

Nintiringanyi:

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language Teaching and Employment Strategy





Cover art

Kuluban by Selina Nadjowh
Licenced by Injalak Arts

In this fabric design the artist has painted a colony of *kuluban* (fruit bats) hanging from the branches of a tree at night. They are silent in flight but can be heard feeding at night in the trees and are raucous as they roost in the mornings. *Kuluban* are a food source for the Indigenous people of Northern Australia. It is *yekke* (the dry season) and many flowers are in bloom. When particular varieties of blossom come into season the diet of the bat changes the degree of sweetness in the flesh of the bat itself. *Kuluban* is the generic word for fruit bats, but also specifically refers to the black flying fox (*Pteropus alecto*).

Credits

The title *Nintiringanyi* was provided by Karina Lester and means 'learning' in her language, Yankunytjatjara. Australian English speakers can pronounce it 'nin' to rhyme with 'bin', 'tir' with a short 'i' as in 'ink' and a rolled 'r' similar to the 'tt' in butter when spoken very fast, 'ing' similar to the ending of 'sing', and 'anyi' sounding like 'onion without the final 'n'.



"*Nintiringanyi*"
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Students and facilitator Joshua McHugh composing songs in Wik Mungkan at a Songs on Country workshop at Aurukun State School. Photo Credit: Pama Language Centre



Terminology

Throughout *Nintiringanyi* the terms 'first languages', 'Indigenous languages', 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages', and 'community languages' are used. In this document they all refer to the 'traditional languages' of a local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community, independent of whether this is the first language that community members learn to speak as children.

While the term 'community' means different things to different people, in *Nintiringanyi* it refers to the group of people with a shared connection to a particular language.

These people may or may not speak this language daily, or have learned the language as children. They may live near each other or be spread across the globe. Wherever they live and whatever language they use for daily communication, in *Nintiringanyi* these people are referred to as the language 'community'.

For definitions of the different types of Indigenous language learners, *Nintiringanyi* relies on the Australian Curriculum *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages*.

Although *Nintiringanyi* does not focus specifically on the teaching and learning of new Indigenous languages (such as Kriol, Yumplatok and varieties of Aboriginal English) they are the first languages many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children learn, and are the language of daily communication and expressions of individual and local identity across Australia. The recognition of young languages by schools is essential for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Global lessons: Indigenous languages and multilingualism in school programs, has been published as a companion paper to *Nintiringanyi*. *Global lessons* uses case studies to show the power of schools, communities and language champions to develop programs which build community expertise and strong academic programs that foster Indigenous multilingualism. It is recommended reading and provides definitions of background terms such:

- multilingualism;
- traditional language revival, revitalisation, and maintenance;
- traditional first language instruction in Australia;
- new Indigenous languages; and
- the different types of language programs.

Introduction

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Teaching and Employment Forum

On the 3rd and 4th of November 2016, First Languages Australia gathered 100 language educators from around the country in Adelaide for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Teaching and Employment Forum.

This historic event brought teaching institutions, state and territory education authorities, language centres and community language teachers together to work toward a coordinated approach to the training and employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language teachers. The forum drew a capacity audience and established a collective interest in holding similar events to support Indigenous language teachers in the future.

It was a significant journey for many, with dedicated language teachers and their departmental colleagues attending from as far away as Kalumburu, Coconut Island, Maningrida and Hope Vale. The diversity of expertise and experience in the room was inspiring for all who took part.

Participants identified key issues and suggested actions to progress the teaching of Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages nationally. A summary of the issues identified follows. Subsequent to the meeting First Languages Australia has continued discussions with language teachers and departmental representatives to identify the priorities outlined in this strategy.

Nintiringanyi highlights key actions for each state's and territory's consideration in appropriately developing and supporting Indigenous language teachers in schools. Detailed background information on these issues has been published elsewhere. As this paper does not intend to duplicate these resources, key references for further reading are included throughout the document.

It should be acknowledged that the information contained in this strategy reflects the collective knowledge and generosity of the experienced educators who attended the forum and that of their peers, with whom they work daily in this field. A number of these attendees have published academic papers on these topics and some of these are referenced in this discussion. Those who have been referenced acknowledge that the knowledge, perspective and vision that they promote has been developed over many years with their Indigenous community colleagues.

Our voices are not alone.



Summary of Issues Identified

Issue one: Language teacher training

Steps to becoming a language teacher: what is needed?

- Flexible training options
- Pathways to the classroom
- Culturally appropriate delivery
- Engaging people in teacher training

Issue two: Learning the language required to teach

Growing language skills to enable teaching: what is needed?

- Support for family and community-based language learning
- Resource development
- Teachers/mentors
- Development of alternative approaches for language learning
- Funding

Issue three: Teacher registration

Establishing appropriate accreditation, working conditions, pay rates and professional development opportunities: what is needed?

- A range of pay rates for varying qualification levels
- Alternative entry options for people without a teaching qualification
- Culturally appropriate professional development for Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators
- Consideration of the Department of Education WA approach: providing training toward teacher recognition

Issue four: Community protocols

Who can teach, where and when: what is needed?

- Elders' permission
- Decisions on who can teach
- Establishment of required qualifications
- Setting of community standards
- Negotiation of resource ownership
- Development of partnerships
- Management of non-Indigenous staff involvement

Issue five: Working with the education system

Ownership, funding, establishing hours in the curriculum: what is needed?

- Resource ownership
- Cooperation with communities and language centres
- Succession planning
- Acknowledgment of the value of Indigenous language curriculum
- Time structured into the school program
- Recognition of language teachers
- Funding

Priorities

The full text of this document supports the following actions as the identified priorities.

Action one: Language teacher training

First Languages Australia requests that education departments in each state and territory:

Encourage registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers who are teaching language, or wish to do so, to undertake the Masters of Indigenous Languages Education. This will include supporting willing teachers/schools through the provision of:

- Teacher release assistance for the duration of the block study program,
- Study grants, and
- HECS assistance.

Identify an appropriate model for the provisional registration of community members who do not have a teaching degree, but are willing to teach their languages in schools. The following options should be considered:

- The Western Australian model of Aboriginal Languages Teacher Training, or
- The provision of a Certificate III or IV course that develops skills for teaching Indigenous languages, along with supervised classroom mentoring.

Support community members interested in teaching their languages in schools to complete undergraduate teacher training.

Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language teaching as a rewarding career path, highlighting the available training options.

Anticipate the likely challenge of low enrolments in any state/territory based teacher training program by committing to working nationally toward:

- The provision of Aboriginal language teacher training toward provisional registration, and
- The establishment of a language teacher training degree at the undergraduate level. This would best be offered with relevant entry and exit pathways and consideration for the needs of regional students. For example:
 - o Bachelor of Education in Indigenous Language Revitalization, University of Victoria (UVIC), Canada.

Work nationally to rapidly expand the available pool of Indigenous language teacher trainers.

Action two: Learning the language required to teach

First Languages Australia requests that education departments in each state and territory:

Recognise and support the ongoing language learning needs of Indigenous language teachers, and potential teachers, and support this learning as professional development.

Promote the Community Language Schools program to schools where their Indigenous language community may be interested in working with the school to establish such a program.

Promote relevant community language learning courses offered by universities, TAFE, language centres and community programs. Such as Walalangga Yawuru Ngang-ga, and relevant Certificate I, II, III courses in Aboriginal language learning.



Action three: Teacher registration

First Languages Australia requests that each teacher registration body:

Encourages provisional registration for people with the training, qualifications and school support identified by the department as sufficient. For example:

- The Department's implementation of the Western Australian model of Aboriginal Languages Teacher Training, or
- The provision of the Certificate IV in Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language along with supervised classroom mentoring.

Collaborates toward a national model for the provisional registration for Indigenous language teachers.

Collaborates with teacher education providers in the development and national accreditation of an initial Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language teacher education program. The University of Victoria in Canada's Bachelor of Education in Indigenous Language Revitalization appears to be a replicable model.

First Languages Australia requests that each education department identify or develop an Award that ensures fair wages and conditions for Indigenous language teachers.

Action four: Community protocols

First Languages Australia requests that education departments, which have not already done so:

Develop a strategy to support schools in managing community protocols.

Including:

- collaborating with local language centres where available
- developing support resources, such as:
 - o Indigenous language focused professional development opportunities for all members of staff in schools offering, or looking to offer, an Indigenous language curriculum.
 - o A tool with which to guide schools in:
 - Establishing a language reference group which includes traditional owners and, where appropriate, other people with a specific interest in the language program,
 - Teaching the language of the land on which the school has been built, and
 - Ensuring community control of language curriculum development, delivery and resources. And,
- providing staff within the department to support and guide schools and teachers through local curriculum design and delivery.

Develop and/or promote tools that support successful collaborations between schools and local language communities. For example:

- *Warra: Building teams, Building resources*
- *Guide to Community Protocols for Indigenous Language Projects*

Action five: Working with the education system

First Languages Australia requests that education departments in each state and territory:

Encourage schools to collaborate across their language regions to share the costs of establishing and delivering the program, including sharing:

- teachers
- teacher training and succession planning
- professional development
- resource production
- curriculum development

Encourage schools to work closely with their regional language centres and other appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations in the development and delivery of language curriculum and resources, wherever possible.

Raise awareness of the fact that language communities and language centres may not be able to respond to enquiries at the pace schools might expect. The provision of a local Indigenous languages program is a long term goal and the respectful initiation of conversations toward the school community collaboration will catalyze long term benefits for all involved.

Develop and/or promote tools that support successful resource production collaborations between schools and local language communities, paying particular consideration to the sensitive issues of intellectual property and ownership.

Initiate activities that monitor data on the effectiveness and benefits of language curriculum delivery for the participating students, whole of school and broader community (Indigenous and otherwise).

Over the course of the consultation for this strategy, the following issues and common understandings have emerged as background to all the actions proposed:

Why Australia's first languages are important

Indigenous languages are built on the foundation upon which the capacity to learn, interact and to shape identity is built.

Our land, our languages, 2012.

Australia's first languages are a wonderful and precious resource. They are a bridge to rich and important information. Australia is situated in one of the world's linguistic hotspots and Indigenous languages are treasures of international significance. When one of our languages is lost, a deep body of knowledge is lost with it.

Our languages are unique to Australia and part of the heritage of all Australians. Knowing about the languages of the land we call home allows each of us to build an understanding of where we are, how we came to be here and who we are collectively.

Language is also key to Indigenous well-being in Australia. Australia will be a much better place when Indigenous language communities are strong and healthy and have the power to control their own destiny.

For Indigenous students, knowledge of their own language gives them pride and strengthens their identity through connection to family and history. An obligation to continue engaging with and cherishing their culture through language affirms this connection. Knowing their own language helps them answer the simple but important questions of 'what is my story?', 'where have I come from?' and 'why am I important?'

For young Indigenous students, the knowledge that they have an oral history that reaches back well over 50,000 years is hugely empowering.

Why teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in schools?

Schools can play a crucial role in supporting community recognition of the importance of our traditional languages.

Indigenous languages have an enormous potential contribution to make in relation to Closing the Gap. There is no more powerful way to reassert community authority over the schooling of children than to allow community members to teach community business within school spaces. Indigenous language programs can lead the way to changing school culture and students' perceptions of school. These changes are reflected in improved levels of attendance with flow-on effects in terms of learning more generally.

Associate Professor Tonya Stebbins, La Trobe University. Submission to the Inquiry into language learning in Indigenous communities.

Our languages are a core element of the culture and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and our nation. Through studying these languages, students learn about the history, culture, land and environment of the country in which they live and



can develop a deep understanding of their identities as Indigenous or non-Indigenous Australians.

To me, teaching Kaurna means sinking my toes into this sacred soil and embracing who I am. It means being so proud of my language and culture that I want to share it with whoever wants to listen, learn and be a part of my journey.

Ngathaitya, ngathu Kaurna Warra nguthu-atpama, ngai tidna kuinyunta yartangka ngatpanthi. Naku'athu, yailty'athu ngana ngai tiyati. Ngai kararrinthe ngaityu warraku, ngaityu tapa purrunaku kuma. Ngai padlurninthe ngaityu warra pirrki-apititya ngapidluku, ngana padlurninthe yuringkarnititya, tirkatitya, kumangka ngathaityangka padnititya.

Taylor Power, Kaurna language teacher, Gilles Street Primary School, with Kaurna translation assistance from Rob Amery, Head of Linguistics, University of Adelaide. *Australian Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages.*

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples acknowledges Indigenous peoples' rights over their languages and the need for States to work in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, to take effective measures to recognise and protect the execution of these rights. Articles 9-15, 16, 25 and 31 are of particular relevance to this discussion.





Godfrey Simpson teaching Wajarri to young students from the Leaning Tree Community School in Geraldton. Photo credit: Irra Wangga Language Centre

As outlined by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues:

Language rights are inadequately recognized in many countries, and are often neglected by national legislation and policy. Certain languages are given official status and recognition while the majority of languages, particularly Indigenous languages, are denied legal recognition. Indigenous languages and their speakers are diminished and made to seem inferior, thus allowing for discriminatory policies and practices.

Aside from the basic right to maintain and use their own languages, Indigenous peoples' language rights include:

- The right to be educated in their mother tongue.
- The right to have Indigenous languages recognized in constitutions and laws.
- The right to live free from discrimination on the grounds of language.

The benefits of teaching Aboriginal languages or Torres Strait Islander languages in schools have been known in Australia for many years. In 1996, the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia published the Australian Indigenous Languages Framework. The framework highlights teaching Indigenous languages in schools as an important tool through which all Australians can come to recognise the contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures have made and continue to make to Australian society.

The Australian Curriculum *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages* states:

Each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language is unique to the Country/Place on which it arose. It gives voice to the landscapes, thoughts and ways of seeing and interpreting the world. When the language of the land is spoken, it brings together all of the elements of the landscape and its people. It encompasses the relationships of these people with one another and with the landscape, past, present and future. The learning of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language incorporates the realities of its people and facilitates students' deep engagement with knowledge, ways of being and ways of knowing. It develops in students an understanding of historical, current and ongoing connection to Country/Place and culture.

Offering an Indigenous language curriculum is an opportunity to make a measurable difference to students in terms of identity, to the school in terms of promotion of cultural understanding, and to the school community in terms of making connections and promoting cooperation.

