

MSR TRACKING NUMBER:	MIN09/1009
Due date to Director: [to be completed by Director's EA]	31/9/09
Line area due date to MSR: (MSR to complete)	1/9/09
Senior executive due date to MSR: (MSR to complete)	
Date due in Minister's office: (MSR to complete)	
Official Department file reference: (Line area to complete)	2009/00549

**Title: LANGUAGES IN SCHOOLS**

**Response by: CS&PL**

**PRIMARY Contact: Marianne McCormack**

*Please list the names of the officers who have prepared and/or cleared the brief/response. Each box in the check list should be marked with either Yes (Y) or No (N).*

Action Officer	Date Received	CHECK LIST (Y/N)				Date Cleared	Initial
		Format	Issues	Grammar Spelling	Figures		
Trish Wilks	31/8/09					31/8/09	TW
Kristina Collins	31/8/09	Y	Y	Y	Y	31/8/09	KC
Michael Kindler	31/8/09	Y	Y	Y	Y	31/8/09	MK
Kristina Collins	31/8/09	Y	Y	Y	Y	31/8/09	KC
Trisha Benson	31/8/09	Y	Y	Y	Y	01.09.09	TB
Kristina Collins	01.09.09	Y	Y	Y	Y	01.09.09	KC
Trisha Benson	01.09.09	Y	Y	Y	Y	01.09.09	TB
Trish Wilks	01.09.09	Y	Y	Y	Y	01.09.09	TW
Kristina Collins	01.09.09	Y	Y	Y	Y	02.09.09	KC
Trisha Benson	02.09.09	Y	Y	Y	Y	02.09.09	TB
Trish Wilks	02.09.09	Y	Y	Y	Y	02.09.09	TW
DET Govt Relations	02.09.09	✓	✓	✓		3/9/09	
DCE	8/9					8/9	

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COMPLETED

17.9.09



Education and Training

File Ref: 2009/005489

**Minister for Education and Training**

**LANGUAGES PROGRAMS IN ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Recommendation**

That you note the information in this brief.

NOTED/PLEASE DISCUSS

- contact with P&C
- regular DET column in their newsletter

DET meeting with Minister 21 September 09

Andrew Barr MLA

Director: Ms Trish Wilks

16 / 9 / 2009

Phone: 6205 9205

**Purpose**

To provide information about languages in schools following the publication of an article by the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations (the Council) in their September 2009 issue of *Feedback* entitled 'Languages Commitment Undelivered' (Attachment A).

**Background**

In February 2008, you announced the Government's intention to require all ACT public schools to offer a languages program to all students from year 3 to year 8 by 2010. Primary schools would be required to offer languages education for a minimum of 60 minutes per week in years 3-6. High schools would be required to offer languages for 150 minutes per week in years 7-8.

The 2008-09 ACT Budget provided \$300,000 over three years, 2008-09 to 2010-11, to support the introduction of this initiative.

The Department developed a three-year plan to outline the elements of support that would be provided to schools under this initiative. The Department's *Languages Support Plan 2008-2010* has as its clear aim, to ensure all schools will be equipped to offer a languages program for the beginning of the 2011 school year (Attachment B).

In 2009, the Department released a new policy, *ACT Curriculum Requirements in ACT Public Schools, Preschool to year 10* (Attachment C) which outlines requirements for implementation of the new ACT curriculum framework and related curriculum issues. Included in this policy is the Government's requirement for implementation of languages in years 3-8. The policy states that all requirements are to be fully implemented in schools by the end of 2010.

## Issues

### Implementation timeline

The article in the September 2009 issue of *Feedback* (Attachment A), suggests that your commitment for all ACT public schools to offer a language program from years 3-8 by 2010 will not be met. The Council's view is that your commitment requires full implementation and delivery of all languages programs for the start of the 2010 school year.

This was never your intention, nor that of the Department.

As stated in the Department's *Languages Support Plan 2008-2010* (Attachment B), we have been working with schools towards having all languages programs prepared and in place by the end of 2010. The Department is working closely with schools in their planning by supporting a model of additional resourcing for primary schools in their first two years of program implementation. This plan is on track to deliver full implementation for the 2011 school year.

The interpretation of 'by 2010' to mean 'by the end of 2010' was made clear to all parties, including the Council, since your announcement in 2008. For example, the Department provided an article for the November 2008 edition of *Feedback* (Attachment D), which clearly states implementation is a three-year process with all schools having a program by the start of 2011. The Council were also part of the consultation process in 2008 for the development of the Department's policy on *Curriculum Requirements in ACT Public Schools, Preschool to year 10*, which reiterates this timeline.

### Progress of school implementation

All high schools are already operating a languages program with full implementation of the new policy requirements on target for the start of 2011.

Most primary schools have also already met the languages requirements, while others are advertising for language teachers in the 2009 recruitment round.

The 13 schools that Council has listed in the September issue of *Feedback* as not having a languages program in 2010 is incorrect and based on outdated information.

We expect there will be only two primary schools that have not planned to commence a languages program for the 2010 school year. They are Majura and Weetangerra.

These schools will be involved in the planning phase in 2010 with delivery of the program commencing in 2011. The Department is working closely with these schools to ensure planning is underway to meet the policy requirements and that sustainable quality programs are implemented.

### Teacher availability

The specific languages program offered by each school is dependent upon staffing. Primary schools are being encouraged to work with their feeder high schools to ensure alignment and continuity of languages programs within school clusters.

The Department is working with external agencies and higher education providers to develop the capacity within the ACT education system to ensure a supply of qualified language

teachers in our schools. Recruitment for the languages teachers required in 2010 has commenced as part of this year's normal recruitment process. At this stage we do not anticipate being unable to fill the required positions.

**Funding Implications**

Nil.

**Consultation**

Nil.

**Media**

Nil



Janet Davy  
Deputy Chief Executive  
8 September 2009

## LANGUAGES SUPPORT PLAN 2008-2010

### Background

ACT Government funding from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Appropriation Bill will provide extra funds to support all public primary and high schools to provide a languages program by 2010. An additional \$300,000 has been committed over the next three years to provide high quality interactive language training for primary school teachers and language teachers to ensure quality programs for students.

### Objectives of the support plan

From 2008-2010, the Department will offer a range of support to schools and teachers to strengthen the provision of languages education in ACT public schools. The main objectives of this support plan are to:

- improve the quality of language delivery by providing targeted programs of professional development and web-based teaching support resources for language teachers
- offer a range of staffing and resourcing models whereby students who begin the study of a language in primary years are able to continue the study of the same language into high school
- liaise with local universities to offer courses to upskill teachers delivering languages programs in primary schools.
- provide schools not currently offering languages programs with additional resources and support to assist them to introduce languages in their school
- network with local, national and international educators of modern languages to ensure best practice in ACT public schools.

### Key elements of support

#### 1. Policy Requirements

All public schools will be required to implement a languages program to all students from year 3 to year 8 by the end of 2010. This will be in addition to any languages programs already on offer in the early years and in years 9-10.

Primary schools will be required to teach languages for a minimum of 60 minutes per week for all students in years 3-6 (40 hours per year).

High schools will be required to teach languages for a minimum of 150 minutes per week (or the equivalent of one timetable line) for students in years 7-8. Students must study the same language in both Years 7 and 8.

All language programs will be focused on language acquisition not solely cultural programs.

Languages programs in ACT schools will focus on the following eight priority languages: French, German, Italian, Spanish, Indonesian, Japanese, Chinese and Korean.

#### 2. Professional learning

In 2008, professional learning programs will be offered to language teachers and curriculum leaders in the following areas:

- planning teaching programs for languages using the new ACT curriculum framework, *Every chance to learn*
- intercultural language teaching and learning – these workshops will focus on the implementation of the ELA *Communicating with intercultural* understanding which

highlights the fact that in true intercultural communication at least some participants are operating in their second or subsequent language.

- Introducing languages in the primary school – these workshops will be designed to strengthen languages pedagogy, language content and the use of ICT
- how to use The Learning Federation's learning objects in languages programs.

The Department will work closely with the University of Canberra and ANU to increase access for teachers to courses in primary languages methodology.

Teachers will also have access to a number of scholarship programs:

- Two places have been allocated for languages teachers to complete a Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies – Quality Teaching at Newcastle University
- In-country scholarships offered by the Japan Foundation, Goethe Institute and embassies will be publicised and made available by the Department.

There are eight language networks operating in the ACT: Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean and Spanish. Each network has a leader who is responsible for a small operating budget mainly used for relief days and to engage presenters for language specific professional learning for teachers in their language group. Additional funding will be allocated to provide release time for network leaders to give language specific support to teachers.

### **3. Resources**

In 2008, schools will have the opportunity to apply for grants of up to \$5 000 to assist them to purchase quality teaching resources for languages. Grant applications must address the following criteria:

- deliver quality approaches to language learning, including integration of information technology
- promote language specific innovation and excellence in teaching and learning, including the use of web based materials.

Schools establishing a new languages program will also receive a one off resources grant of \$1 000.

All schools will be provided with high quality languages resources. The Department is currently liaising with the Centre for Learning Innovation in the NSW Department of Education and Training to obtain site licences for their interactive primary school languages CD-ROMS.

### **4. Staffing**

The Department will provide targeted support in the way of professional development and mentors to encourage teachers into language teaching. Teachers targeted will be those with content knowledge but limited pedagogical skills and those with limited language skills and requiring additional content knowledge.

Schools beginning a languages program will also receive ten staffing points (five per year over two years) to assist with the development of curriculum and structures for integrating the teaching of languages into their school plans and to support cluster networks.

Schools will be supported to work in clusters to plan for continuity of languages provision from primary to high school. Different models of staffing will be explored to encourage and support continuity of languages programs.

**Budget**

Funding for languages comes from two sources: the Australian Government's School Languages Program Funds (SLP) and the ACT Government.

ACT Government funding will be targeted at providing the intensive professional learning to build the capacity of principals and language teachers to implement the plan, additional staffing points for schools, interactive resources and scholarships.



Education and Training

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**SCHOOL POLICY:** CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS IN ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS,  
PRESCHOOL TO YEAR 10

**PUBLISHED:** 2009

**IDENTIFIER:** CRIAPS200903

**LEGISLATION:** Education Act 2004

## 1 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 The curriculum requirements for students attending ACT public schools (other than in years 11 and 12) are set out in *Every chance to learn: Curriculum framework for ACT schools, preschool to year 10* (the curriculum framework). Schools are to plan curriculum and develop teaching and learning programs that address these curriculum requirements.
- 1.2 Schools will fully implement the curriculum framework in their curriculum plans and teaching and learning programs, preschool to year 10, by the end of 2010.

## 2 RATIONALE

- 2.1 Student learning and development are at the centre of a school's curriculum. The aim of curriculum is to develop students as learners and as people, empowering them with the knowledge, understandings, capabilities and values to participate as active members of their community and society.
- 2.2 This policy accords with the *Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians (2008)* specifically:
  - Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence, and
  - all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens.
- 2.3 Under Section 30 of the *Education Act 2004* (the Act,) the Chief Executive determines the curriculum requirements for students attending public schools (other than in years 11 and 12). These requirements include the framework of the curriculum and the principles on which the curriculum is based.
- 2.4 Under Section 39 of the Act, one of the functions of the school board of a public school is to develop, maintain and review curriculum for the school.
- 2.5 This policy describes how the curriculum framework will be implemented in school curriculum plans and teaching and learning programs in ACT public schools.

(*Every chance to learn, 2008*, p. 9 -11), and cover the essential content specified under the 25 Essential Learning Achievements (ELAs) in the curriculum framework.

- 4.1.2 Schools are responsible for deciding how they will organise their curriculum to maximise opportunities for students to access learning in the ELAs. Schools, in consultation with their school boards, may also identify additional content for some or all of their students to include in school curriculum plans and teaching and learning programs.
- 4.1.3 School curriculum plans will indicate the scope and sequence of planned teaching and learning against the requirements of the curriculum framework.
- 4.1.4 Teaching and learning programs based on the curriculum framework:
- are to be provided for each year of schooling
  - will address the needs of all students and be appropriate for the age and band of development
  - will indicate the intended outcomes of the learning, the teaching activities planned and the assessment strategies to be used.

#### **4.2 Pedagogy and assessment**

- 4.2.1 Schools will use the Quality Teaching model of pedagogy, adapted from NSW for use in ACT schools, to underpin the implementation of the curriculum framework.
- 4.2.2 School leaders should use the ACT Quality Teaching model to focus professional discussion and critical reflection on classroom and assessment practices in their school as they implement the curriculum framework.
- 4.2.3 Teachers use a variety of assessment approaches and strategies to assist them to plan, guide and implement learning in their classrooms.
- 4.2.4 Teachers gather evidence for learning and exercise sound interpretation and judgement whether the purpose is to make formative assessments of student learning (assessment for learning), or summative assessments of student learning (assessment of learning).

#### **4.3 Preschool to year 6 requirements**

- 4.3.1 Teaching and learning programs from preschool to year 6 must incorporate the essential content for the relevant band of development from the curriculum framework.
- 4.3.2 All students within each band of development must have opportunities to learn the essential content in each of the 25 ELAs.
- 4.3.3 Schools have flexibility in how they implement their curriculum plans and deliver their teaching and learning programs, provided that:
- the preschool year has a play-based learning environment with a focus on the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of the individual student
  - priority is given each day to the development of literacy and numeracy skills from preschool to year 6

*Every chance to learn: Curriculum framework for ACT schools preschool to year 10 (2007)*

*Get a move on: the importance of school-based initiatives to increase children's physical activity (2007)*

*Languages support plan (2008 - 2010)*

*Physical Education and Sport draft policy (2008)*

*Quality teaching in ACT schools: a classroom practice guide (2008)*

*Quality teaching in ACT schools: an assessment practice guide (2008)*

# FEEDBACK

Journal of the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations Inc.  
*Linking Parents & Education*

Issue 5, November 2008









# Languages Matter

By Trish Wilks  
Director  
Curriculum Support and Professional Learning, DET

**M**any parents will have studied a language at school, especially a European one, as languages have been a part of the school curriculum for many years. However, language teaching has changed with the advent of new technologies and the impact these have had on communication. Students are able to relate their learning to real life situations through interactive activities and can easily communicate in their classrooms with other students across the world through the World Wide Web.

