reporting this as an important reason for learners discontinuing a language (Aplin, 1991). In addition, peer group pressure can create a barrier to language learning if language learning is considered unpopular or ‘uncool’ (Barton, 1997; Carr, 2002; Walqui, 2000; Williams, Burden, & Lanvers, 2002). Barton (1997), Carr (2002), and Williams et al. (2002) also found that boys are likely to discontinue language study because they think of it as a girls subject.

It is commonly reported that learners drop languages at senior secondary level because they believe that taking a language will negatively affect their university entrance score. It seems that there are two different beliefs that contribute to this perception. The first is that languages are difficult and that it is much harder to get a good result in a language than it is in other curriculum areas. This has been identified as an important factor affecting persistence in languages by high school learners in a number of studies (1992). Zammit’s study of Australian high school learners found that two-thirds of her sample believed languages were harder than sciences and three-quarters that languages were harder than mathematics. In a UK study, McPake et al. (1999) reported that some of the attitudes about the difficulty of language study in senior secondary schools was the result of the influence of teachers’ beliefs about the difficulty of study and had an effect on the sorts of advice learners received from teachers. Some universities allocated bonus points for learners who have studied a language and in this way language study can contribute positively to the university entrance scores for those universities.
The second is that learners will be disadvantaged by having to compete against native speakers and, in systems in which results are scaled, they believe that this will reduce their chances of getting good results (see also the discussion in section 5.4.6). Both of these beliefs are based on problematic perceptions of the realities of language study. In the case of languages having a negative impact on university entrance scores, there is no evidence that this is true. For example, Treloar (2003) notes that in Western Australia, although background speakers were included in some language classes, they had no impact on the scaling of the results as they were removed from the scaling process. Further he argues that:

... these scaling procedures seem to be satisfactorily fair and valid for the non-background speakers, taken in isolation, being identical to the procedures used in other subjects (Treloar, 2003: 14).

In addition, many States offer differentiated curricula and assessment for background speakers in a range of languages and non-native speakers are not in competition with them.

One phenomenon that seems to be typical of the nature of language study in Australia is for learners to drop out of language study at secondary school level and then restart language study at tertiary level. In fact, ab initio language learning accounts for most language learning in Australia’s tertiary institutions and few learners by comparison continue language study through from high school to university. It appears that learners discontinue language study because of concerns about the impact of languages on their tertiary entrance scores, with a view to picking up the language again, or taking a different language, once they have secured their tertiary place. This could be interpreted as a case of learners seeing a long-term advantage to knowing a language, but a short-term disadvantage coming from language study. The effect of this practice is that comparatively few Australian learners reach the highest levels of language study at university, with most graduates leaving university with the equivalent of 2 years of language study post-Year 12, rather than 3 years of language study.

Another significant factor is the grouping of subjects from which electives are chosen. Learners with particular study goals are unable to undertake language study because of clashes with core subjects. Several studies of persistence in language learning have shown that a key factor in discontinuing is the lack of space in the timetable (Nicholas, Moore, Clyne, & Pauwels, 1993). In grouping electives, languages tend to be placed in one line only. This means that any decision made about languages is a decision to include or exclude language study in the face of alternative subjects rather than allowing languages to be included as part of a more diverse educational package. This contrasts with other subject areas, such as English or mathematics, which are made available on more than one line to allow for flexibility in choosing electives.

In many cases, languages, which are perceived to be hard work, are grouped as electives with subjects that do not have the same reputation (e.g. craft subjects, art, sports). In establishing such categories, schools set up a situation in which languages are likely to suffer a sharp decrease in enrolments not because learners do not wish to take a language, but rather a student has to choose language study over a less demanding option. In this way, curriculum planning is designed in a way that ensures that languages do not attract adequate student numbers and make language programmes at higher levels more vulnerable.

*He really liked Indonesian and he wanted to do it in Year 10. But he wants to do science at university and he had to choose either Indonesian or Chemistry. Chemistry’s his favourite thing, it’s what he wants to do after uni, so there was no choice.*

*Parent*
Both of these issues relating to timetabling can be considered as examples of timetabling for the failure of language programmes. Such decision-making, whether consciously done or not, effectively reduces student numbers in language classes and contributes, together with other pressures on learners’ choices, to the low levels of language study at senior secondary level. Timetabling decisions can either enhance the possibilities for language learning or can be a barrier to it. When languages are placed against ‘easy’ options, it can show that language learning is not considered as a serious part of education and when it is put against subjects that are core elements of other programmes, it suggests that learners who study in these areas do not need, or do not want to study, languages.

There is a possibility that languages at secondary school become elective too early for the learners to see the value of their learning. In the data collection for this project one high school principal reported that in her school, up to 2001, language was only compulsory in Year 7 but that the school had decided to change this to Years 7 and 8 because it was believed that language learning gave skills that are cognitively valuable and 1 year of study is not enough to reach a reasonable linguistic level. She noted that this change had a significant effect on retention in language study beyond the compulsory years, with an increase of about 200 per cent in language enrolment at Years 11 and 12. She noted that the programme and the staff had remained the same and that the increased engagement with languages could be attributed only to the change in the amount of compulsory study. It would appear from this experience that the additional language study provided an opportunity for learners to develop a better understanding of themselves as language learners and to gain a sense of their own language learning achievements, which allowed them to make a better informed choice about whether or not to continue language study. Moreover, as language learning is a long-term endeavour, the 2 years of study would have allowed learners to gain a sense of the reward that came from an additional investment of time in language learning. This experience shows one way in which school-based planning, which actively valued languages and their contribution to education, positively affected learners’ experience of and interest in language learning and illustrates the importance of systemic factors, as well as individual factors, in promoting and supporting ongoing language learning.

In the compulsory years of language study at secondary school some schools offer discontinuous programmes in one or more languages. This planned discontinuity, which resembles the situation discussed above for primary school programmes, may involve providing language study either as an elective for part of the school year, or ‘taster’ programmes in a number of languages during a year. In the elective model, study of a language is taken as part of a series of subjects through which learners rotate each term or semester, with no language study being offered during the rest of the year. In some secondary schools, this cycle may extend to 2 or more years of discontinuous study. This means that learners taking a language may study it over a period of several years, but for only a part of any year.

The second form of discontinuity, the provision of ‘taster’ programmes, usually only last for 1 year in which learners are exposed to a number of languages, later selecting one language for ongoing study. Taster programmes are usually presented as offering learners an experience of two languages before they make a long-term commitment to a particular language. However, it appears that such programmes do not really lead to informed choices of language for longer term study. Personal and local factors, such as attitudes to the teachers,
materials, or teaching methods are more likely to shape the choice of language than aspects of the language itself. Moreover, the time spent studying languages that will not be followed up does not appear to have advantages for developing proficiency in a particular language.

These programmes do not allow for sustained development of language capabilities in any of the languages before regular study of one language begins. The aim of such programmes is to provide learners with a broad range of experiences – either in a number of languages or a number of subject areas. However, such programmes provide particular obstacles to language learning. During those parts of the cycle when learners are not studying a language, the language capabilities they have developed undergo language attrition, which means that by the next time they cycle through languages most of what they had acquired from their first experience of language has been lost and needs to be re-established before their learning can progress to a higher level.

Only a small number of studies have investigated how much language attrition occurs over a short period of time in language learning, mostly focusing on the effects of a lack of instruction between during the break between the end of one year and the beginning of the next. Scherer (1957), in a study of tertiary level learners, has shown that significant attrition of vocabulary and grammar knowledge occurs even after the normal long vacation between years of schooling. In studies of high school learners, Smythe et al. (1973), found a decrease in reading comprehension and Hansen-Strain (1992) found a decrease in grammatical knowledge over the same period. Smythe et al. also showed that over a longer break, such as a full semester without language instruction, the effects of language attrition were more marked. In Cohen’s (1974) study of primary school level, immersion learners showed extensive attrition of oral performance. Given that these studies show attrition of language skills even in a short time, and given also that proficiency levels is an important factor in language attrition – the lower the proficiency level the greater the attrition – discontinuous language programmes would seem to be a less than ideal approach to language teaching.

6.3 Transitions between Levels of Schooling

Transition issues have been identified as problematic for languages education for a number of years (for some Australian-based research on transition, see, for example, Cunningham, 1986; Imberger, 1988; Purvis & Ranaldo, 2003; Steigler-Peters, Moran, Piccioli, & Chesterton, 2003; Tolbert, 2003). The research literature has tended to focus on the issue of continuity in language learning between primary and secondary levels and has found that pathways for continued language study between primary and secondary schooling are not assured. Some of this has resulted from local level planning of language offerings in which primary schools have introduced languages that are not taught at the secondary schools to which their students typically go or from changes in language offerings at secondary schools after a primary school programme has been introduced. This shows that continuity of study is a key policy issue for transition between school levels, and policy around Australia has attempted to address this issue.

Although the continuity of learning throughout schooling is ideal, changing languages on transition from primary to secondary levels is not always problematic. Kipp (1996) has argued there are benefits from prior language study that carry over even where languages are changed, especially in developing language learning strategies that are brought to the new language. A change of language at transition from primary to secondary school does not, therefore, mean restarting from nothing. It should, however, be noted that for Kipp’s students, changing languages was in fact a choice as these students could all have continued to study the same language and that the ability to choose may influence the effects that Kipp observed.

Continuity of language offerings between schools is, however, not the only transition issue that needs to be addressed. A second issue in transition is whether prior learning is recognised in the secondary school, and there are schools in which both continuing and beginning
students are taught in the same class, with the same curriculum. One argument that teachers make for doing this is that the variability within primary school language programmes is so great that post-primary learners do not represent a consistent cohort for whom a single programme can be provided. They also observe that many students have only had 30–45 minutes per week of language study and in some cases for only 1 or 2 years and that their advantages over beginning learners are small in any case (see also Crawford, 1999: 333). Crawford (1999) also reports that even where teachers feel that they would like to provide different programmes for beginning and continuing students, this may not be supported by the school as the number of continuing students is considered to be too small to warrant a separate class. Other teachers in Crawford’s study reported that in some schools other transition policies, such as mixing students from different feeder schools to improve social development, prevented the formation of continuing language classes. Regardless of the rationale for not offering continuing students programmes designed to continue their learning, the failure to recognise prior learning may lead to disengagement with language learning for students who feel that they are only ‘marking time’ in their learning and are simply repeating things they have already done. As Crawford found in her study:

"Where beginning and continuing students are not separated, the primary teachers tended to report negative responses from their students who find Year 8 repetitious and therefore boring. Secondary teachers, on the other hand, find it difficult to teach large Year 8 classes at multiple levels effectively (Crawford, 1999: 333)."

Students with greater levels of learning are likely to be more highly affected by this. This shows that transition arrangements in which language study can be continued, but in which no real recognition is given for prior learning are potentially highly problematic and may be a greater disincentive for continuing language study than a change of language.

There appears to be an additional problem for transition that is less recognised, which is that even where prior learning is recognised by transition programmes the learning developed in primary school language programmes may not be maintained once students transfer into secondary school programmes. Hill, Davies, Oldfield, and Watson (1997) in their study of a Victorian secondary school in which French students were streamed on the basis of prior knowledge of French found that, while there were some initial advantages for students who had studied French at primary school, these advantages were actually eroded by Year 9. In Year 9, in which students were no longer streamed, students with primary school learning of French were performing identically with those who had not studied French at primary school. Hill et al. (1997) identified the teaching practice of the school as one of the factors that led to this result. Both beginning and continuing students from Years 7 to 9 were taught using the same textbook, although the continuing students were expected to be revising prior learning while the beginning students were developing new knowledge. What this actually means is that the school’s language planning expected students to be at the same level by Year 9 regardless of their starting point and effectively slowed down the learning of the continuing students to ‘catch up’. Kipp (1996) found a similar effect for students studying German, although in her study students had converged by Year 8. Although it is acceptable that there may be convergence of beginning and continuing students during their secondary school learning, this convergence should be the result of accelerating learning for beginning students not limiting the learning of continuing students.

My students come from all sorts of schools and some of them have done Japanese and some haven’t. But I don’t know how much they’ve done. It depends on the school and all sorts of things. They don’t even know the same kanji. I can’t have different programmes to cater for them all so it’s better to take them all back to the beginning so I know what they can do.

Secondary school teacher
The recent introduction of a three-tiered schooling system in the Northern Territory has raised another issue for transition. In this case, the problem is perceived more by senior schools, which will no longer offer a languages programme from Years 8 to 12, but will now take students in Year 10 who have completed middle school. In schools where a number of languages are taught (notably Darwin High School), this change may disrupt some of the pathways into senior secondary language study that currently exist as middle schools do not offer the range of languages that had previously been offered by some secondary schools.

6.4 Bilingual Programmes

Bilingual programmes exist in Australian schools in two quite different configurations: (1) programmes designed for the new learning of foreign/second languages, and (2) programmes for Indigenous languages, usually designed for Indigenous learners. The two different programme types have different aims, objectives, and requirements, and need to be treated separately.

6.4.1 Bilingual Programmes for New Learning

Bilingual programmes for new learning are most common in government schools, with such programmes existing in a number of States and Territories. The programmes vary greatly in terms of the amount of target language use planned for the programme. Bilingual programmes for the new learning of languages owe much of their popularity to the impact of successful Canadian immersion programmes. The evaluations of these programmes have shown indications of greatly improved language learning, along with a number of additional cognitive, academic, and attitudinal benefits (see, for example, Lotherington, 2003; Swain, 2000 for a discussion). Canadian bilingual programmes are immersion programmes: that is programmes in which most of the curriculum is taught in the target language, and where the first language of the learner is used only in teaching that language as a subject. Although the inspiration for much of the policy and practice in bilingual education in Australia comes from Canada, this does not mean that Australia has adopted the Canadian model itself.

Bilingual programmes are known across the country by different names, most commonly: bilingual programmes, immersion programmes, and partial immersion programmes. These names do not necessarily indicate different things nor do they give a clear indication of the focus or structure of the programme. Moreover, there are no common features or criteria for determining what a bilingual programme is in any State or Territory, although some jurisdictions have policy statements on what can be considered a bilingual programme.

An exemplification of the scope and distribution of programmes in Australia can be seen in Table 23, which gives an overview of the levels, States, and languages of bilingual programmes. Features of programmes in the various States and Territories are discussed below.

The ACT has a small number of bilingual programmes, with a number of different models. The ACT does not have a mandated time allocation for bilingual programmes. The Mawson Primary School Chinese programme offers two days per week of Chinese language instruction in Years 3 to 6. The Lyons Primary School Italian programme allocates half of the instructional time to each language in all year levels. The Telopea Park French programme allocates half of the instruction time at both primary and secondary school levels to each language. Narrabundah College offers International Baccalaureate subjects taught in French in addition to French language study; however, the proportion of time spent in classes using French or English varies according to students’ subject selection. The Telopea Park School is better considered as a binational rather than a bilingual school as it incorporates the Lycée-Franco-Australian, and under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian and French governments the school is accountable to the French and Australian authorities, as
well as to the ACT Department of Education and Training. In the primary section, the school provides a bilingual programme in the English and French languages from Kindergarten to Year 6. All students learn to speak, read, and write in French and English. The bilingual programme continues in the secondary part of the school to Year 10 and to Years 11 and 12 at Narrabundah College. Students in the bilingual programme receive instruction in French and English in different proportions according to each year level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Language</th>
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**Table 23:** Number of government schools offering bilingual programmes, by level, State, and language

Education Queensland has an accredited category of ‘immersion programmes’, most of which operate at secondary school level. In these programmes it is expected that 50 to 60 per cent of the curriculum will be taught in the target language in Years 8 to 10. One language programme, the Crescent Lagoon primary school programme articulates with Rockhampton High School to create a sequence of learning beginning in Year 3.

South Australia’s Lockleys North Primary School German programme is structured around 60 minutes per day taught in German; however, the use of German is not tightly
programmed and the German component ‘is often achieved randomly as appropriate moments occur’ (http://www.lnps.sa.edu.au/LANGUAGES.doc).

Some bilingual programmes in Victorian schools have been in existence for over 25 years, while others have been developed as part of the Designated Bilingual Schools Project, which began in Term 3, 1997. There are at present twelve primary schools and two secondary colleges with designated bilingual programmes. In the model of bilingual education adopted in the project, Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are chosen by the schools for teaching and learning in and through the target language. Schools are required to provide at least two KLAs in the target language across the various year levels. They are also required to provide face-to-face teaching in, and through, the target language for at least 7.5 hours per week. In reality, the amount of target language use in bilingual programmes varies from programme to programme and across year levels, with 7.5 hours being the minimum, but also the most common time allocation across programmes. At present fifteen government schools offer bilingual programmes in nine different languages, with some schools offering more than one language.

In Western Australia and Tasmania, bilingual programmes are less common. The ‘partial immersion’ programme at East Claremont Primary School has up to 3 hours of instruction of the curriculum in French per week, covering core subjects in addition to language study. Information about the Wanneroo Senior High School Italian programme, however, does not indicate contact hours. The programme in Tasmania at the three Claremont schools is designed for teaching in Auslan and English for a mixed school population of Deaf and hearing students. The programme allows for students to move through a bilingual programme for the duration of schooling. The model adopted is a team-teaching approach in which there are always two teachers in the classroom, one using English and the other Auslan. All teaching is interpreted from whichever language is being used into the other. Learners are therefore always exposed to two languages simultaneously.

Bilingual programmes appear to be less well established in independent and Catholic schools. Mount Scopus Memorial College in Melbourne has a junior secondary bilingual programme in Hebrew. Meridien Anglican Girls School in Sydney has a French bilingual programme from Kindergarten through to the Junior School years. Students completing this programme enter an advanced French programme in the Senior School. Also in Sydney, the Lycée Condorcet, which is a French national school, provides instruction in French and English using the official French curriculum. A number of Greek orthodox schools in Australia also provide a form of bilingual education in English and Greek.

6.4.2 Bilingual Programmes for Indigenous Languages

Bilingual programmes for Indigenous languages have typically been established in communities where an Indigenous language is the common language of communication. Such programmes exist primarily in the Northern Territory. The programmes aim to develop learners’ educationally, especially in terms of literacy development, while also introducing learners to English. Such programmes were first established in Australia during the 1960s and 1970s; however, the place of such programmes in government schools has been reduced in the last decade as a result of cuts to funding for Indigenous programmes, particularly in the Northern Territory in 1999.

The Bilingual Programme was introduced in the Northern Territory in 1973 and continues now as the Two Way Learning Programme. As with other bilingual programmes in Australia, the term ‘two way learning’ has been used to describe a variety of bilingual education programmes. The 2004–2005 report on Indigenous education (Indigenous Languages and Culture in NT Schools Steering Committee, 2005) argues that bilingual education in the Northern Territory context takes one of two possible forms: the ‘step or staircase model’ and the ‘50/50 model’. Of these the most common is the step model. This models aims to teach
basic literacy and educational concepts in the first language and then move from literacy in
the first language to literacy in English. It is therefore a transitional bilingual programme
(Liddicoat, 2004). The 50/50 model aims to give equal space to both English and the
Indigenous language in the programme. In 2004, two way learning programmes operated in
eleven government schools, three Catholic schools, and one independent school. Of the
government schools, two offered two way learning in more than one language: Maningrida
CEC in two languages – Burarra and Ndjebbana – and Yipirinya School in four – Warlpiri,
Luritja, and Eastern and Western Arrernte.

6.5 Complementary Providers

In addition to language programmes of various types in mainstream schools, a number of
providers exist in Australia to provide language programmes that complement mainstream
 provision. There are three basic structures through which such programmes are provided:
schools of languages, ethnic schools, and distance education providers. Schools of languages
and distance education providers are located within government schooling jurisdictions, while
ethnic schools are a parallel sector, which, while government funded, is not within the
organisational structure of government jurisdictions.

6.5.1 Schools of Languages

Schools of Languages exist in a number of States and Territories. These schools are
government specialist schools that offer a pathway for language learning outside the normal
school framework. These schools have different functions in different places.

In New South Wales, the Saturday School of Community Languages (SSCL), which was
established in 1978, operates language programmes on Saturdays in high schools in Sydney,
Wollongong, and Newcastle. The SSCL offers programmes in Arabic, Armenian, Bengali
(Bangla), Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, Farsi, Filipino, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese,
Khmer, Korean, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Modern Greek, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese,
Serbian, Spanish, Turkish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese. It aims to provide students with an
opportunity to study their background language when that language is not available at their
own school or college.

The Northern Territory School of Languages (NTSL) opened during 1997. Until the work
of the school was revised in 2007, the school had three core functions: supporting the delivery
of language programmes in schools, providing professional development for language
teachers, and maintaining a resource centre. The NTSL offered language classes within school
hours in Italian, Indonesian, and Tiwi for schools in the Darwin region. These programmes
were frequently offered in primary schools. In these cases, the School of Languages provided
schools with the language programme and language teacher. The School of Languages was,
therefore, a resource to allow schools to offer language programmes without the necessity of
recruiting teachers and ensuring staffing. It was NTSL’s policy that these classes were offered
only to students who elected to study the language and so this meant that schools that chose a
School of Languages programme could not offer all students the experience of a language.
The School of Languages also provided, and continues to provide, after-hours access to
classes in Auslan, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Spanish,
and Tiwi. Staff from the NTSL have run activity-focused one-day immersion courses for
students of Italian and Indonesian, providing an excursion experience for students of these
languages. The professional development activities are provided by the NTSL through
individual professional advice and professional development workshops. The concentration of
languages taught by the NTSL focuses mainly on more widely taught languages, with
particular support given to Italian and Indonesian. The role of the school in language teaching
can be seen as complementing mainstream provision and providing alternative administrative solutions to languages provision.

Also in the Northern Territory, the Alice Springs Language Centre (ASLC) delivers language teaching to schools and the community in Alice Springs at primary and secondary levels. These language programmes are offered at schools and the Centre therefore provides the schools’ regular language programme. In addition, the Centre offers evening classes for secondary students and adult learners, subject to student numbers, taught by contract staff. Not all languages provided by the school are offered in all modes:

- **Primary level**: Arrernte, Chinese, Indonesian, and Japanese.
- **Secondary level**: Arrernte, Chinese French, Indonesian, and Japanese.
- **Evening classes**: French, German, Indonesian, Japanese, and Spanish.

The Centre has also organised a teacher/student exchange with Indonesia.

The ASLC delivers its languages programme differently from the other Schools of Languages in Australia. The Centre is the normal employer of language teachers, who then work in schools to deliver languages. The Centre therefore has visibility as a provider of languages within the community and can have a more focused role than would be the case of individual teachers.

The model means that teachers who otherwise would be itinerant have more secure and stable employment. The Centre provides a base with collective resources, a resource library, and a collegial work environment and collaborative planning for language teachers who would under other models of delivery work in isolation. The model assures that there is continuity in delivery across schools and year levels and also allows for the introduction of new languages (notably Arrernte) within a focused structure.

The model does, however, also have problems that a more strongly school-based model may not experience. In particular, the resource base in individual schools varies and, as a result, teachers inevitably end by teaching the same programme differently. As the teachers are external to the school, intervention in planning is a problem for them, as it is with itinerant teachers who have part-time contracts in a number of schools.

The South Australian School of Languages (SASL) has operated from 1986 and provides language programmes in the Adelaide area by teaching classes in schools after hours in single blocks of time. In 2007, SASL offered courses at a number of different levels:

- **Primary (K–7) programmes**: Khmer.
- **Secondary (8–10) programmes**: Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese, Croatian, Dinka, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Persian, Polish, Serbian, Spanish, Swahili, and Vietnamese.
- **Senior secondary (11–12) programmes**: beginners level Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Croatian, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Serbian, Spanish, and Vietnamese; continuers level Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese (Mandarin), Croatian, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Khmer, Polish, Portuguese, Serbian, Spanish, and Vietnamese; background speakers level Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Persian, and Vietnamese.

The range of languages offered by SASL includes community languages not taught elsewhere in the mainstream school system as well as the more widely taught languages. This gives the school a dual role. It provides language programmes that would not otherwise be available to learners in the Adelaide area and also provides programmes for students to continue language study at later year levels where provision in their own schools cannot meet their needs, where timetabling problems mean that only external modes of study are possible, or where a change of school has meant that language study cannot be continued. The school also offers courses
in Arabana, Kaurna, and Pitjantjatjara under the *Australian Indigenous Languages Framework*. These programmes cater for students who have no background in the language and for those who have some background. The School of Languages has also produced and makes available a number of teaching and learning resource packages to help meet areas of need identified by senior secondary syllabus requirements.

The **Victorian** School of Languages (VSL) offers language courses in both face-to-face and distance modes. Face-to-face courses are offered at language centres in a number of locations in Victoria, not just the metropolitan region. The VSL at present offers forty languages, although some languages have been dropped from the school’s programme because of declining enrolments. At the same time, the school has introduced new languages to meet the needs of new immigrant communities. The languages that are available for study to VCE Year 12 level are:

- Albanian
- Arabic
- Auslan
- Bosnian
- Croatian
- Dutch
- Filipino
- French
- German
- Greek
- Hebrew
- Hindi
- Hungarian
- Indonesian
- Italian
- Japanese
- Khmer
- Korean
- Latin
- Macedonian
- Maltese
- Mandarin Chinese
- Persian
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Punjabi
- Russian
- Serbian
- Sinhala
- Spanish
- Tamil
- Turkish
- Vietnamese

The VSL provides programmes at both primary and secondary levels that are normally taught outside school times. For some languages at senior secondary level the VSL is the only Victorian provider offering courses. For languages of smaller immigrant communities, there is often no existing senior secondary syllabus and these languages cannot be studied towards the VCE. The school has been able to compensate for this by offering a Certificate 2 in Applied Languages, giving recognition for later year study of the language. The community languages that are not available for VCE accreditation for which the Certificate 2 may be relevant include both languages of newer immigrant groups and older more established groups:

- Amharic
- Bengali
- Bulgarian
- Czech
- Dari
- Latvian
- Lithuanian
- Pushto
- Slovenian
- Tigrinya
- Urdu

The distance education work of the VSL is discussed in the next section (see page 103).

Schools of Languages are a diverse collection of languages providers that complement mainstream language provision in different ways.

- Language programmes offered after hours in more commonly taught languages: South Australian School of Languages, Victorian School of Languages, New South Wales Saturday School of Community Languages, Northern Territory School of Languages, Alice Springs Language Centre. The complementarity here is to provide additional opportunities for languages learning where schools do not offer the language at more advanced levels or where there are timetabling or other barriers to language study in the students’ own schools.

- Language programmes offered outside school hours in languages that are not supported in mainstream schooling: South Australian School of Languages, Victorian School of Languages.
Languages, New South Wales Saturday School of Community Languages. The notion of complementarity here is one of provision of alternative language offerings within the framework of formal schooling.