The value of including Indigenous languages in schools is already recognised in State and Territory policy documents. For example, Education Queensland's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Statement* states:

Greater understanding and shared ownership of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages – traditional languages, creoles and related varieties – will contribute to the Australian identity of all students, schools and communities, and will sustain Queensland's unique Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander linguistic and cultural heritage.

The *Guide to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages in Education Queensland Schools* notes the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language curriculum as having the potential to deliver the following range of positive outcomes for schools and their local communities:

- making school more relevant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- allowing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to benefit personally from learning more about their language and culture
- allowing non-Indigenous students the benefits of learning more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- helping students develop research skills while learning about the history of the area where the school is located
- focusing on the many cognitive and social benefits of learning an additional language
- broadening student and community awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, community and language
- increasing visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language and culture in the broader community within which the school is situated.

It should be noted that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language teachers see the above benefits in both multilingual and revival language contexts.



Education is the key for us to have a good life in our community. We have to have a good education, and language is part of the means, the tools, whereby we can have good access to education.

Maratja Dhamarrandji, in presenting to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs inquiry into language learning in Indigenous communities, 2012.

Additionally, in 2011 the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training commissioned the review *Early years English language acquisition and instructional approaches for Aboriginal students with home languages other than English*. This review of Australian and international literature around the learning of English as a second or additional language at school provides strong evidence for teaching Indigenous language and literacy first, followed by the introduction of English as an additional language, with continued support for both languages.

Our land, our languages (2012) highlights an analysis of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey as showing correlations between language use and well-being, including the following educational outcomes:

- 13-17-year-old Aboriginal students are more likely to attend school if they speak an Indigenous language
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who speak, understand or are learning an Indigenous language are more likely to gain a post-school qualification.

There is also a growing interest in the diverse career pathways that can come from learning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language. Work in education, tourism, parks and wildlife, museums, libraries, public galleries and in cultural development are just some of the many careers for which knowledge of a local Indigenous language will be of great benefit.

Further background information around the benefits of offering an Indigenous languages curriculum can be found in the following reference documents:

- *Our Land, Our Languages: Language Learning in Indigenous Communities*
- *Guide to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages in Education Queensland schools*
- *Early years English language acquisition and instructional approaches for Aboriginal students with home languages other than English: A systematic review of Australian and international literature*
- Education Queensland's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Statement*
- *Social Justice Report 2009*, Chapter 3
- Australian Curriculum *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages*

As a companion to this document, First Languages Australia has published a background paper *Global Lessons: Indigenous languages and multilingualism in school programs*. Using Australian and international case studies, the paper highlights the foundations of successful school and community partnerships in the delivery of an Indigenous language curriculum, bilingual program or immersion school.



Students composing songs in Wik Mungkan at Pama Language Centre's first Wik-Mungkan Songs on Country workshop in collaboration with Aurukun State School. Photo credit: Pama Language Centre

First Languages Australia's appreciation of the benefits of school-based language programs has come from discussions with language teachers and workers since the mid-70s. Those who work daily in schools with, or without, their languages make strong statements regarding the improved outcomes they see for their students through the delivery of school-based language activities. However, it appears that very little data is collected to record the success, or otherwise, of these programs. A collaboration between schools, education departments and researchers to document the links between the provision of an Indigenous languages curriculum and improved outcomes for students would be timely. Likewise, evidence of the benefits of bilingual education for Indigenous students that first learn Standard Australian English at school will assist such programs into the future.

What are the risks?

Once a good foundation of high quality resources and well supported teachers is established, in communities where traditional languages are lingua franca, there are no risks to teaching Indigenous languages in schools. Rather, the depth of language knowledge and comparative language knowledge that can be gained can help students transition to other languages, support student engagement in school, and help children better understand the content being taught across all subject areas, as described above. In contrast, the risks associated with not delivering the curriculum in a student's home language are many, have been well researched, and lead to academic underachievement, e.g. see Grimes (2009), *Indigenous languages in education: What the research actually shows*, especially pp7-9.





In revival contexts, some risks associated with commitment to the delivery of local language curriculum have been raised. These are highlighted below, but it should be acknowledged that these risks are short-term and can generally be resolved through teacher training and support, and by encouraging the development of teaching programs that increase the number of Indigenous language speakers.

Teaching a second language (one not spoken at home) to students for a few hours a week may not rapidly result in a community of speakers of that language. However, the work required to teach that language at schools is significant, both for the language teacher and for the coordinating language centre or program, if there is one. Language teachers undertake many years of training before being registered to teach in schools. Co-teaching relationships can reduce this burden to some extent, as less training is needed for community teachers, and administrative support may be provided. Furthermore, local curriculum and specific resources need to be produced and ongoing community involvement in the curriculum delivery must be gained and managed with a constant eye for sustainability and succession planning. It should be acknowledged that a considerable commitment from the teacher, school and community is necessary.

Currently, most communities have a limited number of community members they can draw on as school language teachers. Schools that are currently delivering Indigenous language curriculum are, for the most part, dependent on one or two passionate and committed teachers, trained or untrained, who are in the main over-worked, under-resourced and who do not have a clear succession plan.

Furthermore, it is essential that language communities are aware that, on its own, teaching languages in schools as second languages to English speakers will not maintain

or revive traditional languages. Rather, while language learning in schools will grow students' understanding of language, traditional languages will only flourish if these students then have the opportunity to communicate purposefully in these languages in their home and in their community.

Teaching and using language within families and communities is how traditional languages will live strongly into the future. If school programs are to see increased community language use, they need to occur in parallel with community programs that are creating a body of language learners and speakers who are the parents and carers of young children. This will create home environments that support and extend the use of traditional languages in daily conversation. Likewise, adults need opportunities to converse with other adults so as to maintain and grow their own language skills.

However, many communities dedicated to their school language activities assert that school is indeed a natural place for language teaching to occur. In revival communities, these programs report increased language use by students both at school and at home. And in stronger language communities, it is now clear that the *bilingual education* programs of the 70s, 80s and 90s have been a solid support for continued language use.

During school time the students are together and ready to learn. Running the language program at the school helps the students engage with their traditional language but also other areas of the curriculum. They also take what they learn home with them, using it with their peers and sharing it with other family members.

Doomadgee State School Language Team, 2017.

This strategy provides suggestions as to how to reduce the risks and thus maximise the positive impacts of delivering a local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Languages Curriculum.

What is it that we fear?

When exploring the development and delivery of a local language curriculum, it should be acknowledged that there may be some underlying community fear.

Some people express concerns about 'doing it wrong'. They may:

- not feel empowered, supported or qualified to design a curriculum
- be nervous about allowing culture to be shared through the school
- have concerns about their own language skills, pronunciation, etc., or those of the proposed teacher
- be worried that the language is not being used in the same way it was by their grandparents or when it was first documented.

Each of the above points is a real and valid concern. However, more and more communities are recognising the need to 'use it or lose it' when considering their language culture.

Attitudes to teaching Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages in schools appear to have changed significantly over the past five years. Several communities that felt languages should be taught within the community first are now expressing a keen interest in collaborating with educators to develop a language curriculum.





Western Australian Aboriginal language teacher trainees 2016.
Photo credit: Department of Education WA

Nationally, there is increased willingness to engage in language learning and public language use, particularly led by revival community members in their twenties and thirties. However, there are many who remain concerned that they will not be correctly representing their culture if they make mistakes as they are learning, mispronounce difficult words, or simply do not have enough language knowledge to articulate what they mean. The situation also exists in some communities where older generations speak their language and younger generations understand it, but choose to respond in English or a local creole. Fortunately, in other regions, we are seeing younger people move beyond that position to embody their role as ‘language learners’ with a keen awareness that, for their language to ‘live’, they need to use it daily.

Language change and development over time is a topic that needs more discussion within communities, and with the schools and linguists with whom they work. People are coming to understand that if a language is not changing, it is effectively ‘dead’ and that all living languages change over time. There are periods of expansion and contraction depending on the needs of the speakers. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages were not frozen in time. All languages gain shapes and sounds from their surroundings and from the other languages of their speakers. Communities are beginning to outline their expectations around contemporary use of traditional languages and to create orthographies and grammar guides that work toward achieving these expectations.

First Languages Australia strongly supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to use their language as much and as frequently as they can. The organisation is committed to helping people overcome hesitancy and fear around their language use.

Australian Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages

In December 2015, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) released the Australian Curriculum *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages*. The Framework provides a way forward for all schools in Australia to support the teaching and learning of the languages Indigenous to this country, from Foundation to Year 10.

It provides important guidance and the necessary flexibility required for the development of local Aboriginal language or Torres Strait Islander language curriculums, whether they be languages that are currently used for everyday communication, those being revitalised, or one of the many creoles that have arisen through language contact in Australia.

A Brief Summary (L₁, LR, L₂)

The Framework has three pathways that take account of both ‘the learner’ and ‘the nature of the language’. The following Pathway summaries are taken directly from the Australian Curriculum *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages* structure summary:

First Language Learner Pathway (L₁)

Languages studied in the First Language Learner Pathway (L₁) are typically used in spoken form as the language of everyday communication by whole communities across all generations.

Typically, but not exclusively, L₁ programs will occur on Country/Place and will have constant involvement from a variety of speakers from the community. A key expectation in the L₁ pathway is that of students having opportunities to interact with Elders and particular places on Country/Place.

Learners are typically Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children who have learnt the language from their families as a first language and continue to use it naturally at home and play. Students may have varying skills in other languages, including varieties of English.

The First Language Learner Pathway provides students with an opportunity to study a first language at school. For these students, having the opportunity to learn their own language at school supports their cognitive development and signals recognition of the value and status of their language and ways of using and understanding language. Learning and using one’s own language at school also meets a widely held community aim to strengthen students’ identity and their connection between their families, community and Country/Place.



As well as continuing to develop oracy, a key feature of the First Language Learner Pathway is the development of literacy and extending language use in additional domains, particularly relating to the school context. Children build a vocabulary for thinking and talking about school topics, routines and processes, and expand their knowledge and understanding by exploring Country/Place with Elders and community members and by engaging with stories and other texts in the language.

Language Revival Learner Pathway (LR)

The Language Revival Learner Pathway (LR) provides opportunities for students to study Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages that are being revived by their owners or custodians and are in various stages of revitalisation, renewal and reclamation.

LR covers a much broader range of language types and ecologies than either L1 or L2, and the vast majority of Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages are included in the LR category.

Schools teaching the Language Revival Learner Pathway (LR) will most likely be located broadly within the geographical region of the language and culture, sometimes in towns and cities and other times in rural and remote regions. Classes will likely include students who relate closely to the language and culture as well as students with varying degrees of affiliation with the language and culture, including some with no connections to the language and culture. A key expectation in the LR pathway is that students have opportunities to interact with Elders and particular places on Country/Place.

Second Language Learner Pathway (L2)

Languages studied in the Second Language Learner Pathway (L2) are typically languages used in spoken form as the language of everyday communication by whole communities across all generations.

The second language learner pathway has been written on the assumption that learning will occur off-Country, involving students who are typically not from the language community and having little or no experience of the language and culture. They are introduced to learning the language at school as an additional, new language.

The language chosen for curriculum development should have a sizeable set of resources in a variety of media, such as local documentaries, bilingual narrative and descriptive texts, and educational materials in print and digital form. Learning is enriched and authenticated by interaction with visiting Elders and community speakers, and where possible visits to Country/Place. Information and communications technologies provide additional resources to support a range of language and culture experiences.

The Framework recognises that each classroom will include learners from different language contexts and allows teachers to develop a curriculum that meets the needs of learners across the pathways. It also provides guidance around the principles and protocols for working with local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities when developing and delivering a local language curriculum.



Dalisa Pigram-Ross teaching Yawuru at Cable Beach Primary School.
Photo credit: Dalisa Pigram-Ross

Responsibility for implementation

The responsibility for curriculum implementation lies with each state and territory.

ACARA's primary role in developing the curriculum framework ended once the Framework was released. There is, however, a role for ACARA in demonstrating how the Framework can be implemented. The collation and sharing of 'illustrations of practice' exemplifying the diversity of ways that local language curricula are delivered would be a useful support for the curriculum document.

Language awareness

Many schools work with their local communities to deliver language activities as an engagement tool for improved student outcomes. These "language awareness" programs do not necessarily align with the provision of a Languages curriculum. Rather they meet the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, cross-curriculum priority, with creative teachers able to link them to content descriptions across their learning areas. For some schools, the provision of such activities is a stepping stone to offering a local language curriculum.



Why do we need a strategy?

This strategy is a tool with which to support and guide departments in each state and territory in the establishment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Indigenous language teacher training and professional development.

First Languages Australia, its predecessors and state language bodies have been working for many years with curriculum authorities to develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language syllabuses to support communities interested in teaching their language/s in schools. Although many states and territories have been implementing an Aboriginal languages curriculum, the release of the Australian Curriculum *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages* in 2015 was a significant moment for first languages.

The release of the Framework has catalysed increased interest in running school-based language programs both from schools and local language groups. Mainstream demand for local language curriculum is one of the core reasons a strategy is necessary.

First Languages Australia emphasises that schools need to listen to and work collaboratively with (and under the guidance of) their local language communities concerning teaching their language at school. This is articulated in the Framework. The importance of waiting until a community is ready cannot be overstated. Indeed, it is not possible to establish a sustainable local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language program without the support and leadership of the local language group.

However, a top-down approach can support the needs of local communities, schools and teachers, and this can be accessed through the Framework. Within Indigenous languages education, we can look to the example of the *essential bilingual language programs* established by Kim Beazley Senior as Education Minister in the Whitlam government. Though federal support for these programs has diminished, it is evident that communities with schools that were the subject of bilingual programs have larger numbers of traditional language speakers today. Bilingual education has resulted in communities literate in multiple languages, including English, and with speakers able to move into careers in which they continue to make use of their language skills. Students have gone on to become, for example, teachers, translators, tour guides and broadcasters. Furthermore, a number of communities have grown a core strength and capacity around their school language and cultural activities that has seen the community actively maintain and improve these programs even in the context of radically reduced support.

The Australian Curriculum *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages* is now in its 'implementation phase'. Each state and territory has been working with the document to adapt it to their needs and to progress the development of local language curriculum in their state.

This strategy provides the necessary guidance required to support sustainable local curriculum implementation with a particular focus on training language teachers, resource production and community involvement.