Today, the need for language learning in schools has never been greater. We live in a globalised world and our students will work in a world where the ability to speak another language and to understand other cultures will be important. Australia is becoming more multicultural with a large percentage of our population being born overseas and many others coming from a linguistically diverse background. Our society's multicultural nature is enhanced through intercultural understanding, and the study of a language provides a good foundation for understanding other cultures.

To keep pace with these changes, in early 2008 Minister for Education and Training Andrew Barr announced funding for a Languages Support Strategy to be implemented in ACT public schools over the next three years. The strategy was developed to complement implementation of the new ACT curriculum framework, *Every Chance to Learn*.

As part of the strategy, Minister Barr announced the Government's commitment to support public schools to offer a languages program for all students from year 3 to year 8 by 2011. This will be in addition to any languages programs already on offer in the early years and in years 9-10. Under the new requirements, primary schools will offer languages for a minimum of 60 minutes per week in years 3-6. High schools will be required to offer languages for 150 minutes per week in years 7-8.

These requirements will establish the ACT as a

national leader in acknowledging the essential role languages play in preparing our students for participation in the globalised economy of the 21st century.

Currently there are eight main languages taught in ACT schools – the four European languages of French, Italian, Spanish and German; and the four Asian languages of Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian and Korean. Under the new strategy, these eight languages will continue to be supported and given priority for support.

Recently the Australian Government recognised the importance of the four Asian languages. Education systems across all jurisdictions have committed to increasing the percentage of students reaching fluency in Asian Languages by 2020.

## The way forward

Maximising opportunities for continuity of language learning is a key element of the Government's strategy. Many primary schools already offer some form of languages program and all high schools offer languages in their curriculum. Under this new strategy, schools are working more closely as clusters, to ensure that the language offered at primary school will be available at the local high school and from there to college.

While it is not possible to support the study of all languages represented in Canberra's multicultural community in schools, the ACT Ethnic Schools Association provides language schools, at nights and weekends, in many languages for over 2,000 students.

Other key elements of the Languages Support Strategy relate to teacher supply, professional learning and resources.

Teacher supply will be addressed through:

- a recruitment strategy
- new accredited courses to support both new and existing teachers who are interested in teaching a language.

(continued on next page)

## Languages Matter

*(continued from previous page)*

Teachers' professional learning will be strengthened through:

- in-country scholarships
- language specific networks
- courses on the use of new technologies.

Schools will be assisted with:

- additional staffing points for the first two years to assist schools to plan and develop a language program
- grants for teaching and learning resources and materials
- quality interactive language resources, such as CD-ROMs.

We are confident that this strategy will assist the ACT to stay at the forefront of education nationally and to provide a world class education for students in ACT public education. Parents should contact their local school to find out what plans the school has for languages education. For more information please contact the Languages Executive Officer, Ms Elizabeth Courtois. •

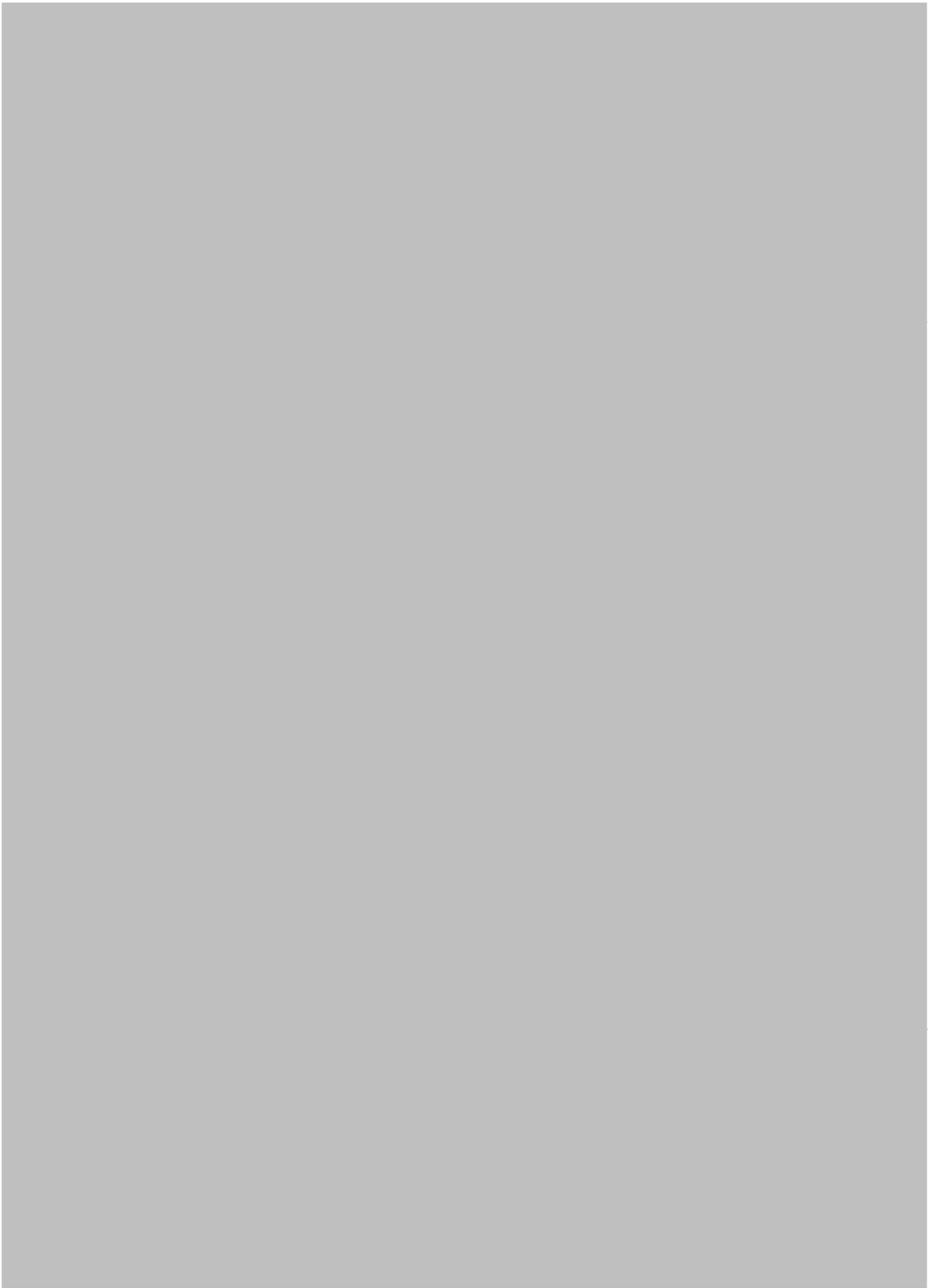
# Election Promises

In the lead up to the 2008 ACT election both the Labor Party and the Greens made important promises on school education. Set out below is a checklist of the promises made by both parties. We expect both parties to work hard to implement these promises over the next four years.

## Labor

- In 2010, it will be compulsory for all public schools to offer a language other than English program;
- \$209,000 to expand links between schools and embassies for language delivery and cultural education and to increase support for the Ethnic Schools Association;











# Action Tracking Cover Sheet

Page 1  
Date 28/08/2009  
Time 5:04:08 PM  
Login Name MARIANNE MC

**Date Due (MSR) 01/09/2009**  
**LANGUAGES IN SCHOOLS**

**MIN09/1009**

Record Type MIN

Container No.  
Primary Contact ANDREW BARR  
Business Phone 50011  
Organization EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
Record Actions - Actions Attached

Record Barcode



Action Required

Date Completed Upd?

Draft  
Resp.Of CURRICULUM SUPPORT AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

	No
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MINISTERIAL AND STRATEGIC RELATIONS  
BRIEF / CORRESPONDENCE ADVICE SLIP

RECORD 1

MINISTERIAL / CHIEF EXECUTIVE     EXTERNAL RELATIONS     URGENT

Type: *MS*    TRIM No. *53767*

Other References:    CMD No. ....

To:

- Chief Executive
- Deputy Chief Executive
- Executive Director, Schools
- Executive Director, Business Improvement Services (BIS)
  
- Manager, Ministerial and Strategic Relations
- Director, Training and Tertiary Education
- Director, Curriculum Support & Professional Learning
- Manager, Media and Communications
  
- Director, Measurement, Monitoring and Reporting
- Director, Governance, Regulation and Risk
- Director, Finance and Corporate Support
- Director, School Capital Works
  
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Copy to: DCCE

**ACTION AREA**

Please prepare a:    **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Reply for signature of:

- Chief Minister
- Minister
- Chief Executive
- Deputy Chief Executive
- Executive Director –  Schools or  BIS
- Director \_\_\_\_\_

Issues/Meeting brief for:

- Chief Minister
- Minister
- Chief Executive

Protocol brief for:

- Chief Minister
- Minister
- Chief Executive

Question

- On Notice Paper (QON)
- Taken On Notice (QTON)

Please provide dot points for a coordinated response to be prepared by Ministerial and Strategic Relations (MSR).

Item for information only.

Your MSR officer is:

- Jane Cuzner 59164     Matthew Clissold 58236     Ashley King 59163     Sheelagh Brennan 50353
- Robin Hutchison 59444     Lynette Davison 59856     Margaret O'Brien 59393
- Leah Roberts 59161     Tara Christoffersen 59155

*Please advise your MSR officer as soon as you receive the request if you are unable to meet this deadline or if you believe the item has been wrongly directed.*

*Please note 53767 speech prepared by the dept for Minister. for Languages Matter Conference DCCE.*

Officer to attend? Y/N

If yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_

Issues/information brief

Dot point speech notes required

Media release

Thank you letter     Map

**External Relations**

- Dot point brief for the  Minister
- Please use External Relations*  Chief Executive
- template in Microsoft Word*  Deputy CE
- Executive Director

**McCormack, Marianne**

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**From:** McCormack, Marianne  
**Sent:** Friday, 28 August 2009 3:26 PM  
**To:** Miller, DavidJ; Jones, David; Doolan, Fiona  
**Cc:** Cuzner, Jane; King, Ashley; Gilfedder, Stephen  
**Subject:** P&C newsletter

**Attachments:** 20090828161911992.pdf



2009082816191199  
2.pdf (179 KB)...

Davids and Fiona

Can you bring the P&C newsletter to senior executive's attention? The Minister has indicated he will require advice on this issue and also whether there are language teachers in the current recruitment round.

I will TRIM an urgent response.

Regards

Marianne McCormack  
Departmental Liaison Officer  
Education and Training  
Office of Minister Andrew Barr MLA

Tel: (02) 6205 0291  
Fax: (02) 6205 0157  
Email: marianne.mccormack@act.gov.au

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# Languages Commitment Undelivered

By Elizabeth Singer

**The ACT Minister for Education's language education promise may not be delivered on time.**

In his media release of 21 February 2008, Andrew Barr stated that

Under the ACT Government's languages in schools initiative all ACT public schools will be required to offer a languages program to all students from year 3 to year 8 by 2010. This will be in addition to language programs already offered in early and senior years of schooling.

In the previous edition of *Feedback*, Council published what it was led to believe was the Language plan to meet this promise in schools from the beginning of 2010 (*Feedback* 3/09, pp. 6-7). The publication provoked comments from parents like 'that language is not taught at my child's school', and 'my child's school has no language education'.

Further information received from the ACT Department of Education and Training has indicated that while many schools are attempting to finalise a language program, the following primary schools may not offer a language commencing in 2010:

- |              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| • Fadden     | • Majura       |
| • Florey     | • Mount Rogers |
| • Forrest    | • Ngunnawal    |
| • Gilmore    | • Taylor       |
| • Gold Creek | • Torrens      |
| • Lyneham    | • Weetangera   |
| • Macgregor  |                |

The problem appears to be a lack of available language education teachers, not a lack of desire for our schools to participate in the language education program.

In addition to this list, some of our High Schools may not be able to expand to offer the choice of a second language for the same reasons.

After looking forward to all students enrolled in

ACT Government Schools in Year 3-8 being able to benefit from language education, Council is disappointed that the promise that Minister Barr's promise of language education may not be achieved.

Council believes that 'the basic reasons that language is important to education include:

- a) exposure to a second language, its relevance and vitality;
- b) reflecting the close link between language and culture generally;
- c) increasing awareness of other people and cultures;
- d) providing a broad grounding in cultural studies;
- e) enhancing cognitive development;
- f) acceptance of other cultures in the community and appreciation of cultural practice as not foreign or inferior while allowing an opening ultimately to the expression of that culture abroad;
- g) in the case of Aboriginal languages, giving a feeling of pride and identity and curiosity in the nature of the original inhabitants and better understanding of the present Aboriginal population;
- h) allowing the cultural roots of [Non-English Speaking Background] parents to be fully valued and [Introductory English Centre] students to be better understood;
- i) stimulating the use of language generally;
- j) access to an important skill for which young children have a natural capacity, which if properly nurtured, is a stimulus to further education and curiosity. •

Council's full Policy Document can be downloaded from Council's website, at <http://www.schoolparents.canberra.net.au/docs/Policy Document Dec08.pdf>. Council Policy C5, 'Language Learning (Other than English)' can be found at pages 35-37.

**Jon Stanhope** Chief Minister, Australian Capital Territory  
Treasurer | Minister for Business and Economic Development | Minister for Indigenous Affairs | Minister for the Arts



Section: Andrew Barr, MLA | Media Releases

## DELIVERING ON LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Released 21/02/2008

13/08 21 February 2008

Around one hundred ACT school principals and teachers started further developing their language teaching skills today as part of the ACT Labor Government's extra \$300,000 commitment to provide better language education to ACT students.

Speaking at the launch of the *Language Matters!* professional development conference at Stirling today, Minister for Education and Training Andrew Barr said investing in language studies is investing in the futures of ACT students.

"Under this program ACT Government schools will provide courses in 8 focus languages being Indonesian, Japanese, Mandarin, Korean, French, German, Italian, and Spanish," Mr Barr said. "This investment will help prepare our kids for a more globalised future by equipping them to better understand and communicate with people from our closest regional neighbours and trading partners such as Indonesia, Japan, China and Korea.

"Besides helping our kids develop the skills they will need to work in various geographic locations across the globe in the future, the study of languages also has a more immediate benefit in helping children understand and appreciate the variety of cultures and traditions that make up a vibrant multicultural city such as Canberra.

Mr Barr said increasing the professional skills of language teachers is a key to delivering better language education to students.