- Languages programmes offered in schools during school hours: Northern Territory School of Languages, Alice Springs Language Centre. In this case, complementarity takes the form of alternative administrative arrangements for delivering language programmes.

- Community or Indigenous language programmes for background speakers taught after hours: South Australian School of Languages, Victorian School of Languages, New South Wales Saturday School of Community Languages, and, to a lesser extent, Northern Territory School of Languages. These programmes complement language education by providing different forms of language learning related to the development and maintenance of a first language, especially for literacy in the language.

6.5.2 Ethnic Schools/Community Language Schools

Ethnic schools, as defined by Norst are:

Community based autonomous schools or classes, not run for profit, which conduct regular voluntary part-time courses for learners (generally of school age) outside normal school hours (Norst, 1982: 3).

Although Norst’s definition dates from the early 1980s, a number of the features of ethnic schools observed at that time are still valid for the twenty-first century. The schools continue to be not-for-profit community organisations, staffed by volunteer teachers offering classes outside normal school hours (Norst, 1982; Scarino, 1995a). School authorities must be legal not-for-profit organisations to be eligible for funding. This gives ethnic schools a character that is quite different from other schooling sectors by framing them as community service organisations, providing language and cultural education for members of community groups. This framing may affect how such schools are perceived by and articulate with the wider educational system. Although ethnic schools are a defined sector of Australian education providing language instruction in the languages of immigrant communities, they are not in fact a coherent sector but rather a loose collection of institutions with different structures, goals, and processes.

Ethnic schools receive funding through the Australian Government’s School Language Programme, through State and Territory education jurisdictions. In some States and Territories Departments of Education also provide additional funding. In addition parents and community groups supplement the running of schools by paying fees and conducting fund-raising events to meet the additional costs of conducting classes. The sector is also supported materially by a significant input from volunteers. Australian Government funding had its origins in the Ethnic Schools Programme (ESP), which began in 1981 and continued from 1992 as the Community Languages Element. Up to 1997, funding for ethnic schools was identified separately from other Australian Government funding for languages; however, from 1997 ethnic schools’ funding was integrated with other Australian Government funding for languages, and the allocation to ethnic schools from this funding was determined by the jurisdictions at State and Territory level.

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1 Ethnic schools also offer classes to adults, but these classes are beyond the scope of the current report.
Australian Government funding is based on the historical shares of the ethnic school enrolments; however, the allocation of funding to organisations is determined at the State/Territory level. This means that established communities are well supported, but newer communities are less well integrated into the funding model. This provides a potential problem for developing flexibility in delivery of ethnic language programmes to meet the needs of Australia’s changing immigration profile.

Funding for the ethnic schools sector represents a large proportion of Australian Government involvement in the delivery of languages. At the same time, the sector has a number of problems which have endured over a long period of time and which have yet to be solved. The development of a quality assurance framework (Community Languages Australia, 2007) recognises the need to monitor and enhance the quality of provision in the sector, and further work can establish higher quality of educational provision.

Each State and Territory Department of Education regulates accreditation. The accreditation process varies from State to State and many of the issues involved are administrative, however, some insight into the state and nature of languages education in the ethnic school sector can be gained from some of the requirements.

**South Australia** has requirements relating to teacher qualifications and makes specific provision for the employment of personnel without teaching qualifications, requiring them to ‘attend the Accreditation Course so that they may be accredited with the Ethnic Schools Board within two years of employment’. In addition, generic minimum requirements are made for the curriculum: ‘Instruction in community language and culture is provided for a minimum of two hours per week based on a sound educational programme’, and the continuity of learning: ‘Student attendance is regular and accurate enrolment and attendance records are kept’ (Ethnic Schools Board, 2003).

In **Victoria**, there is a considerable requirement directed at curricular issues. Ethnic schools are required to undertake an extensive review of their policies and curriculum practices and develop a School Charter, a discipline policy, curriculum outlines for all year levels, assessment and reporting policies. In addition, the Victoria accreditation process requires that accredited schools ensure that all teachers have attended at least 25 hours of approved professional development in language teaching methods (DET, 2002).

To receive funding in **Queensland**, ethnic schools must have been registered with Education Queensland and have operated for six months with a minimum enrolment of six students. Schools are required to provide a minimum of two hours per week of language instruction for 36 weeks of the year, to have a minimum student enrolment, and a suitable language programme (see http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/area/lote/ahes.html).

Ethnic schools teach a highly diverse student population, largely drawn from the relevant ethnic community. Learners may have different levels of language proficiency and be involved in different levels of language use outside the school context. Some learners learn the language as an additional language, having little or no prior knowledge of the language. Other learners arrive with native-like abilities in the language for their age group. Learners in the ethnic school system may have different needs and these will have to be met in different ways. Some learners require an education experience resembling first language schooling with the emphasis on the development of literacy in the community language. For such programmes, textbooks designed for schools in countries that use the target language may be used, with more or less success. For new learning, however, sourcing textbooks may be more difficult. 

*It can be hard to get resources for a programme like ours. In the past I could use things straight from Turkey, but these days the kids are different. They don’t speak as much Turkish at home or they don’t speak any at all. It’s a different job now.*

*Ethnic school teacher*
Although ethnic schools do not exclude non-background learners, it appears that few such learners attend these classes, unless they have a particular association with the community. This may result from a perception that ethnic schools are schools for ethnic communities, rather than schools that teach community languages. In some cases this perception is accurate, as the schools are designed for the education of background speakers of the language rather than for the development of language proficiency for beginners in the language. In reality, ethnic schools have a dual role, which is reflected in the description found on the Community Languages Australia website:

- Community Languages Schools (or ethnic schools) are after hours language schools that provide mother tongue language teaching and cultural maintenance programmes.
- They are complementary providers of languages education to mainstream schools in Australia (http://www.communitylanguagesaustralia.org.au/AboutUs.htm).

The emphasis on ‘mother tongue language teaching and cultural maintenance’ is a community-oriented emphasis, which plays a vital role in the coherence and status of the community within the Australian context. These schools are especially important for communities from countries that do not or are not able to support expatriate communities or speak languages that are minority languages and are not recognised by government policies in their own countries. This role connects very closely with the community service framing of these schools discussed above and constructs ethnic schools as ethnic community organisations. The second dimension, ‘complementary providers’, is a potentially different role although the nature of the complementarity is not well defined for ethnic schools. This definitional problem has been noted in earlier reports on languages education.

The term ‘complementary provision of LOTE through ethnic schools’ is often misinterpreted to mean programmes that are similar, but lacking in what is taught by the mainstream. AFESA stresses, complementary provision needs to be understood in terms of providing high quality LOTE programmes in different settings via different administrative arrangements (Erebus, 2002b: 88).

Complementarity may relate to the provision of an alternate pathway for language learners to gain a language education similar to that provided by other parts of the school system. It could also relate to ways of articulating ‘mother tongue language teaching and cultural maintenance’ with the mainstream schooling sector. It appears that the current function of ethnic schools as complementary providers is the latter rather than the former and that the practices, policies, and overall philosophy of ethnic schooling is designed to support this form of complementarity. In fact, given that community support and involvement are central to the successful operation of ethnic schools, it would seem that the driving force for planning in the ethnic school sector will be community expectations related to the maintenance of their languages and cultures by the community.

For many languages, ethnic schools provide the only pathway for language learning and this means that the issue of how ethnic school programmes articulate with and are recognised by mainstream schooling is important. The issue is whether ethnic schools are a parallel school system in which individuals choose to participate in addition to their other schooling, or it is a recognised component within their mainstream education. Recognition of learning in ethnic schools is least problematic at senior secondary level, particularly in those States and Territories that have an external examination system. In these systems recognition works through assessment authorities rather than at school level, and the ethnic schools provide a parallel path for senior secondary qualifications. In Queensland, where the Year 12 certificate
is not based directly on external examinations, ethnic schools have to establish senior secondary programmes through an application to the Queensland Studies Authority. The application to offer such a programme requires the school to develop a work programme for the language with the assistance of QSA senior education officers and to enter into an agreement with a high school willing to host the programme for the purpose of accreditation, assessment, and review. Once the work programme has been approved, students who study the language have their results placed on their Senior Certificate and use the results for university entrance scores.

In ethnic schools, staffing relies on the availability of people willing and able to teach in the schools and the teaching staff is largely drawn from volunteers from local communities. The use of volunteer teachers has been noted as both a strength and as a weakness of the ethnic schools sector (Scarino, 1995a). It is a strength in that it ensures that language teachers are members of the ethnic communities whose languages are taught. Its weakness lies in issues associated with teacher qualifications and conditions.

In all States and Territories, finding suitably qualified teachers for many of the languages taught in ethnic schools is an issue and such schools have exceptions to requirements for teacher qualifications. Although this enables programmes to be staffed, it also means that the quality of teachers and teaching in ethnic schools varies considerably from school to school and between jurisdictions. The profile of teachers in ethnic schools is highly variable and includes some teachers who are qualified and registered teachers of the language and others who do not have qualifications in the language, beyond being a native speaker, and would not be qualified for registration as a teacher, some having no pre-service teaching education. The evidence suggests that qualified teachers are a minority in the ethnic schools sector, as Table 24 shows. According to this data, collected in 2006, 41% of teachers do not have a teaching qualification, although some of these have other professional qualifications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Qualification</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian qualified</td>
<td>1749</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas qualified</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No teaching qualification</td>
<td>1672</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4070</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 24: Teacher qualifications in ethnic schools (Source: Community Languages Australia)

The question of teacher qualifications has been a recognised issue for ethnic schools, and attention has been given to professional learning to develop the expertise of teachers. Ethnic schools also face an issue relating to the recognition of overseas qualifications, and while the ethnic schools sector allows teachers with overseas qualifications to work in schools, these qualifications are not recognised as being appropriate for the Australian context. In various States and Territories, teachers in ethnic schools are provided with inservice professional development activities, which range from one-day workshops focusing on basic pedagogy and classroom management to more sustained programmes of professional learning.

In New South Wales and Victoria, ethnic schools’ teachers have access to professional learning opportunities that parallel aspects of inservice professional learning. Some of these are award-bearing courses, e.g. University of New South Wales’s Certificate in Teaching

We couldn’t run if we didn’t have good community support. It’s not like other schools. We really have to have the community behind us. The teachers put in a lot of unpaid time to go to workshops because they are committed to what they’re doing and want to get it right.

Ethnic schools teacher

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1 Note: data on teacher qualifications was not recorded for WA, Tasmania, and the NT.
Community Languages, Australian Catholic University’s Certificate in LOTE Teaching and Advanced Certificate in LOTE Teaching, whereas others are non-award packages based on languages curriculum area subjects, e.g. at Monash University, La Trobe University, and Victoria University of Technology. The picture that emerges for professional learning for ethnic schools is one of great diversity across Australia, across languages, and within States and Territories. One issue teachers in ethnic schools raised was that assessment in such courses was conducted in English, a language in which teachers may not be fluent and in which they will not be required to work. A further issue to note in the professional learning is that the qualifications provided are qualifications in second/foreign language teaching – that is for the teaching of languages to students who are learning these as an additional language – however, the reality for many teachers in ethnic schools is that they are undertaking teaching of the languages as the first language of the students. For such teachers, second language methodologies are not appropriate, as they are teachers of first language literacy. Teaching qualifications for these areas in community languages are not available in Australia.

Many ethnic school teachers have full-time day jobs, and neither the time nor the finances to commit to the level of study that is required to become a qualified teacher for the small part of their working lives involved in teaching in language schools. This means that the ethnic schools sector is placed in a particularly difficult position for ensuring national, or even local, consistency of teaching qualifications and practices compared with other schooling sectors. When teaching relies on the availability of willing and able community members, it is difficult to mandate professional requirements that may undermine the availability of teachers and preclude the establishment of viable school programmes. Nonetheless, the 2006 data collection by Community Languages Australia reports that 55% of teachers had attended professional development activities in the preceding year, although without indicating what sort of professional development was provided.

States and Territories typically require the curriculum in ethnic schools to reflect approved government curricula, especially at senior secondary level. In some States and Territories, curricula have been developed for some community languages – those which are widely taught in the mainstream school system. For these languages additional materials and resources may also be available. However, for less widely taught languages, there is no government curriculum provided and teachers using these curricula are required to develop programmes and resources for themselves. This means that for many languages, volunteer and part-time teachers, often without teaching qualifications are required to adapt generic curriculum documents to their particular languages and to locate and evaluate materials that could be used to support the curriculum. In some States and Territories support may be available from government departments or agencies to assist teachers in adapting their curriculum, but the availability and extent of support varies greatly.

The curriculum models used for the ethnic schools are often those of the languages area – that is curricula for the learning of an additional language – and presupposes a student population that does not use the language outside the classroom. As indicated above, the students studying in ethnic schools, and the mission of the schools themselves, do not correspond to the presumed student groups of government curricula. This means that adaptations have to be made to approved curricula to address the needs of background speakers, even where government models and resources are available.

Within the overall provision of languages, however, it should be acknowledged that ethnic schools provide a primary need – language maintenance and development for immigrant groups – and this need is not well met by other parts of the sector. As the sector has a particular, socially important, mission as a complementary provider of language maintenance programmes, it means that ethnic schools do not cater well for second language learning for those without contact with ethnic communities. This means that it is most appropriate to view the complementarity of ethnic schools as being the delivery of different programme types,
rather than as providing alternative pathways for language learning. The mission of the ethnic schools sector cannot be supplemented by alternative pathways within the current funding base without compromising the mission to provide alternative programme types, which is central to the logic and location of the sector in Australian education.

6.5.3 Distance Education

This section will consider organisations that specialise in distance education and deliver languages in distance mode for primary and secondary students. Distance education makes language study available to students in remote locations and also to students who are unable to study a language in their schools. Not all States and Territories that provide distance education also provide language programmes.

The Victorian School of Languages, which is discussed on page 97 above, delivers language programmes in distance mode. The distance education programme is more restricted in terms of languages offered than is the face-to-face programme. The VSL offers a small subset of the languages available at secondary school level by distance mode: French, German, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, and Turkish.

Of the remaining distance education providers, Queensland’s Schools of Distance Education appear to have the most extensive distance education programme for languages. All distance education schools offer a language, although the range of languages and the duration of courses vary from school to school. The language offerings of each school are shown in Table 25.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Year levels</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>6–7</td>
<td>Longreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>Capricornia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Charleville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Charters Towers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8–10</td>
<td>Cairns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6–12</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>6–12</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>Mount Isa School of the Air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8–10</td>
<td>Cairns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>Charters Towers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6–12</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>8–10</td>
<td>Cairns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>8–10</td>
<td>Cairns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 25: Schools of Distance Education offering languages in Queensland

Table 25 shows that languages provision begins at primary school in all distance education schools except Cairns, which offers only secondary school courses. Longreach offers only primary school language, with no secondary school provision. All schools with secondary level language programmes, except Brisbane, offer languages only until Year 10. The only languages available at senior secondary level are Japanese, German, and French, all taught through the Brisbane school.

The Northern Territory Open Education Centre provides junior level (Years 8–10) courses in Indonesian, French, and German, although Indonesian is the only language offered consistently. All courses are available subject to demand and may also be available as accelerated courses, and Indonesian is also available as an extension course. The Centre also offers senior secondary courses in Indonesian, with the possibility of courses being available in German. Indonesian at this level is available at both continuers and beginners levels.
In South Australia, the Open Access College provides language programmes through the R–10 School of Distance Education and the Senior Secondary School of Distance Education. Through these schools the college offers Spanish and Indonesian from Year 4 to Year 12, and French and German from Year 8 to Year 12.

Western Australia’s Schools of Isolated and Distance Education provide language courses in Years 8–10 and offer French, Indonesian, and Japanese. Schools of the Air may provide language lessons, but this is dependent on the availability of a suitably qualified teacher.

Tasmania’s distance education provider, Distance Education Tasmania, offers two languages: Japanese for Years 3 to 5 and French for Years 6 to 8.

Language programmes offered in distance mode are typically offered through written course materials, text, books, audio cassettes, CDs, and telephone or radio lessons. This indicates reliance on more traditional technologies for distance language learning. The use of information technology and multimedia is comparatively less well developed, and online learning is not the norm in language programmes in these schools.

Distance education provides some language programmes for remote students, or for those who do not have access to language programmes in their schools; however, the provision of programmes in most States is limited, with few languages being offered and some schools not providing language pathways through to Year 12 level. In South Australia there is an anomaly in funding for distance education compared with other complementary programmes in that schools are required to pay for their students to access such programmes. This provides a disincentive for schools to promote distance education as a solution where language programmes are not available.

The range of languages on offer is small both within the various States and Territories and across the country, and students relying on distance education have little choice of language for study, and in some programmes there is only a single available language. Given the limited spread of languages provided, the role of such schools in increasing access to languages for students at schools where a language programme has not been delivered is likely to be small. Moreover as the languages offered by distance providers are limited to those most commonly taught in Australia, they do not represent an alternative pathway for study of those languages that are less widely taught and hence most vulnerable in schools. In reality distance education provision for such languages would rely on the programme being made widely available across Australia, and this is not the model on which distance education providers work at present. There is also a limit on the role of distance education providers in filling gaps where students are unable to continue language study in some jurisdictions because of the quota of distance education students schools are allowed to have and the way these students are supported by the State and Territory governments. This means that it is not the case that distance education provides a pathway for all students who are unable to continue language study, but rather that such students may be discouraged from, or prevented from, continuing language study by the administrative and financial arrangements around distance education provision.

The nature of distance education schools as complementary providers is primarily as providers of language programmes for students who do not have regular access to schools rather than to students who attend schools but do not have access to programmes in the language they wish to study. As a result they represent a way of giving at least some exposure to a language to students who may not otherwise be able to study one, but do not directly impact on increasing the available choice of languages for students.

6.5.4 Comments on Complementary Provision

Complementary providers have an important role in the delivery of language programmes in Australia; however, the availability of languages through such providers is not well distributed across the country. This means that different populations of students have different
levels of access to language programmes provided through such providers. Although ethnic schools are found in all States and Territories, not all States and Territories have schools of languages or distance education provision.

Language programmes are most widely available in capital cities, where complementary providers ensure a range of options in language study that address a range of different needs. Learners in other major cities also have access to some programmes, but the range and options are limited. Schools of languages, for example, may be available only to students in capital cities, although some schools are either based, or offer courses, in other major centres. Ethnic schools are again most common in capital cities, with many schools also in major regional centres. The presence of such schools and the range of languages offered are closely connected with the presence of a significant and/or active ethnic community. In most cases, distance education provides language programmes primarily for remote and isolated students, although there is some possibility, especially at senior secondary levels, for students to continue language study if they no longer have access to a language programme in their own schools. The group that is least catered for by distance education is school students in rural schools that do not have a language programme, especially students in compulsory schooling. Although distance education study may be technically possible for students at these schools, it is most likely to be an option only for a very small minority of students and does not appear to be encouraged as a language learning option for the majority of rural students without access to a regular school programme.

Among the complementary providers there are a number of variations in the quality of education offered and the nature of the programmes available. The most obvious distinction is between ethnic schools and schools of language and distance education schools. Ethnic schools are community based, dependent on available language expertise within the community, and teachers in the system may or may not have teaching qualifications. The other schools, however, are government schools in which teachers have to satisfy the normal qualifications for teaching in the government sector, in both language knowledge and teacher education. The other main distinction is the ways in which programmes are designed primarily to complement mainstream delivery of languages programmes. Ethnic schools complement the mainstream by providing programmes that meet the language and culture maintenance needs of immigrant communities, often by providing language programmes for first language speakers of the language involved. Schools of language provide an alternative way of accessing mainstream programmes, where the continuation of a language programme may not be offered by a school, or where the demand for the language does not make it feasible to be offered in one particular school (or in the case of the Alice Springs Language Centre, an alternative model of teacher employment). Distance education provides access to language programmes primarily on the basis of geographic isolation and complements the traditional classroom, usually for more than just language learning. Such providers may also facilitate study of a language at senior secondary level for some languages where no other model of provision is available.

At present no form of complementary provision appears to be established to deal with more general questions of access to the study of a particular language, especially for second/foreign language learning. Only some schools of language offer programmes that increase students’ choice of language, and most of these require a commitment to out-of-school study of the language. This provision is, however, largely restricted to major cities.
7 Teacher Supply and Retention

7.1 Teacher Supply

Teacher supply and retention were studied extensively in the early 1990s in the report *Languages at the Cross Roads* (Nicholas et al., 1993). Nicholas et al. note that identifying the potential supply of languages teachers was problematic as there was little information available at the time on teachers who were qualified to teach languages or on education learners who were preparing to become languages teachers. They note that:

At the moment, neither teacher employers nor teacher educators are able to give even the seemingly simple kinds of information which are needed (1993: 1).

This situation has not changed and issues relating to teacher supply are difficult to quantify. Nicholas *et al.* (NBEET, 1996) found that there was a core problem in the early 1990s in that the demand for qualified language teachers exceeded the current supply of language teachers and proposed a number of strategies for increasing the languages teaching workforce. The issue of teacher supply has remained a constant in reports on education. The National Board of Employment Education and Training (NBEET, 1996) found that the ‘system-wide, long-term historical failure’ in languages had led to a situation in which:

the contemporary practice of setting extravagant and unachievable targets of Learners studying a language while failing to put in place strategies to ensure that there are sufficient qualified and proficient teachers to reach those target enrolments (MCEETYA, 1998).

In the 1997 *National Report on Schooling in Australia* (CESCEO National Teacher Supply and Demand Working Party, 1998) a number of States and Territories noted supply problems for languages, especially in primary school. Tasmanian schools were reported as adopting a range of strategies to respond to the desire to implement language programmes in the face of teacher shortages, noting:

The availability of language teachers remains a problem for some primary schools. Several primary teachers have undertaken language studies and native-speaking parents assist with conversational language and cultural days.

In 1998, teacher supply was again reported as problematic for languages, and recruitment of language teachers faced difficulties (Erebus, 2002b). A 2002 report on languages education in schooling found that supply ‘was mentioned by almost all jurisdictions as probably the most significant issue affecting the provision of LOTE’ (APPA, 2002). The Australian Primary Principals Association’s report (ASPA, 2006) identifies teacher supply as the most important factor leading to the discontinuation of languages programmes (43.5% of respondents). In 2006 the situation appears to be unchanged and programmes continue to remain vulnerable because of issues relating to the availability of language teachers.

Teacher supply issues are most keenly felt in primary schools, but supply issues are found also in secondary schools, especially in rural and remote schools. ASPA has been running supply and demand surveys for a number of years and these show important information for understanding teacher supply for languages (ASPA, 2006). These surveys report a constant problem for principals in finding languages teachers over a number of years. The ASPA survey reports that secondary schools are dealing with the lack of staff with relevant expertise in one of two ways: (1) by culling the subject area from the curriculum, and (2) by using staff without the relevant expertise to teach classes.

‘It’s no good committing yourself to a LOTE programme if you can’t staff it. We had a good programme a few years ago, but the teacher left and we couldn’t replace her. We tried for a couple of years, but we had to let the programme go.’

Primary school principal
Figure 12 shows the number of schools discontinuing language programmes because of a lack of qualified teachers. This graph shows a significant number of schools reporting closure of language programmes; in fact, according to the survey languages have the highest rate of programme closures for any subject area.

Although the graph shows the number of schools discontinuing languages has declined significantly in 2006, it must be remembered that programme closures are cumulative and if a programme is lost it is unlikely to be re-established, at least in the short to mid term. According to the survey, the impact of closures is differential according to school location, with only 4 per cent of urban schools closing languages programmes, while 10 per cent of rural schools and 12 per cent of remote schools did so. This indicates a very reduced opportunity for learners outside urban centres to engage in language study during their secondary schooling.

In secondary schools, programme closure seems to be the most usual solution for a lack of qualified language teachers, although some secondary schools do offer language programmes with unqualified or underqualified teachers. According to the ASPA survey, almost 20 per cent of schools reported having between one and five classes offered in languages by staff without subject expertise, and no schools reporting more than five classes being taught by such teachers.

A further staffing problem relating to languages is found in accessing relief teachers, with in excess of 70 per cent of secondary schools responding to the survey indicating that they have high levels of difficulty in finding relief teachers for languages. This means that when a regular language teacher is unavailable for whatever reason, learners may not receive any language instruction during that absence. The ASPA survey also indicates that languages is reported as the most difficult subject area for finding relief teachers. Again, there is a differential for schools based on their location, with 75 per cent of urban schools, 86 per cent of rural schools, and 94 per cent of remote schools reporting problems.

The information from both APPA and ASPA points to the fact that teacher supply is one of the most crucial problems for languages education in Australia, and it impacts on both the

‘The language programme at our school was set up because the parents wanted the kids to learn a language. The school went with Italian because one of the teachers was from an Italian family. She left and the language programme folded up. Then when my next kid went through they got a teacher who knew a bit of Japanese, so they did Japanese. I don’t think she knew much but she was on staff so they used her. She left too and so we’re now back where we started. The kids still can’t learn a language.’

Primary school parent
availability of opportunities to study languages at any level of schooling and on the quality of language programmes wherever teacher supply is a problem. In spite of the enduring problem of teacher supply for languages, and of reports outlining approaches to the problem, little seems to have been achieved in this area over a significant period of time. The problem seems to consist of two dimensions: a problem in the education of potential language teachers, in which supply is not meeting demand, and an additional problem of attracting language teachers to schools outside urban areas.

Although teacher supply is a key area of need as far as school principals are concerned and is recognised as problematic by other stakeholders, this does not seem to have had a significant impact on workforce planning in educational jurisdictions. Some jurisdictions highlight languages teaching as an area of need, for example, in South Australia, Japanese, Indonesian, and Italian are identified as areas of need in both primary and secondary schools in the Department’s information for prospective teachers.1

The following quote from the Tasmanian government jurisdiction human resources office is indicative of the situation that currently exists in teacher supply:

Our staffing/recruitment officers have not reported on issues re supply/demand of language teachers for a couple of years, so we would assume from that that most needs are being met. As a result we have not got any specific recruitment strategies that target language teachers [personal comment].

This position is a reactive one rather than a proactive one, and is at variance with the needs expressed by Tasmanian principals in the APPA and ASPA surveys.

Some States, however, recognise that some action is needed to recruit more language teachers and incentives have been put in place to attract people to languages teaching. For example, in South Australia final year teaching scholarships are offered for prospective teachers of identified languages. These scholarships are valued at up to $30 000 and include a guaranteed 2-year teaching contract in a rural school.2 South Australia also designates languages as an area of need in its graduate recruitment programme, again with an expectation that new teachers will work in rural schools.3

7.2 Qualifications and Teacher Education

Principals often cite problems in getting qualified specialist language teachers at primary school level. This problem exists in several forms. Firstly, schools may be unable to recruit language teachers with primary school level education and express concerns about teachers’ ability to adapt their secondary teacher education to the primary school classroom. Secondly, they report difficulties in finding primary school trained language teachers with adequate language proficiency and express concerns about the quality of the programme such teachers are able to offer. Finally, principals report that they may have primary school trained teachers who have competence in a language (often as native speakers), but who have not been educated in how to teach that language. These teachers may have difficulties in applying their language knowledge to the context of second language teaching and learning.