Our Goal

Over the next two years, First Languages Australia hopes to see each state and territory publish a clear plan outlining their plans around the implementation of the Australian Curriculum *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages*, paying particular attention to two central areas of importance. These are:



1. Teacher training

Effective implementation must involve:

- establishing clear standards
- developing a training program
- ensuring accessibility
- facilitating registration
- sustainability
- establishing clear professional development opportunities and pathways.

2. Funding

Guidelines established for:

- the payment and conditions of language teachers and co-teachers
- training and professional development
- supporting ongoing, active community involvement
- development of local language resources for use in the classroom, potentially for sharing between schools in the same language region.



Action one: Language teacher training

First Languages Australia requests that education departments in each state and territory:

Encourage registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers who are teaching language, or wish to do so, to undertake the Masters of Indigenous Languages Education. This will include supporting willing teachers/schools through the provision of:

- Teacher release assistance for the duration of the block study program,
- Study grants, and
- HECS assistance.

Identify an appropriate model for the provisional registration of community members who do not have a teaching degree, but are willing to teach their languages in schools. The following options should be considered:

- The Western Australian model of Aboriginal Languages Teacher Training, or
- The provision of a Certificate III or IV course that develops skills for teaching Indigenous languages, along with supervised classroom mentoring.

Support community members interested in teaching their languages in schools to complete undergraduate teacher training.

Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language teaching as a rewarding career path, highlighting the available training options.

Anticipate the likely challenge of low enrolments in any state/territory based teacher training program by committing to working nationally toward:

- The provision of Aboriginal language teacher training toward provisional registration, and
- The establishment of a language teacher training degree at the undergraduate level. This would best be offered with relevant entry and exit pathways and consideration for the needs of regional students. For example:
 - o Bachelor of Education in Indigenous Language Revitalization, University of Victoria (UVIC), Canada.

Work nationally to rapidly expand the available pool of Indigenous language teacher trainers.

Context

Teacher training and resource development are the two major gaps that need to be overcome to achieve the delivery of a sustainable Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages curriculum.



Nationally, there are only two programs that train people to be independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language teachers. These are the Western Australian Aboriginal Languages Traineeship, a three-year program delivered as Professional Development by the Western Australian Department of Education, and the Master of Indigenous Languages Education offered by the Sydney University to people who already hold a Bachelor of Education or similar teaching degree. An undergraduate education degree that supports the needs of those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who wish to teach their languages in schools is needed.

The following provides some suggestions to assist each state and territory to identify an appropriate model of teacher training to fill this significant gap in training options.

Traineeships

The Western Australian Model

In order to meet the continued demand for Aboriginal languages teachers, the Western Australian Department of Education has for the past twenty years been running a Professional Development Traineeship for people who want to teach their languages in schools.





The department offers a three-year program, completion of which allows the graduates' schools to apply for Limited Registration to Teach (LRT). The program includes:

- two years in-school traineeship,
- four block-release training intensives, and
- a third probationary teaching year.

The program builds the Aboriginal language teacher trainees' practical skills in the classroom. The trainee teachers teach with supervision for the two years of their traineeship. The training component of the project is delivered in a block release model, where the students come together in a series of one-week blocks.

All costs are covered by the Department. Senior Consultants of Aboriginal Languages, Coleen Sherratt in the south of the state and Lola Jones in the north manage all aspects of the training.

The theoretical component of the traineeship includes a total of 20 days block-release in four sessions of five days, two delivered in-term and two in school holidays. The block releases are intensive live-in/residential training held in various locations across the state. These locations depend on student location, and the availability and cost of venues. Trainees must attend all block releases, as each builds on the skills acquired in the previous block.

After block releases, trainees return to schools to teach language classes, applying skills acquired and using materials developed during the block releases. This practical

application forms the basis of assignment requirements. Assignments are completed during the term and submitted at the beginning of each block release.

On successful completion of the course and all assessments and additional requirements, the graduates' schools are eligible to apply to the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia for Limited Registration to Teach (LRT). When registration is complete, graduates are eligible for appointment as an Aboriginal language teacher who is qualified to teach their language but not other curriculum areas. The teachers usually continue at the school where they have been trained.

Since inception, between seven and fifteen language teachers have been trained each year. In recent years, enrolments had been declining, however, 2017 saw a record thirty-two enrolments.

Remuneration

Aboriginal language teachers with Limited Registration to Teach (LRT) are paid under the School Education Act Employees' (Teachers and Administrators) General Agreement 2011 on Level 1.6. They are treated as graduate teachers and have the entitlements of all teacher graduates, including Professional Development. With LRT, teachers begin remuneration at Level 1.6, but can only advance to level 1.8. If they want to progress further up the teaching scale, they must undertake a Bachelor of Education.

Costs

At a glance, the costs of teacher training in this model may appear substantial. However, the model ensures that, after three years of training, the trainees can teach independently in the classroom and the school is therefore relieved of the expense of a co-teacher. All other states and territories require a co-teacher in perpetuity, unless they are in the rare situation of having a trained teacher who has undertaken further study to teach their language/s.

Vocational education

At this point in time, the following vocational courses are not considered sufficient for teacher registration in any jurisdiction. They can, however, help aspiring teachers to gain the specific skills required to teach Aboriginal languages.

Certificate IV in Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language

10191NAT- Certificate IV in Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language is currently the only vocational course aimed at building skills toward the teaching of an Indigenous language.

The course fosters skills for community members interested in working in co-teaching relationships. These relationships involve the community teacher working together with a Languages teacher or other classroom teacher to develop and deliver the curriculum. In any co-teaching relationship, it is expected that the teaching team work together in all aspects of class planning and assessment. Strong co-teaching relationships allow for skill sharing between teachers and support the development and delivery of a robust and sustainable local language curriculum.



Community needs: Kurna Warra Pintyanthi

More than 80% of South Australia's population lives within Kurna country and a great many schools across the Adelaide Metropolitan area are looking for a teacher of Kurna. Nearly all of the early teachers of Kurna have passed on or have now retired. Several younger teachers of Kurna have become involved over the last ten years, but nowhere near enough to meet the demand.

There is a great need for teacher training and professional development. In 2012–13 a TAFE Certificate III course 'Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language (Kurna)' was run, resulting in nine graduates. Two of these nine have since passed away. Two young graduates, Jack Kanya Buckskin and Taylor Tipu Power-Smith, went on to complete the Certificate IV course 'Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language (Kurna)', whilst another three completed some of the components. A concerted effort will be made through Tauondi College over the next few years to recruit and train more teachers.

Teaching Kurna is rewarding and culturally-affirming. Having a knowledge of Kurna and the ability to impart that knowledge is a skill in high demand. But much work remains to develop an adequately remunerated and recognized career path. Schools need to collaborate in clusters and to coordinate their timetables to ensure that meaningful employment is provided without having to travel long distances for just one or two hours work.

Vocational courses are not recognised by any teacher registration bodies as sufficient qualification to enable teacher registration, precluding holders from teaching independently in the classroom. However, to alleviate an undersupply of qualified language teachers, discussions between the Departments and teacher registration bodies toward enabling the provisional registration of teachers at the Certificate IV and/or Diploma level may be an option to consider.

It is believed that most community members with only a Certificate IV qualification would not feel ready to independently develop and deliver a local language curriculum. There may, however, be some community teachers and principals who are willing to take the step of applying for provisional registration or 'permission to teach'. Some principals may be able to support a relationship whereby an available community language teacher is assisted by another languages teacher in curriculum development, planning and assessment; using provisional registration to allow the community teacher to be independent in the classroom. This could reduce the burden of requiring two teachers for curriculum delivery. Provisional registration is covered in further detail under Action three of this document. The above model would imitate the Aboriginal language teacher training course offered by the Western Australian Department of Education but be less robust, and possibly less cost-effective, as it relies on an external training provider training a small cohort of specialist teachers.



Ingrid Kenny and Rose Lester Mimili Anangu School Tri-Lingual Sign.
Photo credit: Mobile Language Team

Generic courses

With consideration for the particular needs of teachers of revival/revitalisation languages, it is possible that generic language teaching courses could also support people aiming to become Indigenous language teachers. For example, to rapidly meet a growing need for Languages teachers, the NSW Department of Education (DEC) partnered with the University of Sydney in 2013-14 to offer a suite of certificate and diploma courses for teachers of community and heritage languages.

These include a:

- Certificate in Language Teaching
- Diploma in Language Teaching
- Certificate in Leadership and Management

The courses were offered free to teachers at DEC Community Language Schools (see Community Language Schools in Issue two: Learning the language required to teach), with a fee required for other students. The course website states ‘these practical courses take into account the differences between languages and cover all aspects of classroom teaching, assessment and behaviour management, as well as language teaching’. Designed for people with diverse educational backgrounds, they focused on ‘building on experience, with classroom observations in day/community-languages schools and use of practical video clips and classroom activities’.

Such a course, if offered in block mode to accommodate non-Sydney candidates and with the addition of subjects supporting the particular needs of revival languages, may be of use in supporting the rapid skill development of community language teachers to meet the current need.

In addition, teachers of Languages around the country have been seen to be a tremendous support in the establishment of school-based Indigenous language



Undergraduate program: Bachelor of Education in Indigenous Language Revitalization, University of Victoria (UVIC), Canada

From the course information sheet.

To honour and support the language revitalization goals and work being undertaken across British Columbia and Canada, University of Victoria offers a community-based Bachelor of Education in Indigenous Language Revitalization that seeks to support communities to retain their language, through education programming. First Languages Australia believes that a degree of this type would be a forward step in addressing the need for language teacher training nationally.

Program overview

The Bachelor of Education in Indigenous Language Revitalization is designed with ladder steps providing exit and entry opportunities. Within the first year of the program, students have an opportunity to pursue the Certificate in Aboriginal Language Revitalization (CALR), focusing on what is necessary for language revitalization, or on Indigenous language learning, supported by courses in Language Revitalization. The second year completes the Diploma in Indigenous Language Revitalization which focuses on increasing language proficiency and introduces teaching concepts. The final two to three years focus on completing the coursework for the Bachelor of Education in Indigenous Language Revitalization and professional teaching certification. Depending on funding and student numbers at least the first two years of coursework follow a cohort model that is physically and culturally situated in individual language communities. The ladder steps include the following:

Laddered Steps toward Bachelor of Education

Year 1	Certificate in Aboriginal Language Revitalization (CALR) Path or Language Proficiency Path
Year 2	Diploma in Indigenous Language Revitalization
Year 3 & 4	Bachelor of Education in Indigenous Language Revitalization (leading to professional teaching certification in the province of British Columbia)

Community-Based Delivery

The Bachelor of Education is designed for community-delivery, where the first two years (minimum) are delivered in partnership with a language community or group of communities. The final two years may be delivered in a combination of face-to-face (both on-campus and in community) and distributed learning, bringing cohorts from around the province together OR the individual language community cohorts may continue as a group if student interest and funding warrants. In addition to UVIC faculty and sessional instructors, the program utilises local language instructors and resource people to ensure cultural and linguistic contexts are maintained, and to honour the knowledge existing within the community. These community-based cohorts are negotiated as partnerships between the University and the language community, as either two-year diploma or four-year degree programs.

Graduates:

- Demonstrate greater Indigenous language proficiency
- Understand and employ concepts of effective teaching and learning
- Are certified to teach K-12 in public and band-run schools in British Columbia
- Demonstrate linguistically and culturally grounded teaching strategies
- Work towards the revitalization of their languages in their communities

curriculum. Encouraging greater Indigenous participation in such generic training, with appropriate consideration for the needs of teachers of revival languages, may also be a way to build supportive networks within the broader language teaching community.

In 2017, extending the relationship with DEC Community Language Schools, The University of Sydney received funding from the NSW government for the establishment of the Sydney Institute for Community Languages Education (SICLE). SICLE will have a number of research, training and engagement priorities, including:

- a scoping study and review of the state's community language schools,
- the design of programs to support new syllabuses and curriculums for 54 languages,
- professional learning courses for volunteer community language teachers, and
- the development of a 'languages passport' as a record of students' learning achievements throughout their school years.

University of Sydney staff associated with SICLE, have expressed a willingness to work with teachers of Aboriginal languages if appropriate.

Undergraduate studies

Bachelor of Education (Primary Teaching)

Charles Darwin University (CDU) offers their Bachelor of Education (Primary Teaching) with Indigenous perspectives as a particular focus. Within the Bachelor of Education at Charles Darwin University, all students undertake studies in Indigenous languages and literacy as well as examining specific strategies for enhancing educational outcomes for Indigenous children. The degree is offered in person or online at CDU in Darwin, Alice Springs, Adelaide and Melbourne. Indigenous students are not a special cohort if studying through CDU but are if studying the degree through Batchelor Institute's flexible delivery (online and face to face workshops).

As of 2018, the degree offers the following two units as part of the Indigenous knowledges specialist elective group. The units have been developed in collaboration with the NT Department of Education. They are intended for students who speak an Indigenous language and who wish to teach it, or for those who are interested in facilitating the teaching of Indigenous languages in schools.

- EST211 Learning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language in Schools.
- EST311 Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language in Schools

Students with relevant VET qualifications receive credit towards the Bachelor of Education appropriate to their level of qualification. The following courses offered through the Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledge & Education (Charles Darwin University and Batchelor Institute) can contribute as credit:

- Associate Degree of Indigenous Languages and Linguistics (XINLL1)
- Bachelor of Indigenous Languages and Linguistics (WINLL1/BILL)
- Diploma of Indigenous Language Work (YINLA1)

Although these courses do not foster language teaching skills they provide theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to support the language work required as a teacher



of a language with limited resources. The courses focus on the linguistic skills and knowledge useful in language documentation, recovery and revitalisation.

For example, completion of the Bachelor of Education through the Indigenous Knowledges Centre could look like this:

1st Year	Diploma of Indigenous Language Work
2nd Year	Associate Degree of Indigenous Languages and Linguistics
3rd Year	Bachelor of Indigenous Languages and Linguistics
4th and 5th Years	Bachelor of Education (Graduate entry)

Bachelor of Education (Secondary)

The staff at Sydney University involved with the Masters of Indigenous Languages Education (MILE) have been working toward an undergraduate offering for people who wish to become secondary school teachers of their own languages. The Bachelor of Education (History and Indigenous languages/studies) has been under development since 2013. The proposed course would entail a history major with an Indigenous languages or Indigenous studies minor, to be offered in block release similarly to the MILE.

Development of this course has stalled since 2015 due to the University's concerns about the financial viability of block mode delivery of programs for Indigenous students from rural and regional locations. There is currently no indication that the course will be delivered at any stage in the future.