"In order to ensure our students get the best possible language education we need to support our teachers in further developing their language teaching skills," Mr Barr said. "That's what today's conference is all about and what the ACT Government's Languages Support Plan will deliver.

Conference attendees will hear from internationally renowned experts as part of the *Language Matters!* program. Speakers include author and Professor of International Relations at La Trobe University Joseph Camilleri. Professor Camilleri is actively engaged in international research, education and advocacy on issues such as human rights and global governance reform. Professor Michael Worton of the University of London and Lindy Stirling, Studies of Asia Advisor to the Government of Western Australia will also address the conference.

Mr Barr said languages are currently offered in all public high schools and in thirty-eight out of sixty-two primary schools.

"This investment by the ACT Labor Government will help increase the professional skills of language teachers and through these teachers deliver even better quality language education to ACT students."

Under the ACT Government's languages in schools initiative all ACT public schools will be required to offer a languages program to all students from year 3 to year 8 by 2010. This will be in addition to language programs already offered in early and senior years of schooling.

In the coming years, primary schools will be required to offer languages for a minimum of 60 minutes per week for all students in years 3-6. High schools will be required to offer languages for a minimum of 150 minutes per week for students in years 7-8.

Statement Ends

Media Contact: Paul Kindermann 6205 1690 Mobile 0403 600 955 paul.kindermann@act.gov.au

[Back to Media Releases](#)


 Christoffersen, Tara

**From:** Christoffersen, Tara  
**Sent:** Monday, 31 August 2009 12:50 PM  
**To:** Education and Training 'Song, Yang '  
**Cc:** 'Benson, Trisha '; 'Wilks, Trish '  
**Subject:** URGENT - TRIM Records - MIN09/1009 - DUE 1/9/09

**Attachments:** MSR TRACKING NUMBER.DOC; 09 1009.pdf



MSR TRACKING 09 1009.pdf (345 KB)  
 JMBER.DOC (48 KB)

This TRIM location includes a TRIM coversheet, a brief/correspondence advice sheet, and a scanned copy of the incoming correspondence.

Response templates can be found in Word by selecting New from the File menu and by clicking on the DET tab.

NOTE: Please ensure the electronic clearance proforma is also completed. The proforma should be completed electronically by the action officer, manager and director. Confirmation of sign-off constitutes the name of the clearing officer and the date they cleared the material (an electronic signature is not required).

The response should be emailed to DET Govt Relations by the MSR due date.

Thanks

-----< TRIM Record Information >-----

Title : LANGUAGES IN SCHOOLS  
 Date Due (MSR) : Tuesday, 1 September 2009  
 Record Number : MIN09/1009  
 Current Location : MARIANNE MCCORMACK since Friday, 28 August 2009 at 5:02 PM  
 Current Action : Draft (Responsibility of: CURRICULUM SUPPORT AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, Due 7/09/2009 at 5:04 PM (5 Days, 4 hours, 15 minutes))

-----< TRIM Record Information >-----

Title : MSR TRACKING NUMBER:  
 Date Due (MSR) :  
 Record Number : DOC09/9855  
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Title : 09 1009  
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*Freedom of Information Act 2016*, s43(1)(d) and s45(a)

**From:** Owens, Meg  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Markoska, Isabella; EDU Languages  
**Subject:** Drafting email for Tamil language introduction into the Australian Curriculum  
**Date:** Friday, 11 February 2022 6:55:59 PM  
**Attachments:** image001.jpg

---

Dear [REDACTED]

Apologies for my delayed response, it's been a challenging start to the school year, and hope you have been keeping safe and well during this time.

I have been in touch with various stakeholders. ACARA have advised that:

The decision to add a language to the Australian Curriculum is made by the Education Council, which is a meeting of the Federal and State and Territory Education Ministers. In order for a language to be considered, it needs to be agreed to an considered in relation to other language propositions. To our knowledge, it would be the Federal Education Minister you would need to approach.

In considering new proposals for languages, state and territory jurisdictions require them to:

- Align with the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians ([http://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/national\\_declaration\\_on\\_the\\_educational\\_goals\\_for\\_young\\_australians.pdf](http://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/national_declaration_on_the_educational_goals_for_young_australians.pdf))
- Adhere to the principles and guidelines in the Shape of the Australian Curriculum (v.4 2012, or subsequent version - [http://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/The\\_Shape\\_of\\_the\\_Australian\\_Curriculum\\_v4.pdf](http://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/The_Shape_of_the_Australian_Curriculum_v4.pdf)),
- To be quality in terms of subject integrity (the knowledge, understanding and skills to be taught) and quality of learning (the depth of understanding, extent of knowledge and sophistication of skill) expected of students who have studied the content.
- To have the capacity to meet diverse student needs and interests for future study and work, and,
- To have a clear rationale for its place and purpose within the Australian Curriculum.

Further details and links to the papers mentioned can be found on the ACARA Curriculum pages:

<https://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/development-of-australian-curriculum>

Unfortunately, there are currently no plans to extend the Languages Curricula at this time. We are unable to advise you about a process to include Tamil in the Australian Curriculum in the ACT, as it doesn't exist as of yet. As you well know, it is in the BSSS curriculum.

In regard to the decisions made on Australian Curriculum languages, pages 50-51 of the consultation report provides some background on the Languages that were not able to be written at that time as an Australian Curriculum language. You can access this via the link below:

[https://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/Final\\_-\\_Languages\\_Consultation\\_Report\\_25\\_November\\_2011.pdf](https://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/Final_-_Languages_Consultation_Report_25_November_2011.pdf)

However, I do strongly recommend continuing to use the platforms Community Language Schools in the ACT offer by way of supporting the engagement with, and promotion of, Tamil amongst the Canberra community.

I hope you find this information of assistance.

Kind Regards

**Meg Owens | A/g Director** (she/her)

Phone: +61 2 6205 1262 | Email: [meg.owens@act.gov.au](mailto:meg.owens@act.gov.au)

**Universal School Support | Service Design and Delivery | Education Directorate | ACT Government**

Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning, 51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling ACT 2611 | GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601

[www.education.act.gov.au](http://www.education.act.gov.au)



*The Education Directorate acknowledges the Ngunnawal Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the ACT and region upon which we live and work.*

**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@act.edu.au>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 25 January 2022 1:07 PM

**To:** Owens, Meg <Meg.Owens@act.gov.au>

**Subject:** Re: Tamil

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the ACT Government. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Meg,

I have already approached ACARA a few times regarding this and I have been advised by

[REDACTED]  
Curriculum Specialist: Languages

Curriculum Unit

[Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority](#)

Level 13 | Tower B | Centennial Plaza | 280 Elizabeth Street | Sydney | NSW 2000

Decisions about the subjects to be included in the Australian Curriculum Learning Areas are made by federal, state and territory Education Ministers on advice from jurisdictional authorities.

I can clearly understand how complicated it is considering the number of government bodies involved in the process but still we should start somewhere. I have been working on this for a while now to find the right organisation where I can start the process.

Thank you. I really appreciate your kind cooperation and support.

Regards

On Tue, 25 Jan 2022 at 09:34, Owens, Meg <Meg.Owens@act.gov.au> wrote:

Hi [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email. It would be something you would need to raise with ACARA.

Kind regards

**Meg Owens | A/g Director** (she/her)

Phone: +61 2 6205 1262 | Email: [meg.owens@act.gov.au](mailto:meg.owens@act.gov.au)

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*The Education Directorate acknowledges the Ngunnawal Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the ACT and region upon which we live and work.*

**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@act.edu.au>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 25 January 2022 9:30 AM

**To:** Owens, Meg <Meg.Owens@act.gov.au>

**Subject:** Re: Tamil

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the ACT Government. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Meg,

Thanks for your response. The Tamil community across Australia has been working very hard to add Tamil to the Australian Curriculum. As you know the number of Tamil migrants are on the rise in many states and there is a need for the students to learn their mother tongue in a systematic manner across the country. It is essential that the younger generation know their language and culture in order to have a sense of belonging. Currently the community schools are trying to do the job with various styles and syllabus followed in each different school but many states don't recognise the courses done in the community school and students don't get the credit for the course. This discourages the students from learning their native language.

As you might already know Victoria and NSW offer Tamil from f-10 in their schools and also offer tertiary courses for Years 11 and 12. In ACT, BSSS recently added Tamil to the tertiary language curriculum and is offering Tamil for Years 11 and 12 Students.

I would like to kindly request you to point me in the right direction in what should be done to add Tamil to the Australian Curriculum.

Thank you.

Regards

On Sun, 23 Jan 2022 at 20:45, Owens, Meg <[Meg.Owens@act.gov.au](mailto:Meg.Owens@act.gov.au)> wrote:

Good evening [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email. I really appreciate you reaching out.

Currently Tamil is not offered as a language under the Australian Curriculum. Therefore it will not be a writing group. I really hope that this might change in the future.

Here is the link to the AC Languages Curricula

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/languages/>

Best regards

**Meg Owens | A/g Director** (she/her)

Phone: +61 2 6205 1262 | Email: [meg.owens@act.gov.au](mailto:meg.owens@act.gov.au)

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*The Education Directorate acknowledges the Ngunnawal Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the ACT and region upon which we live and work.*

**From:** [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@act.edu.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@act.edu.au)>

**Sent:** Sunday, 23 January 2022 8:58 AM

**To:** Owens, Meg <[Meg.Owens@act.gov.au](mailto:Meg.Owens@act.gov.au)>

**Subject:**

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the ACT Government. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Meg,

It's good to know that you are looking for expressions of interest from Public School teachers to be part of the team in writing the Australian Curriculum for certain languages. I would like to know is Tamil one of the languages where the team has already been formed or it is in the next phase of development? If the team is yet to be formed, I am keen to participate in writing Australian Curriculum for Tamil.

Thank you.  
Regards





*DISCUSSION PAPER*

# LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Education Directorate  
Service Design and Delivery

September 2022

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## Executive Summary

Canberra is a vibrant and multicultural city and remains one of the best cities to learn an additional language. Canberra is in a unique position with a large international community and many embassies. In addition to this, the higher education sector in Canberra offers extensive language education.

*The Future of Education Strategy* provides a road map for education in the ACT until 2028 and into the future. It provides the strategic framework that applies to the delivery of languages in our schools. The provision of language education is supported by the four foundations and principles of the Strategy. The four foundations of the Strategy are:

- > place students at the centre of their learning
- > empower teachers, school leaders and other professionals to meet the learning needs of all students
- > build strong communities for learning
- > strengthen systems to focus on equity with high quality language provision

The ACT delivers a world class curriculum, the *Australian Curriculum*. Languages are one of the eight learning areas under the *Australian Curriculum* and are offered in rich and diverse contexts in our classrooms.

Demand for a workforce that is culturally aware, and language proficient is increasing. The benefits of language study for ACT students include enhancement of cognitive skills and language proficiency; both being skills sought by 21<sup>st</sup> century employers.

Canberra is a unique city, with a diverse international community which actively and passionately support ACT schools, teachers and students and access to a range of embassies and consulates. This provides a range of options for leveraging language acumen but there remain challenges in language delivery in ACT public schools.

The challenges in the delivery of language programs in ACT public schools are in four themes: language policy; providing language pathways for language proficiency; optimising language expertise and delivery methods for language education.

This discussion paper examines the current context of language provision in ACT public schools. It also provides a series of observations which may inform development of a framework for language education in ACT public schools.

## Summary of Observations

The following observations reflect the challenges that have been identified through an analysis of language education provision in ACT public schools. These observations provide a starting point for further exploration of these challenges.

1: Language Policy	
1.1	Languages are required to be delivered as one of the eight learning areas under the <i>Australian Curriculum</i> but are not always delivered consistently. Mandated language minutes may impede classroom and school flexibility. Consideration should be given to whether greater flexibility in the classroom would be afforded by removing the requirement for mandated teaching minutes, whilst maintaining a mandate for language education provision.
1.2	Current language provision may not align with student uptake and demand. The languages identified as priority languages could be reconsidered to meet student and community expectations.
1.3	Broader community expectations around language education provision and leverage from local skills may not be optimised by limiting language education to the eight priority languages. Exploration and consultation could be undertaken with regard to expanding primary school languages offerings from eight to sixteen languages delivered under the <i>Australian Curriculum</i> .
1.4	Decisions to adopt a language program is made on a school-by-school basis, which can limit the continuity of language pathways available to students. Education Directorate assessment of adoption of a language program by schools would provide a coordinated approach to language program provision in ACT public schools and allow for the planning of future language pathways for students.
1.5	The ELLA language program has been very well received in those primary schools which have piloted the program. Encouraging all ACT primary schools from K-2 to deliver ELLA language learning could assist to close the K-2 language gap once the program has been formally adopted by the Commonwealth.
2: Pathways for language proficiency	
2.1	Students and the community would benefit from greater access to information about the pathways available for language education in ACT public schools. Guidance for students and community about language pathways could be made publicly available to assist with program and school choice, particularly with respect to the pathways available in Category B schools or Years 7 to 12 students.
3: Optimising language expertise	
3.1	There are languages outside the eight priority languages that students are pursuing outside of the school environment, without formal recognition of their learnings. Exploration of the provision of languages through Community Language Schools Association and how this may be recognised may be warranted.

3.2	There are limited numbers of teachers in the ACT who are language specialists and it is important that existing language specialists are able to be retained. Further opportunities for language teachers in the ACT may be explored through continuing to develop relationships with ACT universities as well as providing opportunities to existing teachers to develop a language specialty.
3.3	Investigate further opportunities to leverage from the community languages sector and international teachers, but there are limitations associated with the English language proficiency requirements of teacher registration. Further exploration of these issues may be beneficial.
<b>4: Delivery mechanisms for language education</b>	
4.1	Language education is being provided in a range of settings outside of ACT public schools. Examination of these, and further opportunities for greater collaboration or leverage including through Community Language Schools, online platforms and alternative delivery models may be considered.
4.2	Language education is provided in a manner that disperses language education resources across ACT public schools. Consideration may be given to the opportunities available for development of an integrated multimodal delivery suite should support the provision of quality language learning in schools, included in the suite could be partial or fully centralised language provision

## Introduction

On 28 November 2018, a Motion was passed in the ACT Legislative Assembly to, ‘develop an action plan to encourage, improve and support language education in Canberra Schools as a part of implementing the *Future of Education Strategy*’.