The result of a lack of qualified primary school language teachers has led to many schools adopting stopgap measures in order to establish a language programme. They may institute a language programme based on available language knowledge within the current school context, rather than establishing a programme that reflects community needs and aspirations and without consideration of future pathways for learning the language after primary school. Alternately, they may call for volunteers to study the languages they wish to introduce who will then teach that language while learning it, often with low levels of proficiency.

In some cases stopgap approaches to meeting questions of supply have been reinforced by government policies that offered quick ‘retraining’ of teachers of less popular languages in order to teach a more popular language, or ‘retraining’ of non-language teachers as language teachers through short-term language programmes. Such retraining has been successful only where it has assured sustained language learning on the part of the teacher.

These solutions have consequences for the overall quality of the language programme and parents often express concern about the qualifications of language teachers in primary schools, especially in terms of their proficiency in the language.

At the same time, there are many highly qualified and highly experienced language teachers at all levels of schooling. Many teachers who have achieved high levels of proficiency in their languages have, usually through inservice professional development, upgraded their language proficiency, their languages pedagogy, or developing the knowledge to be able to transition between secondary and primary school teaching. Such successes have especially been the case where government policies have strongly supported the development of language teaching capabilities among primary school teachers and have invested in relevant and sustained professional learning programmes.

Although there are many talented and qualified language teachers, it may be difficult for some schools to attract these teachers, especially to rural, remote, or ‘problem’ schools. The current pool of primary school trained language teachers is too small to provide for the current demand for such teachers. The stopgap approaches to staffing languages programmes have led to an overly negative perception of the quality of languages teachers.

A core problem for teacher supply is found in the university programmes available to education learners, especially to primary education learners. In some undergraduate degrees for primary level teachers, it is possible to take a languages curriculum course and in some of these it is also possible to undertake further language learning. However, it is not possible for primary school education learners to include languages education in their degrees in all States and Territories as Table 26 shows. This table lists all university programmes for primary school teachers that have a language-related curriculum unit. Such programmes were found only at ten universities and in only four States. Primary school languages education is therefore unavailable to learners in the ACT, the Northern Territory, and Tasmania. This means that teacher supply in these areas is highly problematic as language teachers at primary school have to be recruited from other States or from teacher education programmes designed for secondary school teachers. As primary school teachers do not need to demonstrate the ability to teach across the eight recognised KLAs of the National Goals of Schooling, there

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1 Teacher education is the specific focus of an Australian Government funded Review of teacher education for languages teachers, which is currently underway. The comments in this section should be read in conjunction with that review.
appears to be little incentive for education programmes to provide for languages teaching, except in universities in which there is a local commitment to languages education. It appears therefore that the driver for primary school level languages curriculum studies is not the teaching needs of systems but rather the attitudes of university staff and the availability of academics capable of teaching in such areas.

| NSW | University of New England  
Newcastle University  
University of Sydney |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Queensland | Central Queensland University  
Queensland University of Technology  
University of Southern Queensland |
| Victoria | Deakin University  
La Trobe University  
University of Melbourne |
| SA | University of SA |
| WA | Murdoch University |

**Table 26: Primary school teacher education programmes including languages curriculum**

Although some universities do prepare primary school level language teachers, the language proficiency development required for these teachers is not uniform across these institutions as Table 27 shows. Again the list here provides the information available from all universities and shows that the number of programmes requiring teacher education learners to develop their language abilities further is smaller than the number offering languages curriculum subjects.

| NSW | Newcastle: 2 semesters  
Sydney: 4 semesters |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Queensland | CQU: 6 semesters (Japanese only)  
QUT: 6 semesters  
USQ: 2 semesters |
| Victoria | Deakin: 6 semesters  
La Trobe: Indonesian: 8 semesters; Auslan: 6 semesters |
| WA | Murdoch: 4 semesters |

**Table 27: Amount of language learning required in primary school teacher education programmes**

The amount of language learning required of prospective languages teachers in primary school education courses at these universities varies from two semesters to eight semesters during an eight semester (4-year) degree (see Table 27). Six semesters of language study is a typical major in an Arts degree and most programmes in Victoria and Queensland require this. The University of New England includes primary school level languages in a graduate degree and most programmes in Victoria and Queensland require this. The University of New England includes primary school level languages in a graduate degree in primary education and therefore presumes prior study of a language, while Melbourne makes languages curriculum courses available only to those who have completed 3 years of study of a language post-Year 12, although the degree is not a graduate level degree. In these programmes, language learning is only a requirement for those learners who wish to work as languages teachers. The development of some subject knowledge in the languages KLA is therefore not a normal expectation for primary teachers, although the other seven KLAs are typically required.

1 It is possible that some students in primary school programmes may be able to include language study as an elective in their courses; however, this is not the case at many universities where the choice of electives is constrained, often to teacher education courses.
The problem identified here is not new, in fact Nicholas et al. (1993) observed that:

The lack of available language programmes for pre-service primary teacher education programmes would be less worrying if it were possible to combine language teaching methodology with language study in another section of the institution or in another institution (Nicholas et al., 1993: 61).

Although the problem has been recognised for more than a decade, there is little evidence that much has changed over time, especially with reference to the development of language proficiency during pre-service education. In part, this is a structural issue within universities, where languages tend to be taught in different parts of the university from education and the internal transfer of student loads across parts of the university has significant consequences for funding.

In some States teacher education degrees exist for middle years of schooling and these have some overlap with primary school teaching. A list of middle school focused degrees including languages curriculum is given in Table 28.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Adelaide</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flinders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>Southern Cross University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 28: Middle school education programmes including languages curriculum courses

Programs including a languages curriculum area are found only at universities in South Australia and New South Wales. Of these programmes, the degree at Adelaide and Flinders are combined with Bachelor of Arts degrees, which allow for a major in a language. Southern Cross requires only four semesters of language learning, while the UniSA degree is a postgraduate degree that presupposes prior language study. It is notable that the middle school programmes tend to associate middle and secondary schooling more closely than middle and primary schooling. UniSA for example, includes languages curriculum courses in its middle and secondary degree, but not in its primary and middle degree.

Most teacher education degrees appear to allow for ab initio language study and it is thus possible for teachers to come out of a primary school education degree with only a single year’s study of the language and, correspondingly, with low levels of knowledge of the language.

Most secondary school education degrees include languages education as a curriculum area. In graduate level secondary teacher education degrees learners at university develop their proficiency in the language through a major or even an Honours degree in the language before undertaking their teacher education studies. This pathway therefore provides the potential for the maximum possible undergraduate study of one or more languages together with professional learning relating to languages education, with languages-related practicum. However, where universities offer undergraduate degrees in secondary education, they commonly allow for the possibility of some language study, usually six semesters if languages are to be the first teaching specialisation, and four semesters where it is a second specialisation. These requirements often relate to local requirements for teacher registration, and tend to meet the minimum requirements rather than offering possibilities of exceeding these.

7.3 Qualifications and Teacher Registration

Most Australian States and Territories have established bodies for registering teachers for employment in government, Catholic, and independent schools. The requirements and processes for teacher registration are largely similar across the country although there are
some differences between States and Territories. In all cases, teacher registration has as a minimum requirement a 4-year education degree or a 3-year degree with a 1-year postgraduate education qualification. Registration as a teacher is normally generic rather than subject specific, with standards, where they exist or are being developed, specifying a command of the relevant discipline(s) in generic terms.

7.3.1 ACT

The ACT does not have a specific teacher registration body. However, the Department of Education and Training requires that teachers have either a Bachelor of Education degree or Bachelor degree and a Graduate Diploma of Education. Only people holding these qualifications may have permanency in the ACT system. People with education qualifications who do not meet this level may still teach in the ACT system, but without permanency. The ACT has no explicit statement of the level of language study or of proficiency a teacher must have in a language in order to be able to teach the language.

7.3.2 New South Wales

Teacher registration and accreditation are the responsibility of the New South Wales Institute of Teachers (NSWIT) (http://www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au). NSWIT has also approved generic teaching standards identifying the core areas of professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional commitment, which span the teaching career from graduate level to leadership level. Those who have completed a degree but have not completed an education qualification may be conditionally accredited, provided they are undertaking a teaching qualification.

In addition, the NSWIT requires secondary languages teachers to have majored in a language in their tertiary degree. Primary teachers can apply to the Institute to have specialisation in a language included in their accreditation.

7.3.3 Northern Territory

Teacher registration in the Northern Territory is conducted by the Teacher Registration Board (TRB) (http://www.trb.nt.gov.au). The Northern Territory has developed a set of professional standards for ‘competent’ teachers based around the broad areas of professional engagement, professional knowledge, and professional practice, but it is not clear how these connect with the registration process, as there is no provisional registration in the Northern Territory and the standards are not designed for graduates. In the Northern Territory an unregistered person may be authorised to teach where a suitably qualified registered teacher is not available. The Northern Territory has no explicit statement of the level of language study or of proficiency a teacher must have in a language in order to be able to teach the language.

7.3.4 Queensland

Teacher registration in Queensland is the responsibility of the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) (http://www.qct.edu.au/). Registration in Queensland is initially provisional and may be converted to a full registration after a year as a practising teacher, for applicants who meet the relevant standards: possession and application of appropriate knowledge bases; possession and application of a range of literacies relevant to the role; creation of a supportive and intellectually challenging learning environment to engage all learners; participation in professional relationships within and beyond the school; and commitment to reflective practice and ongoing professional renewal.

These standards are therefore generic standards applicable to teachers across all curriculum areas. QCT is developing a new set of standards for teaching, but again focusing on generic
teaching standards. In addition, QCT offers ‘permission to teach’ to allow schools ‘to offer people with relevant skills, knowledge and experience a teaching position, in situations where the position has been unable to be filled by an appropriate registered teacher’.

Education Queensland requires language teachers to undertake a language proficiency assessment and obtain at least an ‘adequate’ proficiency rating in their language(s), regardless of the year levels they will be teaching. The assessment aims to determine the applicants’ general level of proficiency and their potential to use the language for teaching purposes. The test assigns five proficiency levels for each skill area adapted from the Australian Language Proficiency Rating Scales (Teacher Registration Board, 2005) and the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages Guidelines (ACTFL, 1985). This proficiency assessment is separate from teacher registration and registration is not dependent on passing the proficiency assessment.¹

7.3.5 South Australia

The Teachers Registration Board of South Australia (TRB) (http://www.trb.sa.edu.au/) is the registering body for South Australia. The TRB has developed draft standards for teacher registration that are generic and focus on professional relationship, professional knowledge, and professional practice. The TRB may also issue an ‘authority to teach’ to allow people who do not meet the minimum requirements for registration to teach in schools where a registered teacher cannot be found. In 2006 this policy was, however, under review. South Australian teachers must have at least 1 year of tertiary language study to qualify as a language teacher. Technically this could be a 1-year beginners level course, but this would qualify the teacher to teach only to Year 8 level.

7.3.6 Tasmania

The Teacher Registration Board of Tasmania (TRB) requires that for full registration, teachers must also have had at least 1 year of teaching experience. Graduates may be provisionally registered while gaining the required experience. The TRB also grants a Limited Authority to Teach ‘where suitably skilled and qualified, registered teachers are not available to teach the particular teaching placement’. Tasmania has no explicit statement of the level of language study or of proficiency a teacher must have in a language in order to be able to teach.

7.3.7 Victoria

Victorian teachers are registered through the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) (http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/). The VIT grants provisional registration to those entering the teaching profession and full registration when evidence is provided that the teacher’s professional practice meets the standards of professional practice approved for full registration. The VIT has developed generic professional standards for full teacher registration under the broad headings of professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional engagement. The basic qualifications for registering as a teacher in Victoria are a 4-year education degree or another undergraduate degree followed by a graduate level education qualification.

VIT has developed guidelines for the accreditation of pre-service teacher education courses and specialist area guidelines as a prelude to the development of a fuller policy regarding professional expertise. For secondary teachers, the presupposition is that teachers prepare to teach in two subject areas and will undertake ‘subject-specific teaching methodology’ with ‘equal time will be allocated for teaching in each of these subject areas within the supervised

teaching practice programme’. For primary school specialists, it is expected that they will have ‘appropriate subject teaching methodology and appropriate supervised teaching practice in the specialist area’. In addition, the VIT lists the requirements for specialist languages teaching as a 3-year major in a language, in line with the requirements of the Department of Education. These guidelines, however, are not guidelines for registration per se, but rather they are designed for the evaluation of teacher education programmes.

VIT also grants ‘permission to teach’ in some circumstances, most notably where a school wishes to employ a person who is not qualified to be registered because a suitable registered teacher is not available.

7.3.8 Western Australia

Western Australian College of Teaching (http://www.wacot.wa.edu.au) gives a provisional registration to graduate teachers, with the expectation that they will become fully registered after they have gained at least 1 year of classroom experience, supported by a more experienced teacher (Collegiate Support Person). The College also grants a Limited Authority to Teach in cases where a school is not able to find a suitably qualified registered teacher. Western Australia also requires teachers to have completed 4 units of language study at tertiary level – that is the equivalent of 2 years of language study.

7.3.9 Comments on Registration

The process of registration is primarily concerned with issues around preparation as a teacher rather than subject knowledge and is a generic registration: that is an applicant is registered as a teacher, not as a teacher of a specific discipline. Specifications about what should have been completed in teacher preparation are usually limited to minimum education content and requirements relating to teaching practicum. Other dimensions of the applicant’s education appear to be the concern of the education provider and of the programme approval process instituted in the jurisdiction.

7.3.10 Use of Non-registered Teachers

Most of the registration bodies in Australia have a special category allowing certain people with specialist or specialised knowledge to teach in schools even without relevant qualifications. The use of such teachers does not seem to be widespread. Although there is little data available around the country, the information in Figure 13 from South Australia indicates that such applications are rare.

This graph shows that, in South Australia at least, applications to approved unregistered people to teach are more common in non-government than in government schools and more common in country schools than in metropolitan schools, but rarely exceed twenty applications per year. It is not clear from the documents, however, what proportion of the applications are approved. It is also impossible to know what proportion of applications was for language teachers. What the table does indicate is that, because few applications are made for authority to teach, that where schools indicate on other surveys that they are employing language teachers without suitable qualifications, these teachers are most probably registered teachers who may lack language qualifications or language teaching qualifications, or both.
7.3.11 Overseas Qualified Native-speaker Teachers

There are a number of overseas qualified native-speaker teachers employed in Australian schools. Such teachers have high levels of language proficiency and firsthand knowledge of the languages and cultures they teach. The recruitment of such teachers has been proposed as a solution to the supply of highly proficient qualified language teachers (see, for example, Nicholas et al., 1993). However, there is evidence from interviews and focus groups that there are a number of problems associated with overseas qualified native speakers teaching in Australian schools:

- the level of English of the teacher and corresponding problems in communicating with students, colleagues, and parents;
- classroom management problems;
- difficulties in establishing relationships with students.

These problems are not problems of overseas teachers per se, but rather represent problems in the integration of such teachers into Australian teaching contexts. Native speaker language teachers often appear to be ideal language teachers because of their language proficiency; however, it is less well recognised that what is involved in being a teacher is not simply one’s knowledge of the target language, but also involves the teachers’ knowledge of the language and culture of the learners and the culture of education in which they teach. Professional learning for overseas qualified teachers does not typically take into consideration what such teachers need to be able to operate effectively in Australian classroom. Where the overseas qualifications are recognised as being equivalent to Australian qualifications, there may be no requirement for additional professional learning before the teacher begins to teach. In other cases some study may be required as a bridge between the overseas qualification and an Australian qualification. In this case prospective teachers are usually required to enrol in mainstream teacher education courses. What is missing in the preparation of overseas qualified teachers is consideration that they need to learn to teach in new cultural contexts in which assumptions about pedagogy, teacher–student relationships, classroom practices, teaching and learning styles, etc. are not shared by the teacher and others in the school.

7.4 Languages Teachers’ Employment

Languages teachers are employed in a number of different ways. Many teachers, especially those teaching at secondary level, have stable full-time positions. These positions, however, are not always totally allocated to language teaching.
In secondary schools it is usual for teachers to have qualifications in two curriculum areas, and while some teachers teach only a particular language, most teachers appear to teach in two curriculum areas, although in some cases the second area may be another language. This ability to teach across curriculum areas is important for most secondary teachers in securing full-time employment, except in those schools with a very strong languages profile. The ASPA survey (1993) noted that principals prefer teachers who can teach in more than one subject area as this allows for greater flexibility in programming.

In primary schools full-time language teaching positions are less common, although some primary school teachers do secure full-time stable employment. In some cases these teachers may also occupy other roles in the school, sometimes in other specialist roles (e.g. as a librarian), sometimes as mainstream classroom teachers, and sometimes as part of the school leadership team.

In most cases primary schools do not have a full-time staffing allocation for a specialist languages teacher or cannot afford one from current funding. This means that each school offers a fractional position to provide some form of language teaching. In some schools the fraction of the appointment is as low as a day per week1 (that is a 0.2 fraction). Individuals construct for themselves a full-time or part-time position through a collection of such fractional jobs. This means that a teacher’s employment agreements are made with several discrete employers who may all be in the government system or may be spread over government, Catholic, and/or independent schools. In addition, teachers may be working on relatively short-term contracts in the schools. This means that many languages teachers lack stable employment and face complex arrangements in securing adequate work.

Primary school languages teachers with stable employment often teach languages to the entire school population and within a single school may have two hundred or more learners, whom they often see for no more than 45 minutes a week. Where teachers are teaching such large numbers of learners, it is difficult to develop a relationship with learners as individuals and this affects the quality of language education experienced by learners in that it is difficult to monitor individuals’ progress and needs and to tailor teaching to these needs. Where language programmes involve minimal contact time on a single day per week, the problems are exacerbated. Moreover, the lack of a sustained relationship with learners, especially in primary schools where teaching is modelled on a single teacher with sustained contact with the learners, may create problems relating to classroom organisation and management.

It was argued by many primary school language teachers that they need to be better teachers than their colleagues in order to do their jobs. Such teachers need to be able to teach to multiple age, and hence developmental, levels, to large numbers of students, often in multiple school communities. If it is true that teachers need to do more to equal their other colleagues, this has significant issues for determining the expected workloads of language teachers and the level of support they receive. Many teachers working part time in schools indicated that they did not receive release time for marking, preparation, etc., like their mainstream colleagues but rather were expected to do this in their own time, usually for multiple classes.

Primary school level teacher education does not prepare teachers well for such work contexts. Teacher education programmes are predicated on a teaching context in which a

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1 It was reported that in some cases teachers were employed for one day per fortnight – a 0.1 fractional position – but it has been impossible to verify this. Nonetheless, 0.2 is a very common fraction.

'I see the whole school during the week. That’s nearly 450 kids … I get to see them for 45 minutes a week. When it comes to writing reports, you just can’t remember them all. It’s getting better now that I’ve been here a couple of years. I’m getting to know the ones I’ve had since I got here.'

Primary school teacher
teacher teaches a single class for an extended period of time. Teachers who teach large numbers of learners for short periods of time face different demands and require different professional practices, but are left to their own devices in developing these and in adapting their own prior learning to a new context.

7.5 Itinerancy

The school-based staffing practices discussed above are the main contributor to the existence of a widespread pattern of itinerancy in languages education, especially at primary school level. Itinerancy refers to a working situation in which a teacher teaches in a number of schools at a number of levels, including teaching at both primary and secondary schools. The practice of itinerancy means that teachers have contact during the working week with multiple school communities, for brief periods and with extremely large numbers of learners, in some cases reaching in excess of 750. Itinerancy poses problems for the overall quality of language teaching in Australia, but also has an impact on issues of teacher supply and retention which cannot be ignored in the policy context.

Itinerancy has a strong impact on language teaching programmes in two ways. The first of these relates to the number of learners that teachers are involved with each week. In reality this situation is shared by many primary school language teachers, but is exacerbated for the itinerant teacher by the greater difficulty a teacher working in more than one school has in developing professional relationships with other teaching staff and in adapting to a range of different school cultures.

The second issue relates directly to the number of schools involved. Where an individual teacher may work in three or even more schools, the teacher is not able to develop close relationships with the teachers in those schools and this makes it difficult for the teacher to engage sustained interactions about the school, its learners and its community, or to participate in cross-curricular planning in an effective way. In particular, it is difficult for a teacher who is employed only one day a week and who works during the classroom teachers’ non-instruction time to discuss curriculum or other teaching and learning issues with their non-specialist colleague. This means that the languages teacher is unable to connect with students’ learning outside the languages class and for the non-specialist teacher to connect with, or be informed about, what is happening in the languages classroom. Moreover, the itinerant teacher is rarely involved in decision-making in the school and may be left out of communication about school events.

Itinerancy also creates problems for the development of career paths for language teachers. It is very difficult for isolated, fractional teachers to acquire seniority in the profession, and teachers may frequently need to change schools in order to secure work and gain a measure of security. The result is that there is no established career path for itinerant teachers and so no incentive to remain within languages education. In fact, for many primary school level languages teachers, moving from languages education into non-specialist teaching areas is a sensible career decision in that it can secure full-time stable employment, with a recognised career path.

Itinerancy contributes to a low profile for the languages programme in the school as the teacher is not present in the course of the normal school week and school year. Where the language programme is limited to a single day per week, the language programme may in fact be invisible to the wider school community. The lack of profile and the lack of presence in turn limit the possibility of advocacy for languages within schools and school communities by

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'I feel like I’m there on sufferance. They don’t really want me and I’m just a nuisance because I want to be able to teach like everyone else does and do it well. You can’t do that if you’re a sort of homeless person with no rights and no place to go.'

Primary school languages teacher
reducing the possibilities for connection and communication. In a discipline area where advocacy is much needed and where the main advocacy within communities has often come from teachers, the lack of a visible presence for itinerant teachers means that the language programme is likely to continue to be weak and unstable.

The issues discussed so far are inherent in the model of staffing which underlies itinerant teaching; however, additional problems face many itinerant teachers because of the local conditions in schools. One common complaint emerging in interviews with teachers was the lack of space for the languages teacher and the languages programme in the school. Some teachers complained that in their schools they did not even have access to a desk or other work space for the time they spent in the school. This meant that teachers had to transport materials for their whole teaching day from classroom to classroom and had no space in which to prepare or review their lessons or to assess learners’ work. Very few itinerant languages teachers have their own classroom in which they can display material and learners’ work and construct a suitable environment for their language teaching. Many itinerant teachers do not have space in the mainstream classroom in which language materials can be displayed.

Significant problems in teacher supply and demand also seem to be linked to itinerancy, at least in contexts where itinerancy is common. Many principals complain that they are unable to find qualified teachers for language programmes, while at the same time many languages education graduates find difficulty in getting work. The reasons for this are that short fractional appointments are not attractive to graduates and the complexity of employment through different schools makes gaining full-time employment as a primary school language teacher difficult. Moreover, specialist language positions are often filled quite late. Many graduates, rather than adopting the complex precariousness of itinerancy find full-time employment outside languages education, or outside education altogether.

The problem of supply and demand in languages education is, at one level, the problem for principals in filling shorter term, fractional posts and the problem for language teachers in gaining full-time secure employment. The complexity and precariousness of language teaching work, and the marginalisation of the itinerant teacher in (multiple) school communities, and the inequalities between specialist and non-specialist teachers in working conditions all contribute to the problem of retaining language teachers.

Primary school level teacher education does not prepare teachers well for itinerant work contexts, just as it does not address other contexts in which teachers teach to large numbers of learners. Teachers who teach over a number of schools not only have to adjust to teaching large numbers of learners, but have to do so in ways that mean they are less connected to individual school communities, are less likely to be able to co-ordinate their teaching with other colleagues, and have a lesser role in decision-making and the general planning of the school.

Languages education is left with an apparently intractable problem. Primary and some secondary schools are not able to supply full-time positions for language teachers and the conditions that result from this make language teaching less attractive as a career. There is a need to establish a more attractive and secure approach to employment in languages education. Ideally, the best solution for teachers, learners, and language programmes would be to

It’s not easy to talk about the languages programme at our school as we have had a different teacher almost every year and each teacher does things differently. It would be good to know that they had some continuity, but I don’t think the teacher knows what they did last year. I don’t know why they don’t come back, but I think they’re only there for one day a week, so perhaps they get a better offer at some other school.’

Primary school parent
establish a full-time languages position in each school. If this is not possible, a new model is needed to provide support and security for such teachers. This could, for example, be achieved through a cluster model in which a group of schools share language teachers who are based in one particular site in full-time continuing positions who teach in a number of schools within a particular area, with agreed facilities for languages in the schools in which they teach.

Such a model would appear to have a number of advantages. It would ensure continuity of language programmes over time and over levels of schooling. If, for example, teachers for two or three languages were based in a high school and taught languages at that school and also at feeder primary schools, ensured pathways could be created for primary school language programmes into high schools, teachers would no longer work in isolation, languages would have a stronger presence in the cluster and an enhanced advocacy. Programs in feeder schools could be better co-ordinated and secondary language teaching would be better able to build on primary programmes. Teachers themselves would have security of employment and the career options that are associated with security and a critical mass of teachers.

A further possibility for primary schools to offer more stable employment to languages teachers would be to recognise more fully that primary school trained languages teachers are not usually only qualified to be specialist teachers, but rather have generalist primary school teaching qualifications. This means that primary school languages teachers could be employed as mainstream classroom teachers with an additional role in teaching language. Employing two or three generalist classroom teachers with qualifications to teach the same language would allow the school to offer a language programme within the general staffing allocation. This would resolve a number of problems facing languages programmes in primary schools. From an educational perspective, it would integrate better the languages programme with the other curriculum areas and facilitate delivery of the language programme in more sustained and more innovative ways. It would also benefit language teachers professionally by providing them with more stability in their employment, reducing the amount of itinerancy, developing a group of colleagues, and providing better career paths. It would also enhance the profile and stability of the language programme in the school by creating a more permanent presence for the programme and reducing the vulnerability of the programme should teachers transfer to other schools.