Ideally, such a program would model the Bachelor of Education in Indigenous Language Revitalization offered by the University of Victoria (UVIC), Canada.

In the absence of a specialist program, Indigenous language teaching could be offered as a teaching area in Bachelor of Education (Secondary) degrees.

The subject components of such a degree would need to be negotiated with relevant teacher professional standards bodies to ensure accreditation but would likely need to include:

- Pedagogy.
These subjects could be taught by Indigenous language teaching specialists, or possibly by other language teaching specialists with consideration for the needs of Indigenous language teachers (e.g. unique context of Australian languages, learning while teaching, working with limited resources etc).
- Language learning.
Students might learn their own or could also benefit from learning another Indigenous language. Depending what is on offer in the students' language this could be provided by a University, TAFE, in collaboration with a community learning program, or in a Master Apprentice situation (see 'Issue two: Learning the language required to teach' for a selection of options).
- Practical teaching time.

Challenges involved in developing such a degree will include flexibility from teacher accreditation body and the university, recognising that opportunities for learning Indigenous languages at tertiary level are limited compared with other languages.



Nhulu bayan nguumbarr balgaalgal. Lillian Bowen teaching her Guugu Yimidhirr class at Hope Vale School. Photo credit: Pama Language Centre

Challenges involved in delivering such a degree will include catering for aspiring Indigenous languages teachers who are strongly connected to and grounded in their own communities. Moving to a capital city or regional centre in another state/territory to complete all years of a full teaching degree may not be realistic. Away from base or locally-delivered programs may work best as currently most language learning opportunities are 'on country' and very few language regions are home to a university.

Flexible delivery

A Bachelor of Education (Primary Teaching) has been offered flexibly for Indigenous students in a number of states. Examples include:

- Anangu Tertiary Education Program (AnTEP), University of South Australia
- RATEP: Community-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teacher Education, James Cook University (Qld)
- Bachelor of Education (Regional and Remote), Curtin University (WA).
- Growing Our Own, a partnership between Charles Darwin University and Catholic Education Northern Territory (CENT).

These courses have enabled Indigenous people to remain within their local community while completing a Bachelor of Education.

Specifically designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the courses are taught through a flexible delivery mode which includes block release, allowing students to remain in their communities while studying.

These courses give university access to students who would otherwise not be able to gain a tertiary education due to the difficulties of living in a remote community.

These courses do not provide specific skills in language teaching. However, they are considerate of the needs of potential regional and remote teachers. They are models that





Language lesson at Koroit Kindergarten South Western Victoria.
Photo credit: Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages

should be considered when looking to develop training programs that aim to rapidly increase the available numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language teachers.

Graduate Studies

Master of Indigenous Languages Education (MILE)

Developed specifically for Indigenous teachers, the Master of Indigenous Languages Education remains the only degree-based qualification for Aboriginal languages teachers. It provides students with a broad knowledge of the linguistic features of Indigenous Australian languages. The course covers theories of language acquisition, integration and application of linguistics, and language education theory and practice of Indigenous Australian languages. Teachers do not need to be fluent in an Indigenous Australian language to enter the course.

Applicants for admission to the Master of Indigenous Languages Education must have a Bachelor of Education or similar teaching qualification and at least one year of teaching experience. The course is open to Indigenous Australians only.

Students complete eight units of study delivered in block mode in three separate intensive weeks each semester. In Semester One, all students complete core units of study in sounds and writing, words and meanings, sentences and texts, as well as in theories and methods in Indigenous language learning. In Semester Two, students complete compulsory units of study in research methods, curriculum development, and the use of technology in language learning. This is combined with an approved research project conducted in the context of each student's own language teaching.

Embedded courses are the:

- Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Languages Education
- Graduate Diploma in Indigenous Languages Education

Resources for teachers: Patyegarang - Indigenous Australian languages education website

Patyegarang is a website that answers questions about the teaching of Australian languages frequently asked by Australian languages educators, with a particular focus on language revival.

Patyegarang offers both original material and links to existing resources that can assist educators to improve their teaching as part of their language revival process. It is operated by staff of the Master of Indigenous Languages Education course at the University of Sydney in order to try and share some essential information with interested community members who are not eligible for entry to that program. Patyegarang is a work-in-progress that will grow over time. The authors are open to suggestions and contributions from users and others working in the field.

<http://www.indigoz.com.au/>

The course was first offered in 2007 and has seen between four and eleven graduates each year. Almost all of the students have been members of language revival communities. As the University cannot be a language authority, there are no entry or exit language proficiency requirements. Rather, staff adapt the course to the needs of the students each year, and, where available, students may elect to participate in a language learning course in the second semester of the course.

There have been a total of 64 graduates to date, with around 70% returning to teaching, 20% moving into leadership roles and 10% leaving the field after completion. Low enrolment numbers and financial stability continue to be a source of concern for University administration.

Being the only course of its kind, MILE has the benefit of bringing together teachers from across the country. As a group, the teachers can learn from each other and have the opportunity to gain an insight into how teaching is being supported and delivered in other communities, states and territories.

MILE students are all teachers who work in a range of contexts across Australia, mostly in government and non-government schools, but also staff in regional and central/head office positions in school systems, and vocational education settings such as TAFE. Employers could support participation in the MILE course by:

- covering the cost of teacher relief to enable teachers to attend block week classes in Sydney.
- covering the cost of teacher relief for an additional study week to enable completion of all assessment tasks.
- ensuring the school agrees to begin an Aboriginal languages program (if it doesn't already have one) once the teacher completes the MILE course.



This kind of support is ideally coordinated at a systemic level, as it has proven difficult for some individuals to negotiate such support at a local level and for their own schools to find the necessary funds. While some of the block teaching weeks do occur in school holidays, some past students have needed to take leave without pay or long service leave in order to attend some of the blocks.

Training teacher trainers

Nationally, there is currently only a handful of experienced Indigenous language teacher trainers. These include those people involved in the delivery of the MILE program and the Western Australia Aboriginal languages teacher training.

The training of Indigenous language teachers requires a skill set that includes:

- Significant classroom experience,
- Language teaching expertise (this may include training and experience in teaching Languages, teaching English as an additional language, or applied linguistics),
- I.T. for classroom resource production, and
- An understanding of the sound systems and grammars of Indigenous languages.

Promoting language teaching as a career choice

To rapidly increase the number of language teachers available to teach Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages, significant promotional efforts need to be made. The More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSI)



Yawuru students at Cable Beach Primary School.
Photo credit: Courtesy Dalisa Pigram-Ross

was a five-year (2011-16) program to increase the number of Indigenous people entering and remaining in professional teaching positions in Australian schools. MATSITI shares many goals with First Languages Australia in relation to supporting existing Indigenous teachers and increasing their numbers, however, their work looks at all teachers rather than specifically at language teachers.

Recommendations included:

- A national campaign for promoting and marketing teaching as a career for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Increase the profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers as leaders through bold affirmative action strategies that provide leadership development and succession planning.
- Implementing effective retention strategies to maximise the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher graduates.

Promoting teaching as a career of choice

MATSITI project partners managed a range of initiatives that promoted teaching to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Jurisdictions with highly effective promotional campaigns mentored others, which then also developed effective campaigns.

The most effective career attraction campaigns had a highly visible message aimed specifically at potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants. The most successful was the NSW Department of Education campaign, *Join Our Mob*, which included a scholarship program under which 80 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were supported to train as teachers, with a guarantee of an appointment in a preferred location on graduation.

Engaging key stakeholders

MATSITI developed strong links with Australian departments and agencies with responsibility and advocacy in education, from preschool to teacher education in Australian universities, and with those charged with the recruitment and professional learning of teachers and leaders in Australian schools. These stakeholders include Australian Government departments (Prime Minister and Cabinet, and Department of Education and Training), education ministers and senior officials, networks of Principals and authorities responsible for school curriculum, teaching standards and regulation. First Languages Australia and those in the Indigenous languages network have been invited to draw on the networks and relationships developed toward our shared goals.

Evaluation highlighted the process of entering formal agreements between stakeholders as effectively raising project partners' awareness of the connection between increasing the number and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and leaders, and achieving positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students.

A full report on the project can be accessed from the MATSITI website.



Action two: Learning the language required to teach

First Languages Australia requests that education departments in each state and territory:

Recognise and support the ongoing language learning needs of Indigenous language teachers, and potential teachers, and support this learning as professional development.

Promote the Community Language Schools program to schools where their Indigenous language community may be interested in working with the school to establish such a program.

Promote relevant community language learning courses offered by universities, TAFE, language centres and community programs. Such as Walalangga Yawuru Ngang-ga, and relevant Certificate I, II, III courses in Aboriginal language learning.

Context

Supporting teachers' language development

In order to teach their languages, Indigenous language teachers need to be continually growing their personal language skills. Departments across the board need to be aware that this is essential to Indigenous languages teachers and that they need special support in this regard.

For those in revival communities, substantial time is required for own language learning and research. This may involve constant work with a small team of community members in eliciting information from elders or retrieving and interpreting materials from archives. It may involve working with linguists (see *Warra: Building teams, building resources* for further information). In stronger language communities, this may also involve working intensively with other community members to ensure the culturally appropriate transmission within the community, sometimes in specific places or at particular times depending on the content.

Schools and their language teachers will need funds available to enable them to work with language centres or local language teams in the production of teaching resources. The collaborative development of these resources will grow the teachers' and communities' language capacity, provide social and moral support for the teachers, and allow appropriate community input. Working together in this way will also increase the pool of potential teachers and mentors, supporting the growth of a sustainable language curriculum.



Susan Poetsch working with Angelina Joshua (Ngukurr), Michelle Warren (Port Augusta) and Salote R Bovoró (Adelaide) as they make phone calls in Arrente. Photo credit: Ngukurr Language Centre



Community classes: Walalangga Yawuru Ngang-ga

After some years of intensive teaching in schools, the Yawuru community has made a strategic decision to temporarily step away from school programs and spend five years focused energy on growing 20 fluent speakers.

Yawuru language is being woken up in the community. Its region covers the town of Broome in the east Kimberley. Broome is a town that celebrates its cultural diversity and heritage. In the past ten years, Mabu Yawuru Ngan-ga, the Yawuru Language Centre, has been overwhelmed with requests for the supply of Yawuru language teachers for the provision of school-based language programs.

Initially, the Yawuru community was fortunate as it had a small number of trained teachers who were also Yawuru speakers and were able to fill the demand. Additional training was provided until the Yawuru language programs began running in all Broome schools and in community classes at the language centre.

However, after spending five years dedicated to the running of these programs, there was a growing realisation that teaching language to school students one hour a week was not producing a community of language speakers. Furthermore, many of their language speakers were working as teachers across schools and were not getting sufficient opportunity to talk to each other in Yawuru in order to maintain their language skills.

It was decided that using Yawuru and furthering individual community members' language skills needed to be prioritised over teaching language at schools. To meet this need, Walalangga Yawuru Ngang-ga language program was developed to increase the use of Yawuru language amongst family and friends. Walalangga Yawuru Ngang-ga is a two-year study program for Yawuru adults that aims to have 20 Yawuru language speakers by 2021.

Yawuru community members apply to be part of the program. These participants are paid to do three hours a day of language research, five days a week, and are required to use their language across 20 areas of life (for example, food, environment, relationships, etc.).

The program commenced in late 2016 and has so far seen success beyond the group's initial expectations. This includes stimulating conversations between adult participants and children who had participated in the school programs, but who had not known how to use the Yawuru they had learnt.

It is anticipated that graduates of the program will have opportunities to work in tourism, land management or other industries and that some may continue their studies to become school language teachers.



Walalangga Yawuru Ngang-ga class, December 2018.
Photo credit: Mabu Yawuru Ngan-ga

In addition, teachers will need to be supported to participate in regular professional development activities to increase their language skills. Examples of these include teaching and learning activities offered through community language nests, groups, camps, clubs or hubs, language workshops and immersion programs.

In considering sustainability, education departments should also consider supporting community-based language learning programs. These programs not only increase the pool of available teachers, they also assist with the development of resources for use in the classroom and are fertile grounds for testing innovative models for Indigenous language teaching.

Community Language Schools

The Community Language Schools Program could be a useful tool for schools looking to support and encourage community energy around collaborating to teach a local language. The Community Language Schools Program (previously known as the After-Hours Ethnic Schools Program) presents school communities with an opportunity to harness school and Indigenous community resources to genuinely support language use and development for school students and their language community.

If school programs are to see increased community language use, they need to occur in parallel with community programs that are creating a body of language learners/speakers who are parents of young children. A Community Language School could be a significant part of a community program that supports the teaching of the language in school. In addition to supporting broad community involvement in the development and delivery of a local language curriculum, these community collaborations could also be fertile ground for capturing the energy and enthusiasm of particular individuals with a propensity for language teaching. This would further support the development of a sustainable local language program.



Currently, Schools apply for funds to establish a Community Language School with their local community. The Department provides seed funds for a program's establishment, but not enough to cover the payment of a teacher for the required duration of the program. To ensure a program's sustainability, additional funds need to be identified and made available. Developing a partnership between the school, local Indigenous language groups, and the regional language centre (or other local Indigenous organisations) would provide a mechanism for these programs to be sustained into the future.

Community Languages Australia oversees the programs nationally, including establishing training programs. They are also keen supporters of Indigenous languages and would like to see the establishment of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Language Schools.

Relevant courses

In addition to classes run by language centres and community programs, there are a small number of vocational and tertiary programs that teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

Vocational courses

These courses are adapted to a local language with the burden of resource production and teaching resting on the requesting community.

TAFE SA

- 10190NAT- Certificate III in Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language

This course was developed as partner to 10191NAT- Certificate IV in Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language.

TAFE NSW

- TAFE NSW has developed a suite of Aboriginal languages courses that are offered part online and part in person. The programs are currently being offered in Wiradjuri, Gamilaraay, Yuwaalaraay and Bunjulang.

The Certificate I is focused on scripts that cover basic sounds, greetings, numbers, people, animals, body parts, birds, nature, suffixes, verbs and colours. Certificates II and III extend the learning.

The system has been designed so that it can be made available to more languages as the scripts are translated and recorded. It uses the Moodle learning management system to deliver some of the learning materials and track progress. Learning materials are developed using Articulate, or standard word processing software. The online program includes quizzes and assessments with progress being tracked for the teacher to review and grade.