*The Future of Education Strategy* outlines the plans for education in the ACT over the next decade. The strategy establishes a strategic policy direction that informs a range of future initiatives and project work rather than simply listing disjointed remedies, including that of languages.

It is based on four foundations. They are:

- > place students at the centre of their learning,
- > empower teachers, school leaders and other professionals to meet the learning needs of all students,
- > build strong communities for learning,
- > strengthen systems to focus on equity with high quality language provision.

The ACT education system is consistently evolving and improving. It needs to be flexible to meet the increasing demands of a global society. Language provision is a critical subject area. Extensive research has been conducted on the benefits of language provision for young people providing them with tools which assist them academically, socially and culturally, and make them more employable. The *Foundation of Young Australians 2017* report identified that between 2012-2015, the demand from employees, for young people who speak another language, has increased 181%.<sup>1</sup>

ACT public schools have a range of mechanisms in place to support the provision of high-quality language learning. Supports include language teaching assistant programs, and funding language teacher networks in each of the eight priority languages. The Education Directorate also engages in formalised relationships with embassies and other language stakeholders in Canberra to support language provision in ACT schools.

In the broader language context, the Directorate supports the development of student mother tongue and other language programs through the Canberra Language Network, the Community Language Schools Association and the provision of professional learning for community language school teachers. The Directorate is uniquely positioned to provide a rich language program, supported by embassies, universities and the broader community language sector.

This discussion paper outlines the challenges in language provision and makes preliminary observations to encourage and support outstanding language education provision that aligns with the *Future of Education Strategy*. It provides observations that may lead to a more strategic approach to language learning, supporting the provision and strengthen the success of language education in ACT schools.

---

<sup>1</sup> Foundation for Young Australians. 2017. [The New Basics: Big data reveals the skills young people need for the New Work Order](#). The Foundation for Young Australians

## **Background**

The *Australian Education Regulations 2013* require all schools in the ACT to fully implement the *Australian Curriculum* in learning areas, by teaching, assessing and reporting on student achievement against the Achievement Standards provided in the *Australian Curriculum*.

The concept of full implementation is not legislatively defined. The current *National Reform Agreement* and the *Bilateral Agreement Between the Australian Capital Territory and The Commonwealth on Quality Schools Reform* also do not provide specificity around implementation of the *Australian Curriculum* for the purposes of compliance against these two agendas. The manner in which full implementation is achieved is therefore at the discretion of States and Territories and their relevant Ministers.

In 2008, decisions with respect to individual learning area implementation requirements for Kindergarten to Year 10 were made by the ACT Minister's Curriculum Taskforce and its working group, the Australian Curriculum Implementation Committee which included members from all education sectors, as well as key stakeholders. These bodies were dissolved in 2016. The Minister has authority to set implementation requirements and policy at a jurisdictional level whilst maintaining compliance with the National Partnership Agreement. This provides the environment to ensure that the ACT Curriculum has the flexibility to meet the needs of all sectors.

*All students should experience well designed and supported language programs, taught by well trained and supported language teachers, in schools that actively support language teaching linked to universities that are fully committed to widespread and successful language study. It is worth re-iterating why this ambition is important. The principal reason is to do with the deepest purposes of education itself, to instil knowledge, to deepen understanding, to stimulate reflection and to foster skills. Languages are intimately linked to the essentially humanistic, cultural and intellectual reasons for making education compulsory. Bilingualism can foster more reflective and imaginative dispositions in citizens, and the principles of democratic discourse, participation and opportunity which Australia proclaims also find resonance with language study since the bulk of humanity lives in societies and continues traditions forged outside of English.*

2

The 2008 Ministerial Taskforce determined implementation of the *Australian Curriculum*: Languages to be fulfilled by the following:

- > all students in Years 3-8 study one of the eight priority languages (Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, French, German, Italian and Spanish);
- > in Years 3-6 students must study a language for a minimum of 60 minutes per week; and
- > in Years 7-8, students must study a language for 150 minutes per week.

The previous Taskforce and then Minister set the agenda for languages curriculum implementation in the ACT in response to a phased implementation. This included the mandated teaching of languages in Years 3-8 and minimum minutes for delivery. With full implementation of the *Australian Curriculum* embedded in schools

---

<sup>2</sup> Lo Bianco, J. 2009, [\*Second Languages and Australian Schooling\*](#), Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne, pg64.

and the subsequent release of eight additional languages, it is timely that the Curriculum Policy with respect to language is reviewed.

Since the release of the initial eight priority languages, the *Australian Curriculum* and Reporting Authority has released a total of 16 languages curricula. Languages curricula are written for Kindergarten to Year 10. The eight original languages, which are currently offered in ACT public schools are:

- Chinese
- French
- German
- Indonesian
- Italian
- Japanese
- Korean

The Australian Curriculum has expanded its language offerings with the addition of:

- Arabic
- Auslan
- Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages
- Framework for Classical Languages
- Hindi
- Modern Greek
- Turkish
- Vietnamese

## The Current Language Education Environment

### Language Education across Australia

All jurisdictions in Australia endorse language learning. In 2020, there were some significant changes to policy on language learning. With the projected introduction of the National Languages Plan and Strategy in 2022, it is anticipated that delivery of language programs will continue to increase with the uptake of the notion that Languages are one of the eight learning areas delivered under the Australian Curriculum. All ACT public high schools are required to provide language as an elective option for students for years 9-10, and all colleges have access to language programs.

Victoria, South Australia and Northern Territory mandate that students have access to a language. Tasmania by comparison, strongly recommend languages but due to the constraints of the school environment, especially in a remote context, do not mandate language education. The table below shows the span of mandated languages in school years across jurisdictions.

Figure 1: Mandatory language provision by jurisdiction and year group

Year Group/ Jurisdiction	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
ACT													
NSW													
QLD													
NT													
SA													
WA													
VIC													
TAS													

#### Key

■ = school years language must be provided

### Language Education in the ACT

All schools in the ACT follow the Australian Curriculum as set out on the *Australian Curriculum* website. Students are assessed and reported against the Achievement Standards under each of the eight learning areas. The ACT currently identifies eight priority languages, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean and Spanish.

Under the *Australian Curriculum*, in all stages from K-10, language learners are taught under two streams of Achievement Standard, the first is *Communicating*, and the second *Understanding*. Each Achievement Standard is language specific. The Achievement Standards are designed specifically for language study supported by cultural study and understanding. To meet the Achievement Standards, the target language must be taught for acquisition, with cultural study alone not being an option. The *Australian Curriculum*

Achievement Standards for languages aim for proficiency and consistency. Each of the sixteen languages are offered on the premise that they are studied either from K-10 or 7-10.

The student populations and trends from the Language Census data conducted annually for 2016-2020, in each of the eight priority languages currently implemented in the ACT are shown below. The numbers below encapsulate students undertaking language study from P-12 in ACT public schools.

Figure 2: Language education uptake student numbers by census year in ACT public schools

<i>Language/Census Year</i>	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<i>Japanese</i>	10144	11020	11908	12238	12502
<i>French</i>	7074	7341	7631	7359	7577
<i>Indonesian</i>	4509	4318	3835	2954	2941
<i>Chinese</i>	2345	2533	2407	2505	2562
<i>Spanish</i>	1682	1744	1199	1675	1534
<i>Italian</i>	1060	846	838	652	739
<i>German</i>	217	217	166	154	169
<i>Korean</i>	167	248	679	290	332

Student numbers can fluctuate significantly over time, as a school may drop or change a language program. This can be seen in the differing numbers between 2019-2020, where a primary school switched their program from Indonesian to Japanese, and another high school discontinued Korean and Spanish for Chinese and Japanese. Additionally, a number of schools discontinued their language programs due to unavailability of specialist language teaching staff. These changes in numbers of students can be attributed to the shortage of language teachers in the ACT.

It is worth noting that there is a downward trend in enrolments in German and Italian over time. German is offered at one High School, and three Colleges only. Italian numbers are due to the presence of the Yarralumla Primary school Italian program, with numbers in high school and college remaining small.

Ideally, language teachers are specialist language teachers, who have had substantial language learning experience. This is, however, often not the case. There are no requirements for ACT teachers to have language qualifications, the only requirement is that they have Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) registration. Each school setting is different and decisions regarding timetabling and staffing are school based.

Where schools have been unable to deliver language programs that meet the Curriculum Requirements policy, the reason most often provided is that the school has been unable to recruit a suitable language teacher. In 2020, the Directorate has been working to address this through:

- a bulk recruitment round seeking new language teachers
- offering scholarships to develop the language skills of current teaching staff so they can take on language teaching roles.

## Remote learning during COVID-19 Pandemic

Until 2020, languages have been delivered in a face-to-face setting in ACT public schools. As a part of the ACT response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, schools commenced remote learning provisions in March 2020. This required curriculum delivery to take on a new and innovative way of engaging students in their learning. For languages education this meant a turning point in the way in which languages were delivered and that teachers needed to engage their students in ways which differed greatly from the face-to-face model that is utilised in most schools. This meant teachers had to find alternative online programs, activities, games and applications to assist with distance learning. They did this through both conference style teaching and setting activities for students to do as individuals or groups online. For example, using platforms online such as Language Perfect.

Whilst most students have returned to face-to-face learning in schools, this remote delivery has created a distinct opportunity to investigate alternative delivery models. including further exploration of more flexible ways to deliver language programs and address workforce shortages by creating remote access to suitably qualified teachers.

## Pathways for priority language provision

The following Figures (3-7) outline where the eight priority languages and pathways available currently offered in ACT schools by network: the Belconnen Network; the South-Weston Network; the North-Gungahlin Network; and the Tuggeranong Network. These are the clusters of schools, separated according to location. Enrolments in ACT schools are set according to Priority Enrolment Area, which is generally the residential area closest to the school. The current Enrolment Policy provides for two categories of schools. Category A schools are at capacity for enrolment and are not able to accept students out of their Priority Enrolment Area. Category B schools have capacity to enrol students who live out of the Priority Enrolment Area. Maps show the Category A schools, highlighted in yellow, which generally do not take students out of the Priority Enrolment Area.

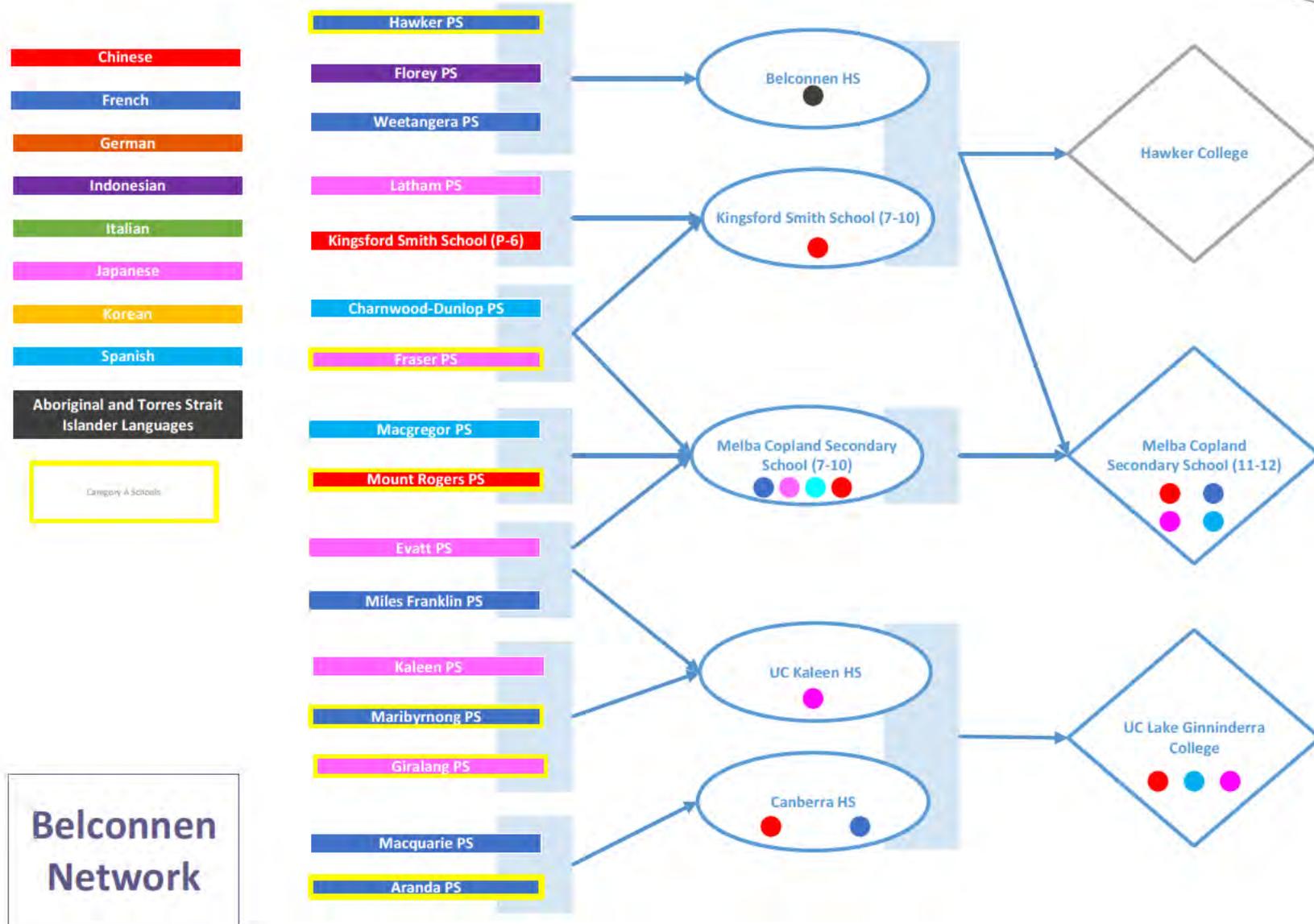
On the left column of the map are the colour codes for each of the eight priority languages. The rectangles represent primary schools and are coloured according to the language programs they provide. High schools are oval and the coloured dots represent the languages they offer, as most high schools offer more than one language. Colleges are represented by diamonds and have dots according to the languages offered. The arrows represent the flow of feeder schools, where a student who lives in a particular suburb will follow according to the Priority Enrolment Area.

Each of the eight priority languages has been extrapolated according to network in an additional language pathway map, showing the available language pathway in each network. Further detail regarding this is at Appendix A.