7.6 Career Pathways

The issue of career pathways was identified by Nicholas et al. (2002) as a problem in teacher supply and demand that needed to be addressed. They note that the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) classification provides one possible solution to the problem, but cast doubt on the ability of the classification to alter the then existing problems, because the salary increment was small and the additional responsibilities amounted to ‘role overload’. Since the publication of this report, there has been further development of this classification: Level 3 Classroom Teacher (South Australia); Experienced Teacher with Responsibility (Victoria), Advanced Skills Teacher 1 and 2 (Queensland and South Australia) and Teacher of Exemplary Practice (Northern Territory). The aim of this classification is to reward teachers who stay in the classroom rather than moving into administration; however, as Ingvaron (2002) notes, the implementation of the Advanced Skills Teacher classification has failed to achieve its objectives. From a languages education perspective, the AST classification appears to have faced additional problems. The classification is based on general criteria as a teacher, rather than the context of the specialist teacher, and this appears to provide a barrier for primary school languages teachers gaining recognition at this level. In addition, itinerant
languages teachers often do not have the stability necessary to meet the eligibility criteria for these levels. With career pathways in classroom teaching problematic, the remaining context for career development for languages teachers is in administration. Again this appears to be problematic. Languages teachers, like other specialist teachers, may find difficulty in developing their careers over time. The lack of career paths results from a number of characteristics of languages teaching in Australia described above. One of the main features of languages teaching is the use of short-term contracts for staffing language programmes. These contracts do not provide adequate employment stability for teachers to gain promotion or create a secure employment pathway.

Another difficulty in establishing a career path is when a languages teacher works alone in a school. In this case, as the language teacher has no colleagues in the same subject area, it is impossible for him/her to become a faculty head in the languages area. As a result languages teachers in secure employment may need to leave language teaching and move into mainstream classroom teaching (in primary schools) or move into another discipline area (in secondary schools) in order to establish a career pathway.

Career pathways are more assured in schools in which there are a number of language teachers. In these schools it is possible for a languages teacher to hold leadership responsibilities in the subject area and in so doing to make a career in languages education with the possibility of promotion.

There is a clear need for specialist career pathways within education systems that encourage and reward teachers who remain in language teaching. However, at the moment the conditions of employment for languages teachers appear to provide a disincentive for many languages teachers to remain in language teaching.

### 7.7 Teacher Retention

Retention of qualified languages teachers is a significant problem for many schools, and reflects a general problem of teacher retention in Australian schools, but with a number of particular characteristics that are particularly problematic for the state of languages education. The loss of qualified languages teachers takes a number of different forms. (1) Teachers may leave the teaching workforce to work in other occupations or in other countries. The latter is a particularly attractive option for some languages teachers as their language skills make them employable in more than one country and the opportunity to live and work in other countries provides rewards and reinforcement for their previous language learning. (2) Specialist language teachers may move into mainstream classroom teaching in primary schools or into other subject areas in secondary schools. These teachers are lost to languages education, although they are retained within the teaching workforce. (3) Teachers leave the government sector for the non-government sector. There is a perception that non-government sector jobs in language teaching have better conditions and greater stability.

The reasons that teachers give for moving out of language teaching vary significantly and depend on their personal context. However, a number of common issues emerge that have an impact on teacher retention. One very significant reason for teachers leaving language teaching is related to the particular problems of itinerancy. Many teachers leave teaching or move into other areas of teaching in order to have more secure and less complex working conditions.

Itinerancy impacts on retention in two ways. Firstly it leads to teachers leaving language teaching entirely and secondly it leads to high levels of mobility for teachers across schools.
In the latter case, short-term contracts and delays in offering contracts to particular teachers means that itinerant teachers assemble full-time work from the offers they receive rather than waiting on schools to make offers. This means that a teacher may work in different schools each year, rather than continuing to teach in the same schools. This provides a problem for continuity in languages programmes within individual schools because of the high level of turnover.

Where itinerancy is not an issue, many teachers say that the working conditions of language teachers are a strong motivation for leaving language teaching, especially in leaving primary school level language teaching. Teachers with full-time employment as languages teachers in primary schools cite a number of factors which, in various combinations, lead to dissatisfaction with their jobs. Specialist teaching is typically characterised by the teaching of a large number of learners, often for very short periods of time. This makes it difficult for the teacher to develop a close relationship with the learners. The lack of a close relationship means that such teachers have additional classroom management problems and are also less able to plan for individual’s learning and to adapt their teaching to learners’ interests and motivations.

In addition to the complexities of having large numbers of learners, language teachers also express dissatisfaction with what they feel is a marginalised position within the school community. This sense of marginalisation may come from a number of different factors including, lack of their own teaching space, lack of recognition in timetabling, resource allocation and decision-making, inadequate communication between the school community and the language teacher, lack of general support for languages education in the school, and the relegation of languages teaching to non-instruction time (also known as release teaching, duties other than teaching). In addition, a language teacher is often the only language teacher in the school and this contributes to a sense of professional isolation.

A core reason for teachers moving out of languages teaching and into other teaching areas is the problem of securing promotion and developing a coherent career pathway as a specialist teacher.

A further factor, which is often associated with those already mentioned, is the quality of the school’s language teaching programme. Many teachers report dissatisfaction with teaching in programmes with inadequate time allocations, which mean that they are unable to achieve significant language learning or engage learners with the language and culture they are teaching.

Many teachers report that the number of learners and the additional problems this causes, the feeling of marginalisation, and dissatisfaction with programme quality are significant factors in teachers’ ‘burn out’.

The impact of teacher retention problems is very strong in languages education. As many languages teachers work in isolation in their schools, the loss of a language teacher means that the language programme itself becomes vulnerable. When a teacher leaves a school, or leaves languages teaching within the school, a language programme can be sustained only if another teacher of the same language is available to replace the lost teacher. This problem is most severe in schools where appointments are fractional as it may be hard to attract teachers willing to take on the position, while schools with strong languages programmes associated with full-time employment appear to have fewer problems in attracting teachers, but may still have problems recruiting teachers in a particular language. The result is that the school may

'I was faced with a choice: either I could teach 350 kids a week with no classroom of my own in 45 minutes a week which didn't let me do what I felt I should do as a teacher, or I could go back into mainstream teaching and have 25 kids and my own space. In the end it just wasn't a choice. I couldn't cope anymore with what they were asking me to do.'

Primary school teacher
elect to discontinue the languages programme entirely when a teacher leaves or may replace a
programme in one language with another language for which a teacher can be found. This
latter solution preserves languages education within the school but disrupts the continuity of
the programme and has implications for resourcing, as resources for one language are not
usually suitable for teaching another.

7.7.1 Mobility Requirements and Retention

In the ACT and Tasmania, industrial relations agreements have mobility requirements for all
teachers after defined periods of service in schools. The details of these requirements are
shown in Table 29. These policies have been introduced with the aim of enhancing education:

There are significant professional benefits to individuals, to schools and the government school
system in encouraging teaching staff mobility (ACT Department of Education and Training
Teaching Staff Certified Agreement 2004–2006).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>1st placement: 4 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd placement: 6 years</td>
<td>ACT Department of Education and Training Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd placement: 8 years</td>
<td>Staff Certified Agreement 2004–2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After 6 years</td>
<td>Teaching Service (Tasmanian Public Sector Salaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and Conditions of Employment Agreement 2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 29: Mobility requirements

At school level, these policies have become a significant problem in retaining teachers. These
requirements mean that where a teacher works alone and establishes a strong and viable
languages programme, this programme may become vulnerable when the teacher is required
to move to another school. In the context of enforced mobility a school may lose a specialist language teacher
and be unable to replace that teacher, or find a replacement teacher of the particular language established
in the school. At the same time, the teacher who has moved may find difficulty in finding a position as a
languages teacher in another school and may need to move out of languages teaching to secure a position.
Mobility is not a problem only in small languages programmes, but can have an impact on larger established
programmes in which enforced turnover of staff undermines continuity of programmes and
makes established programmes more vulnerable.

It would appear that mobility requirements are particularly problematic for specialist
teachers and do not achieve the benefits that mobility policies intend, but rather undermine
programmes and compromise schools’ ability to mount specialist programmes. It would
appear that exemptions need to be introduced into mobility policies so that programmes are
not compromised and learners’ learning opportunities are not disrupted by mobility
requirements.

‘I’ve lost five out of nine
language teachers in the last
year because of mobility and I’ll
lose more next year too. I don’t
know how we can sustain our
programmes like this.’

Secondary languages
faculty head
8 Professional Learning

8.1 Introduction
Professional learning has been and continues to be an integral part of languages education. At both a national level and at State and Territory level, professional learning on the part of teachers is recognised as essential, and ongoing efforts have been in place to provide a range of programmes. In this chapter major professional development initiatives that have been developed to support ongoing teacher learning are discussed and a number of issues that need to be addressed are identified.

8.2 Diversity of Needs and Provision
A fundamental consideration in the professional learning of teachers of languages is the recognition that the needs are immensely diverse. First of all, each teacher is an individual with his or her own personal, professional needs, interests, expectations, and commitments with respect to professional learning. Some are early career (particularly in some languages such as Japanese), while many are highly experienced, having taught languages for more than 20 years. Some are native speakers who need to learn the educational culture of teaching and learning in Australia, while others are non-native speakers and need constant opportunities to develop proficiency in the language they teach, in Australia and in countries where the language they teach is spoken. Some have lived in Australia for many years (for example, teachers of Dutch or Latvian), while others are recent arrivals (for example, speakers of languages such as Dinka). And there is much diversity within these broad categorisations.

With respect to the nature of professional learning opportunities available, these too are immensely diverse in orientation (for example, exposition or application/discovery); in substance (addressing systemic priorities such as the implementation of frameworks, etc., or personal priorities, addressing theory or practice, addressing proficiency or pedagogy, addressing languages generically or as specific languages); in duration (episodic or continuous); in their recognition (credit-bearing or non-credit-bearing); in provider (peers or advisors/consultants or other experts) and in mode (face-to-face or online delivery). The fact that such diversity of provision is available is an indicator of the diversity of the field itself. The diversity of people and diversity of provision are likely to increase in the future with increasing migration that brings to Australia diverse people, their languages, and their desire that their language and culture be recognised in some way in the educational system.

8.3 Understanding Current Provision
The availability of ongoing professional development can be understood in a number of ways. On the one hand, it can be seen as the desire of educational jurisdictions to extend the knowledge and skills of teachers in recognition of their role as major contributors to student learning. On the other hand, such provision can also be seen as a way of providing some degree of support as a proxy for major curriculum or resource development that would require a greater investment. This occurs when, for example, in the absence of curriculum for particular languages or particular groups of students (for example, background learners), the educational system may provide a certain amount of professional development for teachers to compare experiences or pool resources. Although the latter is necessary, it should be available in addition to curriculum development. This issue has become particularly salient with the complexification and intensification of teachers’ work.
8.4 Major Professional Development Initiatives

In the past 20 years there have been at least five major, national, professional development initiatives in the languages area. In the late 1980s, an intensive professional learning programme was developed to extend understanding and uptake of the Australia Language Levels (ALL) Guidelines (Scarino et al., 1988). The programme extended over a period of 5 years (in the context of the ALL Project continuing over 7 years) beginning essentially with initial dissemination and gradually engaging more with the particular priorities of each State and Territory. The programme addressed a range of aspects of curriculum, that is, planning, resourcing, teaching and learning (essentially communicative language teaching), assessing, and evaluating. Because of the concurrent focus on syllabus development for language learning at senior secondary level, as State and Territory syllabus reviews began to adopt the ALL Guidelines, the professional learning needs increased. Then, to support professional learning further, the project team developed an ALL Inservice Facilitators’ Handbook (Scarino, Vale, McKay, & Wichmann, 1991) so that the group of facilitators could be extended beyond the team itself. One State (Victoria) appointed a dedicated project officer to fulfil this role in that State. The external evaluation of the ALL Project found that the professional learning dimensions were a strength of the project. It was the professional development programme that supported widespread uptake of the ALL Guidelines as a basis for languages education in each State and Territory.

In the mid 1990s, with the development of the nationally agreed Statements and Profiles for Australian Schools (Australian Education Council, 1994a, 1994b), funding was provided to professional associations by the Department of Employment, Education and Training for the National Professional Development Programme (NPDP) (see Campbell, Scarino, & Vale, 1996). This programme began a trend on the part of funding bodies to allocate funds to professional associations to support professional learning. Although the value of this is recognised, it must also be acknowledged that as volunteer groups, professional associations of teachers do not always have the appropriate infrastructure and people to undertake the work.

The Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations conducted a programme, with NPDP funding, entitled ‘A supported, school-based professional development programme for teachers of languages other than English’, based on the statement and profile for languages. This programme, involving the participation of all State/Territory MLTAs, was based on principles of collaborative participation by practising teachers in determining the content and process of their professional development. Through a case-study established in each State and Territory, teachers explored an aspect of the use of the statement and profile. The fundamental value of the project was in its recognition that professional learning is a continuing task and one that should involve all sectors: departments of education, professional teacher associations, teacher educators and languages experts in universities, and teachers themselves. In terms of substance, it demonstrated that much more focus needs to be placed on developing assessment literacy. This programme also ushered in the focus on curriculum and assessment frameworks, which has become pervasive.

The next major national professional development initiative for the languages area was the Asian Languages Professional Learning Programme (ALPLP), a project undertaken by the Asia Education Foundation in conjunction with the AFMLTA. Although it focused on Asian languages, many States and Territories supported the participation of teachers of all languages. This programme focused on the concept of intercultural language learning as a major, galvanising idea to support teacher learning and change. It introduced professional development based on (1) a train-the-trainer model and (2) the requirement for participating teachers to undertake school-based work. It also introduced the challenge of how best to provide intensive support to teachers in situ so that they are able to develop their programmes
and their learning, taking into account the requirements of their specific language and context. An ambitious Phase 2 of the programme sought to extend language learning in schools through integration with other areas of the curriculum in a whole-school context. This phase was less successful than the first phase. The external evaluation undertaken in relation to the ALPLP programme highlighted the importance of expertise in the professional learning of teachers.

Building on the ALPLP programme, the Australian Government Quality Teaching Programme, through the Department of Education, Science and Training has recently funded the Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning in Practice (ILTLP) programme (http://www.iltlp.unisa.edu.au/), which is being developed by the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures Education. This programme retains the focus on intercultural language learning and, importantly, it includes all languages at all phases of schooling. The fact of retaining the focus over a period of time means that greater depth of learning can be anticipated. Teacher investigations are an integral part of the programme. The base resource developed to support the programme is enhanced by an extensive, interactive website. Although the programme and its evaluation are still in train, the response to the programme is highly positive. It is hoped that teachers’ skills in undertaking classroom-based investigations can be enhanced. The ideal is that the process of investigation and reflection become the natural stance that teachers adopt in relation to their work.

The value of these national, collaborative professional development programmes is that they have created networks of educators working together around a major galvanising concept (such as curriculum renewal in the ALL Project or intercultural language learning in both ALPLP and ILTLP), and that they have placed classroom-based investigations at the centre of professional learning. The limits reside in the fact that in projects of 1-year duration conducted nationally (such as ALPLP and ILTLP), there is insufficient time to establish sustained networks for sustained change, based on inquiry or investigation, such that the latter extends beyond the one-off experience to become a stance that characterises the way people work. This is precisely the kind of professional learning that complements the recently developed professional standards for teachers of languages developed by the AFMLTA (http://www.afmlta.asn.au/afmlta/aboutus.htm).

The only largescale ongoing language-specific professional learning project now underway is the Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowships programme. The fellowships provide opportunities for language teachers to improve their language and cultural knowledge through an intensive three-week in-country study programme. The fellowships are also available to pre-service teacher education students preparing to teach Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, and Arabic (http://www.endeavour.dest.gov.au/language_teacher_fellowships/).

To date, little professional learning in the languages area has focused on developing the knowledge and awareness of languages education among non-language teachers. The ALPLP had a cross-curricula dimension that engaged non-language teachers in projects with a reference to languages education; however, this often ended with language teachers adapting their programmes to the needs of other teachers rather than a genuine integration of curriculum areas. The Leading Languages education project undertook a process of information dissemination for school leaders.

The focus of this project was to promote greater awareness and deeper understanding among principals and school leaders of:

- the nature of languages education and the significant role it can play in preparing students for life and work in the 21st Century, particularly in developing intercultural skills in students, and how this links to other priorities at State, Territory and national levels;
• the factors contributing to effective and sustainable languages programmes, and their crucial role in the implementation of such programmes; and

• action at the national level to support languages education.

(http://www.beecoswebengine.org/cache116/Overview.html)

The national initiatives described above complement programmes of professional development in each State and Territory provided by regional or Statewide consultants/advisors and the MLTA as the professional body. These programmes tend to be episodic rather than continuous and most frequently address system priorities, which may or may not match the subjective needs of teachers. These episodes are of value, as are the annual conferences and meetings conducted by the MLTAs. They often address the immediate concerns of teachers and provide an update on developments that are important in building teachers’ contextual awareness. For deeper change, however, what is needed is well-resourced, school-based programmes such as the Focus Schools Project, conducted by the Department of Education and Children’s Services (DECS) in South Australia (see Scarino, 2003a). Focus schools were established as a way of developing centres of excellence in particular curriculum areas. As part of the Languages Focus Schools Project, schools were invited to propose a particular investigation, necessary in their particular context. These investigations were supported by substantial teacher release and the provision of systemic and researcher expertise. Throughout the 3-year life of the project, the eight case-study schools came together as a network to discuss issues of common interest.

The major strengths of the Focus Schools programme were its emphasis on the local, on expertise, and on sustained effort over time. These are major requirements for professional learning in general. The focus on investigations is of value in itself, but also because it allows for attending to the personalised needs of the individual in context. The emphasis on the personal should not be seen as exclusive. Clearly, teachers work within institutions, within systems and need to participate in system priorities. The emphasis, however, in the past 10 to 15 years in curriculum work and the professional development that accompanies it, has been on reinforcing prescription and what is needed is understanding (Pinar, 2003) so that teachers are able to make new ideas their own.

8.5 Comments

Professional learning for Australian teachers of language needs to respond to the diversity of the profession in terms of languages, experience, and needs. There has been little systematic language-specific professional development, especially professional development aimed at the maintenance and development of language knowledge for language teachers, with the Endeavour Fellowships being the main activity of the Australian Government and reaching a comparatively small number of teachers each year. Although national and State/Territory agendas are an important part of professional development, there is a need to reconsider the local and individual dimensions of professional learning in relation to these higher levels contexts. In part, this requires that models of professional learning involve some individually adapted dimensions through the inclusion of classroom investigation. It would also be characterised by opportunities for guided, self-directed professional learning responding to the particular learning needs of individual teachers.

There are issues around the models of professional learning available, with some programmes having sustained and supported professional learning through classroom investigation in which teachers work on some aspect of their own practice over a period of time as a response to new learning. However, there is also a significant use of one-off workshops, which introduce teachers to new ideas or new documents, but have no direct classroom follow-up. With such professional learning approaches it is sometimes questioned
whether there is any impact on the practice of teachers in classrooms as teachers may not have
the time, or the depth of knowledge, or both, required to implement new learning in the
classroom (Kennedy, 2005; Retallick, 2007).

The provision of professional learning activities is dependent on the expertise available for
guiding professional learning, and this expertise is not equally available in all places.
Australian Government projects have tended to adopt a train-the-trainer approach in which
materials are prepared by experts who then facilitate dissemination by training a team of
facilitators to implement the professional learning during a short workshop. Such a train-the-
trainer approach assumes that during the training workshop teachers are able to master the
material that they will be delivering. Such a workshop will, however, be successful only if
trainers already have a base level of knowledge and are required only to focus on developing
the knowledge to deliver the content or use a training manual. Where trainers also need to
learn large amounts of new content such workshops are not really sufficient, and train-the-
trainer programmes do not work well if the knowledge to be covered in the train-the-trainer
workshop is too far beyond the current knowledge base of the trainer, or if the trainer does not
have sufficient time to develop the level of knowledge of theory and application necessary
and is confident with his/her understanding of the material (Retallick, 2007; Rolheiser, Ross,
& Hogaboam-Gray, 1999). As professional learning passes from developers to trainers and to
participants, the amount and quality of knowledge involved may diminish as it moves away
from the source expertise (Hayes, 2000; Leach, 1996). Train-the-trainer approaches to
professional learning work best where the trainers have experience directly related to the topic
of training and where the material to be delivered does not represent a large amount of new
learning. Given the nature of some recent professional development programmes, it is
probably the case that a standard train-the-trainer model may not adequately develop the
depth of expertise needed to implement the professional learning.
9 Programme Development

Most government or jurisdiction level work in Australia on programme development has focused on the development of materials. There has been a very strong history of such development, with many materials having been developed through Australian Government and State and Territory initiatives.

9.1 Programme Development in Schools

Programme development is, however, a part of the work of all language teachers and commonly takes the form of adapting curriculum frameworks and/or syllabus documents to a particular language in a particular local context. This form of programme development in Australia is highly diverse and dependent on the needs, interests, and abilities of individual teachers and their students. The resulting programmes range from high-quality innovative programmes to those of low quality.

One feature of programme development in Australia is that much of teachers’ programmes are designed as short-term programmes or episodic activities. The various curriculum documents used in jurisdictions are commonly seen as the long-term programme itself, rather than as frameworks or guidelines for developing individual programmes. This means that the coherence across units of work and across years of study is often based on curriculum documents that are designed to show progressive development of capabilities rather than the overall organisation of teaching for particular groups of students.

9.2 Programme Development at State/Territory and National Levels

The overall approach to programming at the national level has likewise been episodic rather than long term. In particular, the focus has been on the development of learning resources, that is activities for language learning rather than on long-term programming. The use of these activities and their integration into teachers’ programmes has been less well developed and resources for long-term programming are relatively undeveloped.

9.2.1 NALSAS-funded Professional Development Projects

A number of professional development programmes formed part of the suite of programmes funded under the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) Strategy by the Australian Government and State and Territory jurisdictions. These included credit-bearing proficiency courses for teachers of Chinese, Japanese, and Indonesian as well as courses focused on pedagogy. These programmes coincided with the expansion of languages programmes in primary schools and the re-training strategy implemented in many States and Territories to address issues of teacher supply. Despite extensive resource development, the uptake has been limited. A constellation of factors came into play here including (1) the fact that many teachers were now experiencing ‘innovation burnout’, (2) the fact that the materials were designed for online delivery which, while convenient, may not be the preferred way of learning for teachers themselves, and (3) the increasing recognition that short-term re-training was not going to be a sustainable strategy.

9.2.2 The Le@rning Federation Learning Objects

The Le@rning Federation (TLF) was established as a result of agreements by all Education Ministers in Australia and New Zealand to collaborate in developing online curriculum content for all Australian and New Zealand schools in 2001. The TLF languages project developed interactive, digital learning resources and online tools to support teachers and
students in Years P–10. These learning objects are designed for particular years of schooling, but are not tied to any assumed content or level of language knowledge, allowing teachers to integrate them into their programme when considered appropriate. Two types of TLF-produced languages digital content have been developed and are based on separate sets of principles. These are described in two sets entitled Close encounters and Cracking the code. Additional learning objects have been licensed from other sources and made available by TLF.

The Close encounters set of learning objects were first developed for Chinese, Japanese, and Indonesian, with additional learning objects being developed later for French, German, Greek, and Italian. The objects encourage students to interact in activities that portray particular cultural characteristics of the target country. For example, in the ‘Dressing up’ learning object for Chinese, students explore traditional Chinese items of clothing such as a qipao dress, as well as common clothing vocabulary items (socks, shoes, skirt, trousers). Students are provided with simple instructions and feedback to select the correct item of clothing and gradually compose a complete outfit appropriate for each occasion: school, martial arts training, or attending a traditional Chinese wedding. Another series, the ‘Mystery Object’ series helps students to ask for information using culturally appropriate language. Eleven objects have been developed for Chinese, Japanese, and Indonesian, but fewer have been produced for the other languages to date.

The Cracking the code set of learning objects focuses on character learning for Chinese and Japanese. The aim of these objects is to help students to learn and use characters in reading and writing Chinese and Japanese. The premise behind the development of these objects is that characters are a particular challenge for students educated in alphabet-based systems like English. These learning objects, covering a range of conceptual issues underpinning an understanding of the forms and functions of characters and their component parts, aim to enhance students’ understanding of the characters through analysis and interaction, rather than routine writing practice and memorisation. The most significant of these learning objects is the Character Catalogue. The Character Catalogue is an online, interactive Chinese and Japanese character ‘library’ that enables users to identify (or name) character forms (components), and explore sound and meaning relationships between characters and their component parts. The other learning objects in this group are developed in game-play format, with the aim of developing pre-literacy and early reading skills for Chinese and Japanese through simple games. Eleven learning objects have been developed to support this learning objective in Chinese and Japanese.

9.2.3 Queensland Sourcebook Modules

Although many materials have been developed by jurisdictions to assist teachers in developing their programmes, the most elaborated set is probably the sourcebook modules developed by Education Queensland for Years 4 to 10 (see example in Table 30). These modules can serve as an indication of the types of work that have been undertaken to support programming in languages. The sourcebook modules have been developed around a range of fields or broad domains that continue across the levels of schooling from middle primary school through to Year 10. The fields are:

- Personal and Community Life
- Leisure and Recreation
- The Natural World
- The Built World
- The International World
- The Imaginative World.
Table 30: Example of sourcebook models
(Source: http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/yrs1to10/kla/lote/modules.html)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Middle primary (Years 4 and 5)</th>
<th>Upper primary (Years 6 and 7)</th>
<th>Lower secondary (Years 8 and 9)</th>
<th>Lower secondary (Year 10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal and Community Life</td>
<td>Local community</td>
<td>Community celebrations</td>
<td>Buy, buy, buy</td>
<td>Future prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My place</td>
<td>Family life</td>
<td>Getting together</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I'm an individual</td>
<td>Famous people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and Recreation</td>
<td>Weekend fun</td>
<td>Hanging out with friends</td>
<td>Healthy eating</td>
<td>Leisure in the past, present and future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Games we play</td>
<td>School camp</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mini-Olympics</td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>Anyone for sport?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The modules within each area are presented as if they have a developmental aspect. However, the modules themselves are designed to respond to development in language learning rather than to promote such development itself. The modules are designed to be used across a range of language learning levels, with expectations of different performance at these levels:

How students use language to achieve the purpose of the tasks and task demands will be dependent on the stage of language learning. This stage is related to time on the course and prior experience and achievement with the language. As students progress through the stages of language learning, they will be able to interpret and undertake increasingly complex and detailed tasks (http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/yrs1to10/kla/lote/modules.html).

The modules themselves do not actually have language included – that is, they are generic modules into which teachers insert language as relevant. This means that the difference between the various levels of schooling is not a difference in language but rather a difference in task type. The modules are, however, provided with resources, examples of teacher language, and detailed notes provided on six language-specific CD-ROMs.

### 9.3 Comment

Current approaches to programme development by governments and teachers are episodic rather than long term in their focus. The overall coherence of programmes relies on orientations to curriculum framework documents or on the coherence provided by particular textbooks. This means that curriculum framework documents are being required to fulfil a role for which they were not designed — in fact, most curriculum documents are descriptions of levels of achievement rather than of programmes of study — or that textbooks are replacing the individual teacher as the shaper of language programmes. Alternatively, language programmes are not developed over a long period of time but rather are accumulations of episodes with little internal structuring. Language teacher education, including inservice professional learning, does not seem to have emphasised programme development as an activity that language teachers undertake,¹ and so programme development remains weak at the classroom level.