- 10218NAT- Certificate I in Aboriginal Language/s
- 10217NAT- Certificate II in Aboriginal Language/s
- 10216NAT- Certificate III in Aboriginal Language/s



Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-operative

In the mid-1990s, Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Centre Cooperative became a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) for the delivery of language-specific courses for free to a small number of community members. Over the years the cost and administrative burden of being registered as an RTO have been increasing and the organisation is contemplating other options for the delivery of this training.

- 91257NSW - Certificate II in Gumbaynggirr Language and Culture Maintenance
- 10115NAT - Certificate III in Gumbaynggirr Language and Culture Maintenance
- 91258NSW - Certificate IV in Gumbaynggirr Language and Culture Maintenance
- 40635SA - Certificate III in Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language (offered for Gathang in 2016)

VET in Schools: Ripponlea Institute

A course titled, Translation Tracks (<https://www.naati.com.au/news-events/news-events-container/updates/introducing-the-translation-tracks-project-in-central-australia/>), is being delivered by the Alice Springs Language Centre as a pathway for middle years high school students to prepare them to work in the language industry. It is anticipated that graduates will go on to have the opportunity to work as interpreters, translators,





Grant Thompson teaching Ngandi on country.
Photo credit: Ngukurr Language Centre

language teachers, liaison officers or broadcasters. Gaining work skills is a major focus of this course, along with visiting interpreter workplaces and speaking to Indigenous interpreters and liaison officers. The course has been designed to foster a deep understanding of the students' home language/s and of English as they learn about the differences between languages and why miscommunication between these languages is common.

Continuing from the middle years course, together with Ripponlea Institute, a Certificate II in Applied Languages (Aboriginal Languages) is being delivered in Eastern Arrernte, Anmatyerr and Warlpiri. Taught as VET in Schools, the course provides a pathway for students wanting to study Indigenous Languages and Cultures in their senior years of school. A Certificate III in Applied Languages (Aboriginal Languages) is also in development.

- 10297NAT - Certificate II in Applied Language (this course is being offered for Central Australian Languages)
- 22150VIC - Certificate III in Applied Language (this course is being developed for Central Australian Languages)

Languages Newsletter: Northern Territory Department of Education

As part of its commitment to its Languages and Cultures curriculum, the Northern Territory Department of Education has been collating and distributing *Curriculum eNews for Indigenous Languages and Cultures*. The eNews is a regular forum for teachers of Indigenous Languages and Cultures to share their schools' activities and to celebrate their achievements, welcoming contributions from across the territory. It is a tool with which teachers and principals can keep up to date with policy developments and training opportunities.

Tertiary options

There are currently seven Indigenous languages taught at Australian universities. Four of them are languages still in use by large numbers of speakers: Arrernte, Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yolŋu Matha. Three of them are languages which are being revitalised: Gamilaraay, Kurna and Wiradjuri. Some languages can be studied as electives, or as majors.

A current list is published on the University Languages Portal Australia.

<https://www.ulpa.edu.au/>

Supporting community language growth and revival

Schools can play a powerful role in supporting the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages across the community.

Education departments should, as far as possible, support and collaborate with TAFEs and universities that already work with language groups to develop and offer language classes. These courses serve the interests of the Department in supporting their teachers own language learning, succession planning and the sustainability of the Languages curriculums on offer.

In addition, schools can be encouraged to support and participate in local community language activities. Departments and schools working with First Languages Australia and regional language bodies can work together to promote models of community and family language sharing that effectively increase the daily use of language by community members.



Action three: Teacher registration

First Languages Australia requests that each teacher registration body:

Encourages provisional registration for people with the training, qualifications and school support identified by the department as sufficient. For example:

- The Department's implementation of the Western Australian model of Aboriginal Languages Teacher Training, or
- The provision of the Certificate IV in Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language along with supervised classroom mentoring.

Collaborates toward a national model for the provisional registration for Indigenous language teachers.

Collaborates with teacher education providers in the development and national accreditation of an initial Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language teacher education program. The University of Victoria in Canada's Bachelor of Education in Indigenous Language Revitalization appears to be a replicable model.

First Languages Australia requests that each education department identify or develop an Award that ensures fair wages and conditions for Indigenous language teachers.

Context

The Western Australian approach

As discussed in Issue One: Language teacher training, the Western Australian traineeship model of Aboriginal languages teacher training towards 'limited registration' provides a solid foundation for implementation by each state and territory.

The traineeship has been refined during its implementation over 20 years. It is run by two staff (one in the north and one in the south of the state) who are charged with all aspects of the curriculum design, delivery and assessment.

Applicants must have the support of a school and of a teacher/mentor they will co-teach with for the duration of their traineeship. They must also have community language mentors who will work with them in the development of language content and classroom resources.

On completion of two years training and a further year's probation, the trainees can apply to the teacher registration board for 'Limited Registration to Teach'. The limited registration allows them to teach their language only. Further study is required for full registration and career advancement.

The Western Australian approach is considered a model of best practice. The model could easily be adapted to meet the needs of other states and territories.



Provisional teacher registration

Each state and territory has a way of providing provisional teacher registration to professionals when schools require their skills and cannot find a qualified teacher to meet their needs. In most states and territories, provisional registration allows the teacher to take classes without another qualified teacher present, thus reducing the need for and cost of co-teaching situations.

Training pathways: Assistant Teachers in the Northern Territory

In remote schools in the Northern Territory, where most of the Indigenous Languages and Cultures programs are delivered, delivery is carried out by Assistant teachers with the support of Elders.

Assistant teachers have a career pathway connected to certified training:

- Assistant teacher Level 1 – no qualifications
- Assistant teacher Level 2 – Certificate III in Education Support, or four years of service
- Assistant teacher Level 3 – Certificate IV in Education Support
- Assistant teacher level 4 – Diploma of Education, or Diploma of Indigenous Language Work
- Assistant teacher level 5 – Advanced Diploma of Education
- Teacher – Bachelor of Education

Advancement to each level includes a salary increment outlined in the EBA, Northern Territory Public Sector Teachers and Assistant Teachers 2017—2021 Enterprise Agreement.

Specialist units for the teaching of languages are being considered for inclusion in the qualification and training pathway with a view of developing a specialist pathway for teachers of Indigenous languages and cultures.

Applications for provisional registration are the responsibility of the employing principal. The principal needs to be convinced of the proposed teacher's skill in the classroom and must make a strong case for their registration. Applications are approved by registration authorities on a case-by-case basis. Registration is usually temporary with different conditions and durations in each jurisdiction.

Although registration of this type is used for Languages and other specialist teachers, it appears they have not yet been used for the registration of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language teachers, except in WA where the Department offers specific training



Reading Warlpiri books with students at Nyirripi school.
Photo credit: Samantha Disbray

to this end. However, provisional registration could provide a mechanism for registration of Indigenous community members with appropriate language and classroom skills.

Provisional registration may be immediately appropriate for a small number of experienced language teachers. However, many people teaching languages in co-teaching situations acknowledge that they require further training before they will be ready to develop and deliver a local language curriculum without a co-teacher or larger teaching team.

To ensure potential language teachers have access to the necessary teacher training, each Department is in a position to implement a Professional Development traineeship based on the Western Australian model. Alternatively, they may wish to identify a suitable training program (or programs) as a qualification for provisional registration. For example, a Certificate in Language Teaching, or a Certificate IV in Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language along with significant supervised classroom experience.

While it may initially seem more cost effective to outsource the training to universities and training institutes, the success and longevity of the Western Australian Aboriginal Languages Traineeships suggests that Departmental management of training is viable. Furthermore, a training model managed by the Department can avoid the dependency on external service providers who are unlikely to be in a position to make long-term plans for the training of small cohorts of specialist teachers.





Ngarrindjeri language class at Victor Harbor, 2016.
Photo credit: Victor Harbor Times.

Provisional teacher registration details are as follows:

- Victoria - Permission to Teach
- Northern Territory - Authorisation to employ an unregistered person
- Queensland - Permission to Teach
- South Australia - Special Authority (requires enrolment in a degree course)
- Tasmania - Limited Authority to Teach
- Western Australia - Limited Registration (with specific training provided for Aboriginal language teachers and without expiry).

While it is important to find equitable ways to support community members to be recognised and appropriately remunerated in the classroom, there is also need to provide incentives for community teachers to progress to full teaching qualifications. A clear training pathway that sees remuneration increase with qualification, such as that established for Northern Territory Assistant Teachers (Indigenous Languages and Culture), is a useful model in this regard. The pathway allows people interested in teaching to progress through the levels of classroom responsibility and pay scales at their own pace.

Co-teaching and teaching teams

Dynamic teaching teams play an important role in the development and delivery of local Indigenous language curriculum.

The strongest programs have intensive input from a team that includes a local language teacher, Languages teachers, assistant teachers, linguists and local language specialists.

Each participant has a different role in language curriculum development, delivery and assessment but they work together to create strong teaching teams.

In some regions, teams may be supported by Department staff in curriculum preparation and classroom delivery.

Employment conditions

A clear training pathway for approval as a community language teacher is needed. It is essential that such training is met with the establishment of fair wages and conditions. Though in most states there are currently no such provisions there are a number of existing Awards that are relevant.

Using Queensland as an example, the *Community Teachers, Assistant Teachers - Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community Schools Award - State 2012* includes three classifications: Community teacher A, Community teacher B, and Assistant teachers. Community teachers A and B require an approved diploma and a certificate, respectively. Assistant teachers are employed to work in classrooms with registered teachers or community teachers. The Director General approves certificates/diploma's on a case-by-case basis.

The use of such an award for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community language teachers across all schools would clarify employment options and reduce the current reliance on Teacher Aides to guide language teaching.



Action four: Community protocols

First Languages Australia requests that education departments, which have not already done so:

Develop a strategy to support schools in managing community protocols.
Including:

- collaborating with local language centres where available
- developing support resources, such as:
 - o Indigenous language focused professional development opportunities for all members of staff in schools offering, or looking to offer, an Indigenous language curriculum.
 - o A tool with which to guide schools in:
 - Establishing a language reference group which includes traditional owners and, where appropriate, other people with a specific interest in the language program,
 - Teaching the language of the land on which the school has been built, and
 - Ensuring community control of language curriculum development, delivery and resources. And,
- providing staff within the department to support and guide schools and teachers through local curriculum design and delivery.

Develop and/or promote tools that support successful collaborations between schools and local language communities. For example:

- *Warra: Building teams, Building resources*
- *Guide to Community Protocols for Indigenous Language Projects*

Context

Support resources

In some states and territories, the curriculum authority has published a resource that helps school principals and staff understand the protocols around the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. These tools help to guide each school's approach to the delivery of an Indigenous languages curriculum. They are also tools for communities to use in lobbying to establish language programs at schools in their regions. Primarily, the tools make clear the need for schools to work with their local community and at the community's pace in all aspects of a local language curriculum development and implementation. Some examples of these are:

- Guiding principles, Australian Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages.
- Queensland's Information for Principals: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages in Education Queensland Schools, A guide to implementing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Syllabuses.
- NSW's Working with Aboriginal Communities: A Guide to Community Consultation and Protocols and, The Journey's Just Begun: Enhancing schools' capacity to partner Aboriginal communities to improve student learning – Facilitator handbook and DVD.

A list of relevant resources for each state is available via the Teachers' Notes on First Languages Australia's interactive map, Gambay, <http://gambay.com.au/teachers/starting>

The following sections 'Community Control' and 'Establishing an Advisory Group' are largely adapted from QCAA's Guide for Principals. It is available for free download and is recommended reading, https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/p_10/snr_at_si_languages_11_implement.pdf.

Community control

As Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people are the owners and custodians of their languages, it is vital that all decisions about local language programs are made in the context of a partnership between the school and community. Finding local Indigenous community members who are willing to lead the establishment and maintenance of the school partnership will be essential in forging the necessary relationships for curriculum development and ongoing delivery.

Developing an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language curriculum requires passion and commitment, as well as thoughtful and efficient management across the incubation, consultation, and implementation over many years. Identifying a champion from within the school to take on the role of facilitator is recommended early in the process. The ideal champion will be an experienced member of staff with good people skills, a passion for the program, and solid project management skills. The champion's role is to support the program and its various stakeholders, including the teaching staff, committee members, and students. In essence, their role is to drive the project, keeping it on track as it evolves, and ensuring that both the program and the individuals involved in it are given appropriate support, and are motivated and engaged.





Walalangga Yawuru Ngang-ga class, April 2017.
Photo credit: Mabu Yawuru Ngan-ga

Establishing an advisory or reference group

The early establishment of a Language Advisory Group for the school is an important foundation for the development of a sustainable program.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities often deal with cultural knowledge in very specific ways. There is typically a hierarchy concerning who may speak on a particular topic, with particular people, for example Elders and traditional owners, having the authority to share information and tell stories. Although younger community members and people from other groups might be aware of information pertaining to an area and its cultural heritage, they will defer to more authoritative individuals.

In most communities, there will be a number of people who are recognised by the community as holding significant knowledge about the language. These people must have a central role in a school's consultation process. Nevertheless, due to the various responsibilities they hold, they may be unable to personally act as advisor or committee member. If they are unable to be a regular attendee at Advisory Group meetings, they may be able to nominate an alternative person to take on an advisory role.

Some schools may find themselves in the situation where issues surrounding ownership of the country and language exist or where, due to historical movements of the Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people, it is unclear which community should be approached. In these situations a Language Advisory Group will be an essential forum through which sensitive conversations can happen, enabling curriculum decisions to be made when the time is right.

Principals need to observe protocols when making contact with the identified key community members. The Advisory Group will be able to provide guidance to the school on the most appropriate method for contacting the relevant community members. The structure of the Advisory group needs to be sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of the community and the school.

Language Reference Group: Woorabinda State School

A community based language group was formed to provide guidance for the process of implementing traditional language teaching in Woorabinda State School. This language group continues to meet on an 'as needed' basis. The membership of the group is not fixed, meetings are widely advertised in the community and any interested community members are welcome to participate.

An important element of the Language Group success has been the group's meeting protocol. The protocol is about respecting decisions made by the group. If a member misses a meeting, they then need to respect any decisions that the group makes in their absence. This protocol has enabled the language group to keep discussions and decision making processes moving forward.

From the Woorabinda State School website (2017).

Professional development for school staff

The importance of embedding learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in teacher training for all cannot be overstated. Schools considering establishing a local language program would be well advised to establish or seek out professional development programs in the following areas:

- Team teaching for teachers working in co-teaching relationships.
- Local language awareness for all school staff.
- Use of the local language to enrich student learning in line with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority.
- Inductions on two-way and three-way teaching.