## Belconnen Network:

The Belconnen Network has a strong pathway for Japanese, French, Spanish and Chinese. It is notable that there is one school providing Indonesian without any further pathway, and that there is no German, Korean or Italian. There is a strong presence of French in Primary School, but narrow offerings in High School and College, leaving students no direct pathway for French studies if they are to follow their feeder school's pathways. In the Belconnen Network, the only Category A schools are primary school level, which in comparison to South Weston and North Gungahlin Networks. In 2020 Spanish has commenced at Belconnen High School. Of particular note, they provide an elective program entitled "Connecting to Country" which focuses on the cultural heritage and languages of the Indigenous nations of the Canberra region. Melba Copland Secondary School, which has relatively small numbers of students, is a hub of language provision, providing clear pathways for students who attend both the high school and college campus in French, Japanese and Spanish. Hawker College has Chinese only and an extremely small number of students who undertake their Chinese program. This presents difficulties if there is little demand for language provision.

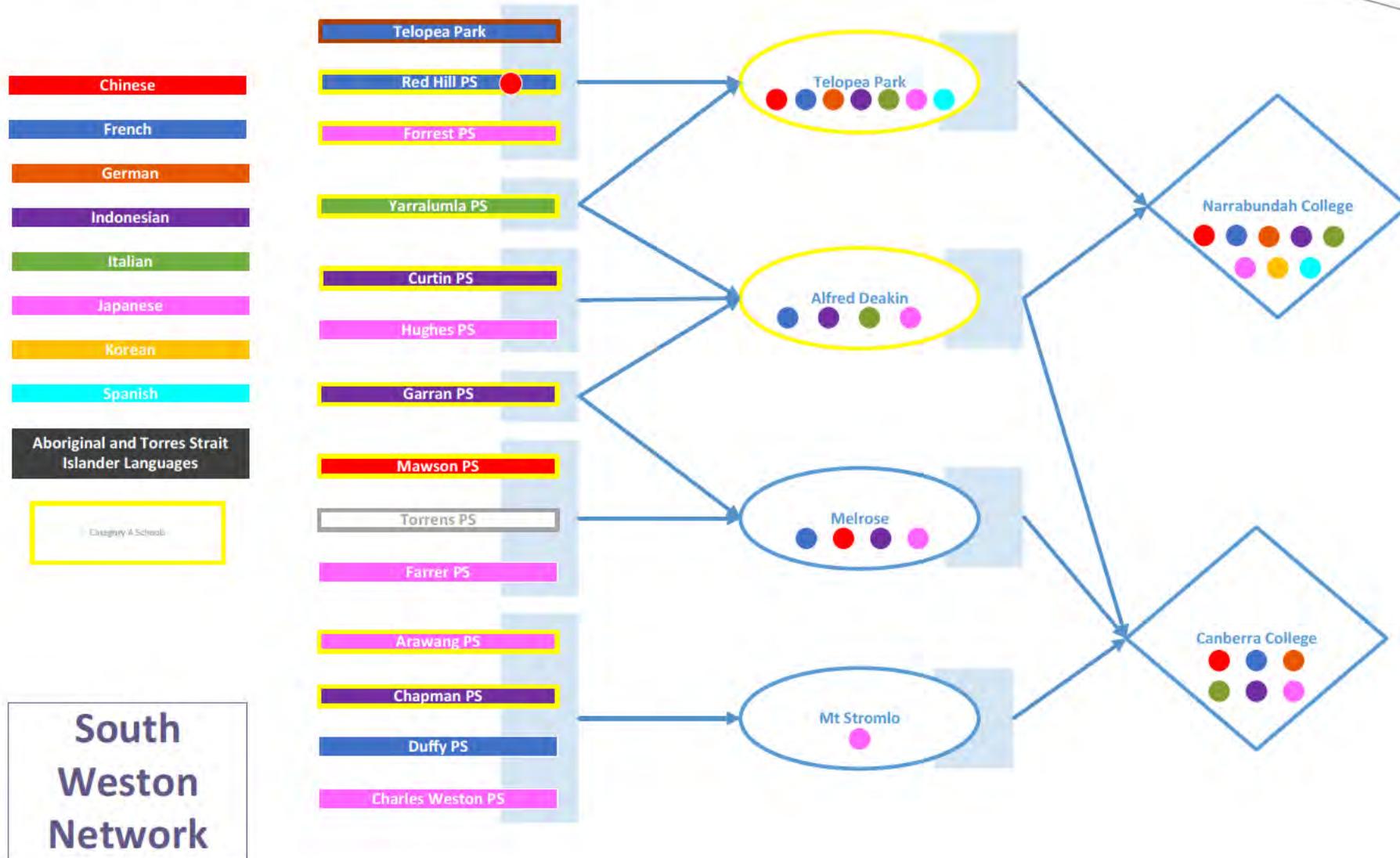
Figure 3: Belconnen Network Language Map



## South Weston Network

The South Weston Network is the richest network in terms of the diversity language provision and in the most language rich case, there are nine languages provided including all of the eight priority languages. There are, however, many more category A schools in South Weston Network, limiting student ability to access these if they are out of the Priority Enrolment Area. There are pathways for Chinese, French, Indonesian and Japanese.

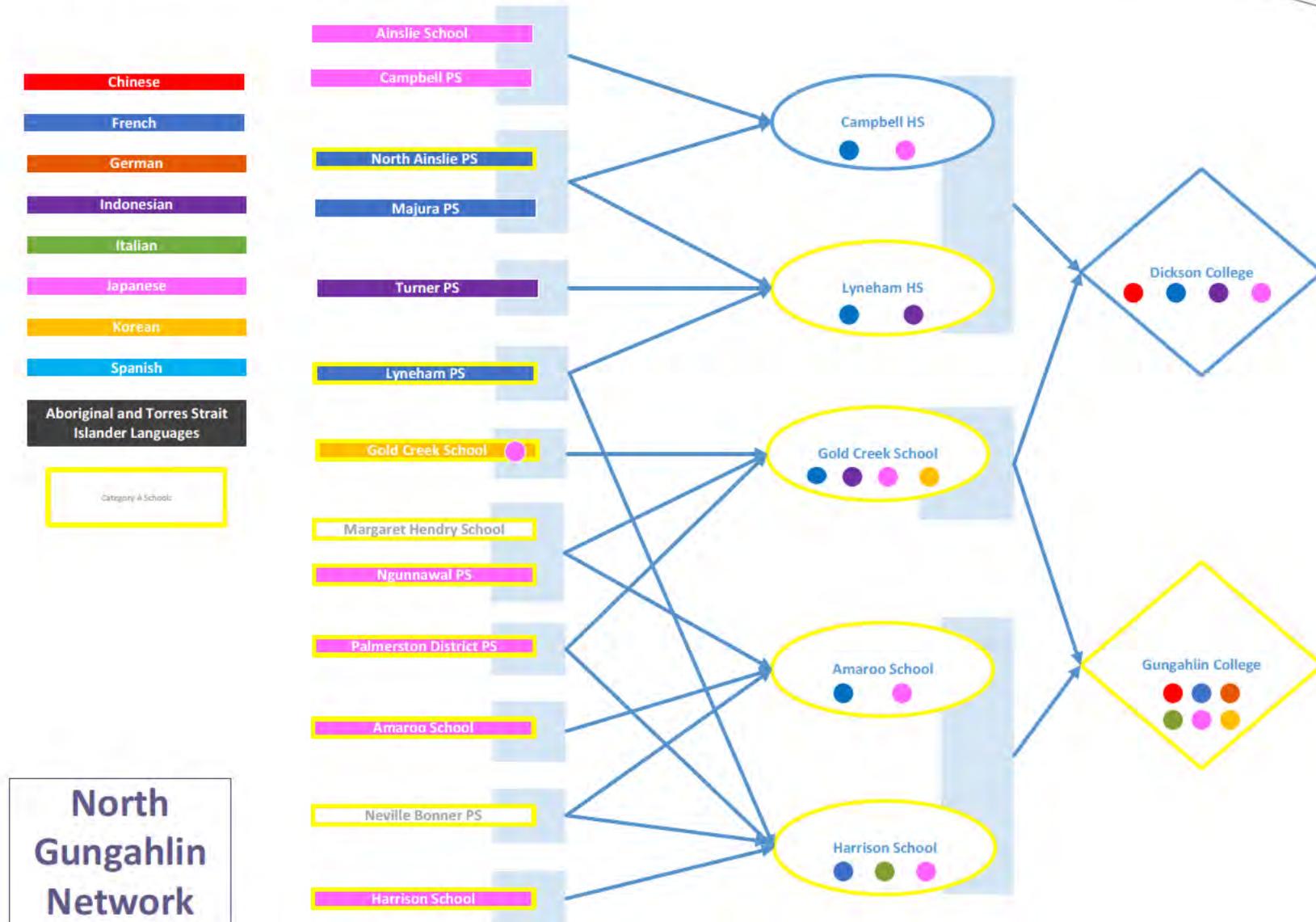
Figure 4: South Weston Network Language Map



## North Gungahlin Network

North Gungahlin Network provides many languages, however due to the expanding population there is not a great deal of flexibility for students wishing to follow a language pathway other than French or Japanese. Across the network there is a strong focus on French and Japanese languages. Further schools have picked up Japanese in place of other languages, and Japanese is very dominant in this network.

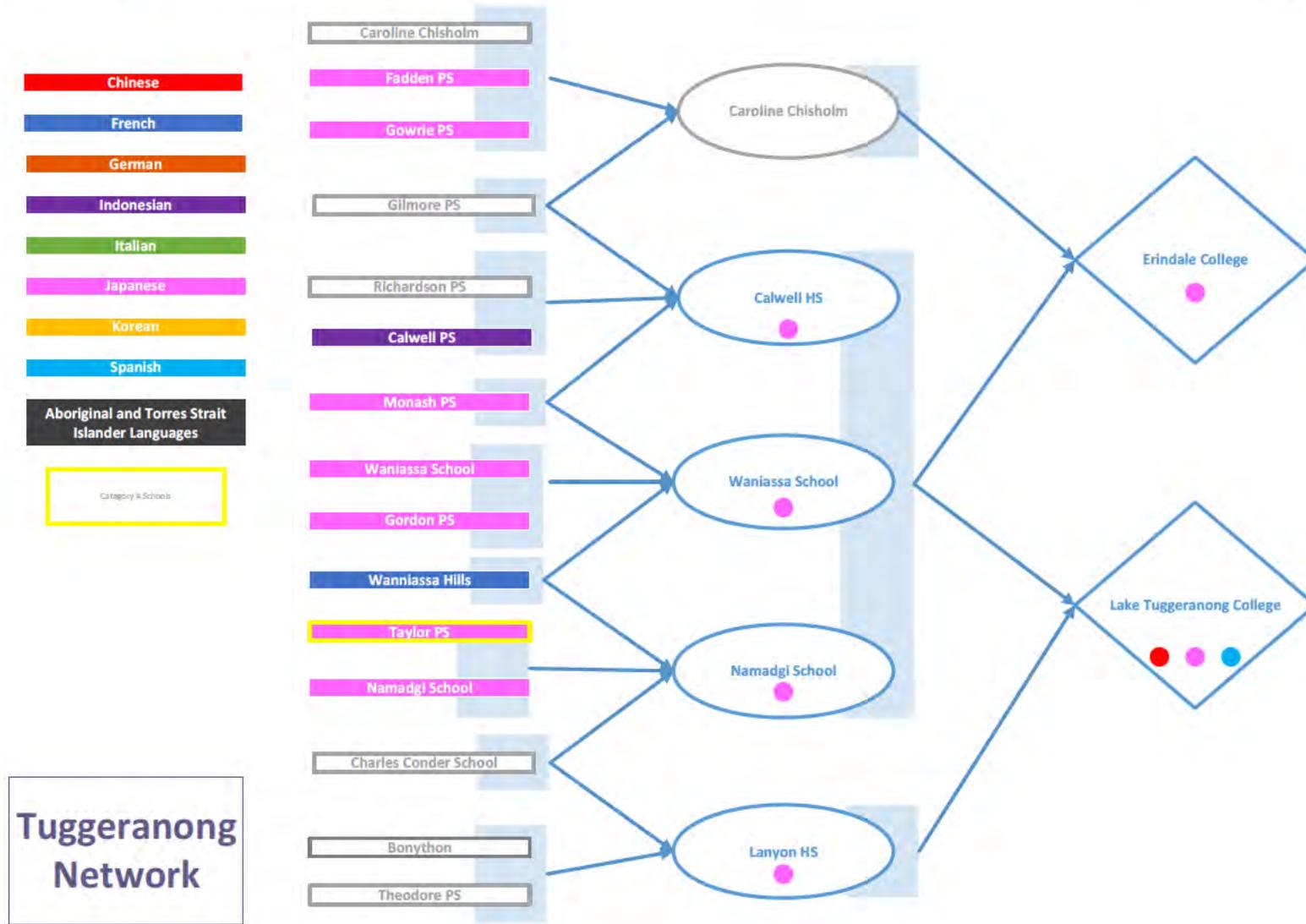
Figure 5: North Gungahlin Network Language Map



## Tuggeranong Network

The Tuggeranong Network represents the network with the most gaps in language programs, and the fewest Category A schools. It has a very strong presence of Japanese across the network. Bonython Primary School has introduced an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and cultures inquiry course across their primary. There is a significant difference in offerings in comparison to other networks and warrants extra consideration.

Figure 6: Tuggeranong Network Language Map



## Challenges

In ACT public schools there are challenges surrounding the provision of high-quality language programs. The challenges are reflected nationally. There are a range of short and long-term options to address challenges faced by ACT public schools. One catalyst for this discussion paper is learnings from other jurisdictions.

Analysis of our current language education provision identified four themes for examination when assessing language education provision and developing a future framework. These include:

- > **Language Policy**
- > **Providing language pathways**
- > **Optimising language expertise**
- > **Delivery mechanisms for language education**

Whilst language provision in the ACT has a strong foundation, there are significant challenges and improvements to be made. There are several factors impacting on schools' ability to both sustain and provide quality language education. This includes the recruitment of quality teachers, who have both the content knowledge and the pedagogical approach, to engage all students in learning a language. The school community often does not view language provision as an essential part of student education.

There are a range of language delivery options that go beyond engaging a full-time teacher and address a number of these challenges that need to be considered to further strengthen language education. It is critical to language provision that a mechanism is found to support continuity of choice of languages so that students wanting deep knowledge are able to pursue a single language over time.