¹ The ILTLP project is an exception.
10 Quality Assurance

10.1 Context of Quality Assurance

This section of the report provides an outline of the context of quality assurance in languages education; it describes the limits of formal, systemic quality assurance processes in relation to languages education; it then describes four quality measures that indicate efforts to address quality in the languages field. Essentially, it concludes that while processes of quality assurance imported from the field of business management are contested, context-sensitive approaches (Lynch, 1996) to quality assurance can provide important means for monitoring and further developing languages education at both whole-of-system and local school/programme levels.

Quality assurance refers to the ongoing process of monitoring and evaluating languages education programmes to ensure that they are in fact ‘quality’ programmes, be they at a systemic or local school level. Quality in this context relates to how well the programme is going. There are many different ways of understanding ‘quality’ and multiple factors that come into play. These are also different levels of quality assurance ranging from the whole-of-system to an individual school, from the whole educational programme to particular areas or aspects of it. Equally, there are many potential judges of quality. As such, ‘quality’ and ‘quality assurance’ are often contested, particularly in education, as opposed to the world of business management where the concept originated. In education, in particular, it is important to work with a more complex notion of ‘quality’ and evaluation that focuses on experiences and meanings as understood by participants in the process and who bring their own knowledge and values. This kind of evaluation or quality assurance is likely to be context-adaptive (Lynch, 1996) and to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. With regard to the question of who decides on quality, there is evidence from quality assurance approaches for schools around the world (Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Scotland) that the process needs to be internal rather than external, and that it must be ongoing within a cycle of continuous improvement. In other words, the process needs to be ‘owned’ by the whole school community and specific to their particular context and culture.

10.2 Limits of Formal, Systemic Quality Assurance Processes in Languages Education

Jurisdictions each have their own systems of quality assurance, in particular the government systems. A feature that is characteristic of most jurisdictions is that there is some degree of ‘reporting back’ to the system by providing various kinds of demographic and student achievement data. The key measure for quality assurance in terms of student learning is student achievement. All jurisdictions have systems in place for gathering some student achievement data, although not necessarily in languages. For the curriculum in general this is linked to the curriculum and assessment framework. All jurisdictions also have systems for recording student assessment information, which allows for the comparison of student achievement data over time for individual schools or groups of schools and, should be desired for comparison among schools. In all States and Territories there is the collection of student achievement data in numeracy and literacy but they are at different stages of implementation with respect to collecting data in the remaining learning areas. Although plans are generally in place, there is at present no State or Territory jurisdiction that collects data systematically on student achievement in the languages area.
10.3 Examples of Quality Assurance in States and Territories

In order to describe the current state of play in formal quality assurance processes for the languages area, it suffices to provide three examples.

In Tasmania, for example, the LOTE proficiency outcomes were made available on the Student Assessment Record Information System in 2006. Individual schools determine whether teachers use this information system at this stage. Thus while Statewide data collection takes place in relation to student participation, a Statewide system is not in place for collecting student achievement data in the languages learning area. A system of reporting is in place for the State-funded Primary Implementation Programme for programmes focused on language acquisition. This, however, entails reporting on the teacher, the students, and amount of time on task, but not on student achievement. Mechanisms designed to support the development of quality programmes are in place, and include, for example, the work of a coordinator for languages (for two days per week) in each of four learning services. These provisions indicate that while there is an orientation towards quality programmes in Tasmania, the system does not require formal quality assurance that could be captured through a measure such as student achievement.

In Victoria, part of the quality assurance process involves all government primary and secondary schools completing the ‘LOTE Survey’, which is sent to schools as part of the annual August School Census. This online survey collects data about the languages taught, the number of students studying each language at each level, the duration of the programme each week, the qualifications of the teachers of languages, and the nature of the programme. This data gathering process is the most comprehensive available across all States and Territories. Government schools are expected to enable students to meet the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), including those available for the languages learning area. Reporting to parents on student achievement for languages is expected from Level 4 and is expected to commence in 2008. ‘Progression measures’ are also available from Levels 1–3 to assist teachers to track the progress of students through the early years of schooling (see http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/teachingresources/lote/assessment.htm for reporting student progress in the languages area). As the VELS programme is gradually being implemented, there are no plans in place for system-wide reporting of student achievement in the languages area. In Victoria, as an informal process of quality assurance, and as in other States and Territories, a group of project officers (advisors/consultants) works with teachers in schools to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

In Western Australia, there are reporting requirements for languages from Year 3 to Year 9. Grades are based on ‘progress maps’ and the achievement target is level 3 in ‘listening and responding’ and in ‘speaking’. Of all States and Territories, Western Australia is the one that has taken forward the process of reporting on student achievement in the languages area. In Term 3 of this year, teachers will be provided with exemplar work samples to support them ‘making consistent judgments’. Little information is available at this stage on exactly how the process of matching teacher samples against the samples provided by the system will work and the overall process of validation.

In the ACT quality assurance is measured using a School Improvement Framework. The framework is a system of tools and processes that allows schools to monitor and evaluate the extent to which they are achieving the standards to which they aspire. There are four domains: Learning and Teaching, Student Environment, Leadership and Management, and Community Involvement. Quality assurance processes follow a 3-year cycle. In year one the school board determines how the School Improvement Framework will be managed and implemented. DET collaborates with the school and provides necessary support. In year two, schools monitor their progress against their agreed goals and priorities. They self-assess and identify new and emerging priorities. In year three the school undergoes an external validation and the
panel report contributes to the data for the next cycle. In languages it is more difficult to monitor what individual schools are actually doing. There is an annual language census, which is completed at the end of term one. The census provides information about languages enrolments in ACT government schools, numbers in classes, time on task, and teachers and their qualifications.

South Australia reported that quality assurance is applied to Curriculum Services, which is required to report on and through a number of strategic policy frameworks, which include the South Australia Strategic Plan and the DECS Statement of Directions 2007. These key documents underpin all the priorities and directions of Curriculum Services. There are a number of checks and balances that all programmes, initiatives, and projects undertake through conceptualisation to implementation. Most programmes undergo scrutiny to ensure that they have quality intellect and commonsense. Officers are required to complete design briefs where they scope the programme, cost it, build in evaluation and review processes, and develop a methodology that produces high-quality outcomes. This is a cyclic process that is shared among officers and managers who each provide constructive comment, feedback, and opinions. This information guides and directs the implementation of programmes. There are also a number of officers who are well trained in a number of quality assurance processes. DECS has a group of experts who can also provide sound advice. In regard to Languages Education all programmes are regularly evaluated and checked to ensure that they are meeting specified outcomes. The overarching framework for this work is the Languages Statement and Engagement Strategy. Each officer and his/her projects are required to meet the outcomes clearly specified in these documents. The National Language plan has informed the development and direction of the local plan and initiatives. The language professional services are required to meet regularly to report on progress over the course of the year. Individual projects are monitored when required and at the discretion of the Superintendent and the officers involved.

In summary, then, all jurisdictions have systems in place for collecting student achievement data. Collecting student achievement data has the potential to be a strong quality assurance measure but it is not used at present in any jurisdictions, though plans are in place to use this measure in future. The systems are now used for gathering achievement data on literacy and numeracy. Given current discussions at a national level, if further learning areas are to be added to these, it would be likely that the next areas of focus would be science, civics and citizenship, and possibly history. This situation is a further reflection of the relative standing of the languages learning area vis à vis other areas.

Although a process and system for collecting student achievement data is available at the level of the educational system as a whole, it is not used in the languages learning area for it is not seen as a ‘priority’. Noting this absence, however, does not mean necessarily that the implementation of such a system would necessarily be of benefit to the field itself. In the first instance, were it to be included it would be a mark of the status of the learning area. Actual benefit would result only if it were implemented with (1) sensitivity to the actual measures used for eliciting student performance, (2) processes in place to ensure that valid judgments were made, and (3) processes were in place to ensure validity of the system as a whole. These processes, in turn, would depend on the quality of the conceptualisation of the assessment frameworks and various tools used by systems such as ‘progress maps’, etc.

A similar absence of a systematic quality assurance process pertains at the school level. A common process seems to be that schools prepare an annual report that captures the ‘performance’ of the school as a whole in relation to its particular goals and systemic ‘priorities’. This process tends to be a generic one that pertains predominantly to the education process/system/school as a whole rather than particular areas. It deals with ‘school performance’ in a generalised sense. The only particular areas that are reported upon for the
purposes of quality assurance are areas such as literacy, numeracy, science, ICT, civics and citizenship that are the so-called curriculum ‘priority’ areas. These data are collected because States and Territories are required to report information in these areas under Australian Government legislation. Specialist areas such as languages are not seen as priorities in this context. For the field of languages education, however, there is a certain tension in that it would wish to be included and thereby recognised as a priority, and yet at the same time it does not necessarily wish to be part of management processes that are seen as bureaucratic and not sensitive to the particular context of the languages in Australian education. The jurisdictions’ processes, by becoming increasingly generic in many areas, are less geared towards addressing the specificity of specialist areas such as languages. The move towards the generic ‘as opposed to’ rather than ‘in addition to’ the specialist in education is persuasive. It comes into play not only in quality assurance, but also in areas such as curriculum development, staff recruitment, and promotion among others. There is, for example, no cycle of nominated evaluations or quality assurance process whereby jurisdictions could designate particular focuses for consideration and thereby examine particular specialist areas.

With regard to the process of quality assurance itself, there is some evidence of jurisdictions seeking to introduce at least some contextual sensitivity into the process. A model from South Australia serves as an example.

Principals in South Australia are required to prepare annual school reports. A model that is informing the process is the model of ‘multiple measures’ developed by Bernhardt (1998). It proposes that in addition to student learning, measures should include demographics, perceptions, and school processes. Student learning describes the results of learning derived from assessments (standardised as well as local). Demographics describes data that relates to enrolment, attendance, retention, grade levels, home backgrounds, languages, gender, etc. Perceptions refers to what students, parents, teachers, and others think about the learning programme. School processes refer to the processes used to get the results. A diagrammatic representation of the way these dimensions interact is included at Appendix 4.

A trend in quality assurance for schools, then, is towards internal, local monitoring and evaluation, with a requirement to report back to the system centrally in various ways. A number of questions arise with regard to the process:

- What is the focus(es) for evaluation/improvement?
- What aspects of the focus(es) will actually be evaluated?
- On what bases will the quality/success focus(es) be judged?
- What are the improvement goals?
- What is the baseline data against which the current state/improvement is considered?
- How is the data collected?
- Who is involved?
- How is the data analysed?
- Who is involved?
- How are recommendations for improvement generated?
- Who is involved?
- How are the findings reported?
- Who is involved?
- Others?
In all the interviews conducted for the present project in the languages field and in the documents reviewed, no specific mention was made of quality assurance. This reluctance can be understood in a number of ways. One way relates simply to the fact that quality assurance is a contested area and languages educators are reluctant to enter into the debates. For some educators, quality assurance is seen as a bureaucratic requirement; they are not clear about the value that such a requirement ultimately adds and thus do not engage in the process.

10.4 Measures to Address Quality Assurance

Notwithstanding the lack of formal attention to quality assurance in the languages area at the formal level of the educational system and whole of school, there are a number of developments that point to the desire of the field of languages education itself to address matters of quality. These developments include: (1) the development of professional standards for accomplished teaching of languages and cultures (2) the preparation of a report that investigates assessing and reporting student outcomes (3) the development of a quality framework for community languages schools and (4) the national data collection and reporting of languages.

The Professional Standards for Accomplished Teaching of Languages and Cultures, developed by the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA, 2005; Liddicoat, 2006; Liddicoat et al., 2005) sets out standards for accomplished teachers as well as a set of programme standards, that is, the qualities of effective languages and cultures programmes. This resource informs the field’s understanding of what it means to be an effective teacher working in an effective programme and provides a framework for understanding teachers’ professionalism. It describes languages and cultures teaching through a set of dimensions that include: educational theory and practice, language and culture, language pedagogy, ethics and responsibility, professional relationships, awareness of the wider context, advocacy, and personal characteristics. The programme standards describe the way in which programmes are to be valued actively in the whole school community, that they need to be designed to promote progression in language learning, that there is an appropriate allocation of time, groups and space, staff, and material resources, and that they facilitate transition. It is not clear at present how these standards are going to be used in practice, but the recent funding of the Professional Standards Project by the former DEST (2007–2008), which is to be developed by the AFMLTA, will yield insights in this important area. What is clear is that an explicit articulation of professional standards by the professional body is available and that this can provide a useful reference point for quality in the field.

The Report on Assessing and Reporting Student Outcomes in Asian Languages (Kathryn Hill et al., 2004) proposed a methodology for assessing and reporting student learning outcomes in Asian languages. It described Key Performance Measures (KPMs) that would pertain, if and when a decision were made to gather data nationally on student performance. Although these measures describe dimensions of student participation and achievement for Asian languages (the focus only on Asian languages was a requirement of funding at that time), the methodology applies equally to other languages. The KPMs were described for student performance at Years 6/7 and Year 10 for Indonesian and Japanese. The strength of the proposed methodology is that they were designed to elicit and report on actual student learning. In addition, recognising the different conditions for language learning in different contexts, the methodology included a process for taking into account differences in opportunities to learn, for example, the amount of input that students receive, continuity of learning, programme type, and motivation. This kind of sensitivity is necessary in reporting on learning in an area that has only recently been introduced in the primary curriculum. At the time of developing the methodology, the KPMs for Indonesian and Japanese were endorsed in principle by all jurisdictions.
The need to be able to describe in a nationally agreed, coherent matter what is actually achievable in school language learning has not diminished. There is no agreed baseline for describing actual student achievement in the languages area in a context where (a) a baseline is urgently needed so that judgments of quality can be articulated and (b) in the absence of such a baseline, students, parents, educators, and interested others can resort only to native-speaker norms, a measure that simply cannot be applied to school language learning.

The proposed Statements of Learning, for example the Statements of Learning for English (Curriculum Corporation, 2005), if developed for the languages area, would go a long way towards providing a much needed, agreed resource for establishing such a baseline. A sensitive and collaborative assessment process linked to such a Statement, that included elements of assessment for learning, assessment of language, and assessment as language, would provide evidence from actual student learning performance that would address the critical question: if students do not achieve native-speaker capability, what can they actually do on the basis of learning in school language learning programmes? This is an important question of quality.

The MCEETYA working party for languages has instituted a process for the systematic gathering of data that pertain to languages education at a national level. The collection of data was agreed by MCEETYA as a way of measuring the effectiveness of the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008 rather than as a quality assurance measure, and while the Australian Government is providing funding to assist the collection of data, it is not part of the accountability process for Australian Government funding. Although this process captures the demographic data and provides a mechanism for tracking change over time in this area, it is only one dimension of languages education.

10.5 Quality Assurance in Ethnic Schools

Given the complexities around the provision of community languages in the ethnic schools sector, and issues of teacher qualifications and programme design, there have been questions about the perceived quality of education in the ethnic schools sector. In response to such perceptions, Community Languages Australia is working on the development of a national quality assurance framework, with one of its objectives being to enhance the image and credibility of ethnic schools. The framework consists of eight dimensions as illustrated in Figure 14 (see next page).

Each of the dimensions of the framework is to have further elaboration into elements and pointers against which programme quality can be assessed. The framework indicates the areas in which quality is to be investigated and has the potential to provide information about quality in all these areas. However, the framework is primarily a process for self-evaluation and the articulation between such evaluations and the strategies required to address issues of quality is at this stage undeveloped as the framework has not yet been used as a quality assurance process.

Community Languages Australia (2007) notes in its report on the quality assurance project that the diffuseness of the sector means that co-ordinated development and monitoring of the sector is difficult. It is particularly problematic given the limited resources available to ethnic schools for schools to undertake self-evaluation and to develop the capacity for change, especially in the short term. The report argues that significant change in the sector can be achieved only through a bottom up process involving changes in school culture and practices. At the same time, it needs to be acknowledged that programme evaluation is a specialist process that involves more than the mechanical application of a set of criteria, given that access to expertise is a problem for many ethnic schools, it is likely to have an impact on the
carrying out of any quality assurance process that has to be conducted through the personnel and resources available to schools.

![Diagram of Community Languages Australia's quality assessment framework](image)

**Figure 14: Community Languages Australia’s quality assessment framework**
(Source: Wyatt & Carbines, 2006)

### 10.6 Summary

In summary, work in the area of quality assurance at a formal level within the system and individual schools has been limited in the languages area. State education systems have gathered limited amounts of data on the demographics of programmes and teachers and the data gathered have not been systematically analysed and used to inform programme development in areas such as workforce planning, just to name one example. Little data have been gathered on student achievement (efforts to date have been mainly in Victoria and South Australia but not in a continuous manner such as to be able to establish trends). School review reports, required in some jurisdictions, tend to focus on the school as a whole and languages rarely feature. The four developments in train described above have the potential to strengthen the languages field and should be continued as they provide processes for monitoring change/growth in the field and strengthening quality. At an informal level, it is valuable for teachers of languages in individual programmes to engage in ongoing evaluation and quality assurance of their own programmes, monitoring their school data over time to discern trends in enrolments, retention, etc. They should engage in comparative work with other teachers of languages, in their schools and beyond, to reference their students’ achievements in relation to those in other schools, and continue to learn and improve through benchmarking. Above all, some more robust measures for quality assurance are recommended as a mark of the professionalism of the field, but these should always be focused on student and teaching learning, and data collected must always be sensitive to the distinctiveness of local contexts.
11 Advocacy and Promotion

11.1 The Need for Advocacy

In the current Australian languages environment, advocacy and promotion of languages are clearly recognised by all players as having an important role. It was accepted as one of the six strands (albeit the last-named) in the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008 (MCEETYA, 2005a), it is a frequent topic of discussion at languages education conferences (cf. e.g. Kleinsasser, Elliott, & Liu, 2003), and it is a constant in any discussion involving language teachers. Promotion of languages learning is not just an issue in Australia, of course — it is considered essential in other jurisdictions as well, with promotion carried out by governments and other organisations in, for example, Europe (e.g. CoE, 2007), the United Kingdom (e.g. CILT, 2007b), and the United States (e.g. ACTFL, n.d.-a).

Languages advocacy is essential in Australia in an environment where, while the community at large believes that being able to speak more than one language is good, there is a general belief that languages are not relevant in Australia, no successful or popular Australian is successful through having learnt a language, and that languages are thus not directly necessary for the future of individuals. In particular, it is important to promote the relevance of languages education in schools, as the general community, students, parents, school leaders, and teachers are by and large of the opinion that most other subjects are more important than languages, and that there is no real point in learning a language at school. (For details and further discussion of these attitudes, see Curnow, Liddicoat, & Scarino, 2007.)

These community attitudes within Australia feed into and are supported by larger systemic issues, which require strong advocacy to counteract. For example, the strong belief in the Australian community that languages are not directly relevant to the future of students supports the possibility for schools to ‘timetable languages for failure’ as discussed on page 89; and this timetabling for failure then reflects back and supports the community attitude, since if languages were truly important educationally, surely schools would ensure that students learnt them. Similarly, promotion of and advocacy for languages are needed to break the cycle where the school community does not consider that languages are important, thus leading school leaders to not support languages education as strongly as they otherwise might; which in turns leads back to the community undervaluing the importance of languages education.

In those years in which, depending on the system, languages education is non-compulsory, there is a clear and obvious need for languages promotion, as can be seen immediately from the low enrolments in languages at, for example, Year 12 level. However, there is a need for advocacy for language at the level of compulsory language study as well, as many language teachers are aware that their students are not interested in the subject, and are simply doing it because it is compulsory. Like any other subject, languages are unlikely to be learnt by those who believe that the teaching of the subject is a waste of time.

11.2 Current Australian Promotional Materials and Campaigns

11.2.1 Campaigns

All current Australian promotional/advocacy campaigns consist almost entirely of the collation of existing promotional materials and/or the development of new promotional materials. A promotional campaign needs to be thought about as a long-term project, with messages which aren’t just for now, but to change behaviours which have an impact on future students.

MLTA representative
materials, together with the publication and dissemination of these materials. In general, these ‘campaigns’ are tied very strongly to language teachers — teachers are sent the material, which they then distribute within their school community. No current campaign is designed to reach the broader Australian community beyond the school community; the MLTAV sticker campaign (see page 141) comes closest, but is explicitly tied to parents, with its message ‘Is your child learning another language?’

11.3 Materials

There is a wide range of existing promotional material available in various formats, more and more of it being accessible on the web. The existence of promotional material is not new, of course. In 1995, a bibliography collected 100 references on Australian material promoting languages other than English in school (Education Department WA, 1995b).

Nearly all of this material is of the ‘informational advocacy’ type — for example, lists of points explaining why languages are beneficial. Relatively little of it is immediately usable in any public forum; it must be embedded in specific contexts by someone. Quite often, the material is very general in nature, listing the benefits of speaking a language other than English; it does not show any specific benefits of language learning at school, rather than at any other time of life. This type of material is found particularly on websites, and sometimes consists of little more than a ‘front-end’ for links to other websites; there are also a number of government and non-governmental reports containing material of this type.

Other material is designed to be more specifically distributed directly, rather than being embedded in specific contexts by others. This material most commonly consists of pamphlets and brochures of various types; there are also posters, either associated with or independent from the pamphlets. Occasionally stickers promoting languages education have been produced.

Examples of these various types of promotional materials will be discussed below, together with the various organisations who have developed the materials.

11.4 Developers of Australian Promotional and Advocacy Materials

There are a variety of materials from various Australian organisations that have been collated or developed for the promotion of languages education.

11.4.1 Australian Government

There has been relatively little direct promotion of and advocacy for languages education at a national level in Australia in recent years. The most recent generally available advocacy material appears to be that which was developed during the life of the NALSAS Strategy; this material is still available, and some of it (e.g. NALSAS, 2002) is distributed by others as part of their own package of promotional materials.

The Australian Government has released School Languages Programme (SLP) funding during the current round for the project ‘Development of Nationally Co-ordinated Promotion of the Benefits of Languages Learning in Schools’. This project is underway at present and thus its outcomes are not yet clear; however, it appears likely that this project will produce a number of printed and web-based materials. Several of the other SLP projects that are underway also have an advocacy focus; in particular, the National Seminar and the Leading Languages projects. Thus there should be a strong increase in the involvement of the

We need professionally produced promotional materials.

Language teacher
Australian Government in languages advocacy and promotion, although at this stage the results of this are unknown.

11.4.2 Education Sectors

The various State and Territory government and non-government school sectors have over the years produced a variety of promotional and advocacy materials. These materials are usually relatively similar, allowing for the differences between the sizes and composition of the different sectors in the different regions. Although a range of particular materials will be discussed here to give an indication of the types of materials that have been produced, it is stressed that mentioning the materials here is not intended to suggest that these materials are any better or worse than materials that have been developed by other sectors — these particular materials are representative of the spread of available materials, and are generally the most recently developed available materials.

As mentioned in the previous section, much of the material is not designed to be used directly as is, but is intended to assist language teachers in their own advocacy work. For example, the Victorian Department of Education, Employment and Training developed a report on ‘Linking languages other than English to the early years literacy programme’ (DEETV, 2000), containing research and case-studies showing how literacy in languages other than English can be linked to the development of early literacy in English.

The New South Wales Department of Education and Training has developed (as part of a wider campaign) a pamphlet for teachers (NSWDET, n.d.) which goes through some of the benefits of languages in a FAQ manner. It looks at how languages contribute to children’s development of cognitive skills, children’s development of understanding of others, the maintenance of home and Indigenous languages and cultures, and how languages will be useful for the future employment prospects of children. This material can then be used by teachers to back up other promotional material, or to develop their own material.

Similarly, the Western Australia Department of Education & Training has a list of the ‘Benefits of LOTE learning’ on its Languages other than English website (DETWA, 2005), placed in the ‘For teachers’ section; the Tasmanian Department of Education has a list of links relating to languages advocacy and promotion (DET, 2006).

The South Australian Department of Education and Children’s Services has just produced its Languages Statement 2007–2011 (DECS, 2007b) and Languages Engagement Strategy 2007–2008 (DECS, 2007b). The latter is accompanied by, among other things, a CD of documents that are distributed explicitly to aid teachers and school leaders in the promotion of languages (also available on the web). It contains a compilation of PDF or Word versions of promotional materials produced by others — for example, the NALSAS pamphlet on ‘Linking literacy and language’ (NALSAS, 2002), two pamphlets from the Research Unit for Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Communication (RUMACCC, 2004a; 2004b), a news report on second language learning benefiting the brain, a list of mainly English celebrity language-speakers from the English National Centre for Languages (CILT, 2007b), an 8-page document with quotes from various places giving a rationale for learning languages, an activity sheet on languages and cultural awareness from the ‘Languages work’ site (CILT, 2007a), and a UK-focused PowerPoint presentation ‘Why study languages … when everyone speaks English?’ (LLAS, n.d.).

Other promotional and advocacy materials developed by the school education sectors are designed to be used in a more direct manner. For example, the Victorian Department of Education & Training has produced a series of language-specific promotional pamphlets, such as ‘Why learn Chinese?’ (DETV, 2006); they distribute the RUMACCC pamphlets mentioned above; and they have recently produced a pamphlet for parents (DETV, 2007), replacing their earlier languages pamphlet for parents of children entering high school (DEETV, 2002). In
2005, Independent Schools Queensland produced a brochure promoting the benefits of language learning (AISQ, 2005) and a poster that were distributed to schools. Teachers could thus put the poster on a corridor wall and distribute brochures to parents to back up the messages about the cognitive, social, communicative, and literacy benefits of learning a language.

Overall, the sectors have produced a great deal of material; there seems to be a constant re-supply, with different sectors and different States and Territories having promotional pushes at different times. Almost all the promotion/advocacy work is reliant on language teachers, either to develop their own materials based on information provided, or else to distribute ready-to-use materials among their school communities.

11.4.3 Modern Language Teachers Associations

Several of the Modern Language Teachers Associations of Australia have current material designed to promote or support the promotion of the teaching of modern languages in Australia. These are primarily available via the websites of the respective MLTAs (sometimes simultaneously distributed on CDs), and usually consist of compilations of materials from elsewhere or links to material on other sites.

Occasionally MLTAs have developed their own advocacy and promotional materials. The MLTA of South Australia, for example, commissioned an essay on ‘A rationale for language learning in the 21st century’ (Scarino, Dellit, & Vale, 2006). As with the majority of other accessible promotional material, this resource cannot be used directly, and the information would need to be embedded in specific contexts.