Likewise formalising partnerships with organisations and programs that can support Indigenous students and teachers and the language curriculum is an important advantage for any school. Some examples, in addition to local or regional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language centres and programs, are:

- *Stronger Smarter*
- *Dare to Lead*
- *Narragunnawali*

The cost to Departments in the delivery of the above professional development programs would be greatly reduced over time by insisting that Indigenous language and culture components be included in all teacher education qualifications for all teachers. Charles Darwin University's Bachelor of Education (Primary Teaching) is currently the only course with such a focus.



Action five: Working with the education system

First Languages Australia requests that education departments in each state and territory:

Encourage schools to collaborate across their language regions to share the costs of establishing and delivering the program, including sharing:

- teachers
- teacher training and succession planning
- professional development
- resource production
- curriculum development

Encourage schools to work closely with their regional language centres and other appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations in the development and delivery of language curriculum and resources, wherever possible.

Raise awareness of the fact that language communities and language centres may not be able to respond to enquiries at the pace schools might expect. The provision of a local Indigenous languages program is a long term goal and the respectful initiation of conversations toward the school community collaboration will catalyze long term benefits for all involved.

Develop and/or promote tools that support successful resource production collaborations between schools and local language communities, paying particular consideration to the sensitive issues of intellectual property and ownership.

Initiate activities that monitor data on the effectiveness and benefits of language curriculum delivery for the participating students, whole of school and broader community (Indigenous and otherwise).

Context

In considering the development and delivery of a local language curriculum the school and community need to be clear about what support the school can offer. The school will need to demonstrate they are committed to delivering the language curriculum. Some of the ways that support can be shown are by committing to:

- Funding the community discussions that build the necessary school community relationship. As mentioned under Issue four, a school language champion can be key to facilitating these discussions.
- Ensuring that community members can access the school in a way they feel safe.
- Developing partnerships with other schools in the language region so that the costs of resources (including teachers) can be shared.
- Making clear how and why the school wishes to deliver a local language curriculum.
- Entering agreements with the community, language centres and other partners that outline the schools commitment to the delivery of a local language curriculum.
- Providing professional development for school staff to prepare the school for the introduction of the curriculum.
- Supporting community language teacher training and or local teacher professional development for language teaching. This may include supporting the development of strong co-teaching relationships.
- Making clear the ongoing support that the language teacher/co-teacher will receive including, wages and conditions, ongoing professional development support, and recognising the non-contact time that the teachers will require to keep the community engaged in the curriculum delivery.
- Providing sufficient and appropriate ‘space’ within the school for the delivery of a sustainable program. This includes being clear about:
 - o which classes will participate and how many hours a week
 - o whether a permanent language room/area has been identified for the delivery of language classes and/or resource production and storage, for student and community access.
- Providing funding for resource development and being patient while appropriate resources and curriculum are developed in line with community needs.
- Supporting community language activities that increase the use of language outside the school across multiple domains, including supporting community language classes for all ages, e.g. through the Community Language Schools program. As discussed under Issue Two, these activities also build community capacity for teaching at the school, thus being crucial to the development of a sustainable program.



Resource production

The following information is from *Warra: Building teams, Building resources*, a document published by First Languages Australia to help communities and their partners build a strong understanding of the considerations and steps involved in making Australian first languages resources. It is available for free download and is recommended reading.

The collaborative work of producing Indigenous language resources is an extension of the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to use, learn in, and teach their languages. These rights are recognised in the international human rights framework.

In Australia there are laws relating to the creation of ideas and the production of materials generally, some of these laws are copyright and intellectual property.

State support: NSW Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests

In NSW Aboriginal Affairs as part of the Department of Education have funded five 'Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests' as part of its OCHRE initiative:

- North West Wiradjuri (Dubbo)
- Gumbaynggirr (Coffs Harbour)
- Bundjalung (Lismore)
- Paakantji (Wilcannia)
- Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay/Yuwaalayaay (Lightning Ridge)

The language nests are local community networks which work collectively on Aboriginal language revival and maintenance, and creating learning pathways for Aboriginal students.

Aboriginal communities direct the operations of Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests and their language knowledge is recognised and respected. Each Nest also has a Keeping Place to manage its language resources.

The language nests are a bridge between schools and communities and there are now 60 schools engaged in Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests, with over 5,100 students learning an Aboriginal language through the programs. This is in addition to other NSW schools which deliver Aboriginal languages curriculum supported by the NSW Aboriginal Education Policy and curriculum materials developed by the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards.

The Department also provides 'Our Languages, Our Way' Community Language Grants which fund Aboriginal community driven projects which strengthen community ownership and participation in language revival projects in NSW. These programs may or may not directly involve schools however they directly affect community capacity to collaborate in the delivery of local language curriculum.



Marra language and culture session at Ngukurr School lead by Angelina Joshua from the Ngukurr Language Centre. Photo credit: Ngukurr CEC

When considering the development of the Indigenous language resources required to support curriculum delivery it is important to remember that the language belongs to the community, thus community needs should remain the priority through the design and production process.

The concept of ‘community control’ may seem simple. However, people within the community sometimes have a different understanding of ‘control’ to those in the school. An overwhelming concern of many Indigenous communities is that historically they have had little or no rights over the materials that were made in their languages. Schools need to maximise community control throughout the process of resource design and production.

It can also help to make sure that language resources clearly state the purpose of their content so that future users of the materials can interpret them in the appropriate context.

It’s important for educators and principals to be aware of a community’s right to control the use of language resources produced for the delivery of a language curriculum. Discussions of ownership are particularly important in educational settings as education departments and independent schools have a history of assuming that funding the development of resources about Indigenous languages and cultures entitles them to independent use of those materials.

There are special sections of Australian copyright law that favour federal and state government ownership. This means that resources produced by community members for, or with, school programs are ‘owned’ by the school unless otherwise negotiated.

To help negotiate the ownership of language resources, in 2004 language workers collaborated with the Arts Law Centre of Australia to develop a *Guide to Community Protocols for Indigenous Language Projects* (2004) and sample agreements, including:

- Protocols guide,
- *Consultant Proposed Project Agreement for Education* (updated 2011), and
- *User Guide to Model Agreements*.

The agreements help clarify how to approach copyright, moral rights, and intellectual property when publishing resources. They are useful tools for any language resource production process. A separate version of the agreement was produced for those working with educational institutions, as they require particular considerations.

These documents aim to challenge the assumptions that underpin Australia's legal frameworks and practices, and to increase the awareness of the cultural and intellectual property rights of Indigenous communities. They provide a good basis for beginning discussions between local language community members, schools and other partners collaborating on resource production.

Working with language centres

Some schools will be fortunate to be in regions that have established Language Centres that can provide guidance and resources to support a curriculum. Each language centre is different, acting under the direction by local communities and language workers to deliver a range of activities that meet local needs, generally working within tight funding restraints.

The launch of the National Curriculum: Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages has been welcomed nationally but, combined with increasing public awareness of the importance and diversity of our first languages, local language teams are being overwhelmed with enquiries and requests for school language activities, whether they be the delivery of a local language curriculum or cross-curricular cultural activities.

In the Yamaji region of Western Australia, the language centre contracts the services of language teachers to schools. The teachers are employed by Irra Wangga Language Centre rather than the school. The Centre has developed a series of service agreement templates and resources that support their school partnerships.

The Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages has been running fee-based language awareness professional development for teachers four times a year.

The Central Queensland Language Centre is investigating the options for the use of digital tools as a way to maximise the services of a limited number of teachers.



Grant Thompson facilitating a Kriol Awareness Course for non-Kriol speakers in Ngukurr Community. Photo credit: Ngukurr Language Centre

Support organisations

In addition to regional language centres and local language programs, across Australia there are many types of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations who may be willing collaborators in the delivery of a school languages curriculum.

Local organisations such as ranger groups, heritage councils, land councils, arts and culture centres, tourism operators and health centres may be excellent supporters of the curriculum with their members contributing by participating in the reference group, producing resources, leading excursions, etc.

When collaborating with people and organisations external to the school, it is important to ensure the relationships are made sustainable by appropriately compensating people for their contributions; and setting up systems so that the resources and activities developed can grow into the future with recognition of the IP of all involved.

In order to meet the demand, which is likely to continue to increase, many language centres have temporarily stepped back from delivering programs to individual schools while they focus their limited resources on developing the larger pool of language teachers, language-specific curriculum and sufficient teaching materials to support sustainable programs. See example box: Walalangga Yawuru Ngang-ga on page 40.

As stated above, schools and Departments can support language centres by:

- Providing funding for resource development and teacher training,
- Developing partnerships with other schools in their language region so that the cost of resources and teachers can be shared,
- Funding the necessary community discussions for the establishment of regional programs,



- Being patient while appropriate resources and curriculum are developed in line with community needs,
- Providing professional development for school staff to ready the school for the introduction of the curriculum,
- Entering agreements with the community, language centres and other partners to provide a solid foundation for the delivery of a local language curriculum.

Working regionally

As the initial costs for the preparation, development and delivery of a language curriculum can be high it is important that schools collaborate across language regions. Schools may be able to share such things as:

- teachers
- professional development
- resource production
- succession planning

Likewise, in regions that are fortunate to be supported by language centres, working collectively with the language centre to support planning, training and resource development will maximise outcomes by pooling the limited resources each school has available.

Formal Agreements: Tagai State College

Tagai State College encompasses seventeen school campuses and a TAFE college across fifteen different islands of the Torres Strait. Tagai has worked with its various communities to develop ‘covenants’ with regard to the relationships between school and community, and also on protocols for the use of cultural and linguistic material by the college. The covenants detail the language situation and outline how the school and community will work together to deliver the language curriculum, and include a pledge from each of the partners.

In addition to the covenants the school has developed a set of contracts for use when cultural advisors or language speakers work with the school. There are different contracts depending on whether the material being shared is the subject of personal copyright (e.g. a song that an individual wrote and is teaching the children) or community-owned (e.g. a traditional story). The use of the resources makes the following clear to all involved:

- who is doing the work
- what the purpose is
- who will own the resulting material (e.g. videos)
- what purpose any materials can be used for
- who else needs to be asked for permission, etc



Dalisa Pigram-Ross teaching Yawuru at Cable Beach Primary School. Photo credit: Dalisa Pigram-Ross

Formal agreements

Some schools and language centres have led the way in the development of agreements that outline the expectations of all collaborators. It is clear that schools may not be able to commit in perpetuity to the delivery of a local language program, especially given the current teacher and resource limitations. However, it is similarly difficult for a community and the specific community drivers to commit to the intensive work required to establish a program without a clear message from the school/s that the work will be used long in to the future.

It is proposed that within this strategy a service agreement be developed for use by language centres, covering a range of language teaching related services that could be provided to schools by language centres or similar organisations.

Working with children checks

Each state and territory have their own legislation to ensure the safety and well-being of children at school. While the safety of all our children is paramount, it has been noted that 'one size fits all' approaches can have a negative impact on Indigenous communities. While states work to amend their working with children legislation, First Languages Australia ask that Departments be aware of the specific needs of Indigenous community school partnerships in this regard.



Data collection

To date, little empirical evidence has been captured with regard to the success, or otherwise, of Indigenous language activities in schools. If we wish to see sustainable programs that grow into a future where our languages are strong, the long-term collection and use of data to inform and monitor practice are in the collective interest. First Languages Australia would encourage collaborative research activities to this end.

Red dirt thinking on remote education

“Our culture, our language and our stories, must hold onto tight and not let go because these gives us strength...But we don’t want to leave behind all our strengths and our power in order to receive this new knowledge. We must keep our language, our stories, our lands and our family connections. These are things that give us power in our land.”

Makinti Minutjukur, in *Red Dirt Curriculum: Re-imagining remote education*

“We need to aspire to providing a balanced and achievable education that is both grounded and aspiring; and education that privileges Anangu language, knowledge, community members and our collective identity in the education process.”

Karina Lester, in *Red Dirt Curriculum: Re-imagining remote education*

Summarised from Chapter One, *Red Dirt Education: a compilation of learnings from the Remote Education Systems project*.

Red dirt thinking is a way of approaching and solving problems that allows remote education stakeholders to be creative and innovative exploring ideas that are rooted in the local context. The concept of red dirt thinking has come out of the Remote Education Systems (RES) project within the Ninti One: Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation (CRC-REP).

Education for students in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is often described as problematic. However, the problems are seldom critically considered, and that is reflected in the way they are described. In the light of ‘red dirt thinking’, the ‘problems’ can be considered in a different way.

Remote education in Australia is often presented as a simple system where the right inputs, such as quality teachers and leaders will lead to the outputs that have been set by the system, such as certain levels of English literacy and numeracy. If the situation was that simple, then a magic formula for remote education would have been found. In fact, the realities are nuanced.

Using the red dirt thinking the Remote Education Systems researchers have worked with schools and communities to consider schooling in its local context. Together they explored areas of dissonance between the education department and remote community expectations of school education. For example:

- In cultures where independence at a young age is encouraged, the ‘buck’ does not stop with parents.
- In many remote schools, the same basic content (based on the Australian Curriculum) is taught without considering what is relevant to the students.



Pitjantjatjara Summer School with Anangu teachers, 2015 .
Photo credit: University of South Australia

- If quality teaching is the problem, then why is it that quality teachers from high performing schools struggle in remote school environments?
- What is meant by ‘quality outcome’? Who decides what that is, and what exactly do they mean?
- In relation to jobs and money, what then happens when what motivates students is not the job and not the money?
- If school failure is the problem, what then does success look like?

In the Sidney Myer Rural Lecture 3: *Red Dirt Curriculum: Re-imagining Remote Education*, researcher Karina Lester provided an overview of the necessary focus of remote curriculum from her own experience. For Karina, language must be at the heart of teaching what is relevant for Indigenous students.

Today many Anangu kids growing up on the APY Lands are challenged with many issues... The one place that they should be able to get some peace of mind is also very challenging for children as they are forced to think and learn in a very foreign language, English. For many kids English is a second language or even a third or fourth language and so the level of learning in the English language is limited and the kids struggle to use and understand this language on a day-to-day basis. Subjects are taught in the English language and most of the time, it seems irrelevant to the Anangu child.