## Language Policy

### Mandated Minutes

When the Australian Curriculum was written and throughout updated versions, there have not been any recommended time provision for any learning area. The Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority have left the minutes studied for learning areas up to jurisdictions to fit the context of their interpretation of the Curriculum. In 2010 the ACT Cross Sectorial Australian Curriculum Implementation Committee, which was a sub-committee of the ACT Curriculum Taskforce, determined that there would be mandated minutes in ACT Public Schools for languages and for Health and Physical Education. These were given to try to meet the requirements of the Australian Curriculum whilst accounting for the difficulties in staffing languages and meeting community expectations on language classes.

There are provisions in the *Curriculum Requirements Policy* for mandated language minutes to be spent in classrooms from Years 3-8. In the *Australian Curriculum*, languages are one of the eight

learning areas. The *Australian Curriculum* languages are written from K-10. In the ACT, languages are mandated from Year 3. There is no provision in the Achievement Standards and Content Descriptions for students commencing the study of a language in Year 3. There is provision for entry level into languages at the Year 7 level. This has led to the necessity for language pathways to commence at high school. The entry points at Kindergarten and Year 7 present a challenge for students and schools commencing and reporting beginner level students at Year 3 with assumed prior knowledge. Removing the mandated minutes requirement could provide further flexibility for schools in the delivery of language curriculum.

## Priority Languages

There are currently eight priority languages, taught in schools: Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean and Spanish. It may be necessary, due to student demand and numbers across the ACT public schools, to re-evaluate the number and choice of priority languages currently taught. The eight priority languages were the eight original languages released by ACARA. There are now sixteen languages available for delivery under the *Australian Curriculum* with the offering of Arabic, Auslan, Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages, Framework for Classical Languages, Hindi, Modern Greek, Turkish and Vietnamese in addition to the original eight priority languages. The availability of sixteen languages provides the opportunity to broaden language provision in primary schools. Giving students exposure to different language offerings enhances student learning about a broader range of cultures. The central consideration for priority languages is whether the Directorate pursues a pathway for proficiency language program model, or whether the focus is on providing any language. Further consideration, consultation and exploration is required. A pathway for proficiency model would mean that there is consistency in language provision throughout schooling years. For example, if a student were to study Japanese in Primary School, they would then have the option to do so at High School and College level. This would allow for more time spent learning the language resulting in a higher proficiency in the language.

## School Language Choice

The choice of language provided in schools is currently a decision made by the school principal in consultation with the school board and the school community. The decision is often influenced by the schools' ability to appoint a teacher of a language, and student demand. Canberra is a multicultural city, with two great universities at its heart. There may be opportunities to further leverage from the broader community language acumen and over time to create consistency in pathways for language development.

## Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA)

Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) is a Commonwealth funded preschool play-based language learning app. It does not require the teacher to be proficient in the language on the App and provides student centred and engaging content. In 2019, ELLA has commenced a trial roll out from

Kindergarten to Year 2 (ELLA trial). All ELLA applications are aligned to the *Australian Curriculum* and relevant achievement standards, as used in ACT schools. There are 12 ACT primary schools participating in this trial. The software applications are a Commonwealth initiative developed with the University of Melbourne.

The Commonwealth will review the ELLA program in 2022 which will determine whether it continues. If the ELLA (K-2) is continued by the Commonwealth, and the trial is deemed successful within ACT schools (and cost effective), it could be used in primary schools to address language education gaps in the K-2 space. ELLA has 11 languages available at this stage. Further information on cost and the logistics of making ELLA available will become evident at a later stage in the pilot.

#### Observations:

- 1.1 Languages are required to be delivered as one of the eight learning areas under the *Australian Curriculum* but are not always delivered consistently. Mandated language minutes may impede classroom and school flexibility. Consideration should be given to whether greater flexibility in the classroom would be afforded by removing the requirement for mandated teaching minutes, whilst maintaining a mandate for language education provision
- 1.2 Current language provision may not align with student uptake and demand. The languages identified as priority languages could be reconsidered to meet student and community expectations.
- 1.3 Broader community expectations around language education provision and leverage from local skills may not be optimised by limiting language education to the eight priority languages. Exploration and consultation could be undertaken with regard to expanding primary school languages offerings from eight to sixteen languages delivered under the *Australian Curriculum*.
- 1.4 Decisions to adopt a language program is made on a school by school basis, which can limit the continuity of language pathways available to students. Education Directorate assessment of adoption of a language program by schools would provide a coordinated approach to language program provision in ACT public schools and allow for the planning of future language pathways for students.
- 1.5 The ELLA language program has been very well received in those primary schools which have piloted the program. Encouraging all ACT primary schools from K-2 to deliver ELLA language learning could assist to close the K-2 language gap once the program has been formally adopted by the Commonwealth.

## Pathways for language proficiency

Pathways are the continuous offering of a language through Years 7-12. The provision of pathways provides all students with access to a language proficiency option. Non-pathway schools would continue to provide one or more languages. The potential pathways offer a proficiency model in one or more of the identified languages.

Clear pathways for students from Years 7-12 provides the opportunity to develop proficiency in one language. Pathways support student desire for language proficiency by providing optional pathways to allow for student agency in language choice.

Under the Education Directorate *Enrolment Policy* schools are classified as Category A schools, those at capacity for enrolments, or Category B schools, those that have current and projected enrolment capacity. Under the policy, applying for an out of area enrolment to a Category B school can be based on language curriculum options at high school or college level.

It should be noted that in QLD and NT, it is mandated that if a school chooses to deliver a new language, there must be a pathway in the adjoining school before a school may open a new language program.

At Appendix A, there are more detailed maps for each of the eight languages and show where students may elect to follow a language pathway.

#### Observations:

- 2.1 Students and the community would benefit from greater access to information about the pathways available for language education in ACT public schools. Guidance for students and community about language pathways could be publicly available to assist with program and school choice, particularly with respect to the pathways available in Category B schools or Years 7 to 12 students.

## Optimising language expertise

There are currently eleven schools in ACT not providing a language program. All principals of these schools have articulated their frustrations at not being able to source an adequately qualified language teacher who would fit the needs of their school context.

The universities in Canberra that offer education courses do not offer the option for their students to become specialist language teachers. There are no clear pathways for university students in the ACT wishing to become specialist language teachers. Finding high quality teachers, who have the right combination of language ability and pedagogy to engage students effectively, is a key challenge.

At more senior levels, where students have obtained greater proficiency, there may be alternative language expertise that can be drawn from within the community, including from universities.

## Community Language Schools

The ACT has a rich and diverse Community Language Schools Association with over 2500 students studying 38 languages across 50 community language schools. There are over 390 community language teachers in Community Language Schools. The Directorate supports the Community Language Schools by providing professional development to community language school teachers

through the Modern Language Teaching Association. There is potential for deeper connections with the Community Language Schools, creating a more mutually beneficial and supportive relationship. The key challenge in this space is the requirement that all ACT teachers have ACT Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) registration.

## International Teacher Access

To meet the registration requirements for TQI, non-Australian citizens are required to provide evidence from approved English language providers to demonstrate a near native speaker proficiency. These formalised English language requirements are often difficult to meet. TQI is able to provide a Permit to Teach for international teachers, if the teacher's position is a part of an international agreement. There is an opportunity to work with TQI to consider alternatives for teachers who do not have English as their first language to better support language programs in schools.

### Observations:

- 3.1 There are languages outside the eight priority languages that students are pursuing outside of the school environment, without formal recognition of their learnings. Exploration of the provision of languages through Community Language Schools Association and how this may be recognised may be warranted.
- 3.2 There are limited numbers of teachers in the ACT who are language specialists and it is important that existing language specialists are able to be retained. Further opportunities for language teachers in the ACT may be explored through continuing to develop relationships with ACT universities as well as providing opportunities to existing teachers to develop a language specialty.
- 3.3 Investigate further opportunities to leverage from the community languages sector and international teachers, recognising there are limitations associated with the English language proficiency requirements of teacher registration. Further exploration of these issues may be beneficial.

## Delivery mechanisms for language education

### Current delivery model

The current and standard delivery model of languages is a face-to-face model, where students are in a classroom context working with a teacher. Pedagogies are used to engage students in classrooms, with occasional support from online platforms.

## COVID-19 Delivery: New Opportunities

The COVID-19 Pandemic presented a significant change in the way in which programs were delivered, this was necessitated by the pupil-free, remote learning period. Although initially a significant challenge for language teachers and students, as all parties adjusted to remote delivery. It has been found that there are many tools that aid language program delivery. Language program delivery has included a mix of flipped learning where students complete the set work before classes, and class time becomes more of a tutorial style learning experience. They used online learning platforms, online class meets and flexible learning tasks. This delivery model has reportedly engaged students in a way that teachers did not anticipate and has, in some instances been continued on even after the pupil-free time in ACT schools. The appearance of a challenge has provided the opportunity to innovate delivery and engage students in learning in alternative environments.

## Online Delivery of Language Programs

Online Language programs are delivered solely online and involve activities that are interactive technology based. Usually, they are a series of videos, games and quizzes. Whilst the delivery of online language courses appears to be an attractive and cost-effective solution, there are a number of issues to take into consideration when assessing this as a possibility. Most available models of online delivery are designed as a support for teachers. In addition, there are no programs that provide reporting against the Achievement Standards under the *Australian Curriculum*. Whilst online tools are an essential part of language learning, they should not be the sole mode of delivery. Further investigation of online language learning tools may be warranted.

## Remote face-to-face delivery of language programs

Remote face-to-face delivery language programs exist where a school provides a centrally located teacher delivering language lessons via digital interface tools. When considering remote face-to-face delivery language programs as an option, it must be noted that the remote class still must have a teacher in the classroom in order to ensure duty of care is maintained. Difficulties may be encountered in high school and colleges to fit common class times due to differing timetables and lesson durations across campuses.

## Distance Delivery Model

There are a variety of Distance Delivery Models provided in various settings across Australia. Currently, there are language programs delivered by ACT Colleges within a Distance Delivery Model. This model is set for students who wish to study a language not available at their college, or through other face-to-face options in the ACT. Programs have been delivered in Hungarian and Russian. Students study by 'distance' with course work and phone consultations. An example of how this model is used is the NSW School of Languages. Courses are delivered remotely through online course work, telephone consultations and conference days where students attend the core school to study in person on set occasions. Distance Delivery models are worth considering for more effective resourcing of courses where there are a number of students across the ACT from different schools wishing to study a language.

## Language Hub

A Language Hub option consisting of a central school in which a range of languages would be delivered across ACT public schools may be considered. The delivery model would be multimodal with a mix of distance and face-to-face delivery. The Language Hub would be a centre for excellence, with teachers delivering from a central location across the ACT. It would provide school supports and create a network of language students across ACT. The Language Hub would also provide professional development to language teachers, support for language programs and embassy and language stakeholder coordination.

## Saturday School Programs

In a number of states across Australia, Saturday School programs are delivered to students who are not able to study their language of choice at their home school. The courses delivered are all matched to the *Australian Curriculum* and relevant syllabus. These courses provide students with access to other languages in a manner that is recognised by their Education Departments.

If this method is adopted by the Directorate, it would enable recognition of the sixteen languages delivered under the *Australian Curriculum*. *It would be required that the teachers delivering the courses are TQI accredited teachers*

### Observations:

- 4.1 Language education is being provided in a range of settings outside of ACT public schools. Examination of these, and further opportunities for greater collaboration or leverage including through Community Language Schools, online platforms and alternative delivery models may be considered.
- 4.2 Language education is provided in a manner that disperses language education resources across ACT public schools. Consideration may be given to the opportunities available for development of an integrated multimodal delivery suite should support the provision of quality language learning in schools, included in the suite could be partial or fully centralised language provision

## Future of ACT Language Provision

With the implementation of the *Future of Education Strategy*, the Directorate is in a unique position to reposition the face of language provision to further encourage and support language programs in ACT public schools. An improved model for language provision in ACT schools would:

- > meet the needs of the community
- > provide flexibility and richness in language provision options and delivery
- > provide the choice for students to pursue language proficiency
- > support teachers with professional learning to keep up to date with their language
- > have purposeful and meaningful relationships with the broader language stakeholders in the community
- > include a strategic approach to the recruitment and placement of language teachers

There has not yet been broad consultation across the languages sector. Consultation with the following stakeholders would assist with developing a Language Framework for ACT public schools:

- > public education sector – teachers, principals and students
- > ACT Catholic Education
- > Association for Independent Schools
- > the ACT Education Union
- > Embassies
- > Universities
- > Community Language Sector

## Conclusion

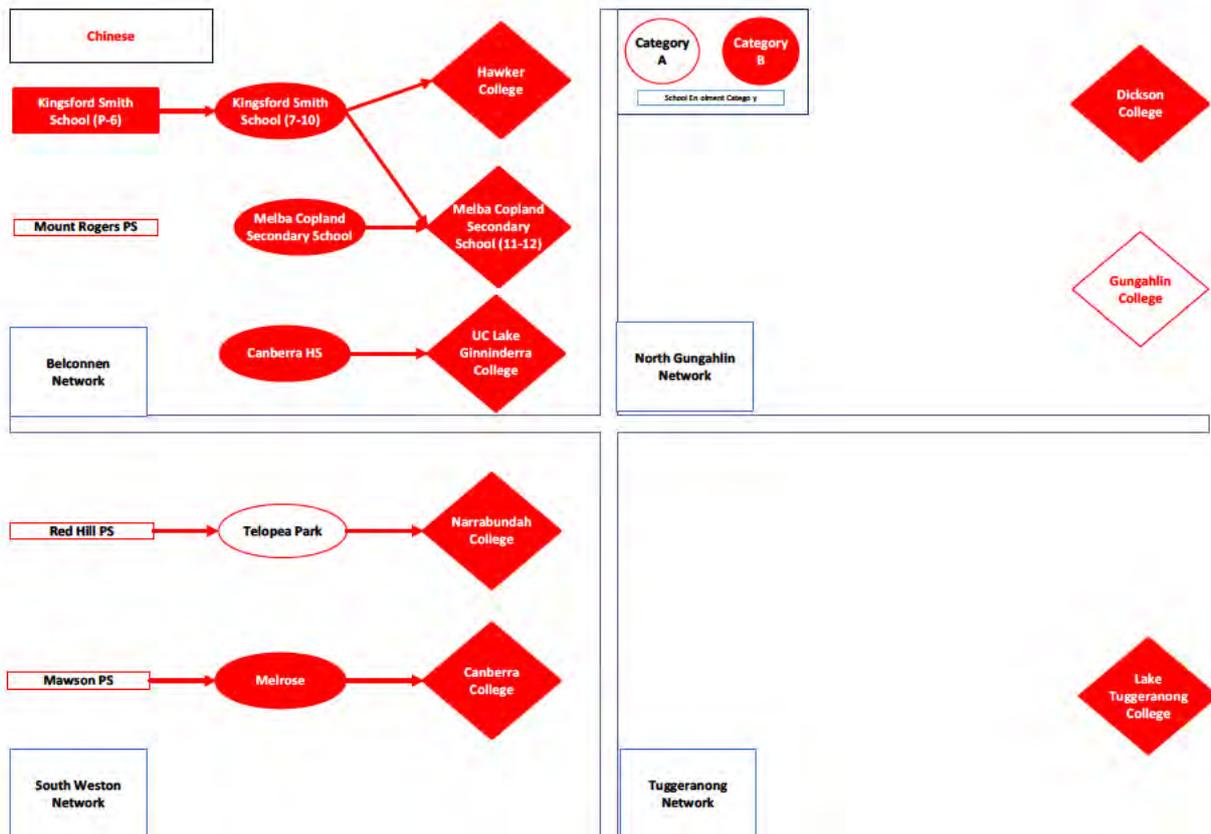
The Legislative Assembly Motion on 28 November 2018 provided further impetus for encouraging, improving and supporting language provision in consultation with key stakeholders. The *Future of Education Strategy* and supporting *Implementation Plan* fosters continued provision of high-quality language programs in ACT schools.