As well as a strong compilation of material from elsewhere on its ‘Promoting languages in Victorian schools’ page (MLTAV, 2007), the MLTA of Victoria has a series of PowerPoint slides for the promotion of languages, about the cognitive, employment and community benefits of languages (MLTAV, 2006). Unlike other resources, this presentation could probably be used ‘as is’, provided that the presenter has some background in understanding the material to interpret the presentation for a general audience. The CD version of the material explicitly states that it is ‘intended primarily for use by teachers … in the context of presenting persuasive arguments … to school curriculum committees, principals and parents’.

The MLTAV also developed stickers with one of two messages (‘Languages = Literacy’ and ‘Languages = Opportunities’) followed by the question ‘Is your child learning another language?’, and the MLTAV web address. Although these are the closest to material produced for the general public, there is a very strong link with schools, with the message aimed directly and explicitly at parents of school-age children, and the stickers being distributed primarily via language teachers.

11.4.4 Language Associations

Many language associations of various types and at various levels have material on their websites that promote the learning of that specific language. For example, the Australian branch of the Goethe-Institut has a dedicated set of pages ‘Bridging the World’, which ‘presents people from all over the world who are currently learning German … [who] describe their reasons for learning German as another language, and how this decision has influenced and enriched their lives’ (Goethe-Institut Australien, 2007). The website also gives ten reasons for learning German. The Alliance Française of Sydney has a webpage ‘French, the most practical foreign language’ (Alliance Française Sydney, 2006). This material is usually pitched in such a way that it could be incorporated in advocacy work done by teachers of the specific language, and teachers are usually informed about the presence of the material by the organisations themselves.
11.4.5 Others

The Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO), in collaboration with the Australian Parents Council (APC), have just begun a strong languages promotion campaign. Aside from the nationwide ACSSO/APC survey on languages, the campaign includes a website with information and resources about languages (ACSSO, 2007), although this is not yet fully operational; a ‘Directory of resources in languages education’ (Kiernan, 2007), which ACSSO/APC are in the process of developing; and they have just released an information leaflet for parents and families about the benefits of the maintenance of a home language (ACSSO/APC, 2007), which is being distributed to interested school communities. Additionally, the ACSSO and APC are calling for 2008 to be declared as Australia’s National Year of Languages.

The Research Unit for Multilingualism & Cross-Cultural Communication (RUMACCC) has developed three pamphlets, two of which are strongly related to languages promotion issues, although slightly ‘skewed’, in that they were developed in the context of a project around community languages, and thus some of the issues are not especially relevant to all contexts. One of the relevant pamphlets explains why bilingual children can benefit from learning a third language (RUMACCC, 2004a). The other goes through ‘Some common fallacies about multilingualism and second language acquisition’ (RUMACCC, 2004b), and counters arguments, for example, that humans have a limited capacity in terms of the ‘amount’ of language they can learn; that the curriculum is too crowded for languages to have a place; that language learning is too hard if students are already bilingual; that other languages detract from students’ ability to acquire literacy; and that ‘real Australians’ can’t compete with native speakers in the language classroom.

There are also some materials developed at the level of individual school communities, particularly by schools with a strong language focus. Thus, for example, the South Australian School of Languages developed a promotional video, and an online careers resource website (School of Languages, n.d.).

11.5 Overseas Comparisons

Although there is a great deal of promotional and advocacy work around languages education carried out worldwide, the most interesting and directly comparable to the Australian situation is the promotional work carried out in Europe, the United Kingdom (especially England), and the United States of America. The last two are the most similar, as English-speaking countries without a single strong Indigenous language. One of the strongest differences between the Australian and New Zealand languages promotional situations, for example, is the existence in New Zealand of a very strong focus on Māori in any languages education campaign.

Europe, England, and the USA have all had strong advocacy/promotion campaigns in the last decade.

11.5.1 Europe

Many of the features of advocacy work in Europe are not directly comparable to the situation in Australia. As noted in an earlier chapter of this report, in most European countries the learning of one or more foreign languages is usually compulsory until the end of secondary schooling. Thus European advocacy and promotion tend to have a broad community orientation, with a stronger focus on adult learning of languages rather than school-based languages learning.

The promotion of languages through employment opportunities should focus on jobs which aren’t traditionally considered as language-related.

MLTA representative
The clearest recent example of languages promotion in Europe was the European Year of Languages in 2001, and the annual European Day of Languages since then. The Year of Languages was a joint event, with the major partners being the European Commission and the Council of Europe. The European Commission has languages as one of its main policy areas, and is very strong on promoting language learning, and particularly ‘awareness-raising’ around languages (European Commission, 2007b). The Year of Languages had three main messages: Europe is multilingual and always will be; learning languages brings people opportunities; and everyone can do it (European Commission, 2007a). It involved the coordination of an information and communication campaign, including press, radio, and TV campaigns and the distribution of many promotional items (postcards, pens, T-shirts, mouse-mats, stickers, etc.); and the Year of Languages directly funded 188 local projects around Europe, most involving several different types of activities, such as festivals, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, open days, mini language courses, and competitions. Many other projects also took place during the year, not funded by the Year of Languages itself. Because of the European languages situation with compulsory languages education in schools in most countries, in the Year of Languages there was a strong focus on the broader community and raising the profile of languages and languages use, and the need for people to learn foreign languages other than English.

As a follow-up to the Year of Languages, the annual European Day of Languages was established, and has been held every year since 2001. Its aim is to make the public aware of the importance of languages, to promote the linguistic diversity of Europe, and to encourage language learning (CoE, 2007). There are events across Europe each year, as well as posters and stickers developed for each Day of Languages.

11.5.2 United Kingdom

The United Kingdom is most directly comparable to Australia, particularly England, because other parts of the UK have a single Indigenous language, and consequently a great deal of promotion and advocacy are focused on these languages (Welsh, Scots, Gaelic, and Irish). As part of Europe, the UK does, of course, participate in events such as the Year of Languages 2001 and the annual European Days of Language. However, in many ways relating to languages, the UK (and Ireland) are separate from the rest of Europe. In the UK in recent years, there has been a very strong push to promote languages and language learning, with a fear in the UK that its citizens are being left behind, as the UK consistently comes near the bottom in surveys of foreign language, such as the Eurobarometers; for example, in the special language Eurobarometer survey carried out in 2005, only 35% of UK citizens were able to hold a conversation in more than one language, compared with a European average of 56%; only Ireland scored worse (European Commission, 2006). One of the main strategies that has been proposed and followed in England with respect to promotion of languages is the strong linking of languages and employment prospects, and the necessity for businesses (who are indicating a lack of skilled staff) to be involved in the promotion of languages.

The Nuffield report (The Nuffield Languages Inquiry, 2002) began the most recent set of UK language-related reports, finding that English was not enough for the UK, that people with language skills were required in the UK, and that school students do not learn languages. It suggested a set of actions, including that of generally raising the profile of languages in the UK. Subsequently, the UK Languages National Steering Group was established in 2001 and, as a result, the Department for Education and Skills produced the strategy document ‘Languages for all: Languages for life’, giving the Government’s plans for languages education (DfES, 2002). This strategy had, among other features, a very strong focus on

Kids need to see that there’s something in it for them.

MLTA representative
linking languages learning and employment. However, one of the changes was that at Key Stage 4 in the English educational system, languages became an entitlement rather than a requirement — essentially, students could stop studying languages at age 14.

As a result of this strategy, student numbers in language classes in the last 2 years of schooling fell dramatically (from 80% of students to 50% in state schools), and in 2006 a new report was commissioned. Both the interim (Dearing & King, 2006) and final (Dearing & King, 2007) versions of the ‘Dearing report’ propose a variety of strategies to overcome this problem and motivate students to learn languages. Most recommendations relating to promotion essentially strongly propose links with employers, particularly multinational companies, and also to explain to students at earlier levels the value of language learning.

One very interesting feature of the final version of the Dearing report is the comment that:

Some substantial expenditure is a matter that goes beyond our competence to recommend, but we tentatively suggest a budget of £2m a year to support a sustained effort through events, articles, languages days, publications, and for material for use in schools, to raise public awareness of the importance of languages (Dearing & King, 2007).

That is, they suggest an annual spending in the UK of two million pounds for languages advocacy and promotion.

The linking in the UK of language promotion and employment prospects is not only done at the level of government reports and policy. The English National Centre for Languages (CILT) has produced the ‘Languages work’ website, a site which contains ‘inspiration, advice, activities and links that help to show the true value of learning languages’ (CILT, 2007a).

11.5.3 United States of America

The United States is in some ways very similar to Australia in terms of languages and languages education. There are a substantial number of Indigenous languages, many with relatively few modern speakers; a substantial number of immigrant languages; and a primarily monolingual English-speaking population. In recent years there have been a number of government reports commenting on the importance of foreign language education, and expressing concern that the US is falling behind.

The major recent response to this concern was the US Year of Languages 2005, which was run by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Its goal was to ‘advance the concept that every American should develop proficiency not only in English, but in other languages as well’ (ACTFL, n.d.-b). More specifically, it intended to ‘celebrate’ the importance of languages through community and school events; ‘educate’ students, parents and the wider community about the benefits of learning a language; and ‘communicate’, together with federal, state, and local government officials, school administrators and classroom teachers, to increase public awareness of languages and cultures. The US Senate and House of Representatives both passed resolutions early in the year essentially establishing 2005 as the Year of Languages in the US.

The Year of Languages involved a great deal of public activity and advocacy — for example, statements of support from governments at various levels, universities and other institutions. Public service announcements in support of languages were made available for downloading from the website for supporters to use in the media — a 30-second TV announcement, a 30-second radio announcement, and three newspaper ads (with taglines ‘Foreign language education spells success’, ‘Make sure foreign language remains part of your child’s education’, ‘Learning a foreign language should be elementary’) — together with information on how to get public service announcements in the media, and other ideas for
media stunts. The website links to a page that goes through the benefits of language learning, with the main categories of how languages support academic achievement, provide cognitive benefits to students, and affect attitudes about beliefs about languages and cultures; references to more detailed academic work are available to support each statement.

11.6 Comments

It is clear that in terms of promotion and advocacy at a national level (whether governmental or other), Australia is behind comparable countries. At a State level, whether considered in terms of the various educational sectors or advocacy groups such as the various Modern Language Teachers Associations, there is a great deal of duplication in production of materials, with each State or Territory organisation producing its own materials (or individually reproducing the material of others).

Advocacy for and promotion of languages education in Australia consists almost entirely of the production and distribution of promotional materials, either web-based or printed; there is now a large corpus of such material. Of the five sorts of initiatives for languages promotion suggested in the National Statement and Plan (MCEETYA, 2005b), only one — ‘produce print and electronic publications and promotional materials’ — has begun, and in some senses this is the least important of the five, given that a diverse range of promotional materials are already available, and it is the initiative focused once again on production of materials (with no mention even of distribution). No more extensive, coherent campaign involving, for example, the media appears to have been conducted anywhere in Australia in recent times.

Although materials are produced, it generally seems to be the case that once materials have been distributed (usually to language teachers) that is the end of the campaign; there is no sustained implementation, and no follow-up.

One issue involved here is the relatively limited distribution methods. If language teachers are used as the main distributors of materials, then only those who language teachers are in contact with (generally, the students) are contacted directly; in some cases, students will then pass physical materials such as brochures on to their parents. Web-based materials, if simply placed on static websites (i.e. not done as web-advertising, etc.), are even more restricted in their range of distribution. In both cases, the only people who actually access the materials in any meaningful way are those who already at least believe that it might be worth finding out about languages.

There are additional issues with using language teachers as the primary distributors of materials and more particularly messages in other forms. Language teachers themselves appear to believe that languages advocacy is part of their job. When asked what they would like in terms of a promotional campaign, many suggested more up-to-date materials that they could use in developing advocacy campaigns. However, teachers are particularly bad promoters for a languages learning campaign. As seen elsewhere in this report, language teachers are at the bottom of the school hierarchy, and are often almost invisible, especially those who are itinerant teachers who may not even have a desk at the school. Even if they are heard, the school community will thus often discount what they say. Equally, there are perceptions of self-interest if language teachers promote languages — of course they will promote languages, because they’ll say anything to get more students! Any campaign for languages education thus needs strong promotion from others, not from language teachers themselves.

Another issue with much of the current range of languages promotion and advocacy materials is that it usually focuses on the benefits of being able to speak another language,
rather than the benefits of learning a language at school. In fact, research clearly indicates that in Australia and elsewhere students and particularly parents are well aware of the advantages of being able to speak another language, and generally believe that learning a language improves a child’s employment prospects (see Curnow et al., 2007 and the references cited there). However a strong distinction is made between a language being ‘useful’ and a language being ‘necessary’, and only ‘necessary’ subjects are studied at school; in a large-scale Scottish survey it was shown that students did consider that a language would have a long-term benefit in their lives (whether for travel, leisure, or their career), but that this was something they would think about studying in the future, after they had received their degree, or already got their job (Low, 1999), and the same appears to be true in Australia.
12 Support for Language Teachers

12.1 Support from Jurisdictions

The amount of support available to language teachers varies across the country and within the jurisdiction in which teachers are working. In government systems it is usual to have at least one person designated as a policy or support officer for the languages area. The nature of the support varies, depending on the role of the person, the number of staff employed to support teachers in comparison with the number of teachers, and the locations in which such support people are based. The core support provided by such officers takes the form of:

- organisation and delivery of professional development;
- dissemination of information;
- housing informational website and web-based materials;
- professional advice; and
- advocacy.

Such systems people also have additional duties relating to management, co-ordination, planning and administration, which can be seen as a form of support for languages teachers, but do not seem to be perceived as part of their support role and are less directly experienced by teachers.

The organisation of this support differs among States and Territories. In Victoria and Tasmania, in addition to staff in the central office, there are also people located in regional areas to provide various forms of support to teachers in that area. These staff are usually employed to support teachers across all languages, although in some cases there are also language-specific support people. In New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, and Western Australia support is organised centrally. In New South Wales support for language teachers is mainly organised as language specific, while in Queensland, South Australia, and Western Australia the support officers are primarily providing generic support, although with some language-specific support as well. The ACT and the Northern Territory have a single officer providing support for teachers and so the support provided is necessarily generic.

In addition to language-specific support, government sector teachers may also receive some support, especially professional development, co-ordinated by officers responsible for generic teacher support. Some government sectors also provide libraries and resource centres and/or may organise for professional support to be delivered by designated groups of teachers.

In addition, government systems may have language-specific support people funded by countries in which the language is spoken. (This is especially the case for Italian and Japanese.)

In the non-government sectors, the level of support provided to teachers varies greatly. In the larger States – Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia – support officers are employed by both Catholic and Independent sectors, although in AISSA only as a part-time position. In the Catholic sector language support is mainly provided centrally rather than in individual dioceses, although the metropolitan dioceses may also have language support officers. In the ACT, Northern Territory, Tasmania, and Western Australia there is no support officer for languages in either non-government sector, although designated staff from other areas may include languages in their portfolio. In these cases, the person responsible for languages often has no background in language education and the role tends to be more administrative and organisational.
12.2 Professional Associations

Professional associations in Australia include the Modern Language Teachers Associations (MLTA), which cover all languages, and for some languages, language-specific associations. Professional associations provide a range of support to their members, but the nature of that support varies with the association and its resources. Professional associations provide teachers with support from within the profession itself and rely on their membership to coordinate and provide many of their services.

The MLTAs are all involved in the provision of a number of support activities, some of which parallel other forms of support and some of which are not typically undertaken by jurisdictions:

- developing formal and/or informal networks for language teachers;
- information dissemination;
- extracurricular activities and student competitions;
- professional development; and
- advocacy.

The MLTAs, through their affiliation with the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA), provide both a national and a local reference point for languages in general. This means that they facilitate networking of teachers and information dissemination across the profession regardless of the language of the teachers. They also provide a professional body that can cater for teachers of small-candidature languages who would otherwise be unsupported by language-specific associations. At the same time, they also provide language-specific support through networks, special interest groups, and language-specific professional development activities. The MLTAs and the AFMLTA also provide a very important advocacy role with government as representatives of the profession as a whole (Liddicoat, 2002a).

Language-specific associations do not exist in all States and Territories nor for all languages, and not all have national level bodies. In some States these associations are integrated into MLTAs as language-specific sections of a single organisation, in others they have a loose affiliation with MLTAs in which each is an independent body, and where there is representation on committees and in some cases joint membership fees, while in some States they are completely separated from the MLTAs. Many teachers see a need for language-specific associations for networking with other teachers of the same language, for language-specific professional development, and for sharing materials and ideas. These language-specific associations meet a need and play a role that is different from a generic association. At the same time, because they are language-specific, these associations are not usually seen as advocates for languages in general and are less likely to be called upon to give advice to governments and education systems.

In some States and Territories there is co-ordination between the government and non-government sectors in the provision of support for teachers. In most cases, this consists of making at least some professional learning activities available to teachers in other sectors. This is particularly important where the non-government sector does not replicate the services provided by the government sector.

12.3 Other Organisations

Some international organisations provide support specifically for languages teachers. There is a range in what is offered by these organisations as for many such organisations language
teachers are not their primary focus. Most offer courses in the language, which is a potential resource for teachers, but these are not specifically designed for teachers. The organisations most actively involved in supporting teachers are:

- The Goethe-Institut offers inservice professional learning activities, resources, scholarships, in-country study opportunities, and has German language advisers whose role is to provide professional learning and advice.
- The Alliance Française is not a single organisation but rather thirty-three centres across Australia, and each centre offers different support for teachers. Some centres do not cater specifically for teachers at all, but some centres provide resources, competitions, and specific purpose language development courses for teachers.
- The Comitato Assistenza Italiani (CoAsIt) provides inservice professional learning activities and in-country study opportunities.
- The Japan Foundation provides inservice professional learning activities, resources, contests, scholarships, and in-country study opportunities.

In addition a number of embassies have educational attachés who have responsibility for supporting language teachers and provide scholarships or organise in-country visits for language teachers.

### 12.4 Issues in Support for Language Teachers

The discussion so far has shown that there are multiple resources for supporting teachers provided by a range of organisations. This provision raises some issues for consideration, in particular issues relating to accessing support and inter-communication.

The first is that the services available to teachers in different sectors differ, and so there may often not be similar levels of support for all language teachers. Where support specifically designed for language teachers is not provided by a jurisdiction, there are likely to be significant problems for teachers working in that jurisdiction, unless schools themselves have the resources to provide such support. As language teachers may work in isolation in their school or schools, the lack of consistent provision of support across sectors may be especially difficult for these people.

Moreover, most provision is concentrated in the metropolitan areas, and in regional areas is correspondingly less immediate. Web-based resources, scholarships, and in-country study opportunities are less affected by geographical location. In the case of support officers and language advisers, the centralisation in metropolitan areas is overcome by having these people travel into regional areas, although this means that such people may be less available to teachers in rural areas than they are to teachers in the cities in which they are based. Support services such as libraries and resource centres are least accessible for teachers in regional areas.

The co-ordination and communication between the providers of support for teachers varies greatly across the country. In some cases there is good communication between jurisdictions and professional associations and even shared co-ordination of some activities. In other cases, communication and co-ordination are almost non-existent, with the consequence that activities may be in conflict or may be scheduled at competing times. This devalues the quality of the support available to individual teachers who must choose between activities rather than from benefiting most widely. It is particularly problematic where interpersonal relationships between people in jurisdictions and professional associations have broken down.

There are also problems of communication and co-ordination between MLTAs and language-specific associations. In some places, these are well co-ordinated and work
collaboratively to support teachers in different ways. In other cases, they seem to be in
competition for members and this can create internal divisions within the profession. This
does not enhance the capacity of either association to support teachers.

Co-ordination and communication between language and cultural organisations and either
jurisdictions or professional associations seems to be the least well developed. There is some
evidence for good relations between language-specific associations and related embassies and
cultural organisations, and in fact some associations receive direct financial support from such
bodies. The relationship between MLTAs is often less close than with language-specific
associations, and tends to rely on individual connections rather than planned cooperation, as
do relationships between jurisdictions and other organisations.

The situation as it applies to support for teachers is therefore one in which there is a
considerable range of ways of supporting teachers within the community as a whole; however,
what is actually available to individual teachers may be much more limited.
13 The Nature of Languages Education in Australian Schools

13.1 The Variable Nature of Languages Education

The state of language learning in Australians schools is one of great variability. There is variability in the quality of language programmes from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and from school to school. Language programmes form a continuum from the very good to the very poor. In some schools language programmes are very strong and produce very good learning. In other schools language programmes are very weak and produce very poor learning.

13.1.1 Local Issues

Strong programmes are characterised by a range of factors of teachers, schools, and communities. Teachers in strong programmes are typically those who have a good level of proficiency and an interest in and understanding of the language and the cultures in which the language is used and know how to use their proficiency to maximise learning opportunities for students. They have professional qualifications in language and language education and work to maintain the language and cultural knowledge and their knowledge of developments in the field of education in general and language education in particular. They are committed to their own learning of language and culture and to that of their students. In many cases, the language programme is highly dependent on a single teacher in the school and the qualities of this teacher are fundamentally important, but also the demands made on this teacher may be far greater than those made on other teachers. In larger schools, where there is a team of teachers teaching the same language, the qualities of the team as a whole may be as important as or more important than the qualities of individual teachers.

Strong programmes are found in schools that actively support the programme and see it as an important part of the overall education that they provide for their students. They have high expectations for language learning for all students and treat learning in languages as being as significant as other subject areas. This means that such schools give careful consideration to the place of languages in the curriculum and in the school timetable and that timetabling allows for effective language learning, both in terms of the amount of time allocated to language learning and the distribution of this time over the course of the week. They also provide access to resources, which allow for good teaching and learning to happen. In primary schools in particular, the effectiveness of a programme is dependent on how well the programme and the teacher are integrated into the school’s planning and practice and the presence that the teacher is able to have in the school.

Strong programmes are usually found in schools where the language programme is supported by the community; however, this does not seem to be a determining factor in the success of language programmes as in many cases strong community support is the result rather than the cause of a strong programme. The more important element for strong programmes is that they have engagements with their community that generate support for language learning and show that language learning is valued and valuable.

In issues around both school and community support, school leaders appear to play an important role as such support is not typically generated from the community or from the school but rather is created by school leaders around language programmes. Strong and committed leadership therefore is an essential element of successful language programmes.

‘I work in a really hard school. We have so many problems there. But it is the best school I have worked in. The principal and the school really support me and that hasn’t happened before.’

Secondary school language teacher
13.1.2 Policy Issues

The local issues discussed above are not independent of the wider situation and a number of issues concerning policy also shape the nature of language learning. In the earlier discussion of policies for languages education (see pages 10ff), it was seen that policies around the country vary greatly in the ways in which languages are treated. However, there are issues around policy, even within States, which affect the nature of language learning in schools.

One particular area of concern is the impact of mandating languages, whether it is the mandating of provision or of language study. Even where languages are mandated for all students (at a particular level or for a particular number of years) to study languages or for all schools to provide a language programme, in no State or Territory are the mandated requirements actually met. Such patchiness in meeting mandates would be expected where a policy is being introduced; however, the situation has persisted for relatively long periods of time in some places and there is evidence that even where languages are compulsory, language provision is diminishing rather than increasing. The nature of languages education in Australia, therefore, appears to be one of a mismatch between policy and practice.

In some States and Territories policy documents suggest or recommend a time allocation for languages. Such time allocations are recommended as the appropriate amount of time for achieving the language. It is not the case, however, that schools regularly deliver programmes that meet expected time allocations for languages, and time allocations may not even be close to those recommended by systems. For example, while Victoria recommends 150 minutes per week for languages – the highest allocation in the country – many teachers interviewed report that they are timetabled for only 45 minutes per week. A similar situation was found in Queensland, which recommends 90 minutes but languages are often timetabled for 45 minutes. This suggests that recommended time allocations for languages have little impact on the actual practice of timetabling.

Even where languages are not mandated, such a mismatch continues to exist, as was seen in the discussion of curriculum (see p. 74). Although curriculum for languages in most States and Territories is designed for K–10, language learning in schools delivering the curriculum may not be planned or offered for the duration of K–10 study. Moreover, curriculum is designed with at least a notional time allocation given for language study; however, languages are rarely allocated this time in schools. This means that there is a fundamental mismatch between the aims, objectives, content, and achievement levels expected for languages at the policy level and what is actually being presented to students in language programmes in schools.

Languages education policy in Australia is failing in its goals, and its recommendations have little impact on practice. The main reason for this is that there are few real consequences for a school that does not implement the policy as required, or where learners do not achieve expected outcomes because they are not taught in expected programmes. The lack of consequences for failing to deliver mandated or recommended programmes means that languages education in Australia is not policy driven but rather determined locally without necessary reference to policy. This means that local factors are the most important for determining the nature of language learning, regardless of whether there are explicit policy requirements or not.

‘We’re supposed to report on languages from Level 4, but our principal thinks that this means that we don’t have to teach Levels 1 to 3 because there’s no requirement to report this. So we’ll only get them from Year 5 and we won’t be able to get them to the level they need to be at, especially as we only get 45 minutes instead of the full amount. So every language student in the school will get an E because the best they can do is two years behind what Level 4 says.’

Primary school language teacher
13.2 The Fragile Nature of Languages Education

The fragility of languages education, and in part the lack of real impact for language policy, derives from the fact that languages education has not become a central part of the curriculum for school education, in spite of languages having been a Key Learning Area since 1989. As languages are so dependent on the factors that exist at local levels and so dependent on the commitment to languages among school leaders and school communities, local factors are the strongest determiners of the state and nature of language learning in Australia. This is despite the recognition by all in the field of the value and strength at a national level. The strength at a national level is based on the national Statement and Plan for Languages and the range of national projects that result from the plan, as well as the ongoing work on CCAFL at senior secondary level. Another dimension of strength that needs to be recognised is the diversity of languages that the educational systems are supporting, with some sixty languages being formally assessed and certified at senior secondary level by assessment authorities around Australia. From a quantitative point of view, numbers of students learning languages are declining. The state of languages in schools is fundamentally related to a failure in the implementation of language policy in and for Australian education.

The lack of success that policies have had in establishing languages as an integral part of Australian schooling is reflected in the ways in which languages continue to be discussed. For example, in the domain of curriculum for Australian schools, there is intense discussion about the place of languages in a ‘crowded curriculum’. Similarly, the current emphasis on ‘advocacy’ for languages education can be seen as a reflection of the fundamental state of languages in Australia. The projects in this area at both national and State and Territory levels may provide necessary support for teachers, but ultimately can influence only in a small way the profoundly monolingual design of Australian education. The recent release of the federalist paper: The Future of Schooling in Australia (Council for the Australian Federation, 2007) is promising. It is a review of the Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century, undertaken by the Council for the Australian Federation. With regard to curriculum it describes six discipline areas (English, Mathematics and Science, Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences, the Arts, Health and Physical Education) as well as cross-disciplinary learning areas (technology, civics and citizenship, business). The retention of Languages in this grouping is welcome, but in the current political climate it is too early to anticipate the status and ultimate impact of this paper.