Queensland Department of Education and Training indigenous language teachers professional development, May 2016. Photo credit: Queensland Indigenous Languages Advisory Committee

The *Red Dirt Curriculum: Re-imagining Remote Education* presentations are recommended reading for all involved in or overseeing remote education in Australia.

Background reading on Red Dirt Education

Guenther J, Disbray S and Osborne S. 2016. *Red Dirt Education: a compilation of learnings from the Remote Education Systems project*. Ninti One Limited, Alice Springs. http://www.crc-rep.com.au/resource/RedDirtEducation_CompilationLearningsRES_EBook.pdf

Lester, K., Minutjukur, M., Osborne, S., & Tjitayi, K. (2013). *Red Dirt Curriculum: Re-imagining remote education*. Alice Springs: Flinders University. https://www.flinders.edu.au/ehlfms/education_files/coreacom/SM%20Rural%20Lectures/Sidney%20Myer%20Rural%20Lecture%203%20-%20Karina%20Lester%20Makinti%20Minutjukur%20Sam%20Osborne%20Katrina%20Tjitayi-%20for%20Web.pdf.

Ninti-One. *Remote Education Systems*. <https://old.crc-rep.com/remote-education-systems>

Professional development: Queensland Department of Education and Training

On 22-23 Nov 2016, the Indigenous Language Perspectives Team ran a professional development workshop in Cairns for people directly involved in teaching Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages in school contexts who wanted to add to their language-teaching skill sets.

The two day workshop provided professional skills development covering these broad areas:

- Exploring policy documents and understanding the structure of the new Australian Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages
- Discussion and examples of agreements between schools and communities around language and culture
- Language-teaching skills development and take-home ideas
- Sharing promising classroom practices and language teaching strategies that work
- Networking to develop a professional learning community

Guest presenter Michael Jarrett of NSW DET provided very popular demonstrations of pedagogical approaches including Total Physical Response (TPR); Accelerated Second Language Acquisition (ASLA) and the use of 'Bedtime stories' to teach language.

Other sessions included:

- Introduction to and unpacking the Australian Curriculum *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages* – Cassy Nancarrow, Indigenous Language Perspectives (DET)
- Current policy frameworks for Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages – Selwyn Button, Assistant Director General, State Schools – Indigenous Education (DET)
- Guugu-Yimithirr in school (Explicit Direct Instruction model and using drama to teach language) –Lilian Bowen and Irene Hammett, Hopevale campus of CYAAA
- Classroom instructions in Gunggay – Nathan Schrieber, Yarrabah State School
- Storytelling with audience participation as a language teaching strategy – Michael Quinn, Kuranda
- Further education – Masters of Indigenous Languages Education (MILE) University of Sydney, Michael Jarrett (NSW DET) and Des Crump (State Library Queensland)
- Working with communities to develop agreements around language and culture – Stephanie Savage, Executive Principal, Tagai State College
- Sharing practices inside and outside the classroom – all participants
- Creating resources to use back at school – all participants

Feedback from participants was extremely positive, especially around Michael Jarrett's practical, engaging teaching sessions. Requests were made for further PD to be made available for longer, more often, and 'on country' or 'in school locations', not only in major cities.



State overviews

South Australia: Department for Education

Summary

Number of languages being taught: 7

Number of programs/schools: 45

Number of students: 4000

Teacher training: No

Policy: Yes

Policy intention: the Department is dedicated to making language education a reality for all students. Aboriginal languages, as the first languages of Australia, hold an equal footing with other languages in this endeavour.

South Australian Aboriginal languages have featured in mainstream language education in government schools for several decades. To achieve this, the Department has worked closely with local Aboriginal language communities to help develop their languages for teaching and learning in schools. Various strategies and support programs have nurtured a gradual growth in numbers of students learning Aboriginal languages. This has grown from an initial total of 2,000 recorded in 1999 to over 4,000 in 2017, with students learning seven of the original estimated 40 South Australian Aboriginal languages.

Key Departmental strategies that have contributed to the above include:

1. The Aboriginal Languages Programs Initiatives (ALPI) program

ALPI supports all students to learn Aboriginal languages. This program provides supplementation funding for schools to employ Aboriginal language and culture specialists to teach their languages in schools, usually alongside classroom teachers. Uniquely, ALPI supports all learners of Aboriginal languages, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, in all years of schooling. This has resulted in approximately equal numbers of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students learning Aboriginal languages.

2. The First Language Maintenance and Development (FLMD) program

FLMD supports the maintenance of a range of first languages. It provides 15 salaries annually to schools wanting to support children in the primary years to maintain their first languages. These languages include all Aboriginal languages and the languages of communities newly arrived from overseas. In 2019, over seven FLMD salaries were allocated to 22 schools supporting a total of eight Aboriginal languages.

The Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee (PYEC), which provides governance and educational leadership for Anangu Lands schools, actively supports redeveloping an educational role for students' first languages and is leading this work in collaboration with school leaders and departmental staff. Since 2016, the ten Anangu Lands schools collectively receive a total of 5 extra FLMD salaries to support students' learning and use of their first languages across the curriculum. Four of these are for hub coordinators, who provide professional learning to teachers and Anangu education workers, while the 5th salary is for overall coordination. The hub coordinators are first-language speakers of Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara.

Staff and leaders report that collaboration between Anangu staff and other teachers has increased, thereby creating a strengthened community of practice with authentic and engaging language and culture programs operating across the schools. Graduate teachers new to the Lands have reported an improved pedagogical understanding of strategy-based approaches through observation of Anangu teachers at work teaching their language and culture in the classroom. In addition, Anangu teachers have reported that:

- Writing the learning packages makes them feel valued and important, and allows everyone to share ideas and stories.
- The hub model improves language teacher skills, helping to build confidence to lead learning and show *piranpa* (non-Aboriginal) staff that if Anangu children understand what they have to do, they can be successful.

The expected mid-term outcomes are that Anangu students will develop high-level language and literacy skills that will support strong conceptual learning fostered through a positive self-identity that is gained by using their first language in school on a daily basis.

3. Aboriginal Community Language and Cultural Partnerships (ACLCP)

ACLCP supports a variety of Aboriginal language groups with grants in order to pursue their own priorities for their languages. This support ensures that the owners and speakers of Aboriginal languages take the lead in reviving and developing their languages for new uses, including education, and that language resources and teaching and learning programs take the form that is approved by the community. ACLCP began in 2011 and currently maintains active partnerships with four language groups. The intention is to explore the development of additional partnerships for other South Australian languages.

4. Strong support for the Australian Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum is the mandated curriculum for all South Australian government schools, and this has given added impetus to the uptake of languages as a whole-school curriculum element. Every student, from Reception to Year 8, is required to learn a language in accordance with the content and achievement standards described in the Australian Curriculum, with the aim of students continuing languages up to Year 12.

Aboriginal languages have always been a supported option for schools in this regard, subject to the wishes of local Aboriginal language groups. The publication of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages framework as part of the Australian curriculum has strengthened the Department's commitment in supporting Aboriginal language communities to work with their languages for educational goals. Communities now need support to develop versions of the framework for their own languages. Work commenced in 2016 on two South Australian Aboriginal languages and expanded by 2018 to include two additional languages.



5. Recognition of the training and employment needs of Aboriginal languages teachers

There is a clear need to enhance the attractiveness of Aboriginal languages education in schools as a career. The Department is working with sites and communities towards this end to explore ways in which Aboriginal languages specialists who are not qualified teachers can be further acknowledged and recognised for the work they do in the preparation and delivery of an Aboriginal language program.

Tasmania: Department of Education

Summary

Number of languages being taught: 0

Number of programs/schools: 0

Number of students: 0

Number of teachers: 0

Teacher training: No

Policy: Yes

Policy intention: At the request of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation, the Department of Education does not currently support teaching Indigenous language in schools.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation (TAC) actively encourages the use of palawa kani by the Aboriginal community, but at this stage take the position palawa kani should be learnt within community only.

At the request of the TAC, the Tasmanian Department of Education does not support any Indigenous language programs. This position is significant nationally in that it is an opinion shared by some other communities around the country.

TAC have, however, developed the palawa kani resource *tipara waranta kani nina-mapali-tu? What can we tell you?* to support Tasmanian schools in accommodating the Australian Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages.

First Languages Australia advocates for the voices of local language communities to be heard in the planning of all Indigenous language activities. Schools and communities need to be in open discussions about their needs, and local language curriculum delivered only when all parties are ready.



Queensland: Department of Education and Training

Summary

Number of languages being taught: Twenty-four languages being taught as of Semester 2, 2018

Number of programs/schools: Fifty-five State Schools investigating engaging with, or actively teaching Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages

Number of students: Approximately 4200 students enrolled in schools known to be teaching an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language

Number of teachers: Twenty-one teachers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages

Teacher training: No

Policy: Yes

Policy intention: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students should have access to their heritage languages where possible. In addition, every state school in Queensland should have a languages program and, where appropriate, this may be a local Aboriginal Language or Torres Strait Islander language.

Queensland has a number of documents that support the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in schools including the Department of Education's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Statement*. The *Languages Statement* provides the basis to assist Queensland educators and school communities to support the languages and cultures of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students within the school context. It outlines a *3 way strong* language approach for DoE schools to:

1. Recognise and value the language varieties which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities are using for their 'everyday' talk
2. Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in learning and achieving in schools by teaching Standard Australian English explicitly, actively and meaningfully
3. Support children's access to their heritage by maintaining, learning or researching their traditional languages and cultures

State policy settings encourage schools to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students access to their heritage languages where possible. With regard to language in general, every state school in Queensland should have a languages program and, where appropriate, this may be a local Aboriginal Language or Torres Strait Islander language.

In addition to the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Statement*, the importance of recognising and teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages is mentioned in the following DoE state schools policies and supporting documents:

- *Parent and Community Engagement Framework*
- *A guide to implementing the Australian Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander languages*
- *Advancing Education: An action plan for Education in Queensland*

Advancing Education: An Action Plan for Education in Queensland recommends supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's access to their heritage by maintaining, learning or researching their traditional cultures and languages. It also

indicates that the state will provide professional learning and targeted scholarship programs for teachers to enhance language and teaching skills. From 2020, all State Schools are expected to deliver a language from Prep.

Queensland's *P-12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework* states:

- schools are strongly encouraged to offer a languages program from Prep to Year 12
- the provision of languages is required in Years 5 to 8
- principals, in consultation with their school community, will make decisions about the choice of language and the year levels of provision
- schools can choose to provide Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages

A guide to implementing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Syllabuses: Information for Principals was released in 2011 with Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages P-10 Syllabus. It was updated in 2018 to align with the *Australian Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages*. The document contains three sections to lead schools through the process of starting an Indigenous languages program:

1. Section one provides suggestions about researching the local language landscape and the initiating consultation process. It also explains how to form and maintain a local language advisory group, reaching agreements, and designing a curriculum to suit the needs of the school and the local community.
2. Section two is an overview of the Australian Curriculum Framework and the Queensland short-course syllabus with links to further information.
3. Section three gives advice about delivering a language program, including advice around resource development and succession planning.

Appendices detail a range of organisations that can support the development of a school program and the required resources, and also templates for agreements and contracts

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Statement is a strong document that states: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Queensland have three kinds of language significant in their lives and schooling. These are the students' traditional languages, contemporary languages, and Standard Australian English. State Schools policy and practice prioritises a three-way-strong approach which depends on teachers being aware of and supporting all three kinds of language, which help build on each other in real ways.

To achieve the three-way-strong language approach the Department has committed to:

- providing leadership, information and approaches to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in schools
- strengthening relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and stakeholders
- supporting schools to develop local solutions to teaching traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages
- increasing the skills of the workforce to value and recognise students' home languages
- delivering high quality explicit teaching and learning that builds Standard Australian English



The Languages Statement can be summarised as follows:

- The core of any traditional language program is the people of that language who are committed to the task.
- Schools in Queensland have a fair amount of autonomy regarding budget allocations
- Ongoing relationships with schools and communities are essential in order to effectively support the work that in many places has been carried on for decades.

Queensland Department of Education is developing and delivering a long-term strategy to train and support language teachers once they are identified. There is no position charged with liaising with those people interested in teaching their languages in schools. The 'Global schools through languages' team (which supports the teaching of all Languages) has limited reference or application for the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

Some Queensland schools are currently developing and running Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language programs at the primary level using the Australian Curriculum Framework or through a cultural program or other short program. These programs are typically run at the discretion of the school, and often continue almost entirely through the determination of a local language teacher working in isolation. Language teachers of Aboriginal languages or Torres Strait Islander languages hold either a Bachelor of Education, are employed as a teacher's aide, or work in a co-teaching relationship. In Queensland, there is currently no training available toward qualifications in Indigenous language teaching or related career pathways.

All teachers must be registered with the Queensland College of Teachers. Language teachers do not require any other specialty qualifications. Registered teachers, Community Teachers and Assistant Teachers fall under the *Teaching in State Education Award – State 2016 and the Teachers' Certified Agreement 2016*.

Salaries are determined by years of service, qualifications and promotional level. Queensland currently has no awards or wage information specifically for Aboriginal language or Torres Strait Islander language teachers or workers. However, the *Community Teachers and Assistant Teachers* classification is relevant and could be extended to community language teachers and other interested schools.

Western Australia: Department of Education

Summary (as at Dec 2016)

Number of languages being taught: 16

Number of programs/schools: 38

Number of students: 4,762 (K-12)

Number of teachers: 46 staff members - 31 Aboriginal language teachers and 15 Aboriginal Islander Education Officers

Teacher training: Yes

Policy: Yes

Policy intention: In Western Australia, Aboriginal language teaching has been included through LOTE (now called Languages) for more than 20 years and the Department of Education provides a specific in-school traineeship for language speakers interested in teaching in the school system.

Western Australia is the only state in which the Department of Education has taken an interest in Indigenous languages sufficient enough to establish such professional development.

The traineeship incorporates language revival and maintenance strategies, language teaching methodology and the development of the necessary resources for teaching.

The studies are practical and modified to the needs of the trainees. The trainees are assessed on their skills in planning and teaching, and in their language proficiency and use. Applicants need to be teaching at least one language class every week for the duration of the training.

The course runs over three years:

- two years in-school traineeship, including four block releases
- a third probationary teaching year

On successful completion of the course and all assessments and requirements, graduates are eligible to apply to the WA Teachers' Registration Board for 'Limited Teaching Registration (LRT)'. When registration is complete, graduates are eligible for appointment as an Aboriginal language teacher and are qualified to teach their language but not other learning areas. The teachers.