The observations provided in this discussion paper may be considered more broadly to assist with formulating a Language Framework for the provision of language education in ACT public schools. Further consultation with the community will ensure that the full range of views are considered in developing the best modality for language provision. This will support a framework that ensures languages are taught in a manner that best positions ACT students for career pathways and supports Canberra remaining the best city for school age students to learn a second language.

## Appendix A: Pathway by Language

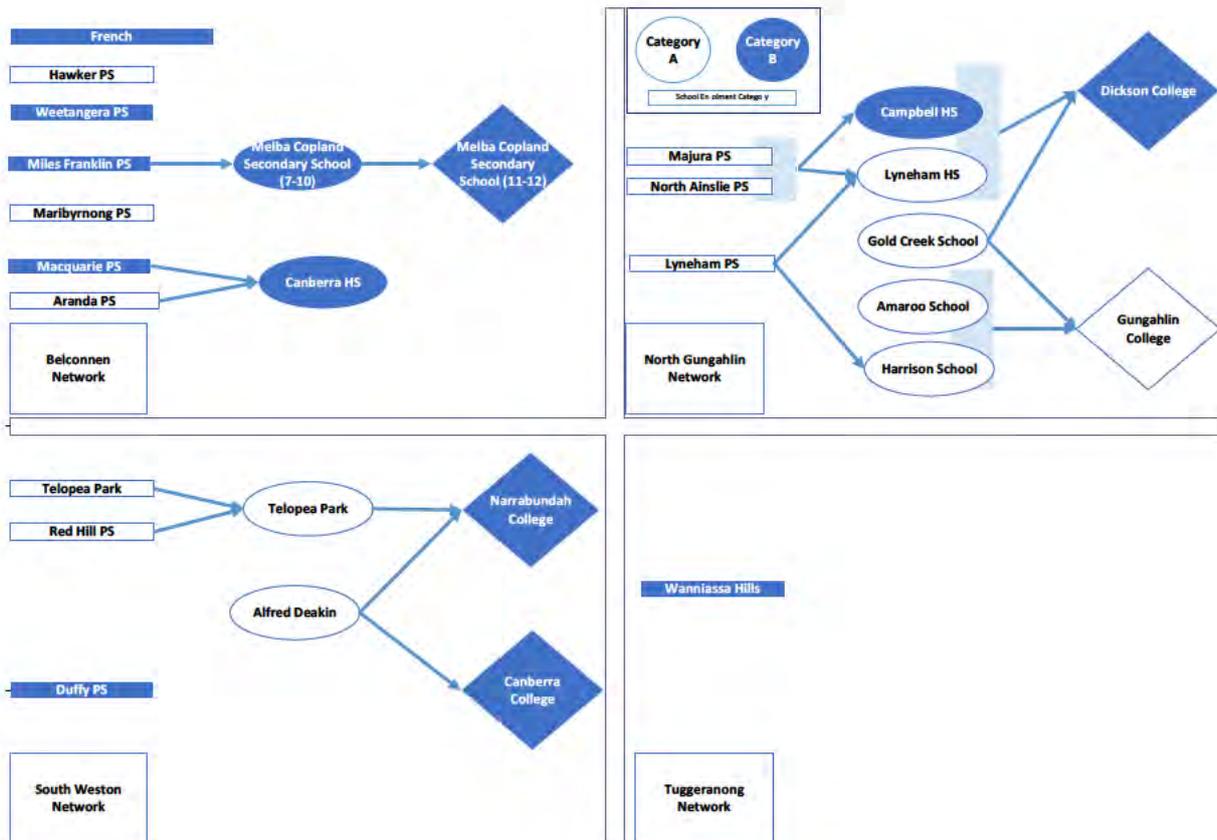
### Chinese

- > 2562 students undertaking study of Chinese language from P-12 in April 2021.
- > Chinese is offered across every ACT College and provides a clear pathway for students who study Chinese as a bilingual program at Mawson Primary School.
- > At a system wide approach, there is an MOU to support the provision of Chinese to students and schools through language teaching assistants.
- > A Chinese language pathway is available through multiple Category B schools



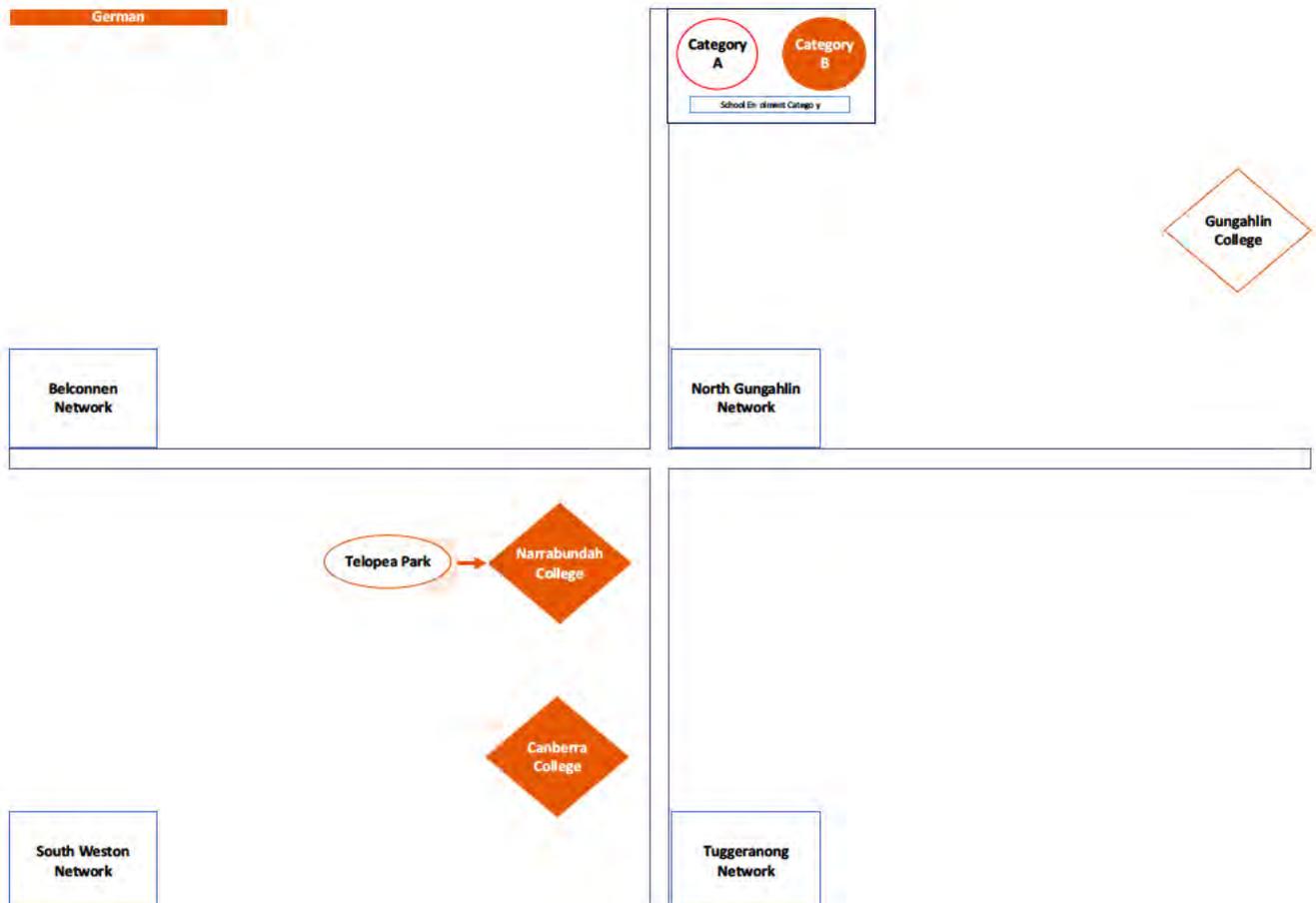
## French

- > 7577 students from P-12 in April 2021.
- > French language pathways remain possible in all networks, except for Tuggeranong.
- > The Directorate is working with the French Embassy to support the French program with the potential engagement of Language Teaching Assistants
- > A French language pathway is available through multiple Category B schools



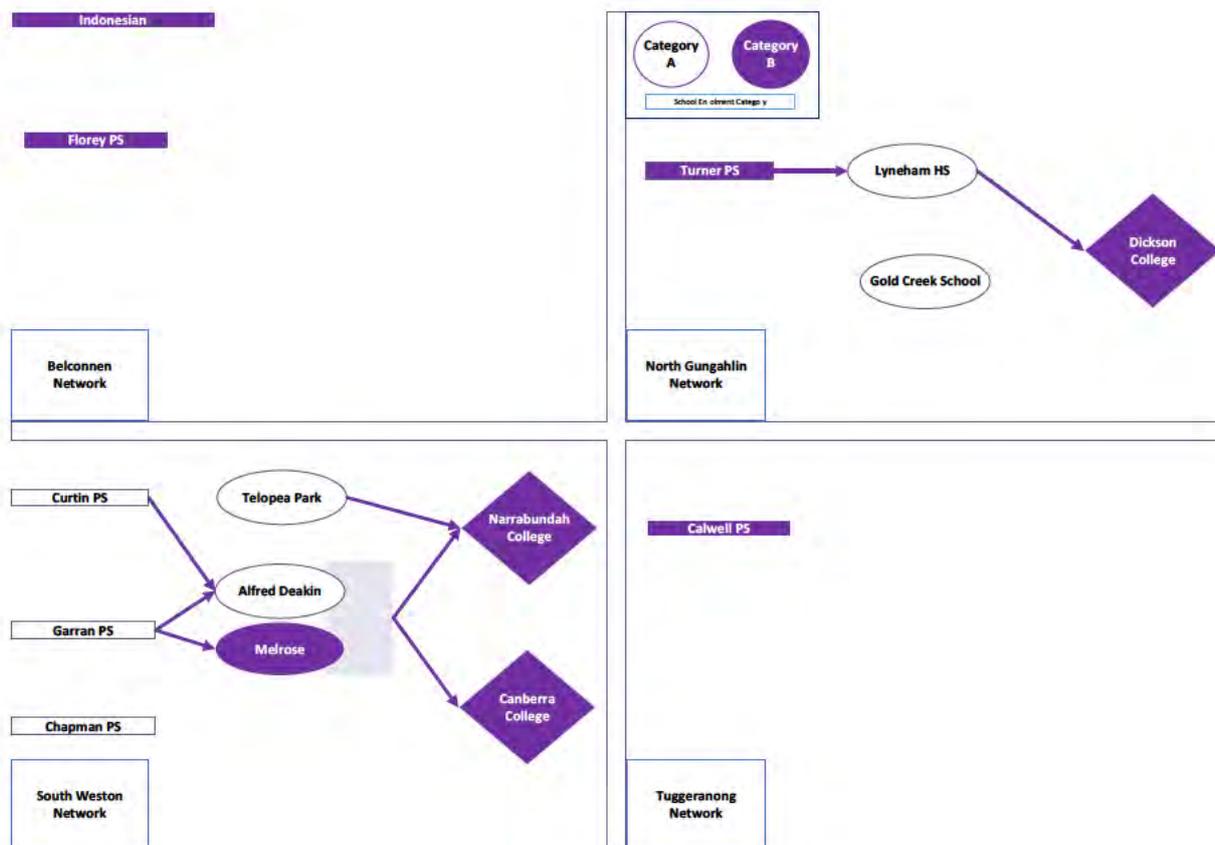
## German

- > As at April 2021 there were 169 students from P-12. German language provision in schools has declined significantly in the last five years.
- > There are currently no pathways for German for Category B schools
- > Although there are no formal supports in place, the German network of teachers is very active in the support of their students. They host STEM in German days, as well as German Immersion days
- > A German language pathway would need to be identified on a case by case basis