In teacher education the limited number of teacher educators for languages who are in continuing university positions is a further factor in the weakness of languages in education. This often means that in faculties or schools of education, lecturers with specialisations in other areas are supervising the work of teachers of languages. There is virtually a total absence of language-specific work in pre-service and inservice awards for teachers, simply because current university funding mechanisms cannot support this degree of specialisation. With regard to the profession itself, teachers of languages are generally older, committed but exhausted, with little prospect of advancing in their field since schools are generally not creating leadership positions specifically for languages. Where languages coordinators are appointed, they are increasingly given additional responsibilities (and work) such as international education or ESL.

With regard to principals, their role is paramount at the school level. The languages profession has sought to engage in dialogue with principals in a number of ways but to date these dialogues have not resulted in any significant change.

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1 The Council for the Australian Federation is a meeting of State Premiers and Territory Chief Ministers to discuss issues delivery of key services for which States and Territories are responsible.
The fragility of languages education in Australia seems to originate from a general perceived lack of value of school language learning, and within this context the area becomes vulnerable to any weaknesses in the complex of local factors that affect language education. What this means is that in the local context any single factor which proves to be problematic tends to lead to the collapse of language programmes in ways that are not reflected in most other learning areas. This means that languages have to be a ‘problem free’ discipline area if they are to be ensured a place in education. Where a problem arises — anything from a lack of available teachers to the ‘crowded curriculum’ — the solution is usually seen in terms of removing languages from the curriculum rather than finding strategies to solve the problem.

The fragility is further supported by the weakness of language policy. Where schools are not required to report on language learning, where schools fail to comply with policy mandates and/or where time allocations are inadequate for genuine language learning, there are few consequences. Principals in interviews often suggested that they felt that they could delay in introducing languages or they could close down language programmes in spite of policy mandates because they perceived it as relatively easy to do and that it was a decision that would not create problems for them. Not having a language programme was often perceived as easier than having a language programme, even if languages education was compulsory, even by principals who were personally committed to languages education and who worked to ensure that the language programme in their schools was strong and effective.

What is needed to address this fragility is a policy commitment from the highest levels of government that reconsiders the long-held ambivalence regarding multilingualism. This commitment should focus above all on the meaningfulness of learning languages as part of general education for all students to extend their communicative repertoires and intercultural engagement. These goals are legitimate and appropriate educational goals of value in their own right. Goals pertaining to trade, diplomacy, and international relations are related but not a goal of language learning for all students as part of their general school education.

With regard to curriculum policy, the national collaboration that is well established should be strengthened in a model of national work that includes ongoing local and State/Territory development as integral. Issues relating to substance of the curriculum work needed in the languages area are addressed in the next section. In the context of curriculum, the languages area needs to be recognised as a specialist area, in fact, as a curriculum area in its own right that is made up of many diverse languages. The recognition of specific languages with their own histories and place in Australian education should be considered in the context of curriculum development, assessment development, teacher education, and support resources and processes.

### 13.3 Diversity of Languages and Programmes

The diverse nature of languages education in Australia is most obviously seen in the number of languages available within the education system; however, a simple count of numbers does not really reflect the nature of diversity, that is, the diversity is not a random phenomenon of accumulation but a principled approach to language learning needs.

One way of examining the diversity is to consider the educational purpose of language programmes.

The languages area is usually framed in terms of second/foreign language learning, that is, new learning of languages not spoken by the learners. Such programmes are designed to take learners from being non-speakers of a language to having some level of proficiency in the language and are expected to produce an awareness of, respect for, and (in some cases at least) engagement with diversity. Of the ten most widely taught languages identified in the discussion of ‘Languages Taught in Australian Schools’ beginning on page 30, the first six
languages plus Spanish are most typically, although not exclusively, taught as second/foreign languages.

A second purpose for languages education is language maintenance, that is the continued learning of a community or Indigenous language spoken in the home environment. This means the learning of the target language as a first language, with an emphasis on developing literacy and academic language capabilities in the language. Most Indigenous languages and those languages taught in ethnic schools are related to language maintenance.

A further rationale is the teaching of languages for what can be considered as ‘cultural maintenance’. Cultural maintenance can be distinguished from language maintenance when the language is taught to background speakers who do not speak the language, but who have a heritage attachment to the language. Most of the twenty most widely taught languages, except the six most widely taught languages and Spanish, are taught either for language or cultural maintenance objects, as are Indigenous languages and community languages, whether in ethnic schools or in mainstream systems.

These three broad purposes have become conflated in the languages area and this creates problems with the perception of diversity if it is seen only in terms of languages. Because of Australia’s demographic profile all three types of programmes have an important role in community building and social cohesion as well as in the development of language proficiency and intercultural capabilities for the Australian population. The conflation of learning purposes leads to a number of issues in which the real diversity of learning needs and educational goals is not recognised in discussion of languages education.

In second/foreign language learning, the number of languages taught is relatively small (Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish) and may need to be expanded to meet Australia’s broader policy objectives (notably second/foreign language learning of Arabic). At the same time, because these languages are the most widely taught, they are also the languages most vulnerable to programme closure and the languages for which teacher shortages, etc., cause the most problems.

In language maintenance, Australia’s Indigenous languages must have a place in the Australian educational system as these languages can be taught only in Australia and it is only in Australia that there is a learning need. These languages require particular policy approaches as they face different needs from most other languages in the Australian educational system — for example, preventing language death, revival of language use, retrieval of languages no longer actively spoken — and are central to the identity and traditions of Indigenous Australia.

Languages taught for language and cultural maintenance are likely to be small and relatively concentrated in the mainstream education system. Demand for such languages is determined by local demographics and the educational needs of local populations. Such programmes may not have long durations as the demographic profiles of communities change over time. It is important, however, that language and culture maintenance programmes are supported in ways that do not make maintaining heritage languages an impost on language learners by confining them solely to language learning in addition to regular schooling.

Curriculum in most cases is designed only for second/foreign language learning and curriculum frameworks all presuppose new learning of the language. There is little recognition of the curriculum needs of other forms of language education. This problem is also reflected in programmes for ‘background speakers’ as the criteria for who is eligible for such programmes varies. For example, background speakers have been defined in some jurisdictions as students who have studied for at least 1 year in a country in which the language is the medium of instruction. This means that programmes for background speakers may conflate those who have studied in the language for 1 year at the beginning of primary school and international students who have studied the language through the entirety of their education before coming to Australia for senior secondary study. Moreover, the definition
may exclude students who speak the language at home in Australia from background speaker status as they have never studied the language in a school system and these students may be treated as beginner learners of the language.

What is revealed by the current nature of language programmes is that the languages area is shaped by an ideology of monolingualism — that is, programmes are designed for learners who speak only English and who bring no knowledge of the target language to their learning. The recognition of students’ bilingualism and the complexity of such bilingualism is relatively unsophisticated and not necessarily adapted to the real world needs of learners. In reality there are a number of learning populations that need to be considered in educational policy:

1. non-speakers of a language learning the language as a new language;
2. non-speakers of the language learning the language as a background language;
3. home speakers of the language learning the language as a first language;
4. speakers who have acquired basic literacy in the language learning the language as a first language; and
5. schooled speakers who have acquired advanced literacy in the language learning the language as a first language.

Not all of these groups will, of course, exist for all languages, but some languages (notably Chinese) have particular needs for a range of programme types to meet the needs of different learners and a clear understanding of which learners can appropriately study which types of programmes.

13.4 The Generic Nature of Languages Curricula

Another dimension of the nature of language learning relates to the impact of the generic curriculum and assessment frameworks that have been developed as the basis for curriculum reform in each State and Territory. Although these frameworks have highlighted the importance of learning over time (K–12 sequences), there has been limited focus on long-term programmes for learning. In addition, these frameworks have generally introduced a focus on assessment and accountability in a way that has created for teachers a tension between assessment of learning for the purposes of accountability and the assessment for learning where assessment is seen as an integral part of the learning process. Furthermore, with the absence of any implementation studies to guide the field, there is little understanding as to how teachers are actually working with the frameworks, and in particular how they are interpreting the frameworks. It is a problem for the field that despite the availability of such frameworks, it remains unable to respond to the key question of what it is that students are able to achieve in and through school language learning. The default response to this is the only other measure, namely, native speaker norms, which have been shown to be problematic as a target for second language acquisition (Kern & Liddicoat, in press; Kramsch, 1999).

13.5 The Eclectic Nature of Languages Education

The nature of language learning in the context of primary and secondary school education can be described as eclectic. This eclecticism can be understood in diverse ways. It can be seen as a reflection of the diversity of students, their teachers, languages, and their history in the context of school education in Australia, and the contexts for learning, where teachers with their own diverse backgrounds and experiences are working in the best way they can to engage their students. It can also be understood as a natural part of the history of language teaching and learning; as perspectives on language, culture, teaching, and learning change,
earlier theories remain influential. As Shepard (2000) states in the context of educational assessment, so too for languages teaching and learning:

Dominant theories of the past continue to operate as the default framework affecting and driving current practices and perspectives. Belief systems of teachers, parents and policymakers derive from these old theories (Shepard, 2000: 4).

With regard to the view of language that prevails in language teaching and learning, there is evidence of language being understood as structural, comprising grammar and vocabulary, as well as a resource to be used in communication (language in use). With regard to culture, there is evidence of culture understood as facts and ways of life, beliefs, and values. With regard to learning it is viewed as acquisition and participation (Sfard, 1998).

Teachers move between these diverse frames, without necessarily articulating to themselves or others the theoretical rationale for the decisions and choices they make in teaching. What is generally absent in the eclecticism is a view of language, culture, learning, and teaching that focuses on the meanings that students make.

What is needed is a process through which we can clarify the conceptual bases of language teaching and learning in schools so that teachers have a common language through which to articulate principles to guide their eclecticism and there is a consensus for change. Further curriculum policy work needs to be founded on a sound research base. This requires the field to develop a research orientation in all its work at every level. It is only with such an orientation that it becomes possible to learn from and build upon the experience of development and implementation in an ongoing way. It is also important to establish longitudinal research that allows for the systematic analysis of developments over time. This is needed particularly in the areas of curriculum implementation and assessment.

13.6 Diversity in Approaches to Language and Culture

Most language learning curricula in Australia emphasise the relationship between language learning and intercultural understanding and this emphasis can also be seen in policy documents about language learning. This dual focus has tended to lead to a conflation of the two goals with some important pedagogical consequences.

When language learning is equated with the development of intercultural understanding, the problem in both policy and practice is that an assumption is made that any form of language learning will inevitably produce intercultural understanding. Many studies have shown that this assumption is in fact false and that language learning may not change stereotypes or preconceived views of the target language culture (Byram, Esarte-Sarries, & Taylor, 1991; Ingram & O’Neill, 2001, 2002; McMeniman & Evans, 1997; Wilkins, 1987). This means that intercultural understanding is assumed to be present and is neither taught nor assessed in language education. Programs that are based on such a view of the relationship between language and intercultural understanding tend to focus solely on the development of language proficiency, either in terms of grammatical accuracy or communicative fluency. The problem with such an approach is that intercultural understanding is not a necessary by-product of language learning and that a pedagogy is needed that focuses on both the linguistic and the intercultural elements.

Curricula often distinguish between language and intercultural understanding and this tends to lead to an approach where culture is included in language education as a separate component. In such models the teaching is about the culture of the other and knowledge of some aspects of another culture is equated with the development of intercultural understanding. The problem lies in an assumption that cultural knowledge is the same as intercultural understanding and also that language and culture are separable. When intercultural understanding is conceived simply as knowledge about other people and places,
it results in two features of language programmes that undermine the effectiveness of languages education. The first is that factual knowledge about institutions, history, geography, etc., and the study of ‘interesting’ cultural differences will influence the attitudes and perceptions of others; however, such approaches do not necessarily change stereotypes or preconceptions and may in fact reinforce them (Byram et al., 1991; McMeniman & Evans, 1997). The second is that cultural learning may be removed from any actual real world context and become an eclectic assembly of cultural ‘snippets’ from many countries or societies with little coherence and few opportunities to reflect on what these may mean for communication. The most serious manifestation of this tendency is found in the inclusion of ‘cultural studies’ subjects as an alternative to language study in some jurisdictions (e.g. in Western Australia and the Queensland Catholic Education).

When culture is separated from language there are also issues for the effectiveness of learning in language programmes. In particular culture teaching and assessment may be done in English with little or no reference to the target language, and in some cases there were reports in focus groups that groups in multiple languages were being grouped together for ‘culture’. This approach prevents students from experiencing the particular ways of understanding culture as it is connected to real world communication and language use and externalises the culture from the language in which it is based. This can undermine language programmes in two ways: it can limit the development of language as culture learning becomes time away from language study and the learning which is considered of most value (especially where proficiency is not being developed) becomes the learning associated with teaching in English rather than the target language, with a resulting perception that the learning can happen as well in social studies classes.

More recent developments of intercultural language teaching and learning, notably in the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008, have tended to add another layer to the current picture of diversity. Although intercultural language teaching and learning are based upon a close articulation of language and the intercultural and move away from a knowledge only focus to knowledge and engagement, much of the current curricula for languages and the practice of teachers educated within the communicative paradigm still reflects separation rather than articulation and pedagogical practice is less well developed.

The diversity in approaches to language and the intercultural means that, although there is a common consensus on the goals, value, and purpose of language education, there is less consideration of curriculum and pedagogical practice for achieving these.
14 Conclusions

14.1 The Context of Languages Education in Australia

Any review of any dimension of education, including languages education, should be situated in its particular context of time and place. It is this that makes the present review pertinent, notwithstanding that it follows an ongoing set of reviews of the area of languages education.

Certain aspects of the current context should be highlighted. First, the reality of globalisation and the unprecedentedly rapid movement of people and ideas demand a capability for communication across cultures and intercultural engagement. English only is not sufficient, despite its status as a lingua mundi. Although comparisons with other regions are not entirely sustainable, it is clear that Europe, Asia, the USA, and Singapore, among other regions/locations, are positioning themselves to strengthen language policies for the teaching of at least two, if not three, languages as part of primary and secondary education.

A number of aspects of the context of education are also significant. Firstly, more than ever before, there are strong debates about State and national responsibilities in education, in particular in relation to curriculum standards, assessment, and reporting. Whereas the previous Federal Minister introduced the idea of a national approach through an argument about ‘national consistency’, the present Federal Minister is talking about ‘national curriculum standards’. Previous attempts to achieve greater commonality in education across all Australian States and Territories have not been successful (for example, consider the nationally developed Statements and Profiles). When such changes are tied to Australian Government funding, there is an additional force for compliance. If anything the languages area stands as an example of successful national collaboration that has been sustained for a long period of time. The Australian Language Levels Project (1985–1991) and the suite of resources produced based on the Australian Language Levels (ALL) Guidelines (Scarino et al., 1988) was considered by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) at the time (now the Curriculum Corporation) as its most successful project, with initial collaboration in developing the ALL Guidelines, followed by collaborative national curriculum development of national curricula in three specific languages (Chinese, Indonesian, and Japanese), national collaboration at senior secondary level, through the National Assessment Framework for Languages at Senior Secondary Level (NAFLaSSL), now the Collaborative Curriculum and Assessment Framework for Languages (CCAFL), based on the ALL Guidelines, and a national professional development programme in each State/Territory that ensured influence in all syllabus development at State/Territory level in all teacher education programmes offered in universities around Australia. The agreement to collaborate at the time was based on the desire to harness linguistic expertise that was available in different States and Territories and to share the developmental load in developing and extending the diverse range of languages offered across Australia. These arguments hold in present times, in a context of changing views about national collaboration.

Another dimension of the changing context of education is the focus on assessment as a lever for reform. The emphasis on developing curriculum frameworks throughout the 1990s, based on the nationally developed Statements and Profiles, included a focus on outcomes of learning. This followed the worldwide trend of developing systemic assessment outcomes and standards to support greater accountability to educational systems, leaving to teachers and schools the responsibility for determining how to ‘achieve’ these outcomes and standards. These outcomes and standards are normally formulated as an ordered series of statements about levels of achievement, frequently expressed in highly generalised terms directed to summative reporting. As such, they do not serve the formative, developmental interests of teachers and students. Furthermore, they are framed in terms of typical curriculum
development categories (such as discourse forms, tasks, linguistic features, skills) rather than addressing specifically a notion of the ultimate value of learning (i.e. what it is that the students take away from the process of learning a language and how they make it their own). A further aspect of assessment using frameworks of outcomes and standards was an emphasis on the machinery of reporting rather than the substance or quality of assessment. The current emphasis on learning, which is evident in many States and Territories (South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia) can be seen as part of a reaction against the 1990s style of outcomes and a renewed emphasis on the formative dimensions of learning and assessment.

The current context of education also sees complex and competing demands on teachers, specifically the need to do justice to all students in their increasing diversity. Demands are also evident in the diversity of roles they are required to perform: teacher, assessor, mentor/guide, social worker, interpreter. Teachers are the ones who work in the space between the local and the systemic, and in languages education, they are often the sole expert and the sole advocate for their area of curriculum. This context of the intensification and increasing complexity of teacher’s work needs to be taken into account.

There are also competing demands on the curriculum as a major focus for the implementation of educational initiatives. The curriculum is that part of the educational process that addresses what it is that students should learn. It has been argued that in curriculum work internationally and including Australia traditionally, there has been an emphasis on prescription rather than understanding (Pinar, 2003), which creates a tension in education at local, State, national, and international levels. Furthermore, with regard to the complex process of implementation of curriculum, across all States and Territories of Australia, in all areas, including languages, there is to date an absence of implementation studies that might inform educators’ understandings of the way in which curriculum resources, such as the frameworks of outcomes and standards, are actually being used. This absence is all the more pronounced because of the total lack of research that is longitudinal. This means effectively that there is a limited research base on which to develop the critical area of curriculum.

A final dimension of the educational context that warrants emphasis is the general shift from specialist to generic in all spheres. In teacher employment and promotion, in curriculum development, in the organisation of services for teachers and schools, development is at a generic level (i.e. employing teachers who are generalists first, then specialists, grouping subjects into generic clusters, appointing generic advisors/consultants). This pervasive form of organisation clearly accords specialist areas such as languages a second order of importance.

It is the constellation of dimensions of the societal and educational context such as these that influence languages education at the present time.

14.2 Language Policy and Languages Education

Language education has been the subject of a large amount of policy work at all levels of government in Australia since the NPL in 1987. In spite of this policy context, many of the problems that existed in 1987 are still present today: that is policies have not solved the problems they were designed to address. This is not to say that there have not been achievements during that time.

- Access to some level of language study at primary school has become a normal part of education for many students — such programmes were very rare in 1987.
- The spread of bilingual programmes in a range of languages at a number of levels of schooling is also a substantial achievement of the last 30 years. Although such
programmes are not very widespread, they represent a significant development in languages education for a particular section of the community.

- The maintenance and development of a diverse range of language programmes across a large number of languages is also a notable achievement, as have been the strategies implemented to foster this diversity through the establishment of schools of languages, the ongoing development of the ethnic schools sector, and national collaborations such as NAFLaSSL and CCAFL.

- Activities to improve teaching quality through the development of curriculum, materials, and resources, through large- and small-scale professional learning programmes and through various national, State/Territory and Australian Government projects.

Although there have been achievements in languages education, languages are still in a problematic position in Australian schooling and 30 years of policy development has not succeeded in integrating languages well into mainstream education. It would appear that this failure results from a number of factors that typify much languages provision and both result from and reinforce the marginal position languages have in education.

- Widespread languages education in the primary school sector has not meant that most children are exposed to positive language programmes. Many programmes do not meet the educational needs of learners or the expectations of students, parents, and the community because programmes have not been established in ways that give languages adequate time allocations or the ensured continuity needed to achieve high-quality learning. The proliferation of programmes allocating a single block of 30 or 45 minutes per week for languages has been particularly detrimental for the effectiveness and the perception of languages education in primary schools. Where such programmes exist alongside policies recommending much greater time allocations they represent a particularly severe failure of policy.

- Lack of assured pathways for many students to continue learning of even the most common languages from the beginning of primary school to the end of secondary school, even in large cities has led to a failure to develop the levels of proficiency that could be expected from sustained language learning.

- There remain significant problems in the employment of teachers, including a highly casualised workforce with little real presence or support in schools, poor working and teaching conditions for languages teachers, lack of career paths in languages education, lack of qualified teachers especially at primary school level, and poor retention of qualified teachers in language teaching because of poor conditions.

- Problematic expectations and relationships between the K–10 curriculum for languages and actual programmes and experiences of languages education in schools.

- Poor community perceptions of school language learning, even where languages are considered as valuable.

One way of understanding how 30 years of policy work in language education in Australia has failed is to examine the components of policy to determine which have been addressed well and which have been underdeveloped. One useful model to inform such an investigation is the typology of languages-in-education planning developed by Kaplan and Baldauf (1997; 2003). They identify the following areas of focus in languages policies:

- **access policy**: policies regarding the designation of languages to be studied and of the levels of education at which language will be studied;

- **personnel policy**: policies regarding teacher recruitment, professional learning and standards;
• curriculum and community policy: policies regarding what will be taught and how the teaching will be organised, including the specification of outcomes and assessment instruments;
• methods and materials policy: policies regarding prescriptions of methodology and set texts for language study;
• resourcing policy: policies regarding the level of funding to be provided for languages in the education system
• evaluation policy: policies regarding how the impact of language-in-education policy will be measured and how the effectiveness of policy implementation will be gauged.

Through these dimensions it is possible to see what policy work has addressed in Australia.

14.2.1 Access Policy

Most Australian policies have addressed issues of access to languages through expectations about levels at which languages will be studied. These, however, vary around Australia in a number of ways. The first is in the ways in which language study is seen as a part of curriculum and ranges from mandating language study, expecting language study, recommending language study, or simply encouraging language study. A second way of dealing with access is not to focus on requirements for learning languages but on requirements for delivering languages: there may be an expectation that all schools will offer a language at some or all year levels, but without an expectation that all students at such schools will take a language, that is, language can be seen as part of basic education or as an elective.

There is also variation in the levels at which language study is required or expected. Languages can be seen as having a place in the whole of compulsory schooling or for some part of schooling only, with different numbers of years and different year levels being indicated. It is particularly notable that there has been strong policy support for the introduction of languages in primary schools and this is where most growth in language learning has been seen. There has been less attention paid to secondary school language programmes, often stemming from a belief that secondary level languages education was not problematic, except in terms of retention into senior secondary levels.

In terms of identifying languages the policies at State and Territory levels have always allowed for diversity, with schools making local decisions about which languages and how many to teach. At the same time attempts have been made to target languages in different ways with the NPL’s designation of ‘languages of wider teaching’ and the priority languages of the ALLP and NALSAS. Such approaches to identifying languages have, however, been related more to the development of curriculum, materials, and resources or for the allocation of funding than to programme delivery.

14.2.2 Personnel Policy

There has been concern at various times in Australia about the staffing of language programmes, most notably in the Languages at the Crossroads report (Nicholas et al., 1993); however, personnel policy is probably the least well-developed aspect of policy in Australia. At the same time, issues relating to personnel appear to be one of the biggest problems confronting languages provision in Australia at the moment.

In the context of expanding languages provision, early policies for developing teachers’ expertise in languages focused on retraining teachers either to teach languages for the first time or to teach different languages. Some policies were based on highly problematic understandings of the levels of expertise required for language education. For example, some jurisdictions have allowed teachers to be retrained though short-term programmes in which the amount of time devoted to developing language proficiency leads only to low levels of
language ability (e.g. a semester or year-long university course). This has been mostly the case for primary school teachers because of a perception that learners at low proficiency levels did not require teachers with high proficiency levels. Although such policies have been recognised as problematic, there are still teachers in the system who were trained through such programmes and whose expertise and proficiency have not been developed further. The failure of short-term solutions to providing language teachers has indicated that professional learning for language teachers requires a more sustained and focused model.

At primary school level there has been little attention given to teacher education with the result that there is a lack of primary school trained language teachers. Few education degrees allow opportunities for education students to develop their language proficiency, with the result that students in education degrees are unlikely to be able to develop the levels of proficiency necessary for primary school teaching. In addition, comparatively little time may be devoted to language teaching itself and where such courses are available they are typically generically focused on ‘languages’ rather than on providing for language-specific teaching needs. In addition, courses may be generically designed for both primary and secondary school education students and do not adequately address the issues related to language teaching and learning at various age levels.

Teacher recruitment has also been a common problem for personnel policy. There are problems at a number of levels. Recruitment is problematic both in terms of attracting people into teacher education programmes to become language teachers and also in staffing school programmes with qualified teachers. At least part of the problem relates to the poor conditions of employment of language teachers, especially the predominance of short-term, casual employment in some jurisdictions. A profession that does not offer secure long-term employment will always have trouble attracting people. Where teacher employment has devolved to schools, employment conditions are likely to be more fragmented as individual schools’ programmes often cannot provide employment for a full-time teacher. The problems with teacher recruitment and employment stability tend to lead to problems of retention. What personnel policy has consistently failed to address in Australia is job security and continuity, the conditions under which language teachers work, the impact of such conditions on morale and programme quality, and strategies for retaining teachers already in the system.

The issues all imply a failure of workforce planning to address the issues around the wider introduction of languages in Australian schools. There has been little planning of recruitment, of terms of employment and career paths, of retention and replacement of teachers. Institutional data usually does not capture the age profile of language teachers and potential retirements from teaching, rates of turnover and attrition, rates of full-time or part-time employment, or whether qualified language teachers are actually teaching languages. This means that workforce planning cannot be done in a systematic or informed way and the real state of the teaching force is largely unknown.

There has been considerable planning of professional learning activities for teachers, but as mentioned above, the focus of professional learning has varied between one-off workshops, train-the-trainer style delivery, and sustained professional learning. In many cases it appears that the cost of professional learning has been a stronger determinant of policy than the quality of learning produced: both one-off workshops and train-the-trainer models are less expensive than more intensive supported investigative work. The focus in professional learning has largely been on implementation of curriculum documents, issues of pedagogy, and using materials and learning objects. There has been less professional development aimed at understanding key issues in teaching and learning, particularly assessment.
14.2.3 Curriculum and Community Policy

Language policy in Australia has given much attention to, and directed much funding towards, issues of curriculum, assessment, and reporting, and all States and Territories have documents relating to these dimensions of languages education. In addition, there has been an ongoing renewal process for these curricula throughout the country. The current discussions around a national curriculum can be seen as a further stage in such a process.