Northern Territory: Department of Education

Summary

Learner Pathway	No of Languages	No of Schools	No of students	No of teachers
L ₁	38	31	3014	Data not available
LR	7	7	274	Data not available
L ₂	2	7	579	Data not available

Number of teachers: Data is not kept

Policy: NTBOS *Keeping Indigenous Languages and Cultures Strong: A plan for the teaching and learning of Indigenous Languages and Cultures in Northern Territory Schools*. The policy is to be supported by forthcoming *Guidelines for the Teaching and Learning of Indigenous Languages and Cultures*.

Policy intention: All Northern Territory students have access to education in Indigenous Languages and Cultures that reflect and respect their background and develop knowledge, skills and understandings (NTBOS Plan for the Teaching and Learning of Indigenous Languages and Cultures in Northern Territory Schools).

That schools develop meaningful programs in Indigenous Languages and Cultures by listening to, observing and working with Indigenous Elders as the custodians of the languages and holders of the knowledge.

Background to the teaching and learning of Indigenous Languages and Cultures in the NT

Aboriginal people currently make up some 30% of the population of the NT. According to the Wilson Review of Indigenous Education in the NT (A Share in the Future, 2015), the majority (65%) of Aboriginal people in the NT speak an Australian Indigenous language at home and 13% do not speak English at all. While Aboriginal people are distributed across all population centres - urban, remote and very remote areas - 58% of the population live in what have been described as very remote locations. These very remote locations include settlements, often referred to as communities, with populations varying from less than 100 to over 2000, where the use of English is restricted to engagement with non-Aboriginal people or other Aboriginal people who do not speak the community language. These groups of people are generally a small minority of the population. English is used only when dealing with local government offices and business and in interactions with the police, schools and health clinics. While there is movement between very remote, remote and urban centres, the population of these very remote locations, particularly those of school age, is increasing, rather than declining. The proportion of the NT school-aged population identified as Aboriginal is estimated to be more than 45% and in some very remote locations is between 90% and 100% of school enrolment.

Of the 154 government schools in the NT, 76 are in very remote locations while five of the 17 Catholic schools in the NT are in very remote locations. There are five independent schools in very remote locations, another two in Alice Springs and one in

Darwin. These schools all provide education including boarding facilities for students from very remote locations who continue to speak an Indigenous language as their first language. There is clearly a high proportion of students in schools in remote and very remote locations speaking and using an Indigenous language and living their lives according to the principles and practices of an Indigenous culture. This invests the teaching and learning of ILC with the same significance for those students as the teaching and learning of English has for students who come to school as first language speakers of English. This also means that the teaching and learning of Indigenous Languages and Cultures in the NT may be different in focus from other states and territories where Indigenous languages are no longer spoken as strongly.

The historical patterns of settlement and resettlement as a result of colonial and government policies and the encroachment of non-Indigenous people on Indigenous lands has meant that there are often children and young people who speak an Australian Indigenous language as their first language while also identifying as a member or speaker of another Australian Indigenous language community. This ‘identity’ or ‘heritage’ language is a marker of their connection to a distinctive group of people and to land. For example, children in Galiwin’ku speak Djambarrpuyŋu as the main language of communication in Galiwin’ku although many will identify with one of a number of Yolŋu languages belonging to areas and people from across Arnhem Land even though they may no longer actually be a speaker of the language.

Languages and Cultures are widely taught throughout the NT. At the end of 2016 the following figures were reported:

Learner Pathway	No of Languages	No of Schools	No of students
L ₁	38	31	3014
LR	7	7	274
L ₂	2	7	579

Bilingual education

Currently, seven schools run a bilingual program where the language of instruction is the students’ first language. In these programs, English is taught as an additional language and gradually introduced as the language of instruction becoming the major language of instruction in year five. The students’ first language is the medium of instruction for the teaching of initial literacy and across all learning areas.

The NT government has recently indicated that they would accommodate communities interested in bilingual education under a policy of community led schools.

The Northern Territory has developed a draft NT Indigenous Language and Culture curriculum to be trialed in 2018. It revises the previous NT curriculum in line with the new ACARA Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages. Cultural knowledge is at the heart of teaching and learning and provides the starting point for collaborative planning with Elders and speakers of the language. The Culture component of the curriculum is intended to provide opportunities for students to



learn through an Aboriginal culture. It is a synthesis of over 40 years of work from NT schools, carried out by teachers in collaboration with Elders deciding on appropriate cultural knowledge to be taught.

The Culture component has common content and purpose with the Australian Curriculum in all three dimensions: Disciplinary knowledge, General capabilities and Cross-curriculum priorities.

There are curriculum options for six Learner Pathways:

- First language Bilingual
- First language Maintenance
- Second language
- Language Revitalisation
- Language Renewal
- Language and Cultural Awareness

Five key principles underpin delivery:

- Strong ownership by language custodians and Elders
- Strong programs based on a whole school approach to systematic curriculum delivery
- Strong teacher, strong learning achieved through leadership by Elders and members of the language community
- Strong pathways for learning languages through all years and stages of schooling
- Strong futures, strong plans provide sustainability and continuity of programs

Teacher training

The department has worked with Charles Darwin University towards three accredited units within their Bachelor of Education (Primary Teaching) that can be undertaken as a specialization for teaching Indigenous Languages and Cultures. These units are discussed in Issue one of this paper.

A pathway for Indigenous languages teaching is being developed within the NT Professional Standards for Aboriginal Assistant Teachers.

The NT Department of Education is currently exploring the options for training for teachers of Indigenous Languages.

New South Wales: Department of Education

Summary

Number of languages being taught: 13

Number of programs/schools: 60

Number of students: 7986

Number of teachers: 50

Teacher training: No

Policy: Recognition of the significance of NSW Aboriginal languages, and the importance of encouraging their use; and measures to protect and revive NSW Aboriginal languages, including funding a proposed NSW Aboriginal Languages Centre, a strategic plan, and accountability framework.

The rich and diverse Aboriginal languages of NSW are an important part of this State's cultural heritage and identity. However, they are all considered to be critically endangered. Since 1998, the NSW Aboriginal Affairs has supported revival of Aboriginal languages through funding and policy coordination.

The New South Wales (NSW) Aboriginal Languages K-12 Syllabus commenced in 2005 and has been developed in conjunction with the Aboriginal owners and custodians of each of the languages offered. The syllabus supports sequential learning and covers linguistic features of Aboriginal languages, grammatical structures, listening, reading, writing and speaking in an Aboriginal language, and an understanding of Aboriginal heritage and contemporary culture.

In 2010, 7986 students, 1571 Aboriginal and 6415 non-Aboriginal students, undertook study in one of the then 13 Aboriginal languages offered at one of 36 public schools. In 2007, TAFE began offering a Certificate 1, 2 and 3 in an Aboriginal language, and by 2011, 532 students had undertaken one of these courses.

The NSW 2021 Plan, a ten year plan, recognises that Aboriginal people are disadvantaged across almost every social indicator and incorporates Aboriginal specific targets across all relevant goals. Within the NSW 2021 Plan, the following goals specifically impact on the teaching of Aboriginal languages:

- Goal 15: Improve education and learning outcomes for all students includes the Aboriginal specific target: Halving the gap between NSW Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in reading and numeracy by 2018
- Goal 26: Fostering opportunity and partnerships with Aboriginal People, establishes that a reinvigorated Aboriginal affairs strategy will be developed in conjunction with Aboriginal people, through a real and meaningful partnership

Alongside the NSW 2021 Plan the NSW Government established a NSW Aboriginal Languages Policy in 2004. A five year Aboriginal Languages Strategic Plan 2006-10 was developed after lengthy consultations with Aboriginal communities, and recognised the critical role of the educational sector to the reclamation of Aboriginal languages. One of the four key result areas was Aboriginal Languages in the educational sector.



Through the Strategic Plan from 2005-2012, Aboriginal Affairs NSW contributed to 78 community based language projects through the Aboriginal Languages Research and Resource Centre.

The NSW Government's Aboriginal Education and Training Policy commits to the teaching of Aboriginal languages, Aboriginal studies and Aboriginal cross curriculum content. The Policy acknowledges the strength, diversity, ownership and richness of Aboriginal cultures, and custodianship of country are respected, valued and promoted. The Policy outlines the incorporation of cultural contexts, values and practices of local Aboriginal communities into the mainstream delivery of education and training.

Language Nests

In 2013 the OCHRE Plan was released by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon Victor Dominello MP. The Department of Education and Communities – which includes Aboriginal Affairs – and its government and non-government partners have commenced implementing OCHRE's initiatives across the state. OCHRE outlines a number of initiatives to increase opportunities to learn Aboriginal languages in communities, schools and for greater appreciation of Aboriginal languages within the broader community.

Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests established in the following communities to revitalise and maintain languages, are one of the Plans five key initiatives.

- North West Wiradjuri (Dubbo)
- Gumbaynggirr (Coffs Harbour)
- Bundjalung (Lismore)
- Paakantji (Wilcannia)
- Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay/Yuwaalayaay (Lightning Ridge)

The Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests have been established to begin to redress the loss of Aboriginal languages and culture and the resulting impact on the wellbeing of Aboriginal peoples in NSW through the teaching of languages in public schools.

The Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests are located in DoE schools and comprise a principal and a project officer who facilitate community consultation and resource teaching in surrounding schools within the language region.

In schools, Language and Culture Nests aim to provide Aboriginal students and their families with a continuous pathway of learning from preschool to Year 12 and into tertiary education (TAFE and universities) and to offer Aboriginal students a new opportunity to consider language teaching as a vocation.

A Keeping Place located in each of the Language and Culture Nest, identified by the local Aboriginal community will provide advice relating to the local Aboriginal language as well as housing language resources for use by communities including organisations such as schools, universities and TAFE institutes.

Ownership of Aboriginal language and culture remains solely with local Aboriginal communities.

In the long term, Language and Culture Nests aim to:

- improve knowledge of, and competency in, Aboriginal languages
- strengthen Aboriginal identity, pride and community resilience
- increase the number of language learners
- increase the number of language teachers
- contribute to increased school attendance and retention

The 2016 report, *OCHRE: Three years on* outlines the following key achievements and data:

- The NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. (NSW AECG) engaged to ensure each Nest has its own Aboriginal Language and Culture Adviser/s to assist communities, including establishing community-endorsed Keeping Places. A Keeping Place can be either physical and/or virtual. Its purpose is to protect and sustain Aboriginal languages.
- Aboriginal community involvement in the Nests increased and formalised through the establishment of local reference groups in each Nest site

From 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016:

- the number of pre-schools, primary and secondary schools and school engaged in the Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests increased from 35 to 60
- the number of students now learning an Aboriginal language increased from 3,679 to 5,166
- 50 tutors and teachers delivered language lessons

The NSW Government also strengthens local languages and local cultures by:

- funding NAIDOC Week events across NSW – \$197,349 granted in 2015-2016 to 136 organisations to support cultural events and activities.
- funding language revitalisation – \$156,759 granted in 2015-2016 under the Our Languages, Our Way program to six projects to support the revitalisation of Aboriginal languages, including the development of language apps, a language dictionary and languages taught on Country by Aboriginal Elders protecting NSW Aboriginal languages.

On the 19th of October 2017, NSW became the first state in Australia to pass legislation through its Parliament recognising the importance of Aboriginal languages. The legislation acknowledges that Aboriginal languages underpin Aboriginal identity and the revival and teaching of languages must accord with local community aspirations. It focuses on the NSW Government working in partnership with Aboriginal communities to support the revival of Aboriginal languages and raise awareness amongst the broader NSW population.



Victoria: Department of Education and Training

Summary (as of June 2018)

Number of languages being taught: 8

Number of programs/schools: 9+

Number of students: 1200+

Number of teachers: Co-teaching occurs in most schools (i.e. where the language teacher is not a registered teacher), with Traditional Owner representatives supported by classroom teachers.

Teacher training: Thirty-eight Aboriginal language groups have been identified in Victoria. Most of these languages are “revival languages” – i.e. they are no longer spoken or used in everyday life. The delivery of the Certificate III in Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language commenced in October 2018 to a cohort of Victorian Aboriginal community members. Successful candidates will be supported to undertake the Certificate IV in Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language.

Policy: All Victorian schools are required by legislation and as a condition of their registration with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority to provide instruction in the eight learning areas, including languages. Teaching an Aboriginal language is an option available to schools subject to agreement by Traditional Owners and availability of language teachers and resources.

Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026 (Marrung), developed in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal community, is Victoria’s integrated plan to deliver improved education outcomes for Koorie learners across the early childhood, school, and training and skills sectors. *Marrung* supports the teaching of Aboriginal languages in schools and early childhood services through action 2c. to *(increase) the number of Koorie language programs in Victorian kindergartens and schools, by supporting community efforts at language learning through working with VAEAI and the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages, and providing assistance to support Koorie community members to undertake relevant language and teacher training courses.*

The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL), the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) and the Victorian Department of Education and Training work in close partnership to ensure the teaching of Aboriginal languages in schools and early childhood services is culturally safe and respectful of Traditional Owners.

In 2016, the VCAA, in conjunction with VAEAI and VACL, accredited the ‘*Victorian Curriculum F-10 – Victorian Aboriginal Languages*’. Aboriginal languages taught in Victorian government schools include Dhauwurd-Wurrung, Yorta Yorta, Barkindji-Marawara, Woiwurrung, GunaiKurnai, Dhudhuroa/Murrin-patha, Wemba Wemba and Taungurung. This builds on earlier work in 2004 to develop a Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) course, “Indigenous Languages of Victoria: Revival and Reclamation”, which has been completed by students studying Yorta Yorta, Wergaia, Gunai-Kurnai and Dhudhuroa/Murrin-patha.

The Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Victoria website has been developed to support the teaching of Aboriginal languages in Victorian schools. The website links to the Victorian Curriculum F-10 – Victorian Aboriginal Languages and has a range of resources including advice on protocols for establishing an Aboriginal language program, resources and links, and sample units of work. The site also contains interviews with seven Aboriginal community leaders talking about the importance of Aboriginal languages and cultures being introduced into Victorian schools





First Languages Australia is the peak body committed to ensuring the future strength of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

We share the stories of the people, the histories and the diversity of our languages; we work to bring the best tools and technologies to our communities to enrich their teaching and sharing of language; and we pledge that by bringing strong partners to share our commitment, the first voices of this land will be heard clearly and loudly into the future.