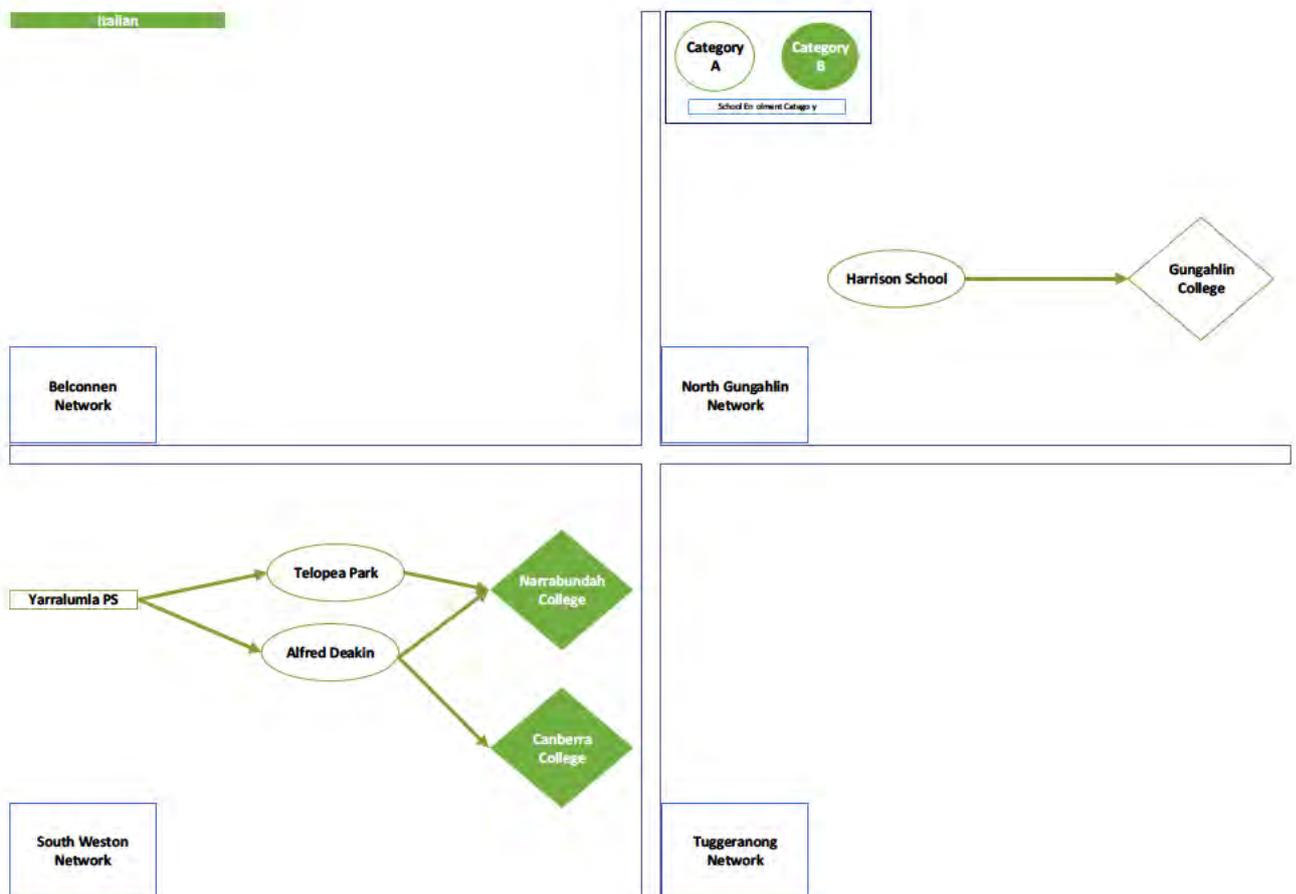
## Indonesian

- > 2941 students of Indonesian in P-12 as at April 2021
- > Pathways for Indonesian are sporadic, as the majority of schools that offer Indonesian are Category A schools.
- > At a system wide approach, there is an MOU to support the provision of Indonesian to students and schools through language teaching assistants.
- > An Indonesian language pathway would need to be identified on a case by case basis



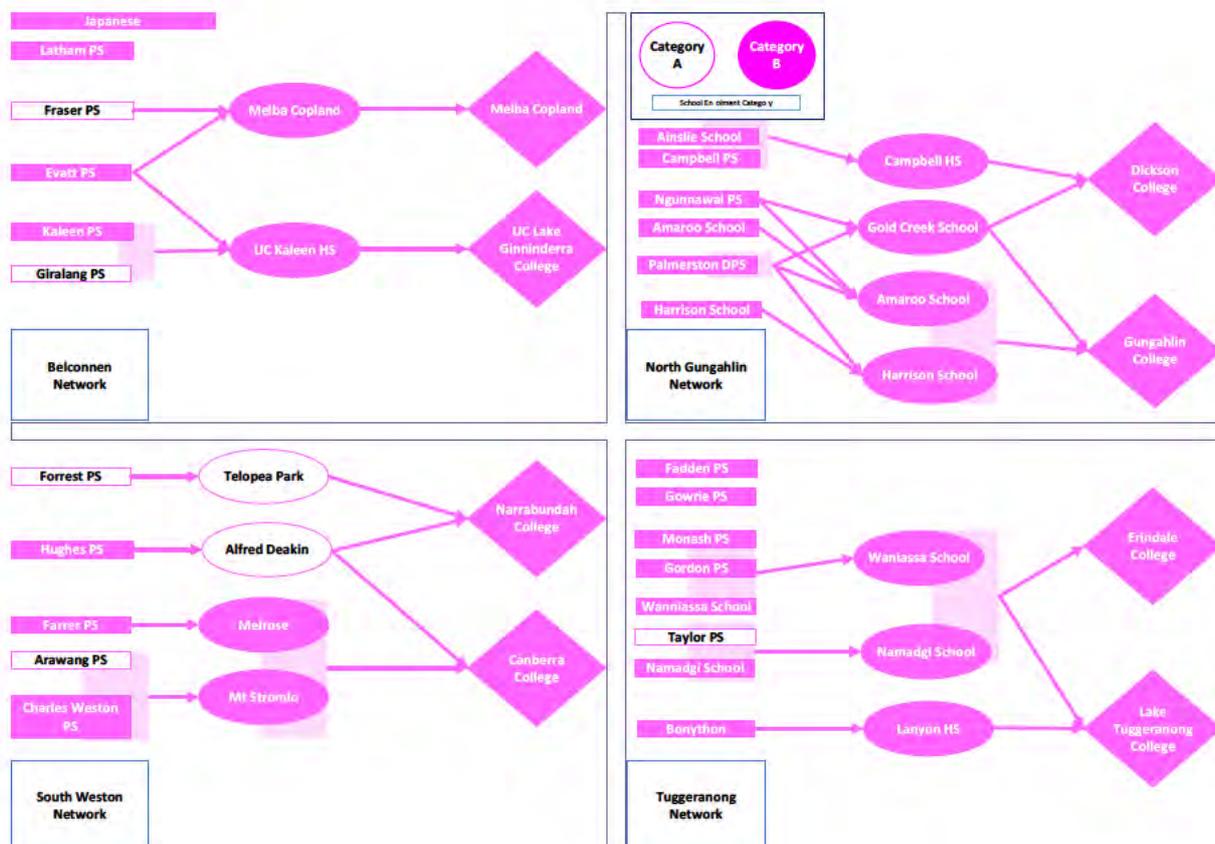
## Italian

- > As at April 2021, there were 739 students undertaking Italian in P-12.
- > Pathways are possible from Yarralumla where there is a bilingual program, provided students live in the Priority Enrolment Area.
- > Work has been undertaken with the Italian Embassy to formalise an agreement for a teacher from Italy.
- > An Italian language pathway would need to be identified on a case by case basis



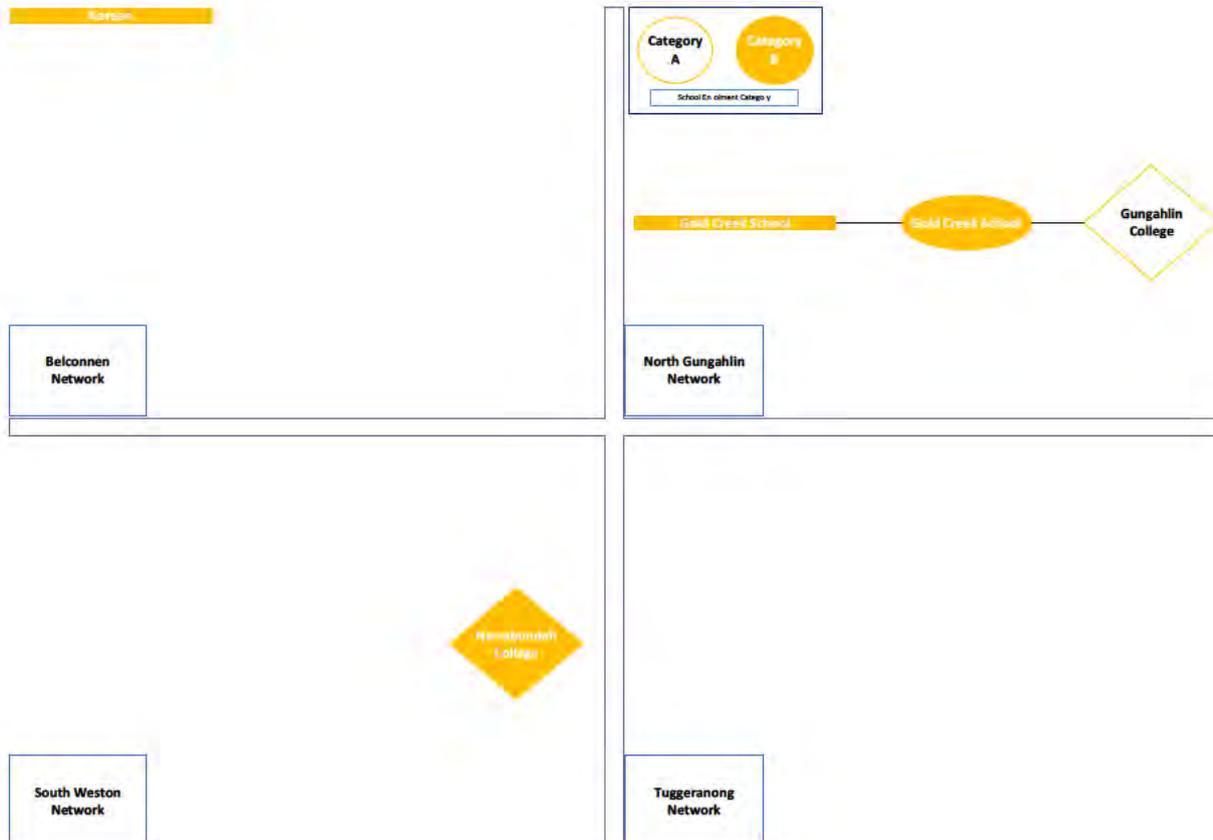
# Japanese

- > As at April 2021, 12065 students were studying Japanese in P-12. It is currently the largest language group in the ACT.
- > There are strong pathways across the ACT in all networks.
- > The Japanese network is strongly supported by the Japan Foundation, the Japanese Embassy and volunteer Japanese Teaching Assistants.
- > A Japanese language pathway is available through multiple Category B schools in all Networks.



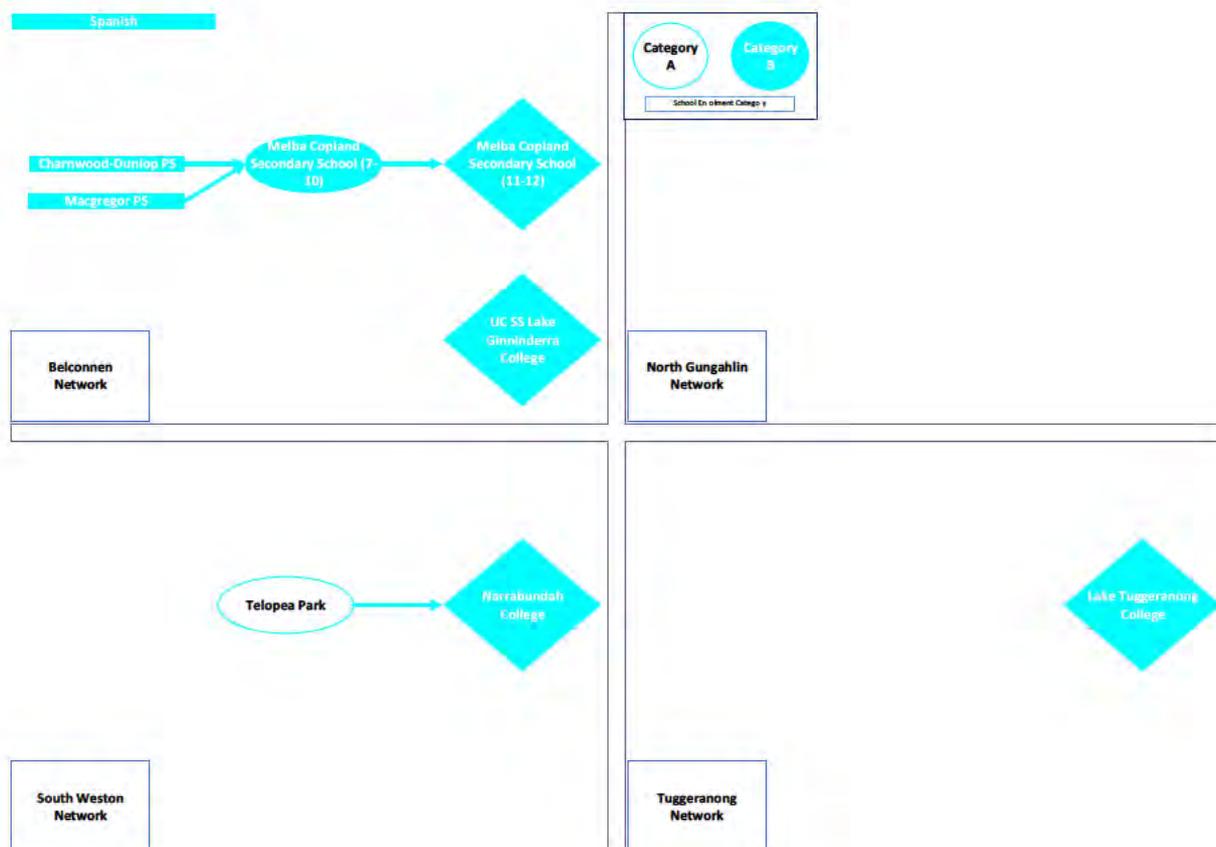
# Korean

- > In April 2021, there were 332 students studying Korean from P-12.
- > There are not yet distinguished pathways in Korean.
- > Further consideration needs to be given to the expansion of Korean in ACT schools.



Spanish

- > As at April 2021, 1534 students were studying Spanish in P-12.
- > There are distinct Spanish Pathways in the North of Canberra
- > Schools undertaking Spanish are well supported by Spanish speaking Embassies, such as Spain, Uruguay and Cuba.
- > A Spanish language pathway is available through multiple Category B schools in the Belconnen Network.



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