Although there has been extensive work in these areas, the results have not come together in a consistent way to create a critical mass of understanding in areas of curriculum. Each development has rather been independent of the others and change has tended to be a change in the form of curriculum and assessment rather than in the development of a coherent body of curriculum theory and practice. The result has been that the development of curriculum has been piecemeal rather than sustained, and within various documents there may be an eclectic collection of ideas stemming from radically different perspectives about the nature of teaching and language learning, which are juxtaposed in ad hoc ways. The result is curriculum, assessment, and reporting documents that may have internal contradictions. There is little current evidence of the development of a conceptually coherent curriculum for languages in most jurisdictions and correspondingly less evidence of conceptual coherence nationally.

14.2.4 Methods and Materials Policy

In Australia there has been no specific mandating of methods in language teaching; however, methodological issues are at least implicit in curriculum documents and professional learning programmes. The period from the 1980s can be considered as a time of generalisation of communicative teaching methods. The assumptions that underlie curricula from that date show that language proficiency has usually been constructed in terms relating to understandings of communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1981; Hymes, 1987; Swain, 1985) and correspondingly expect a communicative pedagogy. Many professional development activities have also been predicated on communicative methodologies.

Most recently there has been a change of emphasis in languages methodology to an interculturally focused perspective. This perspective comes through most clearly in national professional learning programmes, such as the ALPLP and the ILTLP, as well as in many professional learning activities at State and Territory level.

Materials have received much more policy attention and much funding has been devoted to producing language materials, especially online resources. The materials developed have tended to be modular or stand alone materials without a strong developmental focus as this makes materials more adaptable to diverse ranges of programme types. At the same time, the lack of developmental focus means that such materials present issues for sequencing and progressing learning, which must be addressed by those using the materials.

14.2.5 Resourcing Policy

Most languages policy in Australia has included the allocation of funding, and funding has been made available at Australian Government and State/Territory level. It has mainly been through resourcing that other dimensions of policy have been achieved. For example, funding allocations have been used as a way of prioritising languages (as in the ALLP and NALSAS) and in many jurisdictions schools were granted additional resources to establish languages programmes.

In many cases funding allocated to languages has been allocated for the discretionary use of the recipient without an evaluation of the effectiveness for resources. The Australian

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1 The National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008 is a notable exception.
Government under NALSAS allocated funds to jurisdictions who were required to report on how the funding was spent, but without investigating whether the activities undertaken did in fact lead to furthering of policy objectives. Similarly, jurisdictions’ allocations to schools often require little more than a report that languages education did happen, but not on programme quality, school support, or other issues that are fundamental to the quality and sustainability of the programme.

The tying of funding to other issues of language policy means that when resourcing policies changed, the results have often been confused messages about policy directions. For example, the end of NALSAS funding was seen as a move away from a commitment to Asian languages, or even languages more generally. Similarly, when jurisdictions that had allocated additional resources to language programmes included such funding in regular school budgets in which languages funding was not identified specifically, this was often interpreted as the removal of support for languages or as a change in expectations about whether or not languages were to be included in the curriculum.

14.2.6 Evaluation Policy

Not all language policy in Australia involves evaluation, and where evaluation is done it is of a specific kind. Language policy usually gets evaluated only for specific projects to which funding is attached. This evaluation usually takes the form of a descriptive report on the conclusion of the project, or as a review process linked to deciding to continue a project or not. Such evaluations are usually tied to the narrower objectives of individual projects rather than to the whole of languages education. Quality assurance is likewise limited, where it exists, and typically addresses issues such as student numbers or teacher qualifications, and in some cases time allocations. Evaluation policy has never consistently addressed the effectiveness of language education policies in general. In particular, at present there is no information on what language learning is achieved by and can be expected from different programme types. Given that a diversity of programme types is a common feature of Australia’s language provision and that most schools run programmes with minimal time allocations, this would appear to be a central question for the evaluation of current language policy.

14.2.7 Comments

Each of these components interacts with the others to determine the effectiveness and clarity of language policy overall. It can be argued that the failure of language policy in Australia to establish languages in schooling is the result of a failure in policy to consider all of the issues required. For example, access policy has sought to expand language learning in schools; however, personnel policy has not addressed the issues of teacher supply that are fundamental to any change in provision. One result of this has been a problem for programme quality and stability in schools, with a corresponding undermining of the very policy objectives on which expanded provision were based. There is also a disconnectedness between resourcing policy, which is goal directed, and evaluation policy, which does not necessarily evaluate whether some of the goals of resourcing have been addressed. This has meant that resources have not always led to the outcomes expected and that the value of such resourcing has been called into question.

14.3 Policy Drivers and Inhibitors

In determining what factors promote or inhibit the development of languages it is necessary to look not only at the policy macrolevel of governments and jurisdictions but rather also at the microlevel of schools and communities. It is often the interaction between the macro and microlevels that have the most effect on what is actually happening in the Australian context.
14.3.1 Factors Promoting Language Education in Australia

A number of factors can be identified as supporting languages education. At the macrolevel the existence of language education policies since 1987 has had an important impact on language teaching and learning at least in terms of the numbers of students exposed to languages at school. The current level of provision in languages in primary school in particular must be seen as the result of sustained policy work over an extended period of time.

Another feature of languages in Australia that has proved particularly supportive of languages, where it has happened, is national collaboration. Collaborative approaches, such as those at senior secondary level, have been highly effective in shaping the languages field, in developing consistency and in supporting the provision of languages education in local contexts. In addition, collaborations in national projects, such as those funded under NALSAS and in the context of DEST’s projects under the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008 play an important role in shaping Australian languages education and co-ordinating policies and practice between jurisdictions. Such collaboration is particular important in Australia as it allows for a concentration of resources and expertise and represents an effective allocation and use of limited resources.

The diversity of languages provided in Australian education can also be seen as a positive factor for languages education. The current diversity is not a random accumulation of programmes but is rather a response to diverse learning needs within the Australian population. The diversity that exists is a responsive diversity that acknowledges a variety of programmes and purposes for languages education. This diversity is the result not only of programmes in mainstream schools, but also of complementary providers. Schools of languages, ethnic schools, and distance education all play a role in supporting a variety of language learners, learning pathways, and learning programmes. Schools of languages, where they exist, have proved particularly important for sustaining language learning through to Year 12 level and have ensured that there is at least some learning of small-candidature languages at higher levels.

At the microlevel, school and community support play a vital role in successful languages education. This shows that local level language policies are central to the implementation of macrolevel policies. Where schools view languages as having an important place in the curriculum and plan to ensure and maintain that place, languages programmes typically flourish. Such programmes may be characterised as allocating adequate time for languages and thereby encourage language learning as an activity and allow learners to gain maximum benefit from their learning. Languages in such schools are well integrated into the school, its planning and resourcing, and there is an obvious presence of languages as a valued part of the school’s work. Many school leaders argue that such a situation is possible only if parents and the community support the languages programme, and such support is obviously important for successful programmes. However, the causal link between community support and school support is an uncertain one, as a successful language programme can generate community support for the programme, while strong community support for a language programme can encourage school support. It is possible, however, to argue that school support has a particularly important role as it is in the school that many of the factors that contribute to quality programmes are actually played out, while community support reflects a backdrop against which decisions are argued and justified.

14.3.2 Factors Inhibiting Language Education in Australia

Factors that inhibit language education in Australia also play out at both macrolevels and microlevels. Policy itself, which has been argued to have had a positive effect on languages,
also has an inhibiting effect. In particular, where policies are weak or unclear language programmes tend to be more vulnerable or less well developed.

Language programmes tend to be stronger in jurisdictions that mandate languages than in jurisdictions that do not. However, there is a core problem of accountability for policy goals that affects all jurisdictions. In places where language study is mandated, some schools may continue not to offer languages or may discontinue their language programmes. Where this is the case, there appear to be few consequences for such schools and the school leadership. This means that mandating languages is a problematic practice as mandating language study does not equate with an obligation to provide languages and failure to provide a language is not taken to represent a short-fall in school performance. In jurisdictions where the formulation of the requirement for language study is weaker, the provision of languages tends to be correspondingly lower and the programmes are more vulnerable to being discontinued.

Policy statements about the types of programmes that should be offered in schools tend to be weaker than those about whether languages are to be offered. Most policies imply that any language programme meets the requirement for language study and policies do not usually consider the quality of the programme that should be provided to meet the requirement. At most policies make recommendations about time allocations to language programmes, but such macrolevel recommendations do not seem to become microlevel practices in many instances. For example, in Victoria, which recommends 150 minutes of language study per week, some primary schools provide only 30 minutes or one-fifth of the recommended allocation. Again, divergence from recommendations about time allocations or other programme features do not seem to have implications for the evaluation of schools and school leaders. Recently some jurisdictions have seen learning standards as a way of dealing with language provision – that is, schools are required to ensure that students achieve certain levels of ability in the language by a certain time. At this stage it is difficult to discern whether such a strategy will be successful, but again it is not certain that there will be consequences for schools not meeting the targets (although there may be consequences for perceptions of teachers themselves when their students cannot achieve at required levels because they have not been timetabled for adequate time on task to meet those levels).

Policy changes can also introduce a lack of clarity into the policy process as changes in policy may be seen as cancelling out earlier requirements if they are less precise than the policy being replaced. For example, the removal of time allocations for languages in the Northern Territory policy was viewed by many people as the removal of a requirement to offer languages. Where there is a lack of clarity in a policy it appears that many school communities will adopt an interpretation of the minimal level of requirement unless they have a strong local commitment to languages that is not dependent on policy in the first place.

If Australian policies are considered collectively rather than individually, there is a diversity in the ways that languages are viewed within education that is potentially problematic for the success of policies. Australian policies do not give the same space to languages through the years of schooling, they do not construct languages as having the same place in the curriculum, and they do not give the same value to language learning in education. This sends a problematic mixed message to the wider community. If not all Australian governments think languages education is equally valuable, relevant, or legitimate, then the value, relevance, and legitimacy of languages education is contestable on the basis of the range of policy responses. Even though there is a nationally agreed statement on the nature and purpose of language learning in National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008, the diversity in policy responses undermines the value of such an agreed position as there is no clear and unambiguous message being sent about languages.
Associated with the policy issues is a further problem for developing languages education: this is the diversity of languages provision in Australia. The variations in duration of learning, time allocation for learning, timetabling, etc., mean that, while some programmes achieve very good results many others achieve comparatively poor results. The causes of the diversity of outcomes is not well understood outside the language teaching profession itself, although they are nonetheless clear – achievement in languages correlates very closely with time on task – and this lack of understanding affects understandings of teacher quality, programme quality, and educational value in problematic ways.

A lack of qualified teachers is also an inhibitor for policy – a language education policy cannot be implemented unless there are people to teach languages. The problem of teacher supply is in part a policy problem in that there is little effective policy to address the teacher shortage or to ensure that teacher education programmes address the needs of teachers qualified to teach languages at primary school. However, the issue of teaching personnel is much more complicated than just teacher education as problems remains even if there are potential teachers. These problems relate to the ways in which teachers are employed – casualisation, multiple short-term contracts, lack of career paths, lack of security, etc. – and also to the conditions in which teachers are required to work – lack of teaching space, marginalisation in the school community, in decision-making, planning, and communication, (unpaid) travel requirements, limited access to paid release time for planning and marking, lack of valuing in the school (particularly the lack of value that is associated with being the ‘release’, ‘non-instruction time’, or ‘duties other than teaching’ teacher, which constructs languages as a ‘filler’ while the real teacher is absent from the classroom. Such issues have an impact on both recruitment and teaching.

Attitudes to languages education also play a role as a policy inhibitor. In Australia generally languages are not thought of as a standard part of education by many people but rather as an added extra, something that is good to have but not necessary. Such attitudes affect the context, both in and out of schools, within which languages are taught and learnt. One reason that the take up of languages by schools has been problematic is that there is no general perception that schools should offer languages or that schools without a language programme do not offer as complete an education to their students. Although some parts of the community support languages education and expect their schools to provide languages, many people in Australia do not think this way. This means that the main driver for languages programmes in schools is policy rather than public opinion. If policy does not address the indifference of parts of the Australian community, the result will be a qualitatively different education offering different opportunities and possibilities being provided to those who live in communities which support language learning and those which do not.

The final inhibiting factor for languages education is the dissipation of effort that has come about in much work in developing languages education in the past. With education divided among many jurisdictions the result has been that much time and money have been devoted to developing resources, curriculum, professional development programmes, etc., in multiple sites in the various jurisdictions. This means that the limited resources available for languages may be spent in multiple similar projects rather than concentrating resources and expertise to develop these in a co-ordinated an efficient way. This does not mean that such projects cannot respond to or be adapted to local needs, but rather that such projects need to be designed collaboratively to be flexible responses to a range of needs.
14.4 Recommendations

14.4.1 Recommendations to MCEETYA

Recommendation 1: That MCEETYA extend the National Statement and Plan for Languages in Australian Schooling for a further quadrennium in order to continue national collaboration in languages and to address further the areas of need identified in the Plan.

Explanation: The National Statement and Plan for Languages in Australian Schooling has begun to address some of the goals identified but has not yet been able to address these in systematic ways or to address many of the activities indicated in the plan. A further quadrennium is needed for the work now being undertaken to be consolidated and for the outcomes of this work to be developed further.

Recommendation 2: That the MCEETYA working party investigate models for co-ordinating national collaboration in languages for the development of curriculum, materials, professional learning, etc., and as a resource for policy advice, and conduct a feasibility study into a selection of models.

Explanation: The dissipation of effort involved in parallel development of curriculum, materials, and professional learning programmes has been identified as one of the problems for the sustainability of languages education in Australia. Collaboration in this area would allow limited resources to be used more effectively.

Recommendation 3: That, on the basis of Recommendation 11 below, the MCEETYA working party undertake collaborative action to develop language-specific curricula.

Explanation: In many States and Territories languages curriculum documents are generic and the translation of the documents into language-specific curricula for classroom use tends to be done in an ad hoc way. There is a need for both generic and language-specific curricula for languages. Given the recent moves to develop national curriculum standards, the collaborative development of such curricula should be a high priority in Australia.

Recommendation 4: That MCEETYA actively address the issue of teacher education in the area of languages, especially in primary school education, and develop models of teacher education that include languages as a key learning area for teachers.

Explanation: Language teacher supply has been identified as one of the key problems facing languages in the primary school. This review and the Review of Teacher Education for Language Teachers have both identified the existing models of primary teacher education as contributing to the problem of supply. The problem was also identified in the Languages at the Crossroads report in 1993 (Nicholas et al., 1993) and in the Language Teachers: The Pivot of Policy report in 1996 (NBEET, 1996); however, to date the problem of teacher education has not been addressed in any systematic way.

Recommendation 5: That MCEETYA investigate the current provision of pre-service and inservice teacher education programmes for overseas-educated native speakers and consider how to address needs that are not being met.

Explanation: The use of native speakers for language teaching has commonly been put forward as one way of addressing the shortage of language teachers. However, there are also significant problems for such teachers in Australian classrooms that
result from the current approaches to teacher education for preparing such teachers for teaching in the Australian context.

**Recommendation 6:** That MCEETYA explicitly include in any national strategy for workforce planning the employment of language teachers which addresses the problems in terms of employment, career paths, and working conditions.

**Explanation:** The attrition of qualified languages teachers from languages education contributes to the problems of supply. This attrition is explained at least in part by the problems that characterise the ways in which language teachers are employed and the resulting impact this has on their job security, career paths, and on the conditions many teachers face in schools.

**Recommendation 7:** That MCEETYA explicitly include in any national strategy for workforce planning data collection to aid workforce planning for languages education, including the age profile of language teachers and potential retirements from teaching, the numbers of teachers employed full time, part time, and on short-term casual contracts, the number of contracts per teacher, rates of turnover and attrition, and the number of qualified language teachers employed but not teaching languages.

**Explanation:** It is significant that there is no consistent data collection in Australia that can identify the number of qualified language teachers, which languages they teach, the nature of their employment, attrition rates (especially where teachers move into other learning areas), or how many qualified language teachers are not employed in language teaching. Without this information, it is impossible to develop any approach to workforce planning, as this is the core information on which any planning needs to be based.

**Recommendation 8:** That MCEETYA develop as a long-term strategy a coherent, systematic, nationally agreed languages education policy. The policy should establish national agreement on a number of dimensions including, but not limited to:

A: The policy should be nationally agreed, but allow for adaptation to State/Territory and local context, with principles to guide such adaptation.

B: The policy should take into consideration the following:

- the place and status of languages in the school curriculum
- the normal duration of languages learning during compulsory schooling
- appropriate time allocations for achieving desired levels of learning
- teacher education, especially for primary schooling
- teacher recruitment and workforce planning
- teachers’ employment conditions
- curriculum, with a focus on the cohesion of curriculum and the relationship between generic and language-specific curricula
- assessment, with a focus on assessment innovation that addresses alternative approaches to assessment
- quality assurance
- national collaborations with commitment to harnessing the best available expertise to sustain and develop the diversity of languages that make languages education in Australia meaningful and distinctive
- research and development
• funding allocations
• monitoring and evaluation of the policy.

C: The policy should be systematically monitored and evaluated during its implementation to track changes in languages provision and programme quality.

D: The policy should also include the establishment of a broadly based national committee to advise on the implementation of the policy, the research and development agenda, decisions about projects and future directions, and evaluation. The committee should include high-level representatives of jurisdictions, professional associations, language educators and researchers, and deans of education.

E: The policy should run for 10 years with a substantive review at the end of this period as a basis for refocusing and renegotiation.

Explanation: Language policy in Australia has consistently failed to achieve its objectives. Part of the problem is the lack of a coherent approach to languages across Australia to reflect the status of languages as a key learning area. Policy has tended to address only parts of the complex situation of languages in Australia and this lack of systematicity in addressing languages education has tended to mean that many policy goals have been unrealised because they have been addressed in isolation from the other factors affecting the state and nature of languages in schools. Policy has tended to be short term with changing focuses. The effectiveness of language education policies needs to be evaluated in systematic ways to ensure that the goals of policy are met and that the investment made in languages is achieving the desired results. Evaluation can allow policy to be fine-tuned to emerging issues.

14.4.2 Recommendations to DEEWR

Recommendation 9: That DEEWR continue to support national projects for a further quadrennium and increase the proportion of the School Languages Element allocated to national programmes to 10% of total funding to reflect the increased level of national collaboration in languages which is being developed and which needs to be sustained.

Explanation: The national projects funded by DEEWR under the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008 have had considerable impact on the area of languages and have led to genuine collaborative achievement. This work has been the most significant activity in languages in recent years. Increasing funding to projects would allow for this impact to be increased and for the range of projects to be diversified.

Recommendation 10: That as a next step to developing the state of languages in Australian schooling, DEEWR develop and fund a large-scale national assessment project to investigate what students can realistically be expected to acquire through the programme types that currently exist.

Explanation: One of the fundamental pieces of information that is lacking in Australian language planning is an understanding of what learning can be achieved through the wide diversity of programme types currently found in Australian schooling. This means that language programmes are developed and planned without any real consideration of learning, and decisions are made in relation to factors other than learning. An assessment project is needed to undertake baseline testing across
languages and programme types to establish what learning can be expected from the various programmes offered at present in Australian schools and for a range of languages. The focus of the project should be an assessment system that provides baseline data on what is achievable for different degrees/intensities of exposure and to build evidence of actual student learning matched to programme time. The project should assess exit levels at Years 6/7, Year 10, and Year 12 through two iterations over a period of 3 to 5 years. Concurrently and in conjunction with the development of baseline data the project should include a series of school-based investigations to develop models and process for formative assessment and to develop resources for developing teachers’ understanding of assessment in a range of programme types.

**Recommendation 11:** That DEEWR develop and fund a national project to identify common elements in languages curricula, syllabuses, and resources across States and Territories and identify how these can be used more effectively as a basis for national collaboration.

**Explanation:** The report has identified similarities and differences between States and Territories in a number of dimensions of languages education. As a starting point for further national collaboration it is desirable to have a detailed account of what these similarities and differences are and how they can be used for further development of national collaboration.

### 14.4.3 Recommendations to State and Territory jurisdictions

**Recommendation 12:** That States and Territories support national collaboration for the next quadrennium by undertaking projects to complement initiatives from the Australian Government.

**Explanation:** The National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008 is an agreed plan for all States and Territories as well as for the Australian Government. To date, the most effective support for the activities identified in the plan has come from the Australian Government’s national projects. There is a need for State and Territory work to complement the national level work.

**Recommendation 13:** That State and Territory jurisdictions develop more effective strategies to ensure that current and future language education policy is implemented in schools. Such strategies may take the form of inclusion of language programme quality in terms of continuity and time on task in performance management for leaders, incentives for schools maintaining high-quality language programmes or demonstrably improving programme quality.

**Explanation:** Language policy has often failed to achieve its objectives because it has not been implemented and there are few accountability measures that gauge whether policy objectives are being met by schools. It may be the case that even where languages are mandated by States and Territories, this does not mean that all schools offer a language or that all students study a language and there are no consequences for schools that do not offer the full curriculum of eight KLAs to their students or for those who offer limited educational programmes with only tokenistic inclusion of languages.

**Recommendation 14:** That State and Territory jurisdictions address the issues of employment conditions for languages teachers, including the impact of short-term contracts, part-
time positions, career paths and itinerancy, which are currently working as barriers to staffing language programmes and retaining teachers.

**Explanation:** Employment conditions are one of the key problems facing language teachers, especially those in primary schools. Teachers’ conditions, security, and career paths are recurring problems for teachers and limit the effectiveness of their work. Conditions also work against attracting people to language teaching and retaining teachers in language teaching.

**Recommendation 15:** That State and Territory jurisdictions develop a collaborative approach to developing syllabuses for background speakers at senior secondary level, e.g. along the lines of CCAFL, to ensure that syllabuses respond to a range of background speaker needs.

**Explanation:** The area of languages education provision that shows the most diversity in Australia is the provision of courses for background speakers. In some States and Territories, there is no separate curriculum for background speakers, even for those languages for which there is a high level of demand. In those places which do have background speaker syllabuses, the criteria vary dramatically with the result that background speakers may be discouraged from taking courses because of the wide range of proficiency levels grouped together as ‘background’ knowledge of a language, or native-speaker students may be enrolled in second language learning programmes that do not meet their learning needs.
### Appendix 1: Interview Protocol

#### General questions (for all groups)
- What is your perception of the current state of languages education?
- What sorts of things do you see happening in language education at the moment?
- What do you think has changed in the ways in which languages are taught?
- What do you think needs to change in the way languages are taught?
- What problems do you see in the ways in which languages are being taught at the moment?
- What do you think is the impact of language learning on students?
- What do you think is the value of language education for students?
- What factors do you think influence languages education in Australia? (positive or negative influences)
- What factors do you think affect the success of languages education in your school/system?
- What directions do you think languages education needs to take in schools?

#### Additional questions for specific groups

**For system representatives**
- What is the current state of language policy for education in schools? What documents shape language education in your system?
  - What are the expectations placed on schools for delivering languages?
  - What gaps can be identified between policy for languages and actual practice in schools (e.g. choice, duration, amount of contact, continuity)?
- What is the current profile of language teachers in the system (e.g. age, background-non-background speakers, experience, etc.)?
  - What issues are there for teacher supply in languages in general and/or in specific languages?
  - What strategies are in place to recruit language teachers?
  - What procedures are in place for registering languages teachers?
- What system level support is available for languages education?
- What resources/curriculum support is available for languages education?
- What professional development is available for languages teachers?
  - What models of delivery are used?
  - What do you think are the most important needs?
  - What are the likely future directions for languages in your school?

**For language teachers associations**
- What is the current state of language policy for education in schools?
  - What are the real expectations placed on schools for delivering languages?
  - What gaps can be identified between policy for languages and actual practice in schools (e.g. choice, duration, amount of contact, continuity)?
- How would you describe the conditions for the languages teacher and programme in your school?
- What are the factors which strengthen or limit language programmes in your school?
- What system level support is available for languages education?
- What school level support is available for languages education?
- What resources/curriculum support is available for languages education?
- What professional development is available for languages teachers?
  - What models of delivery are used?
  - What do you think are the most important needs?
  - What are the likely future directions for languages in your school?

**For school leaders associations**
- What is the current state of language policy for education in schools?
  - What are the real expectations placed on schools for delivering languages?
  - What gaps can be identified between policy for languages and actual practice in schools (e.g. choice, duration, amount of contact, continuity)?
- What issues are there for teacher supply in languages in general and/or in specific languages?
  - What strategies are in place to retain language teachers?
- How would you describe the conditions for the languages teacher and programme in your school?
- What school level support is available for languages education?
- What resources/curriculum support is available for languages education?
- What professional development is available for school leaders about languages education?
  - What do you think are the most important needs?
  - What are the likely future directions for languages in your school?

**For parents groups**
- What are the factors which strengthen or limit language programmes in schools?
- What are the likely future directions for languages education in schools?
## Appendix 2: Languages Taught in Australia

Non-Indigenous languages reported as taught in Australian Government, Catholic, Independent, and Ethnic schools, 2005

Data not available from all sectors. List includes Auslan.

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Indigenous languages reported as taught in Australian Government, Catholic, and Independent schools, 2005

Data not available from all sectors — in particular, of States with strong Indigenous populations and focus, Queensland Government lacked Indigenous data, no Queensland Catholic, no Northern Territory Independent, no Western Australia Catholic. Four State-sectors just had ‘Indigenous’; one had listing of languages which included some Indigenous languages, but also had ‘other Indigenous’ category. No Indigenous languages currently taught in ethnic schools. List excludes Auslan.

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### Languages reported as taught in Australian Ethnic schools, 2005

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**Total** | 1,645 | 29,989 | 5,080 | 8,526 | 272 | 34,645 | 80,157 |

Figures are for all places in ethnic schools not just funded places.

Language names:
1. Mandarin or unspecified Chinese
2. also includes Sinhalese
3. also includes Farsi
4. also includes Cambodian
5. also includes Bengali
6. also includes Tagalog
7. also includes Madi
8. also includes Gujerati
Appendix 4: Quality Assurance: Multiple Measures of Data

[Diagram showing interrelated measures of quality assurance]

Tells us: What processes/programs work best for different groups of students with respect to student learning.

Tells us: If a program is making a difference in student learning results.

Tells us: Over time, interrelated student learning data give information about student performance on different measures.

Tells us: If groups of students are "experiencing school" differently.

Tells us: The impact of the program on student learning based upon perceptions of the program and on the processes used.

Tells us: The impact of demographic factors and attitudes about the learning environment on student learning.

Tells us: Over time, perceptions can tell us about environmental improvements.

Over time, interrelating data indicate changes in the context of the school.

Over time, shows how classrooms change.

Enrollment, Attendance, Drop-Out Rate, Ethnicity, Gender, Grade Level

Perceptions of Learning Environment, Attitudes, Objectives

Standardized Tests, Norm-Criterion-Referenced Tests, Teacher Observations, Authentic Assessments

Description of School Programs and Processes

Perceptions

Student Learning

School Processes

Demographics


(Source: Bernhardt, 1998)
